TOWARDS A SOCIOLOGY OF TIME-SPACE COMPRESSION

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

August 1994

University College London
ABSTRACT

It has been argued that Western experiences of time and space are radically changing and that these changes, signalling a new round of time-space compression, may be underpinning a wider shift from the 'modern' to the 'postmodern'. Processes of globalisation, for example, are commonly argued to be disrupting traditional modes of spatial distinction through which a secure 'sense of place' is constructed, whilst new work practices are understood to be leading to a newly insecure sense of time. A polarised literature has characterised the experience of these changes as being both universal and either wholly 'good' or 'bad'.

Using in-depth qualitative interviews with a range of white respondents from an ethnically diverse area of inner London, the thesis challenges these grand and universal claims. Whilst the literature continues to engage with these issues only at the highest level of theoretical abstraction, the thesis shows how a careful analysis of people's accounts, drawn from transcript material gathered during extended fieldwork, can in fact reveal much about how such abstract processes are negotiated in people's day-to-day lives. It relates these changes to everyday experience, analyzing, for example, the use of communication technology, the consumption of 'exotic' food, and some experiences of these new work practices. It illustrates the experiences of differently empowered social actors and constructs a sociology of time-space compression around the positions of ethnicity, class and gender. It draws particular attention to the experiences of members of a new cultural class. It is members of this class who are at the cutting edge of processes of time-space compression, and who inhabit a particularly ambiguous position in relation to the epistemological challenges of postmodernism. It uses their experiences to establish a 'test case' for future research.

The thesis concludes that the experience of such change differs markedly for different people and that for any individual the diverse processes of time-space compression may offer both positive and negative experiences. It examines some of the mechanisms through which people are 'handling' such change and suggests that these processes are less disorientating than is often assumed. It concludes that far from signalling any fundamental shift to less exclusionary systems of thought, current restructurings should in fact be understood as re-inscribing the traditional power relations of the 'modern'.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the help of a number of people. The first year of research was funded by a Postgraduate Studentship from King’s College, Cambridge. I should like to thank the college for its generosity, and most of all my tutor, Dr. Tess Adkins, for her friendship and guidance over the years. The research was conducted at the Department of Geography, University College London. The department’s graduate students provided a stimulating and supportive atmosphere in which to work. It is difficult to single out particular colleagues, but I would like to extend special thanks to Khalid Kosser, James Kneale, and Ben Richards, all of whom, in their different ways, enabled me to think my ideas through more carefully. My supervisors, Professor Peter Jackson, and Dr. Jackie Burgess, offered constant support and encouragement in research that I am sure was often as frustrating for them as it was for me. I should like to thank them for their friendship, patience, and inspiration. Thanks too to Barbara Cathersides for her heroic efforts in transcription. The thesis itself would clearly have been impossible without my respondents, and I would like to thank them for their commitment to the project.

Most of all I would like to thank my family and friends, many of whom, I am sure, often wondered whether the thesis would ever really be finished (didn’t we all?!). Their support has been unwavering. In particular I would like to thank: my parents, as ever, for their unstinting support; Chris and Lorna, who have probably seen more of the research process than they ever banked on, but whose help over the last four years has been invaluable; my brother Tim, and his wife Karen, and my sister Stephanie, and her husband Andrew.

Tim’s ability to relate my rather tortuous arguments to developments in the ‘real world’ has been a continuing source of amazement to me and his knowledge of ‘world music’, and the ‘cultural sphere’ more widely, was always shared with the most generous spirit - even if this generosity was rarely extended to his behaviour on the squash court! Without Lu and Andy this thesis would never have got off the ground. I cannot here do justice to their contributions, but can only hope that the interminable discussions Andrew and I have shared over the years have not done too much damage to their marriage (!) and that one day I can return the support that Lu has always offered.

Most of all I would like to say thank you to Vicki, without whose love none of this would have possible. Perhaps now we can finally get on with other things. I dedicate this thesis to her.
To Vicki:

For sharing her city
### Chapter 3
**Methodology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>68-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2a</td>
<td>The use of case study areas</td>
<td>69-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2b</td>
<td>Welcome to the global village: introducing Stoke Newington</td>
<td>70-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3a</td>
<td>'If only I'd stayed on the 73': the selection of respondents</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3b</td>
<td>George, Alex, Dorian, Amanda, Paul and Pat</td>
<td>84-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4a</td>
<td>The choice and power relations of method</td>
<td>86-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4b</td>
<td>Some everyday topics of time-space compression: the interview process</td>
<td>90-95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5a</td>
<td>The interpretation of material: data analysis and the power relations of interpretation</td>
<td>96-102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5b</td>
<td>Textual strategies and the editing process</td>
<td>102-105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter 4
**The Technology Connection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>106-111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Tapping into power: the experiences of George and Alex</td>
<td>112-121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>The uncertain gendering of geographical knowledge: Paul</td>
<td>121-128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Expressions of ambiguity: Dorian and Amanda</td>
<td>128-138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Upholding commonsense: Pat</td>
<td>138-143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>143-144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chapter 5
**A Time for Everything and Everything in its Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>145-147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Work and the comforts of 'natural time': Paul and Pat</td>
<td>147-156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Work and the comforts of home</td>
<td>156-165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Time-management and the (gendered) comforts of family time</td>
<td>166-174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>174-175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>In Search of Authenticity (Or Travels in Cultural Capital)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Roast beef and yorkshire: defining the 'English'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Power and the 'real exotica': a little taste of something different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>All around the world</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>The empire goes on holiday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Travellers' tales: in search of authenticity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 7</th>
<th>Bringing it all Back Home: Beyond a 'Progressive Sense of Place'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>The loss of a sense of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Gazing upon the 'exotic': the new urban flâneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Histories of conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>The 'global village': geographies of power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 8</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Towards a sociology of time-space compression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Thesis aims and conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Taking things forward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix 1</th>
<th>The Pilot Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix 2</th>
<th>Contact Letters and Replies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Waiting for the 149</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stoke Newington in a global context</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Location of the case study area: Greater London</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Albert Town and Shacklewell</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Stoke Newington Church Street</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A typical street in Albert Town</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Stoke Newington High Street</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ridley Road market (Dalston)</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.1 Towards a sociology of time-space compression

"The argument: There has been a sea change in cultural as well as in political-economic practices since around 1972. This sea-change is bound up with the emergence of new dominant ways in which we experience space and time.

Whilst simultaneity in the shifting dimensions of time and space is no proof of necessary or causal connection, strong a priori grounds can be adduced for the proposition between the rise of postmodernist cultural forms, the emergence of more flexible modes of capital accumulation, and a new round of 'time-space compression' in the organisation of capitalism.

But these changes, when set against the basic rules of capitalistic accumulation, appear more as shifts in surface appearance rather than as signs of the emergence of some entirely new postcapitalist or even postindustrial society."


In recent years a series of fundamental changes in both the nature of the world and the ways in which the world is thought about and (re)presented have been traced. Many have argued for nothing less than a 'sea change' in the basic categories of time and space that locate the material and experiential parameters of everyday thought and action (Harvey, 1989a; McDowell, 1991a; Shields, 1992). These arguments have attempted to connect a series of ontological ruptures to the potential for radically new epistemologies and have been located within a broader set of debates concerning the perceived shift from a condition of modernity, to a condition of postmodernity (Gregory, 1989; Harvey, 1989a; Jameson, 1984, 1991).

Within the social sciences, and geography in particular, critics have tended to concentrate upon changes in the nature of contemporary space and traditional systems of spatial understanding (Dear, 1988; Smith & Katz, 1993; Soja, 1989; Soja & Hooper, 1993). Analyzing processes of globalisation, for example, interest has focused upon how such processes might be affecting our understandings of place and the politics of identity (Appadurai, 1991; Chambers, 1993; Featherstone, 1993; Friedman, 1990; Keith & Pile, 1993; Mulhern, 1993; Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1990).

Certainly, for many in the West at least, the spaces of everyday life would seem to be connected to a set of global inter-relations as never before. From the foods people eat to the television programmes they watch, traditional spatial understandings are in a process of re-organisation. An awareness of these changes thus reaches far beyond the academy and has come to structure much contemporary culture. From advertisements celebrating transport revolutions that make possible the consumption of crops picked
barely a day before on the 'other' side of the world to the transgressive hybridity of 'world music', popular culture is struggling to articulate the emergence of a new 'global village' (McLuhan, 1964) and those more complex social and cultural identities that have emerged with it (see, for example, Hanly & May, 1989; Lee, 1991; Rushdie, 1981).

But shadowing, or in fact emerging out of, these changes in the nature of space have also come radical changes in our experiences of time (Paine, 1992). For example, it is often argued that the arrival of post-Fordist production regimes has led to a sense of 'speed-up' in everyday life (McDowell, 1991a). These developments may have the potential to render the structures of time itself unstable, as a clear sense of temporal distance is replaced by a sometimes bewildering sense of simultaneity. They are most easily illustrated with reference to the emergence of new communication technologies (Adams, 1992), and certainly seem to strike a chord with popular experience. Where many people might characterize the contemporary period as one of almost overwhelming change, a number of novelists and film makers have attempted to capture the increasing fluidity of temporal experience, and the implications of this fluidity on traditional understandings of the self, and social identity (see, for example, Amis, 1992; Jameson, 1984; Kasser & Vajna, 1990).

Bringing together these spatial and temporal processes David Harvey has identified the contemporary period as subject to a new and powerful round of 'time-space compression' (Harvey, 1989a). Though others have charted the increasing distanciation of life in a period of late modernity (Clark, 1974; Forer, 1978; Giddens, 1991; Janelle, 1968, 1969) Harvey's contribution is an attempt to capture the subjective experience of these processes and locate them as the causal force behind a much heralded shift to a 'condition' of postmodernity.

His thesis has generated considerable academic debate (see, for example, Bird et al, 1993). For example, the emergence of a distinctively new social condition is by no means accepted by all (Eagleton, 1985). Others have argued that understanding postmodernity as a totalizing condition is contradictory (Luckhurst, 1992). More importantly, it has been suggested that the reading of time-space compression itself that Harvey constructs is only partial. Whilst he believes these processes to be universal, others have called for a more developed sociology of recent change (Dear, 1991; Massey, 1993a). Massey argues that the problem with Harvey's thesis is that it rests upon a certain Euro-centrism. And Michael Dear has added that: "Harvey tends ... to treat such compression as a homogenous phenomenon, and fails to develop how the experience of time and space differ for a corporate king and a homeless bag lady" (Dear, 1991:535).

The primary task of this thesis is to trace the contours of that empirical sociology
of time-space compression alluded to by Dear. This sociology needs to make clear the unequal power relations inherent to these processes (some, after all, may be in a rather better position than others to control such change). It must also clarify how those changes that benefit some may act to disadvantage others. For example, the 'dislocations' connected to the emergence of new work regimes are liable to be experienced quite differently by different social actors, as these changes have themselves produced a differentiated labour market structured around a 'core' and 'peripheral' labour force (Lash & Urry, 1987; Scott & Storper, 1986). Further, whilst for Harvey the processes of time-space compression affect us all in similar ways, and reach through every arena of daily life, so too are they always profoundly disorientating. Yet, it might seem that for any individual the processes of time-space compression might well have bought about some changes that are broadly welcome (an increase in the range of foods now available in the local supermarket, for example) whilst engendering others of a more disturbing nature (changes in one's local area and the destruction of more familiar ways of life).

The present thesis aims to make clear how different social groups may be differently positioned within a bout of time-space compression. It also seeks to clarify how these 'universal' processes are always 'complicated' by the ambiguities of individual experience.

1.2  ... and postmodernity

The thesis also seeks to clarify the connections between these ontological changes and the possible emergence of less exclusionary systems of thought. It seeks to locate these changes too, and in particular the connections that Harvey draws between the 'dislocations' of time-space compression and the epistemological challenges of the postmodern, within a more developed sociology. For example, just as Harvey (1989a) understands processes of time-space compression as always, and only, profoundly disorientating, so too he always moves against those epistemological challenges that these processes arguably engender, and that have been broadly associated with systems of postmodern thought (Harvey, 1993a).

The processes of globalisation, for example, have rendered the construction of any clearly 'bounded' political identity more complex, and for Harvey and others (Jameson, 1984, 1988, 1991; Soja, 1989) such processes undermine a previously coherent political project based around the structures of class with a number of alternative divisions: gender, race, sexuality, age, and so on. For these critics the contributions of 'postmodern philosophy' have therefore become characterized as little more than a set of superficial 'language games' that serve only to draw attention away from a more 'grounded'
material politics (cf Lyotard, 1984). Yet for others the epistemological challenges associated with the emergence of postmodern thought have been broadly welcomed (Deutsche, 1991). To understand these different positions we need a clearer idea of the connections between processes of time-space compression and the emergence of the (post)modern. These have recently been provided by Shields (1992).

Shields (1992) understands processes of time-space compression as offering the potential for a fundamental disruption of those basic categories of thought through which individuals in the West have traditionally constructed their sense of place, and thus their social identities. As he argues, with processes of globalisation: "A synthetic union of distance and presence, of the foreign and the intimate, becomes conceivable and practicable" (Shields, 1992:195). As processes of globalisation and time-space compression re-organise traditional relations of 'presence' and 'absence', a set of epistemological closures structured around the distinctions of here & there, inside & outside, us & them, may also be disrupted. In essence these processes carry the power to disrupt the very categories of binary thought that arguably characterized the structures of a modern epistemology. It is debates around the relative merit of such challenges that effectively demarcate a number of divisions between critics like Harvey (1989a, 1993a) Jameson (1984, 1991) and Soja (1989) on the one hand, and a number of feminist and post-colonial critics on the other (Massey, 1991a).

It is important, of course, not to argue for too close an association between a set of postmodern epistemologies and the positions explored by critics within either an often diverse school of feminist thought, or post-colonial studies (see, for example, Bondi & Domosh, 1992; McDowell, 1991b; Nicholson, 1990; Said 1978, 1993; Spivak, 1988a & b). But, it can at least be argued that at the heart of many of those perspectives emergent in the academy over the last twenty years or so is a challenge to precisely those structures of binary thought that have dominated a 'modern' epistemology, and which 'postmodern' critiques have sought to de-centre (Bhabha, 1992; Derrida, 1976; Lyotard, 1984; Seldon, 1985).

For these critics, challenges to the traditional structures of binary thought bought about with processes of time-space compression are profoundly liberating, because they serve to open up a previously closed subject identity. Just as, in the light of Freudian psychoanalysis (Benvenuto & Kennedy, 1986; Frosh, 1991a & b; Pile, 1993), any notion of a coherent subject existing before contemporary dislocations can itself be understood as something of a myth, so too the 'Master Subject' identified within the modern epistemologies defended by Harvey and others may be characterised as only straight, white and male. In essence, the impact of modern epistemologies was simply to position
all outside this Master Subject as Other. For those previously rendered invisible the fragmentation of this subject thus offers the potential for a more liberating politics. Certainly, as society itself is now conceived to be wrought with multiple divisions, many feminist and post-colonial critics have welcomed notions of this more fluid, hybrid identity as opening up a more radical form of political resistance; one based around a strategy of political mobility, rather than some form of positional certainty or closure (Gilroy, 1992; Haraway, 1990; Rose, 1993: cf Harvey, 1993a).

To summarize, if processes of time-space compression have led to a fundamental disruption of the basic categories of presence and absence, so too there might emerge a challenge to those structures of modern binary thought through which people have traditionally mapped their presence in the world. The first task of the thesis is thus to trace the extent of such disruptions.

We might also expect the experience of, or rather responses to, such processes to differ according not only to positions of class and age, but also and especially gender, ethnicity and sexuality. The second task of the thesis is to outline these differences in more detail. At the same time, since we all inhabit multiple, and often inconsistent identities, the positions different social actors adopt in relation to these changes may themselves be ambiguous and contradictory. An understanding of these ambiguities is vital because it re-emphasises the need always to identify with the experience of the individual, rather than simply positioning subjects as some kind of cypher around which different theoretical positions may be hung (cf Bell, 1994).

The thesis thus attempts to open up both the structures of time-space compression, and postmodernity itself, to a more developed sociology, tracing the complex and unequal power relations inherent to both.

1.3 An empirical investigation of time-space compression and postmodernity

Further, even as processes of time-space compression are argued to affect us all (in differing ways) and in all arenas of everyday life, these debates have continued to be conducted at only the highest level of theoretical abstraction, and have yet to be opened up to any sustained empirical examination. Even where critics have sought to illustrate these processes with reference to developments in 'popular' culture it is often difficult to relate their examples to issues negotiated in our day-to-day lives. Jameson, for example, continues to access debates around the disintegration of traditional modes of spatial distinction only through a suitably intellectual discussion of the conceptual art of Hans Haacke and Robert Gober, whilst elsewhere even claiming that these processes may lie
The third aim of the thesis is thus to attempt exactly this empirical analysis, and to re-cover these more abstract theoretical concerns through accounts drawn from peoples own experience. In many ways the challenge has been to find a series of topics through which people can articulate the everyday experience of such change, and from which these more abstract arguments can then be accessed. Despite the dearth of empirical work, such an attempt should by no means prove impossible. For example, if we are interested in that re-organisation of the traditional categories of spatial distinction (and thus cultural exclusion) that Jameson explores, rather than start at the Tate we can just as easily start with people's daily diets. If foods such as pizza are still somehow considered 'foreign', understanding how and why such categories are constructed (and by whom) provides access to exactly these sorts of issues.

The thesis therefore draws upon an analysis of interview material concerning the negotiation of time-space compression in people's everyday lives. It works with a qualitative methodology operating within a logic of 'theoretical' rather than 'statistical' inference (Mitchell, 1983). Seeking to understand the impact of these processes on people's understandings of place and place identity, the thesis uses a single case study area - Stoke Newington in inner London - from which all the respondents are drawn, and through their understandings of which I may better access these debates (see chapter 3). In this sense, rather than offering any 'representative' conclusions, the thesis aims to illuminate a set of key theoretical concerns through insights derived from a strategic continuum of respondents, and concerning the negotiation of these processes in a particular time and place.

With this limited selection the most important question becomes around whom such a sociology should be constructed. The solution adopted here is to draw upon a body of work now emerging in sociology and cultural studies. There a number of writers have highlighted the emergence of a new social class, one they have variously described as a new middle class, or new service class, as being particularly pertinent to issues of both time-space compression and postmodernity more widely (Featherstone, 1991, 1992; Lash, 1990; Lash & Urry, 1987; Pfeil, 1988, 1990).

Members of the new service class may be open to the most obvious manifestations of time-space compression. For example, not only do many work within those international business environments where global communications are simply part of everyday life, but with processes of gentrification the new service class are often drawn to exactly those inner city areas that most clearly articulate a sense of cultural 'implosion' (Butler, 1991). At the same time, inhabiting managerial positions in those businesses, and
in many ways being a product of these changes in the workplace (Pfeil, 1988) so too, and in stark contrast to those either in the peripheral labour force, or other inhabitants of the contemporary inner city, such actors may be in a rather better position to control the ‘disorientating’ experiences such environments supposedly engender.

More significantly the new service class also inhabits a particularly interesting position within the structures of the postmodern. As the main producers, disseminators and consumers of a new cultural aesthetic (Featherstone, 1992) they might seem to have an instrumental interest in the promotion of those ‘postmodern’ cultural forms (‘world music’, or the proliferation in ‘ethnic goods’ for example) that supposedly challenge the traditional structures of binary exclusion. Yet clearly such tastes may delineate their own exclusions. For many the expansion of such products articulates nothing more than a ‘ commodification of Otherness’, built around a quite traditional set of binary closures, and through which those in a position of both class and ethnic empowerment may flirt with difference without in fact ever relinquishing their own hegemonic position (hooks, 1992). At the same time, as members of the new service class construct their class position through cultural as well as economic capital, so they may be deploying such tastes only as a form of cultural capital and class distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). If so, these tastes may in fact re-inscribe the structures of exclusion they purport to challenge. Certainly, before uncritically celebrating the possibility of a hybrid identity we need be sure for whom such ‘hybridity’ is an option, and who can afford such ‘playful’ inversions (Sivanandan, 1990).

Persuaded that it is members of the new service class who capture most powerfully many of those ambiguities associated with a sociology of time-space compression and postmodernity (Bauman, 1990), the thesis concentrates upon the experiences of this group. But, drawing attention to the differential power relations these processes articulate, the research contrasts their experiences with the experiences of those in rather less privileged social positions and notes where the interests of the new service class may impinge upon the empowerment of these less powerful groups. Further, since the disintegration of binary thought may have very different ramifications according to an individual’s gender, it compares the experiences of two new service class women with the experiences of two new service class men. The experiences of both have then been compared to those of two working class respondents, again one man and one woman.

The thesis also aims to explore the unequal power relations that processes of time-space compression produce across the divisions of ethnicity and race. But, for a white researcher, there are both practical and theoretical difficulties working with black and ethnic minority respondents. Thus, just as the investigation has been limited to the
experience of these processes within the spaces of contemporary Britain, so too it
considers only the experiences of a white new service class, contrasting these with those
of white working class interviewees. In this sense the thesis moves to explore the unequal
power relations of ethnicity and culture through what Gillian Rose has, in another
context, called "the itinerary of silencing rather than the retrieval" (Rose, 1993:5) (see
chapter 2.3a).

Finally, through this empirical study the thesis also explores the concept of time-
space compression itself in more detail. In particular, it argues that recent debate may
have exaggerated the experiential impact of what is in fact only the most recent bout of
such change (Kern, 1983). For example, even as Harvey himself has drawn a series of
parallels between contemporary experiences and a similar round of restructuring at the
turn of the last century (Harvey, 1989a), the significance of these historical continuities
has yet to be developed.

The thesis examines the 'mechanisms' with which people may be 'handling' such
change in their everyday lives. Uncovering what amounts to a series of 'coping strategies'
it argues that the experience of time-space compression may well be less 'disorientating'
than often assumed. In the first place, it is argued that even as processes of time-space
compression produce a number of disorientating changes in the everyday structures of
time and space, so too may those very changes bring about the opportunity to develop
other structures with which to balance these changes. For example, the proliferation of
'exotic' food may well challenge traditional concepts of 'authenticity'. But, such foods
may also, and ironically, offer access to a more 'natural', more authentic world beyond
the inauthenticity of the postmodern. Alternatively, where recent developments in the
work place may (for some) bring about unsettling feelings of temporal change, people
may balance these feelings by drawing upon a series of more comforting 'temporal
shapes' accessed through other arenas: in the space of the home, for example, or the
attractions of local heritage.

Most importantly, and in contrast to much work within the 'spatial discipline' of
geography, the thesis endeavours always to consider together both the spatial and
temporal movements associated with processes of time-space compression. It does so most
powerfully by drawing upon a series of arguments around the nature of the aesthetic. As
a 'spatialization' of time, one that moves to 'freeze the terrors of time itself' (Harries,
1982; Harvey, 1991), the aesthetic may act as a powerful mechanism for delimiting the
contemporary experience of temporal dislocation. In the light of such mechanisms it can
be argued that current experiences may well be less rather than more disorientating than
the experience of these changes traced at the turn of the last century (if only because
coming a second time around people may have already got used to such developments). Indeed there can be traced a number of continuities between the negotiation of these processes in either period. Attention is drawn, for example, to the emergence of a 'new urban flâneur' for whom, as in the nineteenth century, the disorientating experiences associated with a period of time-space compression may be negotiated only through the structures of a powerfully aestheticized gaze.

This gaze can only operate within those epistemological structures associated with the construction of an unequal and objectified Other. But it is precisely these epistemological closures that are supposedly under threat with recent changes in the nature of time and space. The thesis therefore argues that, far from disrupting the traditional exclusions of modern binary thought, not only do these changes continue to be 'mapped' through a familiar set of cultural understandings, but that many of the changes associated with a period of time-space compression offer new and powerful opportunities for the construction of these traditional categories of exclusion. Thus, rather than set up any crude distinction between processes of 'disorientation', and those mechanisms through which people may attempt to 'retreat from' or 'handle' such change, the thesis argues that these very mechanisms of 'retreat' may themselves articulate the unequal power relations inherent to the contemporary period.

To summarize, the thesis attempts an investigation of two closely related projects. On the one hand it examines the processes of time-space compression themselves in more detail, and locates them within a more developed account of those mechanisms through which people may be handling these processes in their everyday lives. On the other, it explores a set of arguments connecting time-space compression to the epistemological challenges of the postmodern. It moves to open both projects to a grounded sociology within which the unequal power relations inherent to recent change may be traced.

Finally, especially when connected to the emergence of the postmodern, processes of time-space compression have generally been considered part of a broad 'conditional' shift affecting all arenas of everyday life. The thesis is therefore structured around an exploration of a number of arenas within which these processes may be traced, in such a way as to allow the reader to follow both the experience of any one respondent through a range of these experiential arenas, and to connect such experiences to the broader (if ambiguous) social position of each individual. If such a structure runs the risk of repetition (in each substantive chapter, for example, an emphasis is placed on outlining the continuation of traditional forms of binary thought) in part this is the aim of the thesis. Only where the same organisational structures can be traced in people's
negotiation of arenas as diverse as the use of communication technology, the experience of foreign travel, and understandings of their local area, are we in any position to examine these broader claims.

1.4 Chapter outline

Following this structure the thesis is organised as follows. **Chapter 2** is in three parts. Part 1 outlines the basic processes of time-space compression. Connecting these processes to a general ‘crisis of authenticity’ in the contemporary Western world, it assesses a series of debates within geography around understandings of place and the authenticity of ‘dwelling’. It understands these debates to be structured by a set of epistemological conflicts and argues that, despite a proliferation of debate around a new ‘global sense of place’, the connections between processes of spatial restructuring and identity formation have remained somewhat vague. It clarifies these connections through an examination of Rob Shields’s (1992) analysis of the changing relations of *presence* and *absence* and draws attention to the unequal power relations inherent to these processes.

Next, though a number of geographers have considered the impact of these processes upon traditional understandings of space, few have considered their impact upon a changing sense of time. In Part 2 it is argued that this emphasis upon the subjective experience of time is one of the major contributions of a thesis of time-space compression. The chapter explores these arguments in more detail. It suggests that there are a number of problems with the way in which these arguments are usually presented. In particular, the chapter explores the notion of different ‘temporal shapes’ and, whilst recognizing that an individual’s ability to construct qualitatively different understandings of time may be essential to the negotiation of contemporary change, argues that such structures need to be located in a more developed sociology of time and temporal experience.

Finally, Part 3 develops a more grounded sociology of time-space compression, outlining the importance of the new service class to the structures of both time-space compression and postmodernity more widely. After a brief survey of the literature relating to the class position of the new service class it argues that those analyses that locate them as central to this sociology are in fact identifying a particular fraction within this wider social group. Drawing upon the work of David Ley (1994) it argues that it is in fact only a *new cultural class* that defines that position of ambiguity explored above. It compares their experiences with the experiences of a similar social class at the turn of the last century. It is suggested that in accounts of an earlier urban flâneur there might be found a number of continuities with contemporary experiences of time-space
compression, and identifies the aesthetic as a central analytical theme.

Chapter 3 then explores the methods through which this sociology has been constructed. After introducing the project's case study area it examines the selection of respondents and outlines the interview topics through which I have attempted to capture some of the experiences of time-space compression. It introduces the respondents themselves and, having described something of the complex power relations inherent to any qualitative work, outlines the main analytical tools that have been used to unpack the experiences of each.

Chapter 4 then turns to the re-organisation of presence and absence. Since developments in communication technology have remained a kind of leitmotif for processes of time-space compression the chapter examines these changes through an account of their consumption. The chapter argues against any crude technological determinism (cf Kern, 1984; Entrikin, 1985) and, locating the analysis within recent developments in media and cultural studies (Allen 1987; Livingstone, 1990; Morley, 1992; Silverstone 1991), argues that these technologies may be both empowering and disempowering according to the wider social position of their users.

Starting with the experience of the male respondents it argues that, whilst notions of presence and absence may be in a process of re-organisation, such changes have not led to any significant challenge to the wider structures of modern binary thought. It traces the development of a powerful 'technological gaze' and argues that this gaze allows for the development of new systems of power knowledge through which the world may continue to be mapped around a traditional set of exclusionary cultural oppositions. Indeed, rather than challenging the formal exclusions of binary thought, it is suggested that such systems may provide a strengthening of these categories.

Throughout the chapter, however, it is argued that access to, and the use of these technologies, needs to be understood in relation to a set of complex and unequal power relations. Whilst significant differences emerge, for example, in the use of communication technology (and thus the experience of time-space compression) between the working class and new cultural class men considered, the constructions of all remain powerfully gendered. The chapter therefore moves on to outline the consumption practices of the female respondents in ways that demonstrate the ambiguity of recent developments. Whilst often upholding those systems of control outlined by the male respondents (and in ways that challenge the operation of the gaze as a system only of gendered control), the female respondents may also set out to deploy these technologies in ways that challenge the structures of binary thought.
Having set up a basic thesis - that processes of time-space compression need not necessarily lead to any significant challenge to the exclusions of a modern epistemology, and that such processes themselves need always take account of a complex, ambiguous and often contradictory set of power relations - subsequent chapters examine this thesis in more detail.

**Chapter 5** looks at contemporary experiences of time. Focusing upon recent changes within the workplace, it argues that important differences are apparent in the experiences of the new cultural class and working class respondents, structured most clearly around the divisions of a core and peripheral labour force. But, where it is shown that all the respondents may be experiencing significant forms of temporal dislocation, it demonstrates how each seeks to balance these feelings through moving towards the construction of other, more comforting 'temporal shapes'. It focuses in particular upon how such shapes are often accessed though a variety of temporal understandings found within the home, and thus draws attention to the gendering of 'time management'.

Having, for the sake of analytical clarity, kept apart the 'spatial' and 'temporal' aspects of time-space compression, chapters 6 and 7 move towards their recombination. In an analysis of the consumption of 'exotic' food and people's foreign travel experiences, **chapter 6** develops a more complex understanding of both those unequal power relations inherent to contemporary change, and those mechanisms through which people are negotiating the diverse processes of time-space compression itself.

It is shown how for the working class respondents the expansion of 'foreign' foods may act to threaten traditional notions of Englishness. But it is also argued that those travel opportunities made possible within a period of time-space compression may allow for the recovery of this national identity. In contrast, for the new cultural class respondents both this expansion in exotic foodstuffs and exotic travel is embraced as part of a broader liberal project that celebrates diversity and difference. At the same time it is demonstrated how their consumption practices often move to re-inscribe a traditional set of (racist) understandings.

Even as the constructions of each group seem to move in opposing directions, it is shown how, ironically, each in fact embrace recent change as a means through which to seek out a more comforting relationship with time and temporality. Where for the working class respondents these relations are recovered through the enactment of a fantasy of imperial travel, the new cultural class respondents forge this relationship through an equally repressive construction of the 'authentic' and of an 'authentic exoticism'.

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Chapter 7 brings the argument 'back home', to discover how these relations are played out in the local high street. Returning to those debates within geography concerning a 'progressive sense of place', it submits them to empirical examination and argues that they should be located within a more developed understanding of the 'politics of place'. Attention is therefore drawn not only to the unequal power relations articulated as each group of respondents move to construct their own 'global sense of place', but to how the constructions of the new cultural class respondents often move to directly impinge upon that image of Stoke Newington that the working class respondents wish to see upheld.

Drawing upon arguments concerning the emergence of a new urban flâneur, and contrasting the activities of this figure with understandings of the nineteenth century metropolis, the chapter describes the emergence of a local 'heritage movement' and assesses the role that the area's historical associations play in promoting a sense of comfort and security in the face of recent global change. As it outlines conflicts between the heritage demands of the new cultural class and working class respondents, the chapter finishes by describing the area's newly complex 'global geographies' - constructed around the exclusions not only of class, but also of gender, ethnicity and race.

Throughout, the thesis aims to explore the unequal social relations articulated within a period of time-space compression, and to locate these relations in material analysis. If nothing else I hope it demonstrates two things: first, that a more developed sociology of recent change is necessary; and secondly, that recent developments in qualitative methods have rendered this sociology, and even the most complex of contemporary theoretical debates, open to sustained empirical analysis.
CHAPTER 2
THE EXPERIENCE(S) OF TIME-SPACE COMPRESSION

This chapter takes the form of an argument. It is divided into three parts. As well as contextualizing the thesis as a whole, each part provides the groundwork for a more detailed examination of issues raised in later chapters. Part 1 introduces the concept of time-space compression itself. It connects these processes to a 'crisis of authenticity' in the developed Western world, and outlines a few of the ways in which people have been said to respond to this crisis. It also clarifies the connections between the processes of time-space compression and the disruption of binary thought argued to be having such a debilitating effect on people's ability to construct a secure sense of identity.

Part 2 describes the impact of time-space compression on people's understandings of time and temporality. It takes issue with better known accounts and argues for a more developed sociology to the changing experience of time, emphasising the importance and ambiguities of individual experience. Part 3 describes the rationale behind constructing this sociology around the experiences of the new cultural class, and traces their peculiar position in relation to postmodernism. It ends with the suggestion of a series of important historical parallels between the contemporary period and an earlier urban modernism. These continuities, expressed most strongly by the figure of a 'new urban flâneur', warn us against connecting the current experiences of time-space compression to any radical break in traditional, and quite exclusionary, systems of thought.

PART 1

2.1 Time-space compression and the 'crisis of authenticity'

Processes of global change, and the emergence of a postmodern cultural aesthetic, have problematized everyday understandings of place, identity, reality and authenticity. In pre-modern societies everyday life was predominantly lived at the local level (Thrift, 1985). Concomitantly the structures of identity were highly localised, inter-personal relations lent a certain 'unmediated authenticity' (cf Young, 1990), and a particular relationship with reality produced. The 'real', or 'authentic', was material, tangible and close-at-hand, and remained open to personal verification (cf Bondi, 1993). With the advent of the 'modern' period, however, processes of identity formation changed. The increasing distanciation of everyday life (given space by a number of developments in communications and technology, but driven primarily by the rise in 'abstract' social systems) meant that identity became negotiated not only within this local space, but also in relation to a number of previously distant (and thus absent) Others (Giddens, 1991).
These processes reached their zenith with a powerful bout of social and spatial restructuring at the turn of the last century (Kern, 1983) and have re-emerged under similar conditions in the contemporary period (Harvey, 1989a).

But, where the pace of such change has recently increased - with, amongst other things, a growing internationalisation of labour and production, further developments in communication technology, and the proliferation of truly 'global' commodities - so too the construction of any clearly 'bounded' or 'local' identity has become more problematic. This is because the emergence of the previously far-away in the everyday spaces of the familiar means people must now construct their identities in relation to an increasing array of intra-local cultural systems. The increasing pace of change has also rendered more difficult any strict divisions between one culture and another. Artifacts that may once have designated a single culture have themselves become truly global. For example, it is unclear whether pizza is Italian, American, or British (or French or Sudanese and so on). At the same time a new cultural aesthetic has emerged, the postmodern, that often seeks to celebrate precisely the disintegration of these boundaries and thus complicate any simple understanding of cultural 'authenticity' (Chambers, 1993).

But these changes, and especially the emergence of the postmodern, have also had a more profound impact. They have problematized notions of identity and authenticity not only as they relate to issues of cultural homogeneity, but also the connections between authenticity and reality itself. In the first place, the reality of experience can no longer be determined by personal verification. Indeed, "the truth of experience no longer coincides with the place in which it takes place" such that "we can say that if individual experience is authentic, then it cannot be true; and that if ... a cognitive mode of the same content is true, then it escapes individual experience" (Jameson, 1988:349). These developments are clearly related to the rise of those abstract systems traced in the modern period. But with the recent extension of these systems, and especially developments in communication technology, they may now be leading to nothing less

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1 The novelty of such processes may relate only to the contemporary Western world. For colonized peoples a 'local' identity has always been negotiated in the face of 'global' intrusions. For example, where the contemporary proliferation of Indian goods may be a novelty for consumers in the West, the people of India were surrounded by British goods throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Massey, 1993a) such that these debates can be accused of a certain Euro-centrism (chapter 1.1). But they also need to be understood in relation to the interdependence of the 'global' and the 'local', and the creative nature of consumption (Jackson, 1993a; Miller, 1987). Processes of globalisation do not lead to cultural homogeneity. Rather, these 'global' processes are always negotiated within a 'local' sphere. The 'global' and the 'local' are thus interdependent, and rather than the global being something 'out there' that forces its entry into the 'local', these processes are always 'in here' to begin with. A distinction needs to be drawn between processes of globalisation and universalisation (and see below).
than a state of 'ontological terror' for many in the contemporary Western world (Giddens, 1991).^2

At the same time, the emergence of a postmodern cultural aesthetic, and especially developments in simulacrum, has further problematized understandings of the real. Where it is now possible to produce a copy more perfect than the original, it often becomes impossible to designate the original, or authentic object or experience. More widely postmodernism has sought to destabilize our understandings of (re)presentation. Where modernism clearly differentiated the roles of signifier, signified and referent, postmodernism undermines these distinctions, and especially the relationship between signifier and referent (or 'representation' and 'reality'). For Lash, where "modernism conceives as representations as ... problematic ... postmodernism problematizes reality" (1990:13). For example, postmodern culture often asks the consumer to join 'ontologically impossible worlds' (McHale, 1987). Similarly, in its mix of architectural styles, the contemporary urban environment may lend not only a sense of geographical and historical disjuncture, but render more difficult any distinction between the real experience (of a holiday in Mexico, for example) and the experience rendered by such environments (the Mexican restaurant) (Hopkins, 1990; Shields, 1989).

For a number of commentators these developments have produced a 'crisis of authenticity' (Harvey, 1989a; Giddens, 1991; Jameson, 1984; Relph, 1976) and this crisis is argued to have led to a series of quite particular responses. As commonsense understandings of reality are undermined, people may seek out 'more authentic' ways of life. In the social sciences these attempts have often been traced within an analysis of contemporary travel (Urry, 1990). At the simplest level, where an increasingly interdependent world has rendered more difficult contact with the 'authentic experience' of other cultures, a distinction is commonly drawn between the 'tourist' and 'traveller'. A traveller can be understood as someone who will attempt to move beyond an 'inauthentic' tourist experience to the 'reality' of that culture to be found in the 'backstage areas' of everyday life (MacCannell, 1976, 1992). Such actions rest upon a belief that even within processes of cultural implosion there can still be traced a unique local experience.

But, such travel often draws upon a more important distinction. The emergence of abstract systems that have undermined the authenticity of life at home can in turn be related to Western conceptions of science and rationality, modernity and progress (Ross, 1991), such that they delineate a central contradiction in modernity's relation to

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^2 Giddens (1991) himself prefers to characterize the contemporary period as a condition of Late Modernity, rather than postmodernity, and this distinction relates to the general difficulty in periodization (see chapter 1.1).
authenticity itself. As the modern world has expanded geographically so too has it tended
to define those spaces outside of itself as both uncivilised but also authentic (Baudrillard,
1991). In effect, direct access to the real is understood as still possible in highly localised,
pre-modern societies. Within the contemporary period, geographical distance has thus
become conflated with historical distance. The further a particular place is from the
metropolitan ‘centre’, the further it is positioned from the historical progress of
modernity.

These distinctions often work through a traditional separation of an authentic
rural existence, and the increasing ‘inauthenticity’ of metropolitan life (Williams, 1973).
Life in the Yorkshire dales, for example, is considered more authentic than life in Leeds
(or London). But they have also tended to produce a wider distinction between the
‘under-developed’ and ‘developed’ world. Here everyday life in Nepal (whether urban
or rural) is considered somehow more authentic than life in Spain. Where the authentic
has come to be related to a particular experience of time (see below) this conflation may
offer an important means of ‘retreat’ for those dissatisfied with the inauthenticity of life
at home.

In important ways, then, this understanding of authenticity has become related
to constructions of the ‘exotic’. Where the exotic is positioned as a space beyond the
civilisation of the familiar and the modern (Said, 1978) notions of authenticity and
exoticism often become conflated (Short, 1991), such that there is a need to construct a
more developed model of the unequal power relations inherent to these conflations. Just
as the ability to undertake such travel delineates an important set of class relations (not
all can afford, or even want to reclaim these ‘more authentic’ ways life) they also
articulate a set of unequal power relations constructed across the divisions of ethnicity
and culture.

2.1b ... and the politics of place

Within geography, these issues are usually addressed through debates around the
nature of place, and the role of place in conceptualizations of human subjectivity. These
debates reflect a particular disciplinary slant on relations between the global and the local
(and thus the structures of identity), but also seek to explore contemporary
understandings of authenticity. They have become somewhat polarised, as different
conceptualizations of place in turn reflect different epistemological positions, and can
most easily be accessed through drawing a distinction between the positions adopted by
David Harvey and Doreen Massey.

For Harvey (1989a, 1993b) processes of time-space compression are extremely
unsettling and have led to a series of quite reactionary responses in everyday life. In particular, as processes of globalisation have undermined a secure sense of place, they have threatened the 'authenticity' of cultural identity. In response, he argues, a rise in xenophobia and racism can be traced across the Western world, movements that draw upon the (mythical) possibility of some sort of closed, or 'bounded' place identity.

In connection with these developments, postmodernism has also rendered the 'authenticity' of everyday experience problematic and so led to a growing glorification of locality and locality politics. For Harvey these movements not only move to close place, but understand place as the locus of some kind of authentic sense of 'dwelling' such that it has become positioned as a space of temporal and spatial 'retreat'. These issues are most easily understood by drawing upon a humanist perspective and Harvey submits these perspectives to a marxist critique (Harvey, 1993b).

Whilst for many in geography identities are formed *within* a particular, and always unique, time and place (Thrift, 1983) for humanist geographers place itself is understood as providing an intangible, but deep rooted sense of identity (Relph, 1989; Seamon & Mugerauer, 1989; Tuan, 1974). The roots of a humanistic approach are still debated, but can broadly be traced to a reaction to the mechanistic understandings of the quantitative revolution, and the positivist turn in geography more widely (Jackson & Smith, 1984). In their early work many humanist geographers shared the perspectives of behavioral geography (Gold & Goodey, 1984) but increasingly a humanist position distinguished itself through its concern with that *sensual* experience of place less easily recovered in these other approaches (Pocock, 1981; Rowles, 1978).

Drawing upon Heidegger, from a humanist perspective place is understood as affording a direct, unmediated and 'authentic' experience of the world, an experience captured in the notion of *dwelling*. The experience of dwelling is itself made possible only through long time residence in a particular place such that place becomes 'time thickened' through the structures of memory. Through such structures place may thus afford a deep sense of *temporal* comfort in stark contrast to a rapidly changing 'outside' world, whilst at the same time providing an unchanging and securely 'bounded' identity in opposition to those more fluid structures associated with a period of spatial change. In this way notions of authenticity become connected to a sense of certainty and stasis, that 'original' state that has not changed, underscoring the *temporal* as well as the spatial aspect of its appeal. As evidence of these attempts to capture a sense of dwelling, and in line with others (Hewison, 1987; Lowenthal, 1985; Wright, 1985), Harvey (1993b) points to an increasing concern with 'heritage', and in particular a growing interest in local history.

But for Harvey (1989a & b, 1993b) these moves to identify with the 'essential'
experience of place are both politically reactionary and deeply problematic, not least as they move to separate the experience of place from space, and thus delimit political consciousness. For example, he submits Heidegger to a marxist critique of the commodity fetish (Harvey, 1993b) and identifies a concern with the local as tantamount to a politics of 'Being' rather than 'Becoming' (Harvey, 1989a). Where consciousness is restricted to the local level actors become incapable of locating their concerns within any broader (class) project. His arguments can thus be understood within a strand of leftist thought that has long called for a universal class politics to transcend that local perspective through which capital seeks to delimit a broader political consciousness, and thereby challenge universal oppression with universal action (cf Harvey, 1989b; Jameson, 1988).

At the same time, in the light of processes of global change and the emergence of a postmodern aesthetic, the contemporary identification with place, and especially a static, 'authentic' place experience, is deeply problematic (Harvey, 1989b). Increasing inter-urban competition has rendered place a market commodity. Whilst different localities vie to attract capital investment so individual places are liable to suffer an accelerated round of creative destruction, with the result that the experience of place is in fact increasingly unstable (cf Leitner, 1990; Molotch, 1976). Moreover, as places compete to differentiate themselves one from another they tend to draw upon a universal architectural style that renders them all the same (cf Relph, 1976), and one that may bear little relation to the experience of that place itself but seeks instead to celebrate an emergent sense of 'elsewhereness' (Hopkins, 1990; Shields, 1989). Even as people attempt to 'retreat' into place, place may no longer afford the comforts they seek (cf Sack, 1988).

Doreen Massey (1991b, 1993a & b) understands the impact of such processes rather differently. In the first place, just as Harvey's reading of Heidegger is itself problematic (cf Dreyfuss, 1991; May, 1991; Thomas, 1991) so for Massey it is also rather misleading. Even though Harvey criticises a Heideggerian perspective, and especially the fetish of dwelling, Massey argues that by identifying place with the possibility of some sort of 'spatial retreat' Harvey presupposes a model of place that is static and closed. In contrast, rather than seeking to conceptualize place in opposition to the progressive politics of space (and thus time), she argues that place should be understood as that always unique and particular point through which a wider set of global processes meet and reconstruct themselves (Massey, 1984; 1993b). In this sense place becomes a sort of 'nodal point' in a wider system of global flows, and a sense of place can only be forged through an awareness of the diverse interconnections of those global processes within which the individual, and the individual place, is always being (re)constructed (Massey, 1993a).

But, though in a series of public debates Harvey and Massey have tended to set
their models in stark opposition (Bird et al, 1993), they are in fact broadly similar. Both understand place as a dialectical process, formed within and through a wider set of spatial flows ('space' and 'place' in this sense being inseparable) and both seek to criticize that earlier understanding of place found within a humanist tradition as ontologically and epistemologically unsound (Merrifield, 1993). Those differences that emerge in their accounts can thus be better understood in relation to the privilege each seeks to confer upon different aspects of identity, and the broader political project each would wish to construct.

Like Massey, Harvey would wish to dissolve any division between our understandings of place and space (Harvey, 1993b). But the rationale behind this dissolution is quite particular. For Harvey an identification with local politics serves only to draw attention away from a universal class politics, one that must be fought not only in place, but across the reaches of space. Thus, though he sees class identity as formed always in relation to other places, a reliance on class privileges one aspect of identity over another in ways that, if it does not produce a closed subject, certainly seeks to position the divisions of class above a number of alternative subject positions: such as gender, race, ethnicity and so on (Harvey, 1993a; and see chapter 1.2). Harvey would not, therefore, wish to defend the possibility of any 'pure' cultural identity (formed in the isolation of a bounded sense of place), and indeed sees such attempts as politically reactionary. But, he does tend to position those processes of globalisation that have opened up our understandings of place identity as rather 'distracting', and supports an understanding of identity that fails to recognize the (unequal) inter-dependence of different subject positions.

In contrast Massey argues for a different political strategy, one based upon the recognition of multiple subject positions, and this in turn presupposes a rather different understanding of the processes of identity formation. Within this perspective identities are not, and never have been, formed in isolation, and different subject positions inevitably articulate a set of complex and unequal power relations one to another. A sense of 'Englishness', for example, has only ever been constructed through the (unacknowledged) negation of a series of Others (Gilroy, 1987, 1992; Hall, 1991; Said, 1993), and a similar argument can be made about any subject position (Rose, 1993). In this sense it is not only a question of attempting political resistance on a number of fronts at once, but working to recover those structures that have silenced alternative positions. Rather than rejecting the growing dissolution of the global and the local, Massey argues for the recovery of a more 'progressive sense of place' as place, and identity itself, can only in fact be forged in the relations of différance (Massey, 1993a; cf Derrida, 1976).
An analysis of people’s understandings of place should thus throw light upon a number of issues. Place itself, for example, may emerge as some kind of arena of ‘retreat’ from the ‘inauthenticity’ of everyday life in a period of time-space compression. The delineation of different place identities should also allow us to connect with a wider set of debates concerning the structures of binary thought and with which postmodern epistemologies have sought to take issue. How we choose to conceptualize place, and its relations to the processes of identity formation, is therefore vital. But, beyond any obvious concern that the work of each remains wholly theoretical, those models of place that Harvey and Massey have adopted remain problematic and, in relation to an analysis of the wider processes of time-space compression, their use is limited.

First, the polarisation these debates have assumed (or at least the way in which Harvey and Massey continue to set themselves in opposition to each other) may blind us to the complexity of everyday understandings of place, and the ways in which contemporary place identities are being constructed. Rather than seeking to construct either a clearly ‘bounded’ sense of place, or that more ‘progressive sense of place’ that Massey identifies, contemporary understandings may draw on both positions. For example, the white residents of Stoke Newington may well attempt to construct their ‘local’ identity through an understanding of a wider set of intra-local connections, but in ways that serve to underpin a more ‘bounded’ sense of place.

More generally it cannot be assumed that the simple recognition of these wider global connections will lead to a less oppressive set of cultural understandings, as Harvey makes clear, but Massey tends to ignore (Harvey, 1989a; Massey, 1993a). This more complex understanding necessitates a detailed analysis of those arenas within which an awareness of time-space compression is generated, and through which people are negotiating this ‘global sense of place’ in their day-to-day lives. An analysis of these different arenas may lead us to a fuller understanding of the unequal power relations inherent to such processes, and serve to warn us against connecting contemporary experiences of global change to a more radical break in traditional systems of understanding. For example, a new consumption ethic that serves only to objectify issues of ethnicity reproduces a traditional set of (unequal) cultural oppositions (hooks, 1992). In the present thesis attention is also drawn to the operation of a powerful ‘exotic gaze’ through which the white respondents seek out an interaction with difference in ways that act only to objectify and contain that difference (May, 1993).

Thirdly, whilst making clear how different individuals, or social groups, must inevitably construct differing senses of place within the same place (as each is connected into a different set of intra-local flows) Massey fails to distinguish how a sense of place
constructed by one group of actors may deny, or subordinate, the constructions of another (Massey, 1993a). Her model needs to be located in a more developed understanding of the politics of place and place identity.

Finally, though both Harvey and Massey connect issues of identity to our understandings of place, these connections remain somewhat vague. In part this is because the processes of identity formation continue to be tied to the rather intangible notion of place itself, rather than to an investigation of the spatial nature of all identities. What is needed is an analysis that clarifies these connections and thus makes clear why a re-organisation of the traditional categories of spatial distinction bought about with processes of time-space compression is potentially so disruptive. At the same time we need to locate this analysis in a more developed understanding of those arenas within which such processes are commonly negotiated. Only then can attention be drawn to the unequal power relations inherent to these negotiations in ways that warn us against connecting recent changes in the nature of space (and time) to a more radical break in traditional systems of Western thought.

To do this I want to turn to an examination of the work of Rob Shields (1992). In his analysis of the changing relations of presence and absence a number of these issues are clarified.

2.1c Presence and absence and the structures of binary thought

"The so-called 'postmodern' thesis that changes are taking place in the structure of spatial understandings is by now widely known but vague ... [and] a thesis of a revolutionary coupure does not fit with our everyday experiences of contemporary life ... Specific changes in the spatialisation of presence and absence can be demonstrated empirically, but the continuity of other aspects of Western spatial understanding is equally clear. It is the difference in the spatialisation of presence and absence that justifies making a distinction between modernity and postmodernity."

(Rob Shields, A truant proximity: presence and absence in the space of modernity, 1992:181)

Since Aristotle Western understandings of being (ousia) have been defined in relation to the concept of presence (parousia). For those in the West, a central dualism of presence and absence has come to define commonsense understandings of both being and reality. In everyday life being is given as that which is present, or 'here'. It defines through negation an oppositional world of absence, a distant space of the Other (Shields, 1992).

This dualism provides the grounding metaphor for a wider system of binary thought within which subjects are defined through a series of oppositions (black & white, male & female, straight & gay, and so on) and provides the basis for any system of social
distinction (of class, for example). Crucially, it has also become tied to a number of spatial oppositions through which interpersonal relations are understood, and identity itself defined (cf Reichert, 1992). These oppositions gained primacy with the development of Cartesian thought, but a number of examples can also be traced in everyday life, ranging from here & there, inside & outside, us & them.

These dualisms, and the grounding opposition of inclusion & exclusion, are clearly not the same and have been held apart in other historical moments and places. For example, other cultures offer a quite different understanding of personal subjectivity and the relationship between subjectivity, the body and that space 'outside' (Geertz, 1973; Loy, 1992). Their form may also vary dramatically according to the scale of spatial analysis (Smith, 1993). 'National' identity, for example, often works through a hierarchy of geographical identities within which any individual may claim identification with different places at different times. In Britain, a person may variously hold a London, Southern, English or British identity, either simultaneously (in opposition to another nationality) or singularly, as each is positioned in opposition to the others.

But, since at least the Enlightenment, these oppositions have tended to become conflated, such that a distinction between presence and absence has come to form the basis of modern identity (Giddens, 1991). Freudian psychoanalysis, for example, locates the formation of the ego at that point at which the infant begins to differentiate between a position of near and far, an understanding taken to its limits in the school of Object Relations (cf Frosh, 1991b). These structures delineate a system of identity that is always defined from the centre (and in relation to a peripheral Other), though the precise character of this central position will vary historically according to material relations. This understanding is crucial because it moves systems of identity beyond the realm of the symbolic, and allows us to understand how the unequal social relations they articulate will always be defined by those in the position of most power. The exact form of individual oppositions can thus vary (Cresswell, 1993), as the characteristics of this peripheral Other are defined, according to need, and in relation to a wider set of power relations, by those at the centre. Though this can allow for a powerful system of oppression (Said, 1978), recognition of the fluidity of these systems also gives space to a more radical form of resistance, one that moves around a notion of positional mobility (Rose, 1993).

Where identity is understood as inevitably spatial it is easier to relate processes of spatial restructuring to the disruption of traditional systems of identity. A global television network, for example, has bought a previously distant Other into the everyday spaces of the familiar. These developments strike at the heart of the traditional
relationship between presence and absence, and thus at the very centre of Western binary thought. These developments are by no means new (cf chapter 2.1.a). At least as early as the Middle Ages a local social world was periodically ‘invaded’ by the products and peoples of distant and ‘exotic’ climes, most usually with the arrival of the local carnival (Featherstone, 1992). The carnivalesque has always been understood as a space of transgression (Bahktin, 1984) within which the reigning social order, and those spatial oppositions through which it is constructed, are placed in temporary abeyance. More generally, metropolitan life itself has always moved around the transgressive figure of the ‘Stranger’, someone who is physically near, whilst remaining spiritually remote (Simmel, 1908). But, until now such transgressions have tended to remain either temporally or spatially delimited, often consigned to a particular ‘liminal zone’ (Shields, 1991). Only in the contemporary period has "the philosopher’s paradox of presence and absence ... [become] ... part of everyday life" (Shields, 1992:195). The potential of such developments is clear. As they undermine a traditional set of spatial oppositions "a synthetic union of distance and presence, of the foreign and the intimate, becomes conceivable and practicable" (Shields, 1992:195).

It is also not difficult to relate these developments to the emergence of new epistemologies. It is exactly the transgression of these ordering discourses that is proposed by systems of postmodern thought. Derrida (1976), for example, argues that any presence always articulates its own absence, such that being can only be located in the play of différance (cf Massey, 1993a; and see chapter 2.1b). Rather than accept a discourse of centre and margin as universal and inevitable, deconstruction attempts to reveal the power relations that lie behind any claims for the ‘centre’ (Seldon, 1985). It is this act of ‘excavation’ that has driven a number of those accounts that have challenged the silencing of other subject positions explored in a feminist or post-colonial literature (see chapter 1.2).

But, connecting a re-organisation in the traditional relations of presence and absence to a destabilization of the unequal structures of binary thought may be premature. We need to recognize that those arenas within which the diverse processes of time-space compression are negotiated may themselves give space to the continuing deployment of quite traditional cultural understandings. Already, for example, doubts have been raised over the transgressive potential of a new ‘commodification of Otherness’. In other arenas these transgressions may be even more unlikely. Often, for example, contact with these alternative spaces of Otherness only comes through the distancing gaze of television, and as Bauman (1988) understands:

"The frame of a cinema or TV screen staves off the danger of spillage more effectively still than tourist hotels and fenced-off camping sites; the one-sidedness
of communication further entrenches the Strangers on the screen as, essentially, *incommunicado*.

(Bauman, 1988, quoted in Shields, 1992:193, his emphasis)

These technologies do not determine such a gaze (cf. Bech, 1992). It is important, however, to recognize not only that the present re-organisation of presence and absence may already be 'framed' by a wider set of unequal power relations, but also that the form in which such restructuring is experienced may encourage those relations. Elsewhere, too, traditional systems of spatial understanding (and cultural exclusion) co-exist with new relations of presence and absence. The current rise in xenophobia clarifies how the traditional exclusions of national identity may even have been promoted by these new relations.

The strength of Shields's analysis is that he clarifies the connections between a period of spatial restructuring and challenges to the traditional structures of identity. Instead of attempting to explain these connections through the intangible experience of *place*, he positions issues of identity within those more sophisticated understandings of space and spatial relations recently emergent within geography (Gregory & Urry, 1985; Soja, 1980, 1985; Smith, 1984). The central opposition of presence and absence gains its power as space itself is filled with social meaning. The structures of binary thought are in effect inevitably 'spatialised' and, far from mystical, this process can be explained in reference to a familiar set of mechanisms provided in Lefebvre's analysis of a materially produced socio-spatialisation (Lefebvre, 1991; Shields, 1991). At the same time Shields draws attention to the fact that the current re-organisations of presence and absence have not, or not yet, led to the complete dismantlement of other systems of cultural exclusion, as they are themselves always negotiated within an older set of (spatial) understandings.

But, beyond the fact that, like Harvey and Massey, Shields's argument has yet to be opened to empirical study, there are a number of problems with his analysis. Curiously, for example, despite drawing upon these more sophisticated models of space, Shields fails to understand how the same social actor might negotiate the re-organisations of presence and absence within quite different, though mutually constitutive, worlds. These worlds are undoubtedly connected to those different arenas within which such processes are experienced. Using a fax machine, for example, is qualitatively different from physically undertaking an act of embodied travel. Where the first traverses

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3 These relations are formed within the interstices of spatial practice, representations of space, and spaces of representation, all three being collapsed into that 'material abstraction' that makes up a Western spatial consciousness. See Shields (1989, 1991).
'imaginary space' the second moves one materially across space (though one equally filled with imagination). Within these different spaces individuals might negotiate the relations of presence and absence, and thus their connections with a traditional set of cultural understandings, rather differently - just as the business trip and holiday may afford rather different experiences of the same place. Where Shields himself has recognized space as fluid, multiple and laden with meaning(s) (Shields, 1989, 1991, 1992), this conceptualization needs to be carried to an understanding of the re-organisations of presence and absence.

Further, though drawing attention to the unequal social relations inherent to a re-organisation of presence and absence (in the continued framing of a televisual Other, for example), Shields fails to distinguish how different social actors might be rather differently positioned in relation to these processes within the space of the 'centre' itself. Attention needs to be drawn, for example, to the differentiated power relations that communication technology itself articulates (Livingstone, 1990) and a wider sociology of these processes constructed across all experiential arenas. It is this task that the current thesis undertakes (chapter 1.3).

Crucially, however, Shields does recognize that any change in the relations of presence and absence also necessitates a shift in traditional understandings of time and temporality (Shields, 1992). This is vital because it is those connections that a thesis of time-space compression makes between processes of spatial restructuring, a changing sense of time, and the impact of these changes on traditional understandings of identity that is the most radical aspect of the thesis.

Whilst presence is 'spatial' (in the sense of proximity) it is also temporal, designating a sense of 'nowness'. Within a traditional understanding of presence and absence a movement from one space to another also necessitated a movement through time. This model in turn necessitated an atomistic understanding of time within which time could be divided into a discrete sense of the 'past', 'present' and 'future'. But, with the simultaneity of the contemporary world this relationship may have been irrevocably undermined. For example, where communication technologies can now reach

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Though this relationship too has been subject to a critique similar to Derrida's call for différence. Lyotard, for example, has argued that any understanding of the 'present' inevitably draws upon the simultaneous recognition of that moment's 'past' (and 'future'). For Lyotard et al (1988), in this sense a traditional understanding of time as a series of continually passing 'nows' always draws attention to that absence (the past) conceived of in the 'present', and this destabilizes traditional understandings of time. The critique is in fact an old one, and it is exactly these sorts of issues that concerned a number of thinkers at the turn of the last century (Kern, 1983) driven by the processes of time-space compression (see below).
instantaneously across the divisions of space-time they can also put one in contact with a time different from one's own. These developments may have rendered a commonsense understanding of time's linear structure unstable, and if so are liable to have an impact upon self identity beyond even those traced with processes of 'spatial' restructuring (the two in reality being inseparable).

Since few geographers have looked at these issues in any detail, I shall consider these 'temporal' aspects of time-space compression at some length. And because geographers may be rather less familiar with arguments concerning the nature of time than those associated with concepts of space, I have prefigured my discussion with a broad introduction that explores both the importance of these issues in general (section 2.2a), and introduces some of the key theoretical debates around the nature of time itself (section 2.2b).

PART 2

2.2a The spatial bias of contemporary theory

Time, and in particular the temporal structure of memory, is fundamental to issues not only of self identity (Warnock, 1989), but also any understanding of one's place in the wider social fabric (Connerton, 1989). Any shift in the structure or experience of time is therefore liable to have a radical effect not only upon our understandings of 'who we are', but also how we relate that understanding to the world around us. For Jameson (1984, 1991) it is those proposed shifts in the nature of temporal consciousness associated with a 'condition' of postmodernity that has fractured contemporary identities (cf Deleuze & Guattari, 1972; Finlay, 1989; Frosh, 1991a & b).

Considering the importance of time in the formation of identity, the failure of geographers to address these issues in any detail, and especially as part of debates concerning processes of global change and 'identity politics', needs to be explained (Keith & Pile, 1993). It is a failure not confined to geography alone, but one that has structured much of the work around processes of global change in the social sciences more widely (Appadurai, 1991; Chambers, 1993; Featherstone, 1993; Friedman, 1990; Morley, 1991; Mulhern, 1993; Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1990). This explanation can be sought at two levels.

First, it is through shifts in the spatial coherence of everyday life that the complex processes of globalisation are most easily understood. These shifts are most usually observed through changes in everyday life - from the expansion of 'foreign' foods, issues of migration and global fashion, to the emergence of 'placeless', or more accurately perhaps, many placed global locales. In other words, it is questions of cultural
heterogeneity that have therefore dominated both the academic literature on globalisation, and popular and media attention (see chapter 1.1). But, this bias may also be explained at a more abstract level. The social sciences have traditionally been framed within the temporal concerns of 'progress' and 'change' (Harvey, 1991a; Smith, 1984; Soja, 1980). But the simultaneity of the contemporary world has led many in social theory to argue for some kind of shift from the temporal framework of Modernity to the spatial structure of a postmodern world (Jackson, 1989; Jameson, 1984, 1988) - and this shift has been reflected in an agenda that has placed issues of space, rather than time, at the heart of a reformulated social theory (Keith & Pile, 1993, Soja, 1989). It is not surprising that this shift has often been rather uncritically embraced by those working in the 'spatial discipline' of geography (Smith & Katz, 1993).

Thus, with a few notable exceptions (Harvey, 1985, 1989b; Pred, 1981; Stein, 1992; Thrift, 1981, 1983), geographers have failed to develop their theories of time with the same sophistication with which they have outlined their understandings of space. Where time has been considered at all it has been treated most often simply as a resource through which time geographers have mapped people's everyday movements (Gregory, 1985; Hagerstrand, 1982; Thrift & Pred, 1981; and see Rose, 1993 for a powerful critique of the gendered exclusions of the time-geography project). But geographers have in fact long dealt with issues of time (Carlstein et al, 1978; Parkes & Thrift, 1980) and even the processes of what was termed 'time-space convergence' (Clark, 1974; Forer, 1978; Janelle, 1968, 1969). In these accounts, however, it was only shifts in the nature of an 'objective' and 'public time' that were recognized, rather than any attempt being made to trace historical shifts in time consciousness, or subjective temporality.

One of the major strengths of a thesis of time-space compression then, and the work of David Harvey in particular (1989a; 1991), is that he has placed shifts in the nature of subjective temporality, as well as issues of space, at the heart of his theorizations. As such his thesis moves beyond those better known theories of 'globalisation' and places the meaning of time, rather than simply time as resource, at the centre of the geographical agenda.

Here I want simply to expand on a few of Harvey’s arguments as they relate to my empirical analysis of the processes of time-space compression. In doing so I draw heavily upon Harvey’s own work, and that of Stephen Kern (1983). But I want to suggest that the recent emergence of a more detailed literature about time and temporality in social theory (Bergmann, 1992; Nowotny, 1992) demonstrates a need for a more sophisticated analysis and calls into question some of their conclusions.
2.2b The nature of time

"The Hopi, an Indian tribe, have a language as sophisticated as ours, but no tenses for past, present and future. The division does not exist. What does this say about time?"

(Jeanette Winterson, Sexing the Cherry, 1989:iii)

From an early age, in industrial societies at least, we learn to ‘tell the time’. Yet though the measurement, use, and basic awareness of time forms perhaps the central pillar of experiential consciousness most people, when pressed, still find it difficult to think of what time might be. At the heart of this confusion lies a central contradiction between what might be termed a deeply held, and subjective sense of time - or temporality - and an ‘objective’, universal and ‘public’ time, the most powerful symbol of which in the West is the clock.

A deep rooted and subjective sense of temporality lies at the heart of any feelings of subjectivity. For those in the West this sense of ‘lived time’ is linear. It is driven by a recognition of one’s own mortality, a philosophy of time that has found its most powerful articulation in Heideggerian philosophy (Dreyfuss, 1991; Thomas, 1991). Its most powerful role in creating a sense of self is the linear, and continuous structure of memory. As Taylor (1989) has argued, in order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going. Such feelings require the ability to ‘atomise’ time into the discreet moments of past, present and future.

A central problem emerges, however, when we recognize that whilst this sense of subjective time is inherently unstable - for example, most are familiar with the feeling that in different situations time may seem to ‘slow down’, ‘speed-up’, or in the process of remembering even become inverted - our sense of self relies upon the possibility of a shared and ‘objective’ sense of time. We can only define ourselves by first defining who we are not, and whilst a sense of self is dependent upon feelings of personal continuity, it follows that it is also dependent upon a sense of social continuity (Connerton, 1989). Such continuity not only demands that we all share the same sense of continuous, linear time but, if social beings are to organize their actions, there must also be a shared ‘objective’ time to which we can all turn, and within which we can ‘place’ events and happenings.

A way through this confusion - of how time can be both subjective, and objective and ‘external’ - is to recognize that time itself is a social construction that quickly takes on the force of objective fact (Durkheim, 1915/1965). For example, whilst the calendar was originally simply a way of coordinating the material activity of the harvest, the harvest itself soon became defined by its position within the calendar. From this materialist perspective, far from universal, different societies exhibit quite different senses
of time (and space) (Bloch, 1977; Bourdieu, 1977) and therefore different conceptions of
the human subject (Geertz, 1973; Loy, 1992).

Our sense of time - both ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ - is thus created through
material practice, such that different modes of production and social formation each
embody distinctive bundles of time practices and understandings (Gurvitch, 1964). As
such even within the same society there may be a number of temporal constructs, each
attached to particular activities.

Indeed in the West it is possible to trace a history of different ‘temporal shapes’
as different notions of time have fought for primacy at different moments. Since the
appearance of the mechanical clock, from at least the fourteenth century (Thrift, 1981), it
has been an ‘objective’ and universal clock time that has emerged as the primary sense
of time consciousness in the industrialised world. Within a mercantalist, and later a
capitalist mode of production clock time (together with developments in cartography)
offered a number of benefits to the dominant mode of production. Whilst it allowed for
social and economic activities to be formalised and organised as never before, it also
allowed for a sense of commodified time. Through the clock it became possible to
‘bracket’ economic activities in time and space through a system of credit (such that time
became intimately tied to the nature of money) and to define labour value itself through
the time taken to perform a task - thus establishing a universal system of value (Giddens,

But, this notion of commodified time does not explain the primacy of linear time
in the West (both ‘personal’ and ‘public’). This development is often connected to the
emergence of the ‘objective’ space-time of Newtonian physics in the sixteenth century
(Harvey, 1989a). Yet, as Adams (1992) explains, whilst both clock time and Newtonian
space-time allowed for the continued dominance of commodified time, both in fact
constructed only a non-temporal time. As the clock endlessly repeats its invariant cycles
so the sense of time it creates is unaffected by the changes it measures - such that with
the clock time always in fact holds the possibility of reversal.

For Adams (1992), it was only with the emergence of ‘thermodynamic time’,
coming with the development of the thermodynamic engines of the industrial revolution,
that the clock was, in effect, ‘re-temporalized’. Within thermodynamics time must be
unidirectional, irreversible, and transient - in ways that allow for a sense of progress,
novation and failure. As this new sense of time gained prominence within an emergent
factory system it was these temporal shapes that came to dominate a sense of both
‘public’ and ‘private’ time in the West. For Thompson (1967) this sense of a linear factory
time itself gained prominence as it was tied to earlier systems of time taught by the
Church, and promoted though a Protestant work ethic. Where this ethic connected ‘time wasting’ to ideas of eternal damnation, put together with the physiological evidence of ageing and mortality, it is possible to see how a sense of linear time has become so deep rooted.

Crucially, then, for centuries people have bought together two quite contradictory temporal shapes - the cyclic inevitability of the clock and commodified time, and the linear irreversibility of ‘thermodynamic time’ - and this evidence is important when we come to consider some of the arguments around time-space compression outlined below. It also goes some way to explaining how a subjective sense of time’s fundamental instability is subjugated - or at least allowed to coincide with - the belief in an external, and objective sense of linear time fundamental to both social action and understandings of self identity.

But, though we may identify a dominant time consciousness, as time is constructed through material practice, it also follows that different social actors, and material activities, may exhibit quite different senses of time within the same society. As these different temporal shapes become encoded with different meanings, so too does it become possible to deploy these different senses of time according to different needs. For example, as linear time becomes connected to the possibility of progress, but also failure and death, so in times of stress people may turn to other temporal shapes. In times of economic insecurity it is common to hear politicians explaining the cyclic nature of economic recession - though times may be bad (and will be bad again) they will also (and inevitably) get better. This invocation of cyclic time, in moments of ‘man-made’ insecurity, strike a deep resonance with older, and more comforting notions of time rooted in the ‘natural’ cycle of nature, the seasons and even the calendar itself (Williams, 1973).

2.2c The temporal experiences of time-space compression

The temporal shifts held to come about in a period of time-space compression, and the responses such shifts arguably engender, are now easier to explain. As capitalism is a revolutionary mode of production so is it always liable to revolutions in its dominant mode of time consciousness (Harvey, 1989a, 1991). From the mid-to-late nineteenth century, driven by a need to overcome a crisis of over-accumulation, and enabled by developments in new communications and technology, the industrialised world saw a new and dramatic ‘annihilation of space by time’ (Marx, 1857/1973). The effect of these movements - expressed in the work of the modernists - was to lead to an overwhelming
experience of transience and insecurity, as the social world attempted to adapt to a new and terrifying rate of change.

For Harvey (1989a) the contemporary experience of time-space compression may also be explained in much the same way. Moving out of the over-accumulation crisis of the 1960s and early 1970s, and taking advantage (amongst other things) of still more developments in communication technology, capital moved to the faster turnover times of a new regime of accumulation, one based on the 'flexible' production regimes of post-Fordism (Aglietta, 1979; Gertler, 1988; Piore & Sabel, 1984; Schoenberger, 1989; Storper & Scott, 1989).

Once again the social experience is argued to be one of overwhelming change, or temporal 'speed-up', as daily life seems to be going too fast, and such descriptions strike a chord with many of our daily experiences. From the ever increasing pace of urban life (the never ending creative destruction of familiar places and landscapes), the 'Hurry-Up Time' of the Moonies, through to the very terminology of the 'new' work practices - 'flexi-time', 'part-time', 'short-time' - for many daily life seems to be getting faster. As time speeds-up so too a less than reassuring Future seems to be rushing towards us, out of control.

A sense of transience, and a destruction of the old, is therefore arguably even more pronounced in the contemporary period than at the turn of the last century. Adding to such feelings a postmodern aesthetic has reduced the past to a 'cultural scrapbook', a resource to be mixed and matched at will (Chambers, 1987), such that even the certainties of history have been destroyed. The overwhelming sense is thus one of insecurity, as the future is seen to hold little hope, and a belief in the past as a discrete, atomised moment is itself harder to sustain.

Stephen Kern (1983) takes such arguments a stage further. As developments in communications and transport technology at the turn of the century revolutionised conceptions of space, so too was a traditional and linear sense of time irrevocably undermined. As time and space became separated from each other, and relativised (Giddens, 1991) so a new wave of thinkers emerged who questioned traditional notions of temporality. With the simultaneity of the new communication technologies (the radio, telegraph and telephone, for example, all emerged in this period), a movement across space no longer made inevitable a movement through time. As the traditional opposition of presence and absence was divorced so too, argues Kern, was the present, in effect, 'spatially extended'.

Moreover, the same technologies raised the possibility even of talking to someone at a time 'behind' yours - though it might be 2.00pm in London, for example, it may be
only 12.00 noon in the place of you co-respondent. Where time could, in effect, now be reversed a new and powerful sense of temporal dislocation emerged. Perhaps most important was the impact this new 'reversible' time had upon conceptions of memory. Where there could no longer be sustained a secure belief in a discrete past, present and future the fiction of memory, so central to constructions of 'who we are', became more problematic. In important ways, therefore, Kern's thesis prefigures those accounts concerning the emergence of a schizophrenic identity in the contemporary period, one whose fragmentation has commonly been described in exactly this 'atemporal' manner (Jameson, 1984, 1991).

Though Kern can be criticised for a certain technological determinism (Entrikin, 1985) his arguments are important because from a position of simple temporal speed-up (that maintains the central structures of a unidirectional and linear time) the contemporary unbinding of presence and absence may be having a more profound impact. A problematic for thinkers at the turn of the last century was that these developments made people aware of the central contradictions between a public, universal and standard clock time (tied to the linear time of thermodynamics), the 'simultaneous time' of the new communication technologies, and the relative nature of a personal and subjective temporality within which time could seem to move in any direction, and at any rate.

As the pace, and everyday awareness of globalisation has increased in the contemporary period so, arguably, are these contradictions liable to emerge even more powerfully. Not least, the cultural heterogeneity of contemporary life may also be making people more aware of the very different constructions of time and temporality articulated in other societies. Paine (1992), for example, suggests that rather than singular, the contemporary experience of time must resemble more a situation of 'cultural scrambling' within which people must deal not only with the contradictory temporal shapes of clock, thermodynamic and simultaneous time, but an awareness of entirely different temporal constructs. Surrounded daily by a whole host of contradictory temporal shapes - from the micro-second timing of the computer chip, through the 'reversible time' of time zones, foreign travel and 'live television', to the long durations of a popular environmental movement - it might seem that time itself has become deeply unreliable (or at least impossible to 'pin down'). In turn it is easy to understand those arguments that suggest that time has become a source of deep anxiety.

In the face of such uncertainty people are argued to attempt a move towards a number of more comforting temporal structures (Harvey, 1989a, 1991). In effect these
arguments identify a series of 'temporal retreats', an understanding based on that earlier recognition that there can be identified qualitatively different senses of time, or temporal shapes, each to be found within different experiential arenas. But if such retreats are easy to describe, within a space of such temporal fluidity, none is easy to achieve.

For example, the 'heritage industry' has been interpreted as an attempt to reinscribe a nostalgic sense of the past and tradition (Lowenthal, 1985). Harvey (1989a), of course, explicitly posits a local heritage movement as a strong source of place identity and temporal retreat (chapter 2.1b). But, as postmodernism plays with a sense of the past and calls into question the linear and continuous nature of time itself, so such retreats become more problematic. Within this sense of speed-up, for example, not only is nostalgia itself discounted into the present (the cycles of fashion seem to come around ever more quickly) but a postmodern aesthetic has made it more difficult to secure any clear sense of historical 'authenticity' (Hopkins, 1991; Jameson, 1984, 1991; Shields, 1989).

In the same way, in the face of an uncertain linear time, people may move towards the comforts of cyclical time found within traditional understandings of nature, and ones that have gained prominence with the emergence of a popular environmental movement (Harvey, 1991). But the same movement may often provide for that less comforting sense of temporal speed-up people are attempting to escape, as it articulates its concerns through a series of metaphors based around a discourse of extinction and death (Burgess, 1993).

Finally, for Harvey (1989a) at least, the overwhelming source of temporal retreat is to be found as people move away from social insecurities, to the deeply held traditions and values of home and the slower moving rhythms of 'family time'. Based on older notions of 'cyclic' time (originally of the harvest, but also connected to the gendered cycles of generational and 'female time') such a structure has long been recognized as a way through which people have sought to control the demands of 'industrial time' (Hareven, 1982). For Harvey, therefore, the home is a source of reassuring values and rhythms. It may also be the site of those treasured personal objects that, in contrast to the meaningless goods of consumer society, are a deep repository of memory, and thus do much to hold the passage of time itself at bay (cf Lasch, 1984). "Photographs, particular objects ... and events ... become the focus of a contemplative memory, and hence a generator of a sense of self that lies outside the sensory overloading of a consumerist culture and fashion. The home becomes a private museum to guard against the ravages of time-space compression" (Harvey, 1989a:292, my emphasis).
2.2d The temporal dislocations of time-space compression reconsidered

But there are a number of problems with such arguments. In the first place, the work of both Harvey (1989a, 1991) and Kern (1983) remains wholly theoretical. Secondly, though Kern has convincingly traced the temporal dislocations expressed in the work of a whole host of writers, thinkers and artists, his account takes little interest in how such dislocations may have been experienced and expressed in the every-day worlds of the majority, and far less how such experiences may have differed for different people (cf Gregory, 1993; Pred, 1993). Finally, and crucially, there are also a number of inconsistencies within these accounts themselves, and not least a certain confusion over the conceptions of time that they employ. My aim is to provide an empirical sociology of these every-day temporal experiences. Before doing so, however, it is important to assess these arguments concerning the current experience of temporal dislocation in more detail. In particular, I want to 'unpack' a few of these rather cursory understandings of different 'temporal shapes' in ways that will allow for a more developed sociology of time-space compression, and one in which any notion of 'temporal retreat' is made more rigorous.

There is a tendency - especially within a Marxist perspective - to underplay the creative nature of any individual's temporal consciousness, and thus to claim the inevitable dominance of that mode of time consciousness favoured by capital at any particular historical moment. For example, Harvey (1989a, 1991) recognizes the possibility of individuals deploying different notions of time according to the needs of a particular moment. And at a wider level of analysis he is correct in pointing to disagreements concerning issues of time as underlying many social conflicts. Where the needs of environmentalists and business clash, for example, in part the conflict is over which time scale should gain primacy in decisions over investment (the quick return of the merchant banker, or the long duration of the environmentalist).

But, whilst such arguments draw attention to the social construction of time - and lead to an understanding of the role of material power in the outcome of these conflicts - they also lead towards a rather static understanding of human temporality. As time is recognized as fundamental to the construction of self-identity, and such identities are

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5 This tendency is especially marked in much of the literature around work discipline and time consciousness. Thus though, for example, Harvey (1989) draws upon the work of Hareven (1982) to show how an emergent 'factory time' was imposed upon older notions of 'family' and 'individual' time, Hareven's thesis in fact shows how these older notions of time often acted to subvert the imposition of 'factory time'. For a more sophisticated account of those many, but complicated, acts of resistance workers undertook in the face of this new time discipline see Thompson (1967).
increasingly understood as inevitably fractured and provisional, so it follows that people may in fact daily negotiate a whole range of ‘temporal identities’. In other words, the business person may also be a member of the local environmental group and, in taking a decision over the length of investment return, her decision is as likely to take account of the needs of the environment as of capital. Far from identifying an all-encompassing temporal consciousness, therefore, an analysis of time-space compression needs to trace the possible range of temporal identifications the contemporary subject must negotiate at any one time. More simply, in the context of time-space compression the same subject is as likely to experience the cyclical nature of time, as feelings of temporal speed-up, at the same moment - and it is these more sophisticated negotiations that need to be investigated.

This investigation becomes even more complex when it is recognized that it is in fact impossible ever to identify a static and singular experience of differing time types, and certainly impossible to reduce the experience of time to the shape of a particular social activity or action as, for example, Gurvitch (1964) attempts. Paine (1992), for example, points to the complexity of these different temporal shapes. Whilst linear time - and particularly a sense of its speed-up - may allow for a recognition of failure and the (threatening) unknown, so too it is only within a sense of linear time that a sense of progress may be achieved. And whilst one may find the structures of routine comforting - as for example a 3.00pm meeting ‘breaks up’ and ‘slows down’ an otherwise hectic day - for another the same meeting may be the scene of time ‘dragging-on’ in an intolerable fashion.

These arguments are particularly important when we come to consider the range of temporal ‘retreats’ identified within a thesis of time-space compression, and it is to these that I shall pay particular attention in the substantive chapters. For example, for some the repetitive and knowable nature of the cyclic may indeed be a source of reassurance. Yet for others the notion of repetition, whilst upholding the ‘natural’ order of things, may figure a terrible sense of inevitability and the impossibility of escape from previous experience.

Such arguments draw attention to an emergent sociology of time, and the broader experiences of time-space compression, as it becomes clear that the experience of time must in fact differ for different individuals. These different experiences are tied to the relative empowerment of different social actors (Barclay, 1986; Conway, 1990; Sheveli & Rips, 1986).

For example, to invoke heritage and nostalgia as inevitably comforting, by simple virtue of their positioning with the past, is particularly problematic. In the first place such arguments employ an understanding of nostalgia that may be culturally specific (Bishop,
In the second they rely upon a rather singular understanding of 'heritage' itself, one that positions such sites as always disruptive of an 'authentically' linear historical process and that dictates a conception of memory and the process of rememberance that has recently been called into question (Arcaya, 1992; Crang, 1994a & b).

More significantly, whether history is somehow comforting, or not, cannot be separated from a wider politicization of the act of historical (re)presentation. In terms of the 'retreatist' nature of local heritage whether representations of the past are considered history or 'heritage' is itself an important issue, one determined in part through the question of whose history such sites claim to represent (Jacobs, 1990). Within Britain, and certainly Stoke Newington, debates around heritage are powerfully structured by issues of class (Hewison, 1987; Wright, 1985). As newly arrived middle class residents invest sites that have long served as sources of local identity with their own needs and desires, so such sites may take on new, and less comforting values for an area's original working class residents. In other words, rather than representations of the past always forming a source of comfort we need to look more carefully at what it is that constitutes 'the past' and whose past is being 'preserved'.

Just as constructions of the past differ for different social actors so too those other arenas of temporal retreat identified within a thesis of time-space compression need more careful consideration. In particular any notion of the home as an arena of either spatial or temporal retreat, needs be put in the perspective of a wider gendering of the household. As household tasks still tend to fall to women, so for many women the home may present anything but a retreat from the pressures of work and the 'outside' world (Dalla Costa & James, 1975). Moreover, with an expansion in female paid employment so increasingly may work in the home come to present a double burden for a number of women (Wilson, 1977).

A materialist perspective thus undermines any simplistic notions of time and temporality, and reinscribes a sociology of the experiences of time and time-space compression. As our understandings of time and temporality are constructed through material practice the temporal understandings of any individual are liable to differ from the experiences of another subject located in a different social position. For example, a number of workers have pointed to the gendered nature of time itself, as well as to the gendered nature of arenas like the home within which time is experienced. These arguments often seem to reassert a set of patriarchal understandings. By delimiting women's temporal consciousness to the cycles of menstruation and 'Mother Nature' so women become excluded from the linear progress of 'History'. But these differing experiences may also be explained without recourse to essentialism (cf Forman & Sowton,
1989). Though it would be incorrect to dismiss the importance of 'bodily time', a differing temporal consciousness between men and women may be explained by reference to precisely the differing material practices of each (Hantrais, 1993; Davies, 1990), and a careful analysis of such experiences may lead in surprising directions. For example, Leccardi and Rampazi (1993) found that though contemporary social theory tends to identify a universal fear of the future, conceptions of what constitutes the future may itself differ considerably according to gender. For many young women in the West it may in fact be the short term future that represents the most secure temporal moment - as, taking advantage of increased employment and educational opportunities for women, it is understood as the temporal moment over which they have most control.

In contrast, however, whilst it could be argued that it is women, more so than men, that have traditionally been connected to the structures of cyclic time, and notions of re-birth and repetition, so too social pressures may act to make women more aware, and fearful, of linear time than men. As the 'beauty myth' attaches more significance to the aging process for women than for men, for example, so this process takes on gendered significance (Wolf, 1990). Such fears indeed emerged most powerfully with the female respondents, for whom a Heiddegerian philosophy of time 'running out' proves a powerful metaphor.

Thus, though the social sciences have long recognized the material specificity of our understandings of time and temporality this awareness has yet to be carried over to the theories of time-space compression. Yet it is not only the differences of gender that are liable to be important to this analysis. As new regimes of accumulation arguably draw an increasing division between a core and peripheral labour force, so too any experiences of time constructed through work practices are liable to differ considerably according to class. If so we might expect differences to emerge in the temporal experiences of the 'new service class' and working class respondents and, as the experience of work is carried to other arenas (most obviously within oppositional understandings of the home and leisure), these class differences may emerge in other arenas too.

Considering the emphasis given in history, and the social sciences more widely, to precisely these issues of work discipline and time consciousness (Hareven, 1982; Grossin, 1993; Le Goff, 1980; O'Malley, 1992; Smith, T, 1986; Stein, 1992; Thompson, 1967; Thrift, 1981) it seems surprising that theorists of time-space compression have continued to argue for some kind of monolithic temporal consciousness.

Far from singular and universal - built simply around the experiences of temporal speed-up - notions of time and temporality experienced within a period of time-space
compression are liable to be complex and multiple. Not least this awareness comes when it is recognized that there also emerge a number of contradictions within better known theories of time-space compression as different critics have related their theories to a particular understanding of time itself (cf Giddens, 1991; Rifkin, 1987).

As these critics chart the dislocations of time-space compression - whether they be the simple linear 'speed-ups' of Harvey (1989a) or the more fundamental dislocations of linear time identified by Kern (1983) - all in fact act to tie together a number of different conceptions of time and temporality. In effect such dislocations are argued to emerge as an increasing awareness of shifts in the nature of the commodified, objective, public and cyclical time of the clock (articulated within an increasing public awareness of international time zones, for example) is somehow tied to both an underlying sense of linear time, and to quite new concepts of time emerging with the simultaneous temporal structures of new communication technologies.

Through tying together these different notions of time these theses move to contradict themselves. Shifts in the nature of clock time, for example, can only be disorientating if people connect them - but also allow them to disrupt - this more fundamental sense of linear time. And yet, if for a long time people have lived with the contradictory coexistence of a cyclic clock time and an underlying and fundamental belief in linear time (whether its roots be thermodynamics or theological) it is unclear how a change in one should suddenly and radically destabilize a belief in the other (see chapter 2.2b).

At the same time, rather than being more disorientating than those experiences traced at the turn of the last century, recent developments may be having rather less impact upon people's time consciousness than is often assumed - as people have, quite simply, got used to them. For example, at the end of the nineteenth century the arrival of the telephone undoubtedly had a dramatic impact on peoples lives (Stein, 1992). But the impact of the contemporary fax machine may be rather less dramatic. Its functions are essentially the same as the telephone (both move to sever any connection between spatial and temporal distance), such that the experiences it generates are only quantifiably, rather than qualitatively different from those engendered by its predecessor.

What may characterize the contemporary period is the coexistence of a number of, contradictory, temporal shapes - such that "the multiplicity of times has become an inescapable feature of contemporary life" (Adams, 1992:184). Thus, as Adams (1992) argues, whilst the current multiplicity of time may be acting to disrupt any 'master temporal narrative' most of us still live, day by day, according to the structures of both
a commodified clock time, and an external (and subjective) linear time. At the same time we may all move to identify with, and deploy, quite different temporal shapes and ‘speeds’ - from the long duration of ecological time and the cycles of nature, to the micro-second timing of the computer - without, it seems, experiencing any dramatic feelings of temporal dislocation. To a greater, or lesser extent, this has always been the case.

Within this complex variety of times I shall not therefore be attempting to characterize a singular and universal contemporary temporal experience. Rather I shall be aiming to draw attention to the multiplicity of times through which people now live, and which are both expressions of - but also form the responses to - the experiences of time-space compression. But, I do not follow Adams in arguing that these different time-types articulate a "multitude ... of voices speaking simultaneously and with equal authority" (Adams, 1992:189, my emphasis). Rather, some temporal shapes still speak more powerfully than others. For example, unless there was still a fundamental belief in, and use of, linear temporality I could not have conducted the interviews, nor hoped to express my findings to the reader. I shall not therefore be tracing the more profound sense of temporal disorientation described by Kern (1983), though I shall argue that all the respondents will sometimes attempt to escape a more threatening sense of linear time, or a sense of temporal ‘dislocation’, by moving towards other, and more comforting temporal shapes. Those shapes that most often emerge as more comforting are the cycles of a more ‘natural’ time connected either to the family (and inter-generational time), or to nature itself, though as might be expected these acts of temporal ‘retreat’ are also powerfully influenced by the relations of class and gender.

Finally, though I have sought to extend a materialist perspective of time and temporality to construct a more sophisticated sociology of time and time-space compression, even this sociology needs to be made more complex. If the universal nature of time-space compression is to be assessed - in the sense that its experiences are argued to be effecting all arenas of people’s everyday life - then it is essential to be able to trace the experience of any individual across a number of experiential arenas. To this end I have tried to construct the thesis so that the experiences of any one respondent can be traced through the thesis as a whole (see chapter 3.5b). This concern with the individual often sits uneasily with the methods of the social sciences and certainly makes more complicated any materialist analysis of time and temporality. If the fundamental experience of time differs for every individual, though broad social patterns may emerge in the nature of temporal experience, so too is any sociology liable to be ‘complicated’ by individual experience. For example, as well dependent upon material activity a sense of time may also be dependent upon the shifts of mood. The comforting routine of
housework one day may become an unbearable chore the next, depending primarily upon how we feel. Once such influences are recognized any broad sociology is always liable to be 'disrupted' by the 'contradictory' experiences of the individual in question. But, if the analysis is to attempt to understand the meaning, and subjective experience, of time such disruptions cannot be ignored.

PART 3

2.3a Time-space compression and the 'new service class'

Within this analysis of individual experience there are, however, strong reasons for constructing a sociology of time-space compression around the experiences of the new service class, and it is the rationale behind this decision that I want to explore in more detail in the final sections of this chapter. Though tending to treat such processes as universal Harvey (1989a) himself, for example, has recognized that the experiences of time-space compression may differ according to the wider social position of different individuals, and draws attention to three distinct groups.

The majority, he suggests, will find such processes extremely unsettling, and respond by seeking refuge in those arenas outlined above. But for others those same processes may inculcate rather different experiences. There are, for example, those working in the financial sector whose "frenzied lifestyle ... and addiction to work, long hours and the rush of power make them excellent candidates for the kind of schizophrenic identity that Jameson depicts" (Harvey, 1989a:287), and for whom the experience of time-space compression may be rather more extreme than for the majority. Finally, there are those 'market manipulators' and 'taste makers' working in the worlds of media, marketing and design, who not only seek to control such processes, but for whom the 'dislocations' of a postmodern aesthetic are central to their own professional positions.

The difficulty with Harvey's analysis is that he fails to develop these insights in the form of a more rigorous sociology. These latter groups become positioned only within a rather crude understanding of the 'yuppie' (and thus conflated) and one that may anyway now seem rather dated (Crilley, 1990; Savage et al, 1988; cf Short, 1989). In fact what Harvey seems to be identifying is members of the new service class, and others too have positioned this group as central not only to processes of time-space compression, but the wider structures of the postmodern (Featherstone, 1991, 1992; Pfeil, 1990; Robins, 1991).

I am not suggesting that the experiences of time-space compression are limited to this group alone. Rather, only that these processes are liable to be qualitatively different
for different social actors, and that such differences are important to a fuller understanding of these processes themselves. Already, for example, differences in temporal experience have been suggested according to one’s position in the core or peripheral labour force. So too in chapter 1.3 it was suggested that though members of the new service class may in many ways be open to the most obvious manifestations of time-space compression (in their working environments, or inner city residencies, for example), so too they may occupy positions most able to control these processes. It is the unequal power relations that these rather different experiences suggest that the current thesis aims to explore.

The new service class may, however, occupy a quite singular position in relation to the postmodern, and it is this that I want to investigate in more detail here. At the same time, an analysis of this ‘sociology of postmodernism’ (Lash, 1990) may also offer access to a deeper understanding of those structures through which time-space compression itself is being negotiated, and in particular the importance of the aesthetic.

For Pfeil (1988), for example, far from universally disorientating, the emergence of a postmodern aesthetic may be both aimed at, and hold particular pleasures for, specific social groups. For example, those postmodern cultural forms that ask consumers to join ‘ontologically impossible worlds’, he argues, are rooted in a fundamental break in the chain of signification (see chapter 2.1a). Whilst for some this break may be supremely unsettling, for a class whose roots lies in the ‘De-Oedipalization’ of contemporary family life, where entry into the Symbolic has been delayed, these new cultural forms offer the possibility of re-entering the realm of the Imaginary where signifier and referent were once gloriously merged. As such, for the baby boomers of the new service class, the very dissolution of the relationship between ‘representation’ and ‘reality’ may offer some kind of comforting return to the infant state. Unfortunately Pfeil’s examples are not only rather obscure, but rest upon a mis-reading of the Lacanian theory on which they are based (cf Bevenuto & Kennedy, 1986). But others, and Scott Lash (1990) and Mike Featherstone (1992) in particular, have drawn these connections between the new service class and postmodernism more convincingly.

For Lash (1990) postmodernism should be understood not as part of any ‘conditional shift’, but as a particular ‘regime of signification’. Drawing upon a Weberian perspective ‘the cultural’ is understood as separate from, though related to, other social spheres - of the family, state, economy and so on. This perspective has the disadvantage of simplifying our understandings of ‘culture’ and a wider ‘cultural politics’ (cf Jackson, 1989; Williams, 1958/1990, 1980). But it does suggest that within the ‘postmodern’ other systems of understanding broadly labelled ‘modern’ may persist, and later it will be
suggested that such continuities are vital to an understanding of the contemporary experiences of time-space compression.

Where modernism can be understood as a regime of 'differentiation', for Lash (1990) postmodernism works through a system of 'de-differentiation'. Broadly speaking modernism operated as a system of 'structural differentiation', both 'horizontal' and 'vertical' (Urry, 1990). Horizontally the cultural sphere was differentiated from society, aesthetics, and the economy. Vertically too modernism drew strict distinctions between, for example, 'high' and 'low' culture or 'elitist' and 'mass' consumption. In contrast postmodernism can be understood as a regime of de-differentiation, forging a breakdown between these various spheres both horizontally and vertically (Foster, 1985; Hebdige, 1988; Kroker & Cook, 1986).

Such spheres are no longer 'auratic'. For example, where there has been a de-differentiation of the 'cultural economy' the boundaries between 'high' and 'low' culture, or art and commerce, are dissolved. Already postmodernism's problematization of representation and reality has been noted, whilst most importantly any separation between the 'aesthetic' and the 'social' is denied. For Featherstone (1992) it is this collapse of the 'aesthetic' into the 'social' that marks postmodernism's most important move, a move he terms an 'aestheticization of everyday life'. Within postmodernism the 'aesthetic view' has simply become an alternative mode of being, and the re-emergence of this aestheticized world offers a number of important continuities with an earlier period of urban modernism (Featherstone, 1992). Indeed for Lash (1990) the key theorist of the contemporary period is not Baudrillard (1985, 1988) but Benjamin and, I would suggest, Simmel (Frisby, 1985).

This 'aestheticization of everyday life' has emerged in three senses. First, drawing its strength from earlier movements - Dadaism, the historical avant-garde, or surrealism, for example - postmodernism has sought to efface the boundary between 'art' and 'everyday life'. At the same time there has re-emerged a belief that 'art can be anywhere' - from television adverts to political 'happenings'. Secondly, the aestheticization of everyday life can refer to the turning of life into a work of art. Such a move again has a long history, and emerged most powerfully with the figure of the dandy in the eighteenth century, and the urban flâneur in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. For Featherstone these dandies have re-emerged with the promotion of a contemporary 'life-style ethic' manifesting itself in a contempt for the masses and the glorification of originality and superiority in dress, demeanour and personal style (Featherstone, 1992). The aestheticization of everyday life thus has two sides; a focus on aesthetic consumption, and the turning of life into an aesthetically pleasing whole. Finally, Featherstone draws
attention once again to the increasing dissolution of the chain of signification, and positions it as part of a wider aestheticization, and 'de-realization', of reality (Featherstone, 1992). In its most radical form this has led to Baudrillard's notion of 'hyper-reality' (Baudrillard, 1985), but can also be seen in Jameson's understanding of the simulacrum (Jameson, 1984).

But for Featherstone: "Rather than conceive postmodernism as the product of a cultural logic, capital logic or other 'logic' at work within the historical process, we need also to understand it in terms of the practices and experiences of particular groups of people ... In short we need to focus upon the generation of carriers of and audiences for postmodernism, upon cultural producers, consumers and intermediaries" (Featherstone, 1992:265). For Lash (1990), too, underlying any 'paradigmatic' shift can be traced a particular sociology. Most importantly, where modernist culture served to destabilize bourgeois identity (Lash, 1990:16-19) postmodernism has offered a re-stabilization of middle class identities, and particularly the identities of a new middle class, in a number of ways. To understand such processes we need, briefly, to explore Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1984), and its connection to the rise of a new middle class.

For Bourdieu the powers of different social classes are as much 'symbolic' as economic, or political. These symbolic goods are subject to their own 'cultural economy' and different social classes are engaged in a form of struggle to increase the volume of capital they possess in relation to other classes, and to increase the 'value' of that particular form of capital to which they subscribe. Within these struggles a central role is placed upon cultural institutions and education more widely. This cultural realm has its own logic, and differing rates of convertibility into economic capital. Crucially:

"Cultural capital is not just a matter of abstract theoretical knowledge but the symbolic competence necessary to appreciate works of 'art' or even 'anti-art'. Differential access to the means of arts consumption is thus crucial to the reproduction of class and hence to the processes of class and broader social conflict. This differential cultural consumption both results from the class system and is a mechanism by which such classes, and other social forces, seek to establish dominance within a society."

(Urry, 1990:88)

Where the aestheticization of everyday life has blurred the distinctions between representation and reality, increasing the value of 'symbolic competence', particular

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6 Within this schema Bourdieu (1984) deploys a distinction between 'practical' and 'discursive', or 'reflexive' consciousness (Giddens, 1979) and one on which I draw later (see chapter 3.5a). Within this model understanding is rooted within a system of 'habitus', "the system of classification which operates below the level of individual consciousness and which is inscribed within people's orientating practices, bodily dispositions and tastes and distastes" (Urry, 1990:88), and each class possesses their own distinct habitus (cf Connerton, 1989).
classes stand to gain, and over the last twenty years or so there have been a number of important changes in the class structure of the advanced economies. With a decline in manufacturing, a rise in service industries, and the expansion of state welfare and education there has been a dramatic increase in the absolute and relative number of professional and managerial posts, concomitant with an increase in low wage and insecure, white collar/clerical and service positions (Abercrombie et al, 1988; McDowell, 1991a). Together with demographic change and the maturation of a post war ‘baby boom’ generation (Rose, 1989) a ‘new’ middle class of professionals and managers has emerged on both sides of the Atlantic (Myles, 1988; Sassen, 1991).

In contrast to an established bourgeoisie this new service class distinguishes itself in the social division of labour in a number of ways. Most importantly, entry into their chosen careers is regulated by the differential possession of educational credentials (Abercrombie & Urry, 1983), such that though they may have little economic power (relative to other members of the middle classes) their class position is primarily structured by the possession of a high degree of ‘cultural capital’ (Urry, 1990). In particular there has been a dramatic rise in those working in the ‘cultural professions’; the arts, media, teaching, and academia (Ley, 1994). Harvey (1989a), for example, traces the generalised expansion of an ‘image production industry’:

"The growth of cultural output has in fact been phenomenal. Taylor (1987,77) contrasts the art market condition in New York in 1945, when there were a handful of galleries and no more than a score of artists regularly exhibiting, and the two thousand or so artists who practised in or around Paris in the mid-nineteenth century, with the 150,000 artists in the New York region who claim professional status, exhibiting at some 680 galleries, producing more than 15 million art works in a decade (compared to 200, 000 in late nineteenth-century Paris)."

and relates this to Bell’s (1979) rather ill defined notion of the ‘cultural masses’, whose rise, he suggests, may be to the emergence of a new cultural aesthetic:

"And this is only the tip of an iceberg of cultural production that encompasses local entertainers, and graphic designers, street and pub musicians, photographers, as well as the more established and recognized schools for teaching art, music, drama, and the like. Dwarfding all of this, however, is what Daniel Bell (1978,28) calls ‘the cultural mass’ defined as: ‘not the creators of culture but the transmitters: those working in higher education, publishing, and magazines, broadcast media, theatre, and musicians, who process and influence the reception of serious cultural products. It is in itself large enough to be a market for culture, purchase books, prints and serious music recordings. And it is also the group which, as writers, magazine editors, movie-makers, musicians, and so forth, produce the popular materials for the wider mass-culture audience (Bell, 1979,28)’".

(Harvey, 1989a:290)

In other words it may be no coincidence that the emergence of a new cultural
aesthetic, and the generalized expansion (or 'implosion') of the 'cultural sphere', has been paralleled by the emergence of a new social group whose class position is secured through the operation of cultural rather than economic capital.

Bourdieu's analysis, however, is somewhat more sophisticated. He draws attention to a number of divisions within the middle classes, and particularly between a declining bourgeoisie and an emergent 'petty bourgeoisie', or intellectuals, a group who might broadly be understood as the main actors in this new service class (Bourdieu, 1984). For this latter group the emergence of postmodernism holds a number of benefits, as it relates to the operation of a particular form of cultural capital.

Postmodern culture allows the petit bourgeoisie to distinguish themselves from the 'tastelessness' of both bourgeois and working class culture. Whilst the former is criticized for its 'elitism' (not sufficiently de-differentiated in a vertical sense) working class culture is criticized for its coarseness or lack of subtlety, still horizontally differentiated, and with not enough parody (Urry, 1990). At the same time, where postmodernism has come to form only a quite instrumental system of cultural capital it traces a central contradiction for those members of the new service class for whom it holds such appeal.

Those very goods that supposedly celebrate a system of horizontal and vertical de-differentiation are being deployed as a continued means of class distinction. For example; whilst developments in 'popular' music have collapsed a distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture (the Pet Shop Boys, for example, being studiously deconstructed in the Arts section of the Guardian newspaper), so too the emergence of 'world music' would seem to celebrate the implosion of 'core' and 'periphery'. Such developments should, therefore, challenge the very structures of binary thought and be connected to a wider system of 'postmodern philosophy' (see chapter 2.1c). But, where they are positioned as a continued means of class distinction their consumption maintains those very structures they purport to challenge. And where the new service class define their class position through this contradictory process that class position must itself remain highly ambiguous.

So too it is important to recognize that these new cultural goods often delineate another set of unequal power relations. The 'world music' industry, for example, is divided over whether the expansion of such music honestly articulates a project of radical difference, or the simple commodification of Otherness criticized in the consumption of 'exotic food'. So too questions have been asked about whether such music has been appropriated by the major record companies in ways that must limit any radical political impact. These issues become even more complex when one considers music now
emerging that deliberately fuses different cultural styles (for example, Bhangra), but in
general these goods can be understood as raising a central contradiction for those who
would understand their consumption as part of any liberal celebration of difference,
rather than differentiation (Hanly & May, 1989). It is the contradicory nature of such
consumption practices, and their relation to a wider system of binary thought, that this
thesis explores.

The essential ambiguity of such processes can also be related to contradictions
within postmodernism itself. Lash (1990:37), for example, draws a distinction between
'mainstream' and 'oppositional' forms of postmodern culture (PM.1 and PM.2). PM.1
tends to privilege the implosion of the cultural and the commercial, and eclipses the role
of an avant-garde. Ironically it can thus allow for the operation of social hierarchies, as
cultural objects may continue to function as status symbols. For example, not all can
afford the latest Pet Shop Boys' album, or 'properly' appreciate its essential irony. In
contrast PM.2 moves around the problematization of representation and reality (in, for
example, the emergence of a gay skinhead look) and thus fosters an opening of
subjectivity and the tolerance of alternative subject positions. Here different objects
function not to create distinctions, but to construct a collective identity on a non-
 hierarchical principle of difference. It is only PM.2 that is potentially radical, and has
come to be positioned with a wider system of postmodern philosophy (cf Derrida, 1976),
whilst it is PM.1 upon which members of the new service class tend to draw, thus
boosting their hegemonic position.

This analysis has a number of benefits. It positions the new service class in an
inevitably ambiguous position as regards the disintegration of the wider systems of binary
thought associated with a postmodern epistemology. Since it is precisely these sorts of
ambiguities and contradictions that are raised by processes of globalisation and time-
space compression (chapter 1.2), an analysis of the experiences of the new service class
should add much to our understanding of these wider processes too.

Further, where these processes have in turn been related to a problematization of
the 'real', it is easier to understand why those arenas that promise access to a 'more
authentic' way of life may be especially attractive to members of the new service class.
Thus, the expansion of holidays offering the 'real' experience of Africa, Peru, or even the
'East End', for example, is clearly connected to the consumption demands of a particular
social class, even if these consumption practices may themselves be undertaken in an
increasingly reflexive, or 'ironic' mode. Where this problematization is in turn related to
a particular cultural aesthetic, and postmodernism itself to the practices of a particular
class fraction, for others anxiety over the nature of 'authenticity' may simply be less apparent. Finally, where issues of authenticity are often conflated with a traditional understanding of the exotic it can be seen how the contradictions of a postmodern cultural aesthetic tend to move together.

2.3b Time-space compression and the 'new cultural class'

But, there are also a number of problems with these analyses, not least a certain laxity over the definitions of the new service class that they employ. The current thesis is not an examination of the new service class *per se*, and studies that address these issues in detail may be found elsewhere (Butler, 1991; Ley, 1994). But, it is important to attempt a clearer understanding of just whom such analyses are in fact describing for two reasons; first, because it may allow us to draw a number of parallels with the emergence of a similar group in the nineteenth century, and thus allow for a crucial set of connections between processes of time-space compression and the role of the aesthetic; and secondly, because they relate to those members of the new service class who are to be found in Stoke Newington, and the empirical body of the thesis.

The position of intermediate social classes, and especially the middle classes, has long posed a threat to Marxist accounts of social stratification. The concept of a service class was first introduced in the 1950s by the Austrian critic Karl Renner (Butler, 1991; cf Smith, 1987). For Renner the defining characteristic of this class was that its members enjoyed a contractual, rather than wage, relationship with capital. For others they can broadly be positioned within a set of interlocking social institutions which collectively 'service' capital (Abercrombie & Urry, 1983).

The central problem confronting theorists of this new class is that whilst their class position would seem to implicate a conservative ideology, they have generally been connected to the promotion of liberal, adversarial politics (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979; Gouldner, 1979). Clearly this contradiction raises a number of difficulties for those accounts explored above. Whilst attention has been drawn to the contradictory position of the new service class in relation to the emergence of postmodernism, and the negotiation of the processes of time-space compression, this very ambiguity is in part reliant upon an understanding of their broader liberal posture.

But, whilst some have sought to insert a new service class into a single position within a historical class structure (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979), others have been impressed by its internal heterogeneity (Ley, 1994). Gouldner (1979), for example, draws a distinction between humanistic intellectuals and a technical intelligentsia. McAdams
(1987) and Lash and Urry (1987) distinguish between those employed in the public and private sector whilst, in the United Kingdom, Savage et al. (1988) and Thrift (1987) have understood this class to be fragmented by contradictory political allegiances.

So too this class may be both geographically specific, and spatially fragmented. In general they are concentrated in the Metropolitan Census Areas, and have been broadly related to processes of gentrification (Ley, 1988a; Smith & Williams, 1986). But, whilst the connection between processes of gentrification and reform politics has also often been implied (Castells, 1983) these connections too may be complex. Hamnett (1990), for example, has revealed the conservative political sympathies of many of London’s gentrifiers. So too, whilst gentrification can be understood to attract those seeking a world of cultural and social difference (Wright, 1991) those same gentrifiers may often have a less desirable impact on local working class communities (Williams, 1986) and gentrification itself considered a form of ‘residential credentialism’ (Butler, 1991; Jager, 1986).

Where he has sought to understand the new service class in relation to their political allegiances, and the impact of such allegiances on gentrification, David Ley’s account would seem to offer the most useful framework for the current study (Ley, 1994). Drawing upon Brint’s (1984) survey, Ley makes a distinction between a wider service class, and a *new cultural class* identified by Kristol (1972). This latter group, all college educated, consists only of those working in the arts, media, teaching and academia, or employed as public sector managers in welfare and regulatory activities. Beyond these occupations Ley (1994) identifies architects, clergy, doctors and lawyers, as well as other professionals outside the private sector. In Canada and the United States this group are remarkably coherent in terms of age (up to about thirty five years old), show few differences according to the sector of employment (public or private), and are generally committed to a liberal political position - supporting racial integration and public spending on welfare programmes, for example. The same characteristics have been identified for these professions in Britain, though in London a new cultural class may exclude higher paid members of the medical and legal professions (Butler, 1991).

It is this group that has often been connected to the ‘pioneering stage’ of a gentrification process, and the promotion of a ‘postmodern’ lifestyle aesthetic (Mills, 1988; cf Smith, 1979a & b, 1982, 1986, 1987). Thus, whilst the new service class may broadly be understood as a metropolitan phenomenon, different fractions of this class are clearly attracted to different areas within the metropolis (Butler, 1991). In Hackney, for example, where De Beauvoir has continued to attract politically conservative gentrifiers drawn from finance, medicine and law, Stoke Newington has largely been subject to
gentrification by members of Ley's new cultural class - though in two quite distinct periods (see chapter 3.2b).

Thus, whilst in the current thesis the decision to concentrate the analysis on the new service class is partly 'reactive' (driven by those accounts explored above) within this rather diverse group the specific selection of respondents has been driven by the nature of the case study area (chapter 3.3a). Further, whilst Stoke Newington itself is now dominated by members of this new cultural class, a closer reading of that theoretical literature explored in chapter 2.3a in fact makes clear that it is anyway exactly this class fraction that is being described.

It is members of the new cultural class who inhabit a peculiarly ambiguous position in relation to both postmodernism and the wider processes of time-space compression. And certainly it is members of the new cultural class that Featherstone is describing as central to the 'aestheticization of everyday life' (Featherstone, 1992). This latter connection is vital because it suggests a number of important parallels with the nineteenth century, and may allow for a crucial set of connections to be made between processes of time-space compression and the role of the aesthetic. Where the aesthetic itself can be understood as a key mechanism for the control, or containment, of these processes, its analysis allows us to explore that more complex set of power relations articulated by such 'handling mechanisms' and suggests a less radical departure from the exclusionary understandings of a modern epistemology than is often suggested.

2.3c The 'new cultural class' and the nature of the aesthetic.

"... Simmel was surely one of the first social theorists to make us aware of the aesthetics of modern life, even in a manner that is relevant to the study of a putative postmodern culture. A 'prehistory' of postmodernity could do worse than reexamine the constellation and context of Simmel's 'modern' aesthetic concerns."


Descriptions of a contemporary 'aestheticization of everyday life' bear a striking resemblance to descriptions of an earlier metropolitan world. In these similarities might lie important continuities between the experiences of time-space compression in two quite distinct historical periods. This in turn suggests a number of continuities between the experiences of modernity and 'postmodernity', and warns us against connecting the current round of time-space compression to any radical break in traditional systems of understanding. In relation to the current thesis an analysis of the nineteenth century reveals the emergence of a class fraction little different from a contemporary 'new' cultural class, such that there might also emerge a sociology to these two periods that,
whilst differing in important aspects, is broadly similar.

Featherstone (1992), for example, traces a 'pre-history' for postmodernity, and draws particular attention to similarities between a contemporary aestheticization of everyday life and the 'dream worlds' of an earlier urban flâneur. Before attempting to make these connections, however, we need a clearer understanding of the nature of the aesthetic itself, to discover what Featherstone (1992) calls the "historical origins of particular cognitive styles and modes of perception ... to work towards a more precise sense of what is meant by the aestheticization of everyday life" (Featherstone, 1992:274).

The most detailed examination of modern aesthetics is still to be found in the work of Georg Simmel (Frisby, 1982, 1985). For Simmel, drawing on Kant, the distinguishing characteristic of aesthetic judgement was the assumption of a position of distance, or 'disinterestedness'. It was a view of the aesthetic that he explored through his analysis of the work of art, and it articulated a particular relationship between aesthetics and time:

"The great work of art which reconciles subject and object, which resolves the contradictions of modern experience ('the modern transmutabilita' of restless, fleeting movement and fragmentation and 'the impression of the supramonetary, the timeless impression') is seldom found in everyday modern experience ... 'salvation from the trouble and whirl of life, the peace and conciliation beyond its movement and contradictions ... (is) the permanent goal of art' (Simmel, 1923:197)."

(Frisby, 1991:88, emphasis in original)

In the mid-to-late nineteenth century, however, traditional understandings of the aesthetic came under threat, as developments in the production and (re)production of art destroyed art's 'aura'. It was these developments that Simmel was responding to in his essays (Frisby, 1991). As art shifted into industry, advertising and architecture, the city itself became art:

"One could say that the dynamics of capitalist industrialism had caused a curious reversal in which 'reality' and 'art' switch places. Reality becomes artificial, a phantasmagoria of commodities and architectural construction made possible by the new industrial processes" (Buck-Morss, 1983:213, quoted in Featherstone, 1992:277). In this implosion of the 'aesthetic' and the 'urban' the city took on a peculiar hue: "The capacity of the ever-changing urban landscape to summon up associations, resemblances and memories feeds the curiosity of the stroller in the crowds. To the idler who strolls the streets, objects appear divorced from their context and subject to mysterious connections in which meanings are read on the surface of things" (Featherstone, 1992:277).

This aestheticization of the city lent life in the metropolis a vividness that for Baudelaire rendered "everything anew in its immediacy" (Featherstone, 1992:277). It forged for the urban dweller a state akin to that of one emerging out of a long
convalescence wherein life assumes a new intensity. These developments articulated the emergence of a quite new aesthetic attitude, what Lash (1990) calls the 'figural aesthetic', in which Simmel’s disinterested observer is overcome by the flood of new impressions and sensations that flow through him. There thus emerges a curious tension in our understandings of the ‘aesthetic attitude’. On the one hand it declares a position of distance, of the neutral and detached observer, whilst on the other the implosion of the aesthetic realm and the emergence of the figural delineates the potential for immersion, or ‘de-distantiation’. At the same time descriptions of the nineteenth century metropolis begin to sound remarkably familiar. Featherstone (1992) draws attention to the similarities between them and Jameson’s (1984) description of a postmodern sensibility. The two periods, he argues, share the same essential characteristics; the proliferation of the image and the vivid intensity of an aestheticized world, concomitant with the emergence of a distanced perspective in which the social world is reduced to the patterns of the cinema and television screen, or the artist’s canvas (cf Baudrillard, 1988).

These differing understandings of the aesthetic have tended to be positioned in opposition to each other but they may in fact, as Featherstone (1992) argues, simply represent different aspects of the same process. Most importantly, once this is recognized, it becomes clear that we need to begin thinking more carefully about who the main carriers of this new aesthetic attitude might have been, and it is here that there are suggested more parallels with the contemporary period.

As in the late twentieth century, in the mid-to-late nineteenth century there was a dramatic increase in the number of specialists working in the fields of ‘symbolic production’, and in particular in the absolute and relative number of artists and ‘intellectuals’. It was these who patrolled the streets of Paris and the other major European cities observing and recording their experiences of the new metropolis. And it was their experiences, found in the writings of Baudelaire, Simmel and Benjamin, that have come to be taken as the definitive experience of these places. Most importantly it is in the world of the urban flâneur that we find those sudden swings of immersion and distance connected to a new aesthetic attitude. Even as the crowd carries them along, for example, there is described in their observations a continuing sense of detachment.

Though it is difficult to locate the exact class position of these classical flâneurs (cf Berman, 1983; Clark, 1985; Harvey, 1985), in the writings of Benjamin (1985) in particular there emerge a number of startling similarities with descriptions of a contemporary new cultural class. In his essay Baudelaire on the Streets of Paris, for example, Benjamin writes:

"Baudelaire’s genius ... was an allegorical one ... It is the gaze of the flâneur, whose way of living still bestowed a conciliatory gleam over the growing
destitution of men in the great city. The flâneur still stood at the margins of the great city as of the bourgeois class. Neither of them had yet overwhelmed him, in neither of them was he at home. He sought his asylum in the crowd ... the crowd was the veil from behind which the familiar city as phantasmagoria beckoned to the flâneur. In it the city was now landscape, now room ...

As flâneurs the intelligentsia came into the market place ... they took the form of the boheme. To the uncertainties of their economic position corresponded the uncertainty of their political function."

(Benjamin, 1985:170-171)

Crucially, for Simmel at least, these artists and intellectuals could still lay claim to the traditions of aesthetic judgement, a privilege open only to those with the appropriate ‘cultural capital’, or ‘symbolic competence’ (Frisby, 1991). As such, they could still wrest from the fleeting and transitory encounters that made up life in the modern city an understanding of the inner reality, or ‘essence’ that lay behind (or rather within) the immersions of the figural aesthetic. Indeed for Simmel it was not only that below the collage of surface impressions one could still reach an underlying ‘reality’, but that ‘reality’, or the ‘totalness’ of experience could only be grasped through the ‘proper’ appreciation of surface form - a philosophy that locates him as the first great Modern sociologist, and one that continues to dominate modernist understandings of the city (cf Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991).

This philosophy has a number of important ramifications. It suggests the importance of an aesthetic attitude in the ‘handling’ of the ‘dislocations’ to be found in a period of time-space compression. It also delineates the reliance of this attitude upon a modern epistemology, one that seeks to draw strict divisions between a powerful Subject (or Self) and a subordinate Object (or Other).

Most famously, of course, this distanced perspective allowed the flâneur to distance himself from the increasing poverty of the new metropolis. As he sheltered behind the projection of a powerful gaze, the social diversity of the Parisian streets, for example, became nothing more than a colourful backdrop displayed for the pleasures of the roving eye (Berman, 1983). This perspective was itself only possible for those protected from the realities of working class life in Second Empire Paris, and for those who imagined themselves separate from, and invisible to, the city’s other inhabitants. It was a gaze given room by Haussmann’s boulevards, streets that opened up a space of

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7 For example, Jonathan Raban’s Soft City (1974), a seminal text in contemporary urban studies, follows exactly this philosophy. For Raban below the city’s surface there can still be traced an underlying (and causal) ‘reality’. Thus though Harvey (1989a) locates Raban’s book as a key moment in the emergence of a ‘postmodern attitude’ the text in fact owes much to an earlier modern sensibility.
increasing social distance (Harvey, 1985). It also, of course, articulated a space of
gendered control, as a male flâneur gazed upon any woman venturing outside the privacy
of the home without the ‘protection’ of a male companion (Pollock, 1989).

But, though commentators have tended to concentrate upon the divisions of class
and gender articulated by the perambulations of the urban flâneur, the gaze also acted
to protect these figures from the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of the new
metropolis. Sardon’s (1866) description of nineteenth century Paris, for example, could
as easily refer to the increasing cultural diversity of late twentieth century London, such
that the distancing perspective of the gaze might even then have been a defence against
the ravages of globalisation:

"Nowadays ... [Paris is full of] A crowd of people of all shapes and sizes, cosmopolitans jabbering away in every language ... This is not Athens anymore, but Babylon! ... It isn’t Paris ... and there are no Parisians any longer ... I am a stranger to what is coming ... these new boulevards, which no longer smack of the world of Balzac, which smack of London, some Babylon of the future."

(From Sardon’s ‘Madison Neuve’, 1866, quoted in Clark, 1985:42)

Simmel’s distancing aesthetic attitude thus achieved a number of things. First, it
allowed the flâneur to render these rather threatening developments part of only a quite
pleasing visual tableau that could not infringe upon his own social world. Secondly, and
more significantly, where it allowed the privileged spectator to pull from the myriad of
surface impressions a sense of underlying order, and understand from the briefest glimpse
the ‘true’ nature of the scene displayed before him, an aesthetic attitude offered the
potential of an all encompassing knowledge, and the possibility of categorizing the city’s
diverse population into a number of easily recognizable social types. Simmel’s
understanding of the aesthetic thus has much in common with Kantian notions of the
sublime, and contains many of the same tensions (cf Eagleton, 1990), but when
‘botanizing on the pavement’ it at least allowed the flâneur quickly and easily to position
the surrounding populace into a number of identifiable ‘characters’: ‘rogues’, ‘foreigners’,
dandies’, ‘the loose woman’ and so on (Benjamin, 1985).

Finally though, Sardon’s (1866) description also has a strong air of nostalgia about
it. Even as the flâneur inhabited a world of increasing uncertainty, the aestheticized gaze
allowed him to achieve a sense of control over the vagaries of time. If through the
fragments of a transitory world there could still be recognized, and captured, a universal
essence, it was an essence that was also unchanging. Simmel, of course, chose to explore
this relationship between time and aesthetics largely through his essays on the nature of
art (Frisby, 1991). For him, as for Harries (1982), as it moves to ‘spatialize time’, the
aesthetic promises to hold the terrors of time itself at bay through the possibility of
timeless beauty. Within a consideration of the world of art these connections were also being made by a number of other writers in or around the same period, and most famously perhaps by T.S. Eliot in his *Four Quartets* (1935-1942), but for Simmel the same relationship could be found wherever the aesthetic view was projected. It was a consequence of the reduction of social depth to a static world of surface aesthetics, and in a period when conceptions of time were becoming increasingly unstable (see chapter 2.2c) the aesthetic can be understood as a vital means through which some people sought to control those ‘temporal dislocations’.

More importantly, this relationship between social depth and the stasis of surface projections locates Simmel’s aesthetics within a particular epistemology, and allows for the most telling connections between a period of time-space compression at the turn of the last century and the contemporary experiences of the new cultural class. At the simplest level the gaze can be understood as demarcating the material power to look. Thus, though in the nineteenth century the gaze of the urban flâneur was a gaze predominantly projected by men, at women (Wilson, 1991), it may also have been projected by women in a position of some class privilege onto the city’s working class population - both male and female (Wolff, 1990; Walkowitz, 1992). More recently the gaze has been reclaimed by some women of colour as a vital act of resistance within a patriarchal and racist society (hooks, 1992), and by some lesbians and gay men as a means of negotiating their ‘invisibility’ in a social space actively constructed as heterosexual (Munt, 1994).

The operation of this ‘gay gaze’ in particular calls into question any easy understandings of the gaze as a system of sexual objectification (cf Mulvey, 1975) and whether such objectification is necessarily a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ thing (cf Freud, 1912/1981). So too some feminist critics have called for a reclamation of the gaze as a means of visual pleasure outside and beyond the negative associations it has attracted within some

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8 For example, in *Burnt Norton*, the first of the Four Quartets, Elliot writes:

"... Words move, music moves
Only in time: but that which is only living
Can only die. Words, after speech, reach
Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
Moves perpetually in its stillness.
Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,
Not that only, but the co-existence,
Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
And the end and the beginning were always there
Before the beginning and after the end..."

schools of feminist thought (Haraway, 1988). But, at a deeper level, the gaze *does* articulate a particular relationship between Subject and Object, working through a system of 'temporal objectification'. As the object of the gaze is rendered silent, and static, the bearer of the gaze may invest that object with his or her own needs and desires, freed from the responsibilities of mutual interaction. At the same time the *stasis* of the object serves to underline the subject's own sense of temporal *progress*, both at a personal and social level.

Where there can be suggested a number of similarities between the social position of a nineteenth century flâneurial class, and a 'new' cultural class, it is not surprising that we may see a number of similarities in the leisure activities of the two groups. Armed with the same symbolic competence as their nineteenth century forebears the operation of an aestheticized gaze should hold a number of attractions for this contemporary metropolitan class. For example, as they negotiate the increasing cultural diversity of their local areas through the operation of a powerful 'exotic gaze' so they are free to invest the presence of these other groups with their own understandings and desires (May, 1993). In effect these environments offer the new cultural class the space to enact what Featherstone (1992) calls a system of 'controlled de-control'. Immersed in difference these 'new urban flâneurs' are secure in the knowledge that they may return to the safety and familiarity of home (cf Davis, 1990).

So too it could be suggested that one of the key attractions of gentrification itself is that it allows the gentrifier a sense of wealth, and social progress, relative to the poverty of the surrounding inner city areas less easily obtained in a suburban environment. At a different level, though members of the new cultural class are attracted to precisely those areas that articulate a sense of social and cultural complexity, so too are they perhaps most open to the 'dislocations' of globalisation that undermine any 'coherent', or 'closed' identity (see chapter 2.1a). If so the ability to categorize the surrounding populace through the operation of Simmel's 'aesthetic attitude' would hold a number of advantages.

Finally, that same attitude offers the potential of an all encompassing archimedean perspective. For a group which establishes its class position through the structures of cultural capital the ability to access the world's cultures (and position those cultures in a secure and knowable position) through only the briefest glimpse offers unlimited attractions. One may 'enter the Other', it seems, simply by undertaking a quick trip down the high street and keeping one's eyes open. Armed with this knowledge one may then, ironically, use it quite instrumentally within a system of cultural capital that is itself presented as part of a broader liberal project for the promotion and acceptance of
difference.

But, there may also emerge a number of important differences between the activities of the two groups. Most significantly, aside from a few notable exceptions (cf. Walkowitz, 1992), the gaze of the nineteenth century flâneur was primarily directed across the divisions of class and gender. In the contemporary inner city, and given the attraction of the new cultural class to the cultural diversity of these areas, the gaze may now be operating primarily across the divisions of culture and ethnicity. In the coming substantive chapters I shall trace the operation of a powerful 'exotic gaze' and suggest its importance as a means through which the new cultural class respondents may both welcome, and control, the processes of global change. Furthermore, given changes in the nature of gender relations, and the form of the city itself, these 'new urban flâneurs' are as likely to be women as men. So too, the geography of the urban flâneur may well be changing. A weakness in Featherstone's (1992) argument, for example, is that he traces the continued presence of the flâneur only in those sites of spectacle that most resemble the department stores and arcades of the nineteenth century. But as the hunting grounds of the new urban flâneurs have shifted from the centre of the city to their own residential areas so it may be a reformulated 'tourist gaze' that is acting as the key mechanism of social 'interaction' in the contemporary high street (cf. Urry, 1990).

A reconsideration of these connections between the nineteenth century and the contemporary period thus offers some important insights. Most importantly, where the gaze operates through a strict demarcation of Subject and Object, its operation suggests the continued power of an unequal system of binary thought long connected to a modern epistemology, and one which the new cultural class are supposedly challenging (see chapters 1.2 and 2.1c). Furthermore, where the aesthetic is understood as allowing one to forge both a more comforting relationship with time, and to welcome and contain the processes of cultural implosion associated with a period of global change, it clarifies the complexity of those 'mechanisms of control' identified as a means through which people may be 'handling' the dislocations of time-space compression. Where the gaze demarcates the material power to look, those same systems of 'retreat' may articulate the actions of the most empowered. The operations of an aestheticized gaze will thus form a central organisational theme in the succeeding substantive chapters, where it is considered as both a means of 'control' over the 'dislocations' of time-space compression, and as delineating a position of material empowerment.

Finally, as it is connected to a wider system of binary thought, and continues to operate most often as a means of sexual objectification directed by men at women (Rose,
1993), so we might expect any gaze constructed by the female respondents (whether of the new cultural class or working class) to be more ambiguous than that projected by the male respondents. The gaze can only be understood as operating through a shifting hierarchy of material power, such that it perfectly articulates those more complex and ambiguous subject positions associated with the challenges of a postmodern epistemology (see chapter 1.2).

It is these ambiguities that I want to explore in detail in the first substantive chapter. Since the proliferation of a distancing gaze is often associated with developments in communication technology (Bauman, 1988; Bech, 1992), I shall explore these debates with a detailed analysis of the changing relations of presence and absence as experienced through these technologies. As it traces the differential deployment of a 'technological gaze' the analysis should allow us to connect any re-organisation in the nature of presence and absence to a wider investigation of the disruptions of binary thought associated with a period of time-space compression (see chapter 2.1c). Before moving on, however, we need to clarify how these rather abstract theoretical arguments can be opened up to empirical analysis. That is the task of the next chapter.
Here we are—

"Helen Sharman travelled over 3,000,000 miles in space and arrived back safe and sound twelve seconds early.

The Americans are planning to launch 2,000 jellyfish, 50 mice, 50 rats and 4 women!" Humph

Can you credit it? Do you think these people give one minute's thought to people like us who have to wait hours on end for a bus to Stoke Newington?

Figure 1: Waiting for the 149 (source: The Guardian)
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

"Much of our thinking about contemporary society - about the practices and cultures of everyday life - is informed less by an understanding of the detailed practices of real people as they go about their daily business than an abstract theorizing that takes for granted, almost as much as we do ourselves in our daily lives, the forces and structures, the conflicts and contradictions, of quotidian reality."

(David Morley, Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies, 1992:247)

The current failure to construct a more grounded sociology of recent change needs to be understood less through the positioning of such change beyond the possibilities of empirical investigation, than in relation to the deployment of inappropriate methodologies. For example, many continue to access the 'lived experience' of time-space compression and the postmodern only through readings of either a number of 'seminal' cultural texts (seminal for whom? and how 'read'?), or elaborate deconstructions of those environments like the mega mall or dockland development that supposedly plunge all users into a confusing world of spatio-temporal disjuncture (cf Connor,1989; Hopkins, 1990; Jameson, 1984, 1991; Pfeil, 1990; Shields, 1989; Soja, 1990). As such readings remain wholly assumed neither they, nor the 'representative' descriptions of a quantitative methodology, can move any closer to capturing the lived experience of that change (Jackson, 1993a).

But in recent years an increasing number of geographers have been drawn towards developments in qualitative methods (Eyles & Smith, 1988). These methods are centrally concerned with questions of meaning rather than description, and seek to understand parts of the world through the experiences of those who 'live them out', rather than from the perspective of some detached and neutral observer (Bondi & Domosh, 1992; Haraway, 1988). They operate around their own principles of validation, and imply a rather different set of sampling procedures from those traditionally employed in the social sciences (McCracken, 1988; Mitchell, 1983). Central to them is a recognition of the power relations, stretching from the field to the academy, that structure both the interview process and the act of interpretation itself, raising a number of issues concerning the relations of 'theory' and 'method' more widely (Clifford, 1992; Giddens, 1984; Hunt, 1992; Jenson & Jankowski, 1991).

Within such methods any notion of the 'pure subject' is rejected. Rather, the negotiation of different understandings and identities is understood as always pragmatic,
implying a certain fluidity and contingency (Miles & Crush, 1993). As such they offer an excellent means through which to capture something of the day-to-day experiences of time-space compression, experiences that may themselves be both highly ambiguous, if not contradictory. This chapter explores the rationale behind my use of a qualitative methodology, outlining the particular techniques I have used, and those I have rejected, in an attempt to construct a more grounded sociology of recent change. It is divided into five sections.

The first section introduces debates around the nature of case study areas, and outlines the rationale behind the decision to contextualize the current study in Stoke Newington. I concentrate in particular on the history of area, because it is debates around representations of the area’s past that have characterized many of the conflicts between Stoke Newington’s working class and middle class residents over recent years (see chapter 7). The second section describes the selection of respondents. Attention is drawn to the use of a strategic continuum of respondents, and the respondents themselves are introduced. Thirdly, after a brief overview of some of the techniques that were rejected, I discuss the decision to structure the study around the use of semi-structured, in-depth repeat interviews. I introduce a few of the interview ‘topics’ that were used to unpack the experiences of time-space compression, and discuss some of the practical issues raised in work of this sort - concentrating in particular on the complex power relations negotiated within the interview process.

Fourth is a somewhat longer discussion of data analysis. It is argued that though perhaps the most important aspect of a qualitative method, the actual process of data coding, and thus the practice of interpretation, is often left rather undeveloped. I concentrate upon the coding system I have used to interpret the interviews at some length and, returning to a discussion of the unequal power relations inherent to any act of interpretation, locate my interpretation within a ‘realist’ epistemology. The final section discusses the power relations of writing. It outlines the editing procedure used, and the broad structure of the thesis.

3.2a The use of case study areas

There is a need always to contextualize our theoretical understandings within the life worlds of the respondents’ themselves (Morley, 1991), and never more so than in a project that seeks to investigate how processes of global change may be impacting upon people’s understandings of place and place identity. This thesis moves around the use of a single ‘case study’ area - Stoke Newington in inner London - from which all the respondents are drawn, and through their understandings of which I may better access
these debates (Figures 2 & 3).

But, though the use of case study areas has done much to move researchers away from nomothetic debate towards an assertion of empirical specificity, allowing a new 'wholeness' of understanding based around 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973), their use has also been subject to a critique similar to that concerning notions of a 'pure', or 'bounded' subject (Cook & Crang, 1994). Geographers in particular have been guilty of drawing the boundaries of these areas in ways that imply they are either secure, or discrete (cf Cooke, 1989; Massey, 1991b). Within a project concerning the negotiation of the 'global' and the 'local' such boundaries would clearly be especially inappropriate (see chapter 2.1b).

Stoke Newington was therefore chosen primarily because it is an area of considerable social and ethnic diversity. Within it there can be traced a whole number of place identities not always congruent with each other, and all of which must be understood as constructed through a wider set of global inter-relations. In recent years the area has been subject to processes of gentrification, and has attracted precisely those 'taste makers' who have been identified as central to a sociology of both time-space compression and postmodernity (Butler, 1991; Featherstone, 1991). The area also has the advantage of having been the lens through which Patrick Wright undertook his investigation of a national 'heritage industry', the comforts of which have been positioned as central to processes of time-space compression (Wright, 1985, 1991). Rather than being held up as somehow 'typical', the selection of Stoke Newington as a case study area is thus understood as 'strategic' (cf Wallman et al, 1982: Wallman, 1983) and the experience of these processes in other areas, and by other groups, is expected to be somewhat different. A final bonus is that it is the area I have lived in for the past three years, and of which I have become extremely fond.

3.2b Welcome to the global village: introducing Stoke Newington

Stoke Newington lies in the north-west corner of the London borough of Hackney, about three miles north of the City of London (Figure 3). Its name, from the original 'settlement in the wood', can be traced as far back as the Domesday book, and by the eighteenth century the area was already "known for its connexions with Dissent and Literature" (Bolton, 1985:139). Throughout that century it remained largely the preserve of wealthy city merchants and members of the gentry attracted to its rural feel, and was

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Figure 2: Stoke Newington in a global context
Figure 3: Location of the case study area: Greater London
famed for a certain Protestant non-conformity exemplified by its most famous resident Daniel Defoe.

As with other outlying London districts large-scale development did not come until the early-to-mid nineteenth century, fuelled by rapid, piece-meal and speculative developments and the coming, in 1872, of a rail and tram connection to Bishopsgate. In many ways this development set the pattern for the area’s future social geography. Around Abney Park cemetery (Figure 4) a number of large, flat fronted ‘north London Town Houses’ and villas were constructed for an established middle class. To the south of Church Street, in the 1860s and ’70s, Albert Town was dominated by smaller terraced houses, inhabited by a ‘respectable’ middle class - bank clerks and craftsmen, the original ‘new’ service class (cf Benjamin, 1985; Smith, 1987). To the south, in Shacklewell, crowded a growing population of labourers and those in service to their wealthier neighbours. Indeed by 1862 only 11.5% of the population was described as ‘upper class’, with 75% categorised as ‘working class’. The proportion of those in service was captured in gender differences in the local population. In the wealthier areas around Church Street 61% of the population were women (since most servants ‘lived in’) against only 52% of the population to the south.

The next great period of growth came between 1870 and 1914 when the area’s population expanded fourfold, with an influx from both the City, and the East End. Most importantly, by then Stoke Newington was already infamous not only for pockets of considerable poverty, but also as an area of some ethnic and cultural diversity. By 1902, for example, the area of Shacklewell was described as the ‘worst in North London’ (a popular epithet, it seems, a similar description being used for the area around Archway further north) and was home to a largely immigrant Irish labour force, whilst the 1870s saw the in-migration of a considerable population of orthodox Jews (White, 1986; Widgery, 1993). The Jewish community were attracted to the area not only because of its proximity to the north London rag trade, and the support networks and synagogues of Bethnal Green, but also because of this reputation for liberal non-conformism.

This reputation may, however, have been less than deserved, as the area’s immigrant population suffered a familiar backlash from earlier residents: “In 1903 a writer in the St.Mary’s Parish magazine commented on the changes since 1866: the rich had

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2 Here Albert Town refers to the area demarcated in Figure 4. Stoke Newington’s ward boundaries often refer to the names of those builders who originally developed the area in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, and in its true sense Albert Town in fact covers a smaller area than suggested here (see Bolton, 1985). But within the local area the term has become synonymous with a larger area to the south of Church Street that is often taken to define ‘Stoke Newington proper’, and it is this use that I have adopted here - often using the two terms interchangeably.
To Tottenham
500 metres

To Clapton

Figure 4: Albert Town and Shacklewell
moved out and the poor had flocked in. Only 50 out of 200 families were the same. By 1906 ... the Jews had moved in, and many houses had become boarding houses for young foreigners" (Bolton, 1985:157). Such accounts are important because they warn us against positioning a sensibility to rapid local change as only a recent phenomenon.

The social geography that emerged at the turn of the century continued through the clearance and public housing projects of the 1930s, '40s and '50s, and can be seen in the area's employment and housing patterns. By 1961 40% of housing was publicly owned, largely concentrated in the south of the area (such that much original Victorian architecture survives in Albert Town and north of Church Street), 27% privately rented and 25% privately owned. Through until the 1960s textiles dominated local employment, with 25% of workers employed as out workers in 1947, and as floor space fell in the 1960s so outworking increased to 35%. Like other areas in inner London the next largest industry was light engineering and metals (47% of floor space in 1947, though falling to 18% in 1960) with printing and foodstuffs following closely behind.

For many residents the most significant changes in the area have occurred with two dramatic shifts in population from the late 1950s onwards. By then Stoke Newington was populated by a predominantly white, 'respectable' working class - a pattern emphasised with the movement out, in the 1960s, of the area's wealthier Jewish residents north to Stamford Hill. Starting with the largest in-migration of New Commonwealth residents of any London borough, through to the arrival of an Indian, Chinese and Bangladeshi population in the 1960s and 70s, to the more recent movement into the area of a Turkish community, and from the late 1980s a large population of Kurdish refugees, the area now forms part of one of London's most ethnically and culturally diverse boroughs.

Shadowing these changes in the area's cultural mix have come significant changes in class composition as, alongside other areas of Hackney, Stoke Newington has witnessed two rounds of gentrification. Both can be connected to the arrival of a set of 'taste makers' central to a sociology of time-space compression and postmodernity. In the early 1970s, as gentrification spread north and east from Camden and Islington (Figure 3), a class of 'marginal gentrifiers' moved into the area, attracted by relatively cheap housing costs and the possibility of local authority improvement grants (cf Rose, 1984, 1989). These residents were dominated by public sector employees, teachers, social workers and academics, or the purveyors of state funded 'symbolic goods' (Butler, 1991; Featherstone, 1991). In the mid 1980s, and as house prices rose, a second group of residents arrived so that the area now also has a remarkable concentration of workers
from media, design and the arts more widely.  

In many ways the attraction of the area for these groups can be understood as it offered a cheaper version of nearby Islington: "[Areas] such as East Dulwich, Stoke Newington and De Beauvoir, are soaking up those who can’t afford Dulwich or Islington. If baby boutiques, interior design shops and places selling gifts from Italy are the yardstick, then perhaps areas such as Stoke Newington have arrived" (McGhie, 1994:76). Though there are tensions between these two fractions (not least over the impact of this second group on house prices, and the general cost of local shops and services) they can both be identified as members of the new cultural class that Ley (1994) identifies. They share what Gouldner has termed a common speech community - a culture of 'careful and critical discourse' acquired through higher education (Gouldner, 1979) - and one that is unique to the area (Butler, 1991). In particular, even though it may be increasingly characterized by a number of 'media trendies', in contrast to nearby Islington, Stoke Newington has re-gained a certain reputation for liberal political values or, as one local commentator puts it:

"'No politics please', said Holden Matthews. I agree but to write of Stoke Newington without politics is to eulogize the Himalayas without mentioning snow. This place has become the Islington of twenty years ago, the Kentish Town of a decade ago: it is the cutting edge of the gentrifying of London's Victoriana. We are full to the gunwales with chic new-wave politicians, ex-hippies with burgeoning businesses, poets with directorships. We are a bastion of the chattering classes. We are more a-twitter than a treeful of starlings".

(Richard North in an estate agent’s promotional newspaper; quoted in Butler, 1991:142)

As North recognizes these residents have been attracted to Stoke Newington precisely because of its reputation for a certain political non-conformism. Central attractions are thus its Victorian architecture and a number of reminders of the area’s more ‘genteel past’ (Wright, 1985). At the same time those same residents are also attracted by the area’s essential ‘working class vitality’, and its ‘exciting and alternative’ ethnic and cultural mix (Wright, 1991).

Taken together these population changes have had a dramatic impact on the local social geography, and in many ways the area can now be divided into two quite distinct

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3 For a detailed breakdown of these movements concerning issues of occupation, political allegiance, class fraction, gender and race see Butler (1991). But some idea of this concentration can be seen in responses to my original pilot study. In one of the ‘trendier’ streets off Church Street, for example, of some 16 houses 5 were occupied by people working in the media, 4 by those working in design or the arts (both groups having moved into the street in the mid 1980s) and a further 3 by those working in the ‘caring professions’ (2 teachers and a social worker) who ‘pioneered’ the street in the early 1970s.
districts. Around Church Street (Figure 5), and to a lesser extent Albert Town (Figure 6), the area has rejuvenated itself in the image of that curious mix of the 'traditional' and 'exotic' so characteristic of the tastes of a (white) metropolitan service class (cf Sassen, 1991). Pubs have changed their names to something more in keeping with the artistic sensibilities of these new residents (from the Crown and Anchor to the Samuel Beckett, for example) and new shops and wine bars have sprung up that cater almost exclusively to a middle class clientele. Where once you might have found a local green grocers, there is now a specialist delicatessen, kite shop and fitness centre. But even as emphasis is placed on the area's Victorian architecture, and its much remarked 'village feel', for those who have been attracted by its ethnic mix there are Peruvian rug shops, Anatolian cafes and reassuringly expensive Indian and Mexican restaurants. Church Street itself has recently appeared in a number of 'lifestyle magazines' as one of London's most charming 'hidden villages', and local entrepreneurs now seem ready even to take on Islington.

But in the high street (Figure 7), and south in Shacklewell, is a very different world. As in the 1970s this area is still characterized by lower housing standards and a poorer population divided by race and culture. There one will find the Bangladeshi grocers used by those who work in the expensive 'Indian' restaurants of Church Street, but also a Mosque (previously a Synagogue, and before that a cinema), a Chinese fish and chip shop, Turkish bakers, Kurdish tea shops, and a purveyor of fine African textiles. Just off the high street one will also find many of the area's sweat shops.

Further south, that border between the contemporary inner city and the sanitised isolation the new cultural class residents are so keen to preserve (but also transgress) becomes more difficult to sustain, as the area merges with Dalston. Less than half a mile from the Peruvian rug shops of Church Street, is Dalston's Ridley Road (Figure 8), the local market where many of the area's poorer residents have to shop, and where as Paul

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4 This geography was certainly traced by those members of the new cultural class I talked to in an earlier pilot study.

5 Even as such shops celebrate the 'exotic' they are situated in an area that celebrates its 'village feel'. Indeed, for many in the pilot study, the relative isolation of the area (unlike Islington it is not on any tube link) was an added attraction. Not only, of course, does such isolation reduce housing costs somewhat, but supposedly lends Stoke Newington an air of a 'hidden village', one that can be found only by those with the appropriate cultural capital. A recent campaign by the local Retailers Association capitalized on this with a poster campaign on the local buses illustrating a Roy Lichenstein figure bemoaning 'If only I'd stayed on the 73 I could be in Church Street by now' (rather, one assumes, than Islington).

6 In 1973 only 48% of 'West Indian' households had any bathroom facilities, compared to 75% of white households. The area is still characterized by evidence of considerable poverty, but is now home to a population of Turks, Kurds, and Bangladeshis as well as West Indians, West Africans and sizeable Irish and English populations.
Figure 5: Stoke Newington Church Street

Figure 6: A typical street in Albert Town
Figure 7: Stoke Newington High Street

Figure 8: Ridley Road market (Dalston)
Harrison writes: "Behind those faces lie reaches of time and space, the wheat fields of South Asia, the hills and olive groves of the Mediterranean, the plantations of the Caribbean, the ghettos of Poland, Russia and Germany, underemployment and poverty ... Ridley Road has to cater for the tastes and habits of the world" (Harrison, 1988:26-7). As these worlds jostle together in a series of terrible polarities, in many ways Stoke Newington has become a quintessential area in which to study not only the diverse processes of time-space compression, but also those conflicts liable to emerge as these different residents battle to construct their own unique sense of place.

3.3a 'If only I'd stayed on the 73': the selection of respondents

As was argued in chapter 2.3 the decision to construct a sociology of time-space compression around the experiences of the new service class was in many ways 'reactive', driven by an existing literature. But, because the thesis is not an examination of the new service class per se, the choice of which fraction of this rather diverse group to look at was in turn driven by the structure of the local area itself (though see chapter 2.3b). In contrast to nearby Islington (Figure 3), which has continued to attract higher earning groups from finance, medicine and law, gentrification within Stoke Newington has been dominated by the arrival, in different periods, of members of the new cultural class - those working in the 'caring professions' (both public and private) and in media, design and the arts more widely (cf Ley, 1994). Since this latter group in particular may play an especially pertinent role in that 'aestheticization of everyday life' central to issues of both time-space compression and postmodernity (Featherstone, 1992), it was decided to concentrate the analysis upon their experiences.

This research works with a qualitative methodology, and a qualitative approach works around a rather different set of 'sampling' procedures than those employed within a quantitative methodology. Concerned with capturing the ambiguity of inter-subjective experience, the selection of respondents moves around issues of the quality and positionality of the information different social actors can offer, rather than around issues only of number (McCracken, 1988). The 'sample population' can therefore be quite small, and for the present thesis it was decided to draw up a 'strategic continuum' of respondents, each of whom might throw light upon rather different experiences of the same processes. Within the new cultural class it was felt to be particularly important to bring out those differences associated with gender, as well as occupation (see chapter 1.2). Since within Stoke Newington the new cultural class are almost entirely white and almost all of the same age, ethnicity and age were already relatively constant, and no analysis has been attempted of variations by sexuality.
In an earlier pilot study a simple mail shot (Appendix 1.1), asking residents for help in a project looking at life in Stoke Newington, had proved the easiest way to attract respondents. An advertising campaign targeted at new cultural class residents, and placed in a number of the local middle class ‘haunts’ (from the jazz bar, to the health food shop), had been less successful and in retrospect was poorly worded (Appendix 1.2). For the main research it was therefore decided to concentrate initial efforts on a similar letter, but one aimed specifically at the local middle class population.

Thirty one letters were delivered in the streets to the east of Church Street, and Albert Town more widely (Figure 4). The letter simply asked for help in a project looking at life in Stoke Newington, and drew attention to a small payment for each meeting. Each was written on university headed paper, contained a reply slip with telephone number on which they could contact me to discuss further details, and a self addressed (stamped) envelope (Appendix 2.1).

Though I had a significant response from this first mail shot few replies were received from professional men (in retrospect it was underestimated how many households were structured around married couples, where only the man worked). Two weeks later a second mail drop was undertaken, delivering a ‘follow up’ letter to these first households, and the first letter to some 29 others. Since at the time ‘postmodernism’ was receiving considerable attention in the national media, and particularly those newspapers aimed at a middle class readership, it was felt that drawing attention to the ‘postmodern’ might elicit a greater response. The follow up letter thus promised respondents the opportunity to ‘find out what the fuss about postmodernism is all about’, as well as renewing a call for male professionals. At the same time a letter was sent to a number of local community groups who it was felt might have professional staff who lived in the area and willing to participate (Appendix 2.2). Though letters to local groups generated few replies, the follow up letter received greater attention, and generated some 29 possible respondents, all members of a local new cultural class (Appendix 2.3).

Where a qualitative methodology, and especially one involving repeat interviews (see later), calls for a fairly large commitment in terms of both time and emotional energy, it is critical to make clear from the start what involvement in such a project will demand from the respondent. Everyone who replied was therefore contacted by telephone, and an initial meeting arranged either in their home, or a mutually convenient public place (especially important, as a male researcher, with female respondents). At these meetings I explained not only what the project was attempting to capture, and how I wanted to conduct the research, but also the commitment, both emotionally and in time, the project would require. After these meetings a number of people felt they could not participate
in the project.

Beyond this the final selection of new cultural class respondents was driven by a number of other issues. First, it was felt to be important that the final group reflected the average age of the area’s new cultural class residents (Butler, 1991). Secondly, the group needed to be balanced according to gender. Thirdly, it was decided not to open the analysis to possible divisions within the new cultural class according to the sector of employment (cf. McAdams, 1987; Lash & Urry, 1987), and this decision tended to intersect with issues of age. Where gentrification within Stoke Newington can be divided into two distinct periods, the former dominated by public sector employees, the decision to concentrate the analysis upon the experience of those in their mid-to-late thirties also had the effect of limiting the analysis to the experience of those working in the private (or charity) sector (cf. Ley, 1994). Finally, it was also felt to be important that the respondents chosen were people to whom I could easily relate, and who could talk easily to me (see later). Together these criteria limited the selection to five possible respondents - two men and three women.\(^7\)

The project is also concerned with comparing the experiences of this group to the experiences of those in rather less privileged positions. Early on I was particularly concerned in tracing the experience of some of the area’s ethnic minority residents, and particularly of some of the area’s first generation immigrants. In part this was because I was interested in how these residents might construct their own sense of place, but I was also especially interested in understanding how these residents might negotiate those unequal power relations inherent to the consumption practices of the new cultural class themselves (and especially a powerful ‘exotic gaze’, see chapter 2.3c).

But contacting this second group proved more difficult. Though, again through a mail shot to local community groups (Appendix 2.4), a number of meetings were arranged with representatives of these groups, it quickly became clear either that people did not want to become involved, or those that did did not speak enough English to enable me to interview them without the aid of an interpreter (which, it was felt, would hinder the flow of our meetings). It was also felt that working with people of colour faced me, as a white researcher, with a number of special theoretical difficulties that would (further) problematize an already difficult analysis.

Within the academy workers have become increasingly sensitive to the (mis)conception and (mis)representation of those we seek to interview, and especially

\(^7\) Five new cultural class respondents were interviewed, including a woman who worked in the public sector. But, in the end, the material generated in my sessions with her was not used for reasons discussed below.
those in a position of less power (Abu-Lughod, 1990; Oliver, 1992). In part, behind these debates lie issues over the motives of research, but they also refer to difficulties any researcher must face in understanding the position of another (cf Jackson, 1991a).

As a straight, male, middle class worker a similar set of arguments could be made concerning an inability to capture the experience of female, working class or gay respondents. But within a methodology that understands meaning as constructed through the alignment of different, but mutually constitutive 'fields of meaning' (Pile, 1992), it was felt that with these groups there was at least the possibility of some shared experience. In contrast, in the pilot study interviews with a Nigerian friend made clear that she was simply working within a quite different field of meaning. In our discussions on time, for example, it seemed her temporal consciousness worked through a set of spiritual structures that I could not understand, and which bore little if any relation to the understandings of the other (English, white) respondents.

Thus it was felt that, rather than work with black and ethnic minority respondents, the research would focus upon what I earlier termed the 'itinerary of silencing rather than retrieval' (chapter 1.3). In this sense, though the thesis is directly concerned with developing "insights and knowledge into global relations among people diversely located and vying for power" (Gordon, 1988:21, quoted in Cook & Crang, 1994:17), it aims to "turn the question away from Others, especially poor and powerless Others, and onto ourselves and our own quite violent practices whereby we figure ourselves through the creation of objects of study" (Taussig, 1992:38, quoted in Cook & Crang, 1994:17). For myself this reflexivity is especially marked for two reasons: first, because I am looking at these power relations from a white perspective; and secondly, because where I am looking at those structures of power constructed by the new cultural class, working with 'people like oneself' raises an added degree of reflexivity.

In the light of both these practical and theoretical issues it was decided to compare the experiences of the new cultural class respondents with those of a group of less empowered white residents. But contacting members of a local white working class population also proved difficult. Once again a mail shot was attempted, but this time with little success (Appendix 2.5). Adverts were then placed in local shops, and letters sent to local Tenants Associations (Appendix 2.6). In total I received only 15 replies (perhaps not helped in that when people 'phoned they had tended to take the advert with them!). Since I now wanted to talk only to white residents, I was concerned with generating a similar gender division as with the new cultural class respondents, and I wanted to keep the age of at least one participant constant with the other respondents, in fact only Paul and Pat fitted the criteria (Appendix 2.7).
Clearly the selection of respondents was not straightforward. Once interviews had started I continued to be concerned that I was not drawing a 'wide enough' sample. Only after prolonged debate with my supervisors did I agree to 'limit' the research to its current form. In fact, considering the methods used, and in particular the number of sessions undertaken with each respondent, the sample size would seem comparable to similar work elsewhere (cf Cook, 1992; Pile, 1992). Furthermore, once analysis had started it became clear, as Burgess found, that I had in any case "heard the range of stories that people within the community [had] to tell [me] about their experiences and explanations of what is happening to them" (Burgess, 1992a:209). Indeed, as it became clear that few significant differences were emerging in the experience of the new cultural respondents according to the sector of employment, it was decided not to use a set of interviews conducted with a third female respondent who worked in social services and whose experiences were in fact quite close to those of the other two new cultural class women interviewed. This finally left me with six respondents, four from the new cultural class, and two local working class residents, each group divided equally by gender.

One of the aims of the research is to allow the reader to follow the diverse experiences of time-space compression through different arenas of an individual's life (such that the highly ambiguous nature of these processes can be recognized), as well as to build some understanding of how such processes are structured around a broader set of social positions. It is therefore essential that the reader can gain some idea of the personality of the respondents themselves, such that their experiences are understood in relation to their wider biographies, and they do not simply become cyphers around which different theoretical positions are hung (cf Bell, 1994; Burgess et al, 1988a & b). It is hoped that this understanding will become possible as the thesis proceeds, but here I have also provided a brief biography of each respondent. Though all were happy to use their own names, it was felt that the respondents might feel different if they saw their opinions committed to print. All names, and the names of the respondent's children or partners, are therefore pseudonyms.

3.3b George, Alex, Dorian, Amanda, Paul and Pat

'George':

George is in his mid-thirties, married and works as an editor for a major international news organisation. Indeed the first time we met was at his office. As I struggled to articulate what my project was about my attention was drawn to his desk. There, next to a large dial, was a tannoy and behind them both a map of the world with
a number of passport photos of well known journalists stuck on it. As George explained, by turning the dial one could receive through the tannoy live (unedited) output from almost anywhere in the world. As a key member of those ‘taste makers’ that have been identified as central to a sociology of time-space compression, as George himself joked, his profile is just a "bit too classic".

Born in the Home Counties to a wealthy middle class family, after a "hellish time" at Harrow George went to Oxford University to read history. Having "bummed around" India for a couple of years he then moved to a flat in Notting Hill. After marrying he finally moving to a house in one of the ‘trendier’ streets of Stoke Newington in the mid 1980s. His wife works as an editor for a well known women’s ‘life style’ magazine, and they have one daughter and a live-in nanny.

‘Alex’:

Alex was also born in the Home Counties, into a relatively wealthy family. As his father was an engineer Alex spent much of his childhood travelling around the developing world. After studying animation at Art School in South London, Alex bought a flat with his brother in Maida Vale, and set up his own animation business in a converted stables block in Islington. The move to Stoke Newington came when Alex married in the mid 1980s. He and his wife now live in a Victorian terraced house in Albert Town from where Alex can cycle to work. He is in his mid-thirties, and has three children (including twins born towards the end of the fieldwork period). Unlike the others all our meetings took place during the lunch hour in his office in Islington, after which we often went to the pub.

‘Dorian’:

Though Dorian works in graphic design, her background is a little different from either George or Alex’s. Born into a working class home in Stepney, east London, Dorian grew up in an east London suburb from which she was keen to escape. Education was seen as the key and Dorian studied design in central London, since then working as a freelancer for different publishing companies. After leaving college she quickly bought a flat with her then partner in Dalston (or, as she would have it, "Islington borders"). On separating, she bought her house in Albert Town after a conscious decision to move to ‘where it was happening’, and not being able to afford Islington itself. Dorian is in her mid-thirties and single, though she has taken a lodger to help with the mortgage repayments.
'Amanda':

Amanda grew up in north central London. Marrying young, she first worked as a primary school teacher, living with her husband in Hackney, before moving to Stoke Newington some ten years ago. She now works as an 'ex-user' in the charity sector of mental health care. Unlike the other respondents, Amanda is deeply political, with affiliations to a far left organisation, and her work has fuelled an interest in race relations. For many years she has been involved in a number of local community groups, and especially those working with West Indian and West African members. Amanda is in her mid-to-late thirties with one child (now a teenager) by her previous marriage. She lives in a Victorian house in Albert Town, but one which she is only now beginning to 'do up'.

'Paul':

Paul is in his early thirties and married with three children. Both he and his wife grew up in Stoke Newington (in fact in the same street) and his family all still live within a two mile radius. After a variety of jobs in the local area, Paul worked for London Transport as a bus conductor before becoming a housing estate cleaner in Hoxton. He and his family now live in a council flat at the northern edge of Albert Town. His wife works for a well known high street bank, and Paul also runs a stall in Brick Lane’s Sunday market, Spitalfields. His dream is to give up work for the council and run the stall full-time, eventually buying a corner shop to pass onto his children.

'Pat':

The eldest respondent, Pat is in her early fifties. Like Paul she grew up in Stoke Newington and, apart from a brief and highly unsuccessful move to Croydon ten years ago ("I don’t know, they’re just different down there"), has lived in the area all her life. She and her first husband bought a house in Albert Town some thirty years ago, and raised a family of three children. Like Paul she has a deeply localised identity and though two of her children have moved no more than three miles away (the other lives next door) they have, for her, effectively "left London". After her first husband died Pat remarried and now spends the life insurance on a series of extraordinary holidays. She has assumed the role of local matriarch, and spends a great deal of time with her numerous grandchildren. Having spent some years as an out-worker for a local textile factory, she now works for "her old ladies" as a local authority home help.

3.4a The choice and power relations of method

One of the principle aims of the thesis is to move beyond the assumed readings
of an existing literature, and capture something of people's own understandings of the
diverse processes of time-space compression. As such, and in line with the general aims
of a qualitative approach, the methodology is centrally concerned with questions of
meaning. But, rather than locating meaning in the understandings of some distanced
academic observer, it seeks to understand how such meanings are constructed by these
respondents themselves, people who live out the changing relations of the 'global' and
the 'local' in their day-to-day lives. There are a range of techniques geared towards such
a project, ranging from participant observation to 'autophotography' (Eyles & Smith,
1988), and it is important to outline the criteria behind the selection of my own particular
methodology.

From the beginning it was felt that the main body of the thesis would move
around a theoretically informed thematic analysis drawn from peoples own accounts, and
gathered through a number of semi-structured interviews. But at the stage of an initial
pilot study a number of secondary techniques were also considered, largely because the
'triangulation' of multiple research methods is one way to ensure a more rounded picture
of any set of understandings, and to move towards greater 'theoretical adequacy' (Cook
& Crang, 1994; Morley & Silverstone, 1991; Schutz, 1967). Early on, for example, the use
of 'autophotography' was considered, as a way to capture people's own constructions of
their local area. In the end, however, this was rejected. It was felt that it would have
involved a detailed understanding of the 'politics of representation' that would draw
attention away from the main aims of the thesis (some may be better at using a camera
than others, for example, and some may not capture what they 'see' at all), and that an
understanding of people's constructions of their local area could as easily and more
directly be accessed through simple interview material (cf Cohen, 1989; Ziller, 1990; Ziller
& Smith, 1975). So too participant observation was rejected because it was felt such
techniques still located an understanding of the 'rationale' behind behaviour largely with
the observer, rather than the observed (cf Dwyer, 1977; Evans 1988; Tedlock, 1991).

Initially, however, there was the aim of deploying a 'creative tension' between
qualitative and quantitative techniques (Pile, 1992). For example, to capture the changing
relations of presence and absence I considered using a modification of Wallman's map
of 'affective distance', on which respondents could plot their social networks along the
lines of both geographical and emotional distance (cf Wallman et al, 1982). Once again,
however, it was felt not only that the emplotment exercise would take up too much time
in the interview, but that such themes could be accessed more directly through interview
material itself.

Having rejected a number of possible techniques it was decided that the simplest
way to access such meanings was through an analysis of topics within which people could simply describe their 'everyday' experiences of time-space compression, and from which a more abstract set of theoretical concerns could then be 'read off'. As well as constructing these topics in ways that were accessible to people's own experiences it was therefore critical to conduct these discussions in a manner that would allow people to explore these topics in sufficient depth to bring out the ambiguous and contradictory nature of those experiences.

But there also exist a number of interview formats, ranging from the highly structured, to the 'semi-structured', single, repeat and group interviews, all of which intimately affect the type of material generated and thus a wider set of debates concerning the relations of 'theory' and 'method'. In my pilot study I had worked with seven respondents around a 'semi-structured' technique, but conducted just two interviews with each respondent. In these I had not been able to generate enough depth to develop the themes I wished to discuss, and in the main study it was decided more sessions were necessary.

At the same time it was decided not to use either group interviews or focus groups (Greenbaum, 1988). Whilst such techniques have generated significant attention within the discipline (Burgess, 1992b; Burgess et al, 1988a & b; Burgess et al, 1991), and there are a number of overlaps between group work and approaches used in one-to-one repeat interviews, I felt group techniques had a number of drawbacks for the current project. First, I wanted to contextualize my respondent's understandings within a more developed biography of each respondent, and to do this with groups would have generated far too much material for a single worker to analyze. Secondly, group interviews can also represent an even more 'artificial' atmosphere than the one-to-one discussion, and people may not be confident enough to voice their opinions within the group especially when, as in the current research, many of the topics under discussion are of a highly personal nature. Thirdly, though this situation may be reversed, in as much as a group approach allows for the formulation of opinions in dialogue (particularly interesting, perhaps, within a conception of the new cultural class as a shared 'speech community') such work requires skills on the part of the co-ordinator that I did not feel I had. For example, the co-ordinator is often required to manage the group dynamic in such a way as to encourage revelation without engendering potentially damaging emotional confrontations. Though such a skill is also part of the repeat interview, such issues are generally easier to handle one-to-one than in in-depth groups (see Burgess et al, 1988a & b).

In terms of the current project, then, it was felt that in-depth, repeat, one-to-one
interviews held a number of benefits, both in relation to the type of topics under discussion and issues of coverage. Further, any research requires the negotiation of a set of unequal and hierarchical power relations. These issues impact upon the process of analysis, and the final presentation of the research document. But they are bought into stark relief within the interview itself, where a powerful researcher might intimidate a less powerful respondent into revealing aspects of their world they may wish to keep private, usually through playing on their professional credentials (Cornwall, 1984).

In the light of such arguments there has been a generalised move towards a less hierarchical research procedure. Here respondents are viewed not (or not only) as some sort of 'informational resource' to be milked for the benefit of the researcher (to get the material and advance their career, for example) but a (more) equal player in a project designed for the benefit of both parties. For example, it is often hoped that through the research process the respondent may have time to reflect on issues they would not normally dwell on, such that the research becomes a learning exercise for the respondent as well as the interviewer, and certainly this was one of the aims of the current project. One of the major benefits of a repeat interview format is that it allows time for this (more) equitable relationship to be established.

But this is not to imply that the interview itself will not move around the constant re-negotiation of a number of roles (Smith, 1988), and in the current project it quickly became clear that I was playing different roles with different respondents, and according to the topic under discussion. For example, when asking about the local area I would often move between the position of naive and inquisitive visitor, and that of local 'bore' (cf Jacobs, 1990). Where with Paul I tended to 'play' on our shared love of football, and my south London accent, with George and Alex there was a tendency to draw upon similar family and educational backgrounds. Even as this role playing can be understood as a move to engender greater intimacy, and thus encourage a certain material disclosure, it can also be seen as part of quite normal social interaction. We all play roles in all arenas of everyday life, and the 'cut off point' may only come when it is felt that such roles are a deliberate attempt to mislead, or intimidate the respondent.

Nor should such roles be understood as being played only by the researcher or always to the researcher's benefit. Many interviewees are quite capable of withholding information they do not want to disclose, as well as more subtle forms of 'resistance' (Plummer, 1983). Furthermore, there is still a certain prurience within the academy over the quite obvious role that sexual attraction can play in our research (Newton, 1993), combined with a tendency always to see such issues as working to the benefit of, if not always initiated by, the male researcher (cf Pile, 1991a). Pat, for example, certainly played
up her position of wise old matriarch (in contrast to the rather ‘daft’ intellectual who kept asking her such silly questions). In contrast, both Dorian and Amanda undertook a form of sexual flirtation that often made me extremely uncomfortable, but that I often reciprocated (not unaware that it was lending the interview a certain intimacy I would otherwise have found hard to generate).

Within a repeat interview format, where meetings may continue for several weeks (as in this case) or months, these relations can clearly become quite intense. This means that the researcher must tread a thin line between encouraging an intimacy that may lead to potentially damaging emotional disclosures (upsetting to both parties), and one in which the research may continue in a more open atmosphere. The respondent may often attempt to use such meetings as a form of therapy, and the researcher must be certain of how far they are prepared to let such a form develop (Burgess et al, 1988a & b).

For example, in my meetings with Amanda we often discovered material that was extremely upsetting to us both, and on one occasion I deliberately aborted the next meeting in order to let the general atmosphere ‘calm down’ before reconvening two weeks later (I feigned illness). Further, it is important to recognize that neither party may be prepared to continue such intimacy outside of the quite specific atmosphere of the meetings, such that these developments need to be recognized, and if necessary diverted, at the time of the interview itself. Certainly, when Dorian and I met some months after our sessions (we bumped into each other on a bus) the meeting was fraught, and Dorian seemed embarrassed over ‘what she might have told me about herself’. Yet in other cases, of course, researcher and interviewee might continue a friendly acquaintance. Since our interviews I have often met Alex quite easily on the street, I receive Christmas cards from Pat, and Paul has kept me informed of his growing family. Indeed, within an atmosphere that can generate such intimacy it was clearly important both that I liked my respondents, and that they liked me. As much as around those issues explored in section 3.3a, then, personal relations drove the selection procedure, and (I hope) the meetings were enjoyable for all concerned.®

3.4b Some everyday topics of time-space compression: the interview process

Repeat, in-depth interviews also hold a number of benefits in terms of the material

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® Once again this clearly raises issues over the ‘representativeness’ of respondents involved in a qualitative methodology. But such methods necessitate working with respondents who are willing to talk and, though this may seem to ‘bias’ one’s findings, the mode of validation is anyway rather different from that used within a quantitative methodology. It moves around the positionality of different respondents, and the interpretation is based upon the depth of experience that can be analyzed (see below).
gathered. In particular, where there is the potential for further meetings it is possible to return to issues discussed earlier, either to draw out the ambiguities and contradictions of certain understandings, to 'have another go' at a topic that the respondent, or interviewer, simply found difficult to articulate, or to continue a discussion that had proved emotionally difficult in another context. Moreover, as intimacy is generated, it is possible to move beyond a set of 'prepared' responses, to that 'private discourse' that often underlies everyday accounts (Cornwall, 1984).

In general, repeat interviews clearly allow for both a greater coverage of topics, and a more in-depth discussion of particular topics than is possible in the one-off or double interview. In my case it was decided, both in relation to the intimacy and 'difficulty' of the topics I wanted to deal with, and in terms of coverage, to conduct six sessions of approximately one hour each with each respondent, though this was flexible. Within this general format the interviews took a fairly traditional form. At the initial meeting I ran through the general aims of the research, and clarified both the topics I hoped to cover, and the commitment involved. Important here was a guarantee of attendance at all our sessions, and the provision of a nominal 'fee' (£5 for each meeting) helped formalize this 'research contract' - though a number of the respondents refused to be paid, or asked instead for a bottle wine or some other less formal token of my gratitude (cf Burgess et al, 1988a).

Next, it was vital to think through a series of topics with which each could relate their own experiences of time-space compression, without resorting to the kind of questions that all would have found unintelligible. For example, neither the respondents (nor myself) would have been able to answer directly a question asking 'whether one's traditional categories of spatial distinction are in a process of re-organisation', and yet it was exactly these issues I wanted to get at. Instead, therefore, I attempted to construct a series of 'examples' through which we could address these more abstract issues. In relation to presence and absence we talked about the consumption of 'foreign food', but also discussed each person's experiences of communication technology. Each example was chosen to inform upon a number of those theoretical issues I was concerned with tracing, whilst at the same time each session was structured such that all of these issues might be covered.

Within the course of each interview, and across the sessions, questions were organised in order to allow both the degree of intimacy, and reflexive difficulty, required for such questions to develop over time. The first session was primarily an introductory meeting, when respondents were encouraged to introduce themselves and talk through their general experiences of the local area (when and why they had moved there, and so
on). As well as providing a number of the nuts and bolts of the respondent’s biography, these more ‘neutral’ questions are an essential means of developing trust between researcher and interviewee (Burgess, 1992a; Spradley, 1979).

The second session was then given over to a discussion of the respondents working lives, within which we tended to concentrate upon the changing experience of communication technology and especially time. In the third session attention turned to the whole notion of holidays, and overseas travel, but also the changing nature of everyday food - each discussion allowing for an interpretation of both spatial and temporal understandings. Where intimacy had now developed, in the fourth session I asked each person to bring along a ‘favourite object’ that they felt said something about themselves. This technique was originally envisaged to open a discussion on consumption. In the end this theme was not developed in the final account but, as is often the case, the technique drew out a number of quite unexpected developments (see, for example, chapter 7.3). In the fifth session we returned once again to the local area. In this discussion, understandings derived in previous sessions by the respondents themselves were related to their experiences of Stoke Newington. For example, having talked about their experiences of ‘foreign’ travel, we talked about how far in an area like Stoke Newington one still needed to ‘travel’, and whether such developments were a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ thing.

Having covered these substantive issues, the final session was given over entirely to ‘termination’. Where considerable intimacy has been generated it is vital that both parties have an opportunity to ‘disengage’ (Burgess et al, 1988a & b). Just as at the beginning of each session I tended to review the discussion of the previous week, and at the end to remind the respondent of the topics of next week’s discussion (each was also telephoned between sessions to re-confirm each meeting), so termination was talked about from the start of the interview process. The final session was thus given over to a general discussion of the interviews themselves - what each person had felt they had gained, or found upsetting, intrusive, or just plain ‘difficult’, and these discussions were as important to me (not least in organising meetings with future respondents) as to the respondents themselves.

But it is important to avoid the impression that all the interviews were organised in the same way. A semi-structured interview is, by its nature, a fluid system of intercourse. Just as each respondent tended to move at a different pace (such that where travel was discussed in the third session with some, it may have been the second and fourth with others) so too topics were constantly opened and returned to at different points. Further, in light of different systems of understanding, questions were put in
rather different ways with each respondent, coming back to issues of role playing in the interview process.

In this sense neither the questions, nor the sessions were standardized. Indeed with many the start of the last session was also useful for a final ‘scramble’ to deal with issues not yet covered. But each session was partially structured before-hand through the use of an interview ‘guide’. The guide, a list of the various issues (with relevant examples) I wished to cover, acted as a kind of prompt. I tended to arrive at each meeting fifteen minutes early and religiously ‘learn’ mine before the interview started. The guide was useful because if issues were raised in a different order from that ‘expected’ it enabled me both to let the course of the discussion flow and make sure I covered all the issues I was concerned with. Each guide was prepared individually for each respondent, and reflected issues and concerns raised in other sessions and from which I wished to move on from, or return to. On it each ‘question’ was arranged so as to leave space for a number of possible interpretations, rather than to close down discussion (something that is more difficult than it sounds!).

The use of a guide also, of course, draws attention to the role of the ‘interviewer’. There are clearly a number of standard techniques involved in a semi-structured interview (Burgess, 1992a). Just as the aim is to ask relatively ‘open’ questions, so it is important to achieve a fluid discussion, and one in which the respondent feels at ease to articulate their feelings in their own way. One technique is not to dive into the next question as soon as there is a pause in the conversation, but to ‘read for silences’. Such silences may be the result of the respondent thinking through the question, or simply wanting to ‘have another go’ at answering it. The skill, that I am sure I did not entirely master, is to learn when to allow such pauses to develop, and when to move the conversation along.

To encourage the respondent’s confidence it is important to appear open and empathetic, and never to give the impression that their answer is somehow ‘wrong’ (there can, after all, be no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answer). Even when you may be frustrated (they didn’t ‘understand’ the question!) it is often important to allow the conversation to develop, as it may lead in directions you could not have anticipated and throw light upon exactly those issues you are trying to capture. In part this is an issue of ‘body language’ (making the appropriate nods and grunts) but it also requires the interviewer to take a stance upon their own level of ‘participation’ in the interview process.

In contrast to a more ‘active’ approach I tended to assume the role of ‘silent interlocutor’. For example, I sought to avoid voicing my own feelings and opinions. In this sense the interviews were perhaps more ‘directed’ than many (the interviewee simply
replying’ to a range of questions) but this was a deliberate position from the start. It was not meant to imply that the responses were in any way less ‘biased’, since to do so would be to assume both an impossible ‘invisibility’ within the interview, and to ignore a wider series of relations between ‘theory’ and ‘method’.

Rather, since I was interested in exactly those sorts of feelings that I myself often found both personally and politically ‘difficult’ (racism, for example) I felt it important to assume as ‘passive’ a role as possible to allow the space for such feelings to be articulated. At the same time, whilst it is recognized that any interview, however conducted, is a ‘dialogue’, there remain doubts over how successfully this relationship can ever be ‘read for’ in the final account. With this in mind, I have tended to keep my own questions out of the transcript material presented here, except where it is necessary to understand the topic in discussion (see section 3.5b).

It is recognized that such a position assumes its own set of ‘hierarchical’ power relations (Herod, 1993; Oakely, 1981) and these were not always easily negotiated. For example, where I rarely disagreed or challenged my respondent’s opinions this often led to a situation where they were quite unsure of my own position, and plainly felt uncomfortable (though, curiously, this very silence may also have encouraged those emotional disclosures discussed above). Having assumed a position of ‘silence’, at the end many asked directly for my own thoughts on the discussion and the last session was often given over to a discussion of the sorts of interpretations around which I had been working. Such discussions clearly relate to the wider power relations involved in the act of interpretation, but they also impacted upon relations within the interview itself. Especially when couched in terms of ‘what others had said’, these discussions often seemed a blatant request for my opinion of what they in fact had said, and can also be understood as a means through which the individual respondent sought to ‘test’ the level of confidentiality they could expect in these meetings. I found these requests extremely difficult, not least because they tended to re-enforce my position as some kind of arbiter of the ‘correct’, or at least socially correct answer. In retrospect I am still uncertain how far, or indeed if, this position could have been avoided. But I recognize that my silence may have been a deliberate attempt to maintain my own quite powerful position (the all knowing 1/eye), and especially in those interviews with the new cultural class respondents where these power relations often seemed to work in rather different directions (see above). Where the intimacy of the sessions tended to generate a less formal atmosphere this clashed with the formality of my own position and in this sense these ‘difficulties’ were perhaps inevitable.

All the sessions, except for those with Alex, were conducted in the respondent’s
own homes, though the exact context often changed. It was felt that meeting in their
homes would help put the respondents at ease, as well as being more convenient for
them. The environment in which the interviews took place was important because it
allowed me to contextualize each individual's understandings (Morley, 1991). For
example, objects close to hand, or their choice of furnishings, would often allow the
respondent to illustrate a particular point, whilst offering clues to interpretation that
might otherwise have gone unexplored (see Dorian, chapter 7.3). It was no coincidence,
for example, that Alex chose to conduct our sessions in the office. Compared to the other
respondents, Alex tended to assume the role of 'professional interviewee', and almost
always illustrated his accounts with examples drawn from his working life. In this sense
his professional identity was understood as central to his understandings of the
contemporary re-organisations of presence and absence (see chapter 4.2), whilst his ability
to separate the spaces of home and work are also critical to his attempts to assume a
more controlled temporal environment (chapter 5.3).

But the exact context and time of interviews was flexible. Most were conducted
in the evenings, with a week separating each meeting, to fit around a busy work
schedule. But George and I occasionally met on a Saturday, and mostly before work at
about eight o'clock in the morning. In fact, these meetings helped generate a more relaxed
atmosphere, as my arrival became part of the family routine. George and I would sit and
have coffee whilst his wife left for work, and the nanny took his daughter to play group.
Only after they had all left would we start our meetings.

In contrast, not only would Pat often forget our arrangements, but the sessions
usually took place in an altogether more frenetic atmosphere. More than once they were
interrupted by the arrival of her grandchildren, whilst in the early meetings her husband
tended to wander in and out of the room offering his own thoughts on the proceedings.
This tended to make Pat lose her train of thought, and after a while I asked if we could
'formalize' our arrangements. Her husband was then 'banished' from the room, appearing
only to bring us cups of tea. In this more 'formal' atmosphere it then proved easier to
start moving through the interview guides.

Finally, all the sessions were taped, using a small 'walkman' tape recorder, and
the possibility of recording the interviews was discussed in the initial meetings. All the
respondents were happy to let me record the sessions. Clearly this allowed me to
concentrate more upon the flow of each meeting itself (and not to worry about whether
I would remember the conversations themselves) but, though a full transcript was also
essential to the final analyses it should by now be clear that I neither produced, nor have
offered, a 'pure' transcript (3.5b).
3.5a The interpretation of material: data analysis and the power relations of interpretation

Approximately 42 hours of material had to be transcribed. Transcription was undertaken simultaneously with the interviews, as it was important to have a working knowledge of the sessions before subsequent meetings with each respondent (see below). In fact, I found not only that transcription led to a greater familiarity with the material, but also that it was often whilst transcribing that I began to make the first of those theoretical connections that have driven the final analysis (see below).

These transcripts represented my 'primary' material, but once again there exist a number of ways such material can be analyzed. For example, one can undertake a form of 'content analysis', searching for key words and phrases and placing these in tables of frequency (cf Anderson, 1988; Kress & Hodge, 1979). But such an approach tells one little about the meaning attached to these words, or how these concepts work in practice as a way of reproducing particular understandings. In contrast, Clifford (1988) argues only for an identification of a text's 'polyvocality' (cf Crang, 1992). Here analysis should not attempt to interrogate those meanings different authors articulate (the interviewer and respondent, for example), but let these authors 'speak for themselves'. Even allowing for the possibility of such 'pure' speech (all interviews are, to a greater or lesser extent, a dialogue - what questions were asked, and why, and what voices were presented in the final account?) this approach was clearly unsuited to the current project. It assumes that meaning, and the impact of meaning upon action, can be unproblematically retrieved from a set of commonsense understandings. My transcripts were attempting to interrogate these understandings for those experiences of time-space compression that lie somewhere within these everyday experiences.

'Discourse analysis' offers a more sensitive approach (cf Jacobs, 1990; Pile, 1992; Thompson, 1987). Here a reading is undertaken not only of the 'meaning' of each respondent's discussions, but of how such meanings are produced in relation to the dialogue between interviewer, interviewee, and a wider 'cultural field'. Attention is thus drawn not only to the narrative structure of each discussion (since this itself is understood as helping to determine meaning), but to the way in which such meanings become transformed with their movement around a wider 'circuit of culture' (Johnson, 1986). In fact, as was argued above, I had severe reservations over how far such a dialogue is open to interrogation. Instead, even whilst recognizing that such an approach risks blinding the reader to these more complex relationships, I settled upon a system of

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9 All interviews were transcribed and analyzed. Only after analysis was it decided to discard those interviews undertaken with a third new cultural class woman.
theoretically informed 'thematic analysis', working around a system of 'emic' and 'etic' coding.

Within geography this has perhaps become the most usual means of qualitative data analysis. But, whilst coding and analysis takes up a significant proportion of the research period, descriptions of this process figure for only a fraction of all methodological accounts (Miles & Huberman, 1984) such that it is important to outline the practice of interpretation in more detail. Most analyses seem to move around a rather formal system of coding, most usually generated within a system described by Strauss (1987). Here the initial transcript is read and re-read reminding the researcher of both the theoretical and practical context of each session (Bogdan & Taylor, 1984). After this a more careful reading is attempted, moving through the transcript line by line and establishing a series of 'open codes' that refer to the general meaning of each statement. These codes will be both 'emic' (or 'in vivio'), referring to those categories used by the respondent themselves, and 'etic' - those imposed by the researcher as a possible system of understanding (cf Agar, 1980). At this stage there is no search for 'significant themes', as this is held to prejudice subsequent readings; rather such codes are broadly descriptive.

At an early stage my emic codes generally referred to particular words or phrases that caught my attention, and that referred only to the substantive topic of discussion - for example, "communication technology", or "foreign travel". My etic codes were equally broad, often no more than a joyous note of "time-space compression!!" scribbled in the margin of the transcript.

The next stage is to make a series of initial theoretical connections. Transcripts are read and re-read, and the etic codes 'firmed up' as connections are made between different sessions (and respondents) and the theoretical literature. The analysis takes the form of an 'iterative process', a constant re-alignment of often contradictory codes (one respondent may seem to both welcome and reject processes of global change, for example) until a final set of etic codes is formed. The obvious danger is that these codes can become divorced from the life world of the respondent, and the codes themselves reified such that analysis becomes a tautological process. Central to the process of analysis, therefore, are three inter-related issues: the broader relations between 'theory' and 'method'; the power relations within the process of interpretation itself (the role, or 'position' of the interpretation); and the 'theoretical adequacy' of that interpretation.

As Jenson recognizes, any methodology is a "heuristic", a juncture between the "concrete acts and tools of analysis (methods) and the overarching frames of interpretation" (1991:6). Just as the methodology is an integral part of the research (not chosen until those questions that the research is attempting to answer are clear, or clearer)
so too a set of theoretical concerns clearly guides the analysis of material. Within the act of coding this relationship becomes concrete. As one keeps reading so new theoretical insights guide the analysis (and coding) of each session, the conduct of subsequent sessions (in the type of question asked and so on) and thus the production of one’s ‘primary material’. But as reading and ‘method’ progress together, so too does the material generated in each session inform one’s reading of a theoretical literature. In this sense analysis is essentially a ‘dialectical’ process, and it is this dialectic that lies behind the mechanics of analysis recommended in the standard text (Strauss, 1987).

There is simply no point in attempting a final interpretation (or the construction of a final set of etic codes) too soon, since one’s understandings are liable to change as the research progresses. Certainly this raises the need to keep a careful research time table (the temptation is to stay in the field too long, to generate just one more set of comparisons, for example, and not to leave enough time for coding and writing up) (Wax, 1983). But in this way the process of interpretation is kept as open as possible such that any connections made are always driven by the primary material itself, rather than a set of preconceived theories, and this process often requires a rather elaborate filing system. For example, workers are often encouraged to physically cut up their transcripts according to these different codes, and constantly re-sort them in search of new connections, or to draw and re-draw a set of ‘mind maps’ through which different interpretations are fleshed out. As ‘theory’ and ‘method’ move together, or become inseparable, analysis becomes a "maddeningly recursive" (Agar, 1986:26), "messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, fascinating process" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:112) (both quoted in Cook & Crang, 1994:70).

In fact I have a suspicion that these rather formal coding systems are often recommended (though perhaps less often followed) in order to give the act of interpretation a more ‘scientific’ air. For Cook and Crang, for example, "any idea that analysis is some process of mysterious cognition should be dispelled by now: every researcher faces a task that is nearer 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration" (1994:70). In contrast, rather than follow these elaborate tasks, my own interpretation came all of a sudden, with a shout of "eureka" similar to that described by Ley:

"In the face of field notes which consistently refused to support my a priori interpretation, my preconceptions were shattered and for some time no compensating gestalt took their place ... Then slowly a new interpretation began to be pieced together, culminating in a 'eureka experience' not unlike that mentioned by Whyte (1955), when the pieces of the puzzle fell suddenly into place ... a lateral connection between two apparently dissimilar events occurred as I reviewed my field notes, and a new conceptualization took shape, a configuration around which the eventual interpretation was constructed."

(Ley, 1988a:131-32, his emphasis)

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In the course of my field work I came across a literature only then emerging that had a dramatic impact upon my understandings of the material I was generating (and thus the generation of that material). This new literature seemed to ‘explain’ much of the material gathered (though in the light of that material I also revised these initial theories) and soon became the basis of the final account. Interpretation then proceeded very quickly and, driven on by the need to present some form of my account in a number of academic seminars, codes shifted from being largely descriptive to a mixture of emic and etic ones each of which was more closely related to this new theoretical interpretation itself. For example, crude notations of "time-space compression" were replaced with codes that acted to break down this broader experience and explore a set of power relations implicated within a literature of post-colonial studies, such as the "exotic".

At the same time I was very conscious of not losing the individuality and ambiguity of each respondent’s experiences. Instead of religiously re-filing my transcripts I therefore drew up a number of ‘spread sheets’, each one organised around these codes in the order they appeared in each interview. In the writing-up I could then simply glance at each sheet to get an idea of the overall experience of any one respondent, and compare the experiences of each with those of another.

This process clearly raises a series of issues concerning the theoretical ‘bias’ of interpretation, and the wider power relations involved in the act of interpretation itself. Just as there can be no ‘pure’ emic codes (which ‘in vivio’ categories are selected is a decision taken by the analyst, and the material relates anyway to questions asked by the researcher), so too even one’s ‘primary’ material is always ‘polluted’ by a set of theoretical preconceptions (Agar, 1980). In effect this means that the act of interpretation is always carried to the material, rather than derived directly from it, such that this is a dialectical rather than strictly dialogical process. But this also means that one’s interpretations may move to directly contradict the understandings of the respondents themselves, and where interpretations are offered within the interview itself this can lead to confrontation. For example, in a session with Alex, where we were discussing the mechanisms of memory and autobiography, we had the following angry exchange, after which meetings were aborted for the next few weeks:

J: I just find it very interesting. Because on the one - when you look at the world there’s a great pleasure in taking a historical perspective. And yet in your own life it seems to be that - putting things in perspective becomes not only unimportant, but actually perhaps not something that you want to do?

A: Oh I think - well I think it’s a balance. And I think you put things into perspective, but .. it’s how much significance you attach to particular aspects rather than the whole, you know.

.. I think if you over analyze things you can, you can start - how am I going to say this - you can actually complicate things, or make things more
complicated than they actually really were .. I mean you throw odd little questions at me which are quite - psychoanalytical

J: Yes

A: And we, I kind of really, they’re the ones I don’t like, you know. Because I’ve never liked to psychoanalyse myself, because I just feel that by doing so you, you, you’re sort of digging up little bits which aren’t really that relevant but which, but which under psychoanalysis can be exaggerated, and highlighted, and I think, I think to my mind that can lead to a slight distortion, including a distortion - personally, you know, if that’s your reading of me then I don’t mind, because what you think of me is to me, to me is irrelevant.

But I can actually sort of find, well you know, maybe I am actually, you know. Like, like that a couple of things you were digging at - the power thing, you know - and I don’t really consider myself to be into, into power, or manipulation. But having thought about it subsequently, because you do think in retrospect about the conversation, you think oh maybe, maybe you have got a bit of a power trip, maybe you do (laughter) underneath like - because I do exercise an element of power here, because I have employees, and I’m their boss and they do as I ask them. And, so you can - and I sort of end up well, ‘oh god, maybe he’s right’, and then I think ‘oh forget it, it doesn’t matter’, because you are who you are, and you do what you do and, you know. And I have to really bury it again really because it doesn’t really serve any, to me any useful purpose - even if it’s true actually.

(Alex, session 6)

The act of interpretation is driven by a belief that meaning, and therefore the rationale behind action, often lies beneath the commonsense understandings articulated by the respondents themselves and can only be reached through relation to a ‘deeper’ theoretical position. This argument is sometimes made with reference to a distinction between a system of ‘practical’ and ‘reflexive consciousness’ (Giddens, 1979; Thrift, 1983), and one that has informed a realist structure of knowledge (Cook & Crang, 1994). For Roy Bhaskar, for example, ”people do not marry to reproduce the nuclear family or work to sustain the capitalist economy. Yet it is nevertheless the consequence (and inexorable result) of, as it is also a necessary condition for, their activity” (Bhaskar, 1979:44, quoted in Thrift, 1983:31).

This ‘realist’ position has a number of attractions, not least in any understanding of those knowledge structures through which the new cultural class respondents make sense of their world. For example, though they may have embraced the expansion of ‘exotic’ food as part of some broader liberal project, their consumption practices often act only to re-impose those exclusionary cultural understandings they seek to challenge (the

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10 Though I find a realist position useful, this distinction between ‘practical’ and ‘reflexive’ (or ‘discursive’) consciousness has recently been called into question, and especially with a growing recognition of the contribution psychoanalytical models can add to our understandings within the social sciences (Pile, 1991b, 1993). My own use of the realist model can be understood as describing a ‘naive realism’ (see, for a discussion Cloke et al, 1991:132-169).
structures of binary thought, for example). It is important, therefore, to understand that
people may not always be aware of the result of their actions, or the 'true' nature of their
understandings. Rather than making them 'bad' people, one needs to interpret these
understandings in relation to a set of 'deep structures' that may lay beneath both the
intentions, and the understandings, of the individual concerned.

To summarize: the aim of my analysis has been to explore precisely these 'deep
structures'. I have concentrated upon the power relations involved in both the interview
process and the act of interpretation itself because it is important to recognize that where
I have uncovered these 'deep' structures my interpretations might both contradict the
understandings of the respondents themselves, and be vigorously rejected by them. In
this sense my aim is not to 'criticize' the respondents (all of whom, I can only emphasise
again, I liked a great deal), nor to suggest that my 'practical consciousness' is somehow
'purer' than theirs'. Indeed my own consumption practices are in many cases driven by
a similar set of understandings. Having written about 'exotic' food all day, for example,
I often cook an 'authentic' Italian meal, and not always 'ironically' I am sure! Rather, the
distinction drawn is one between 'unreflexive' behaviour, and the act of theory.

In a sense, therefore, and as Hastrup (1992) has argued, any act of interpretation
is an 'act of violence' upon the respondent, and one's analysis needs be driven by an
awareness of this, a degree of reflexivity, and a desire to limit that violence. But in any
case, within a qualitative methodology, an analysis of these 'deep structures' is not
undertaken in a space outside of the transcript material (and the understandings of the
respondents themselves), but is driven by the 'primary' material itself (and often
informed by some kind of 'slippage'). For example, the idea that beneath the (quite
genuine) liberal stance of many of the new cultural class respondents might lie another
set of structures was confirmed by Dorian. Discussing Stoke Newington's ethnic diversity,
for example, and to which she claimed great attraction, the following 'slip' occurred:

J: Well here's a strange part of the question

D: Do I wish they would all go away? Yes, of course I do (laughter)!

(Dorian, session 3)

One way around these difficulties, or at least one way of addressing them more
directly, is of course to liaise with the respondent over the form of the final account. In
practice, however, this usually proves extremely problematic, and where there is reached
a position of 'stalemate' a decision still has to be made by the researcher over whose
interpretation is to take precedence (Jacobs, 1990). In this case the possibility of the
respondents seeing the final draft before submission was discussed, but none in fact

101
wanted to. Instead they only wanted to see the final version and, since cost prohibited making copies for all them all, it was agreed that I would ask the local library to hold a copy of the thesis. In the end, of course, and anyway, "the extrapolation is in fact based upon the validity of the analysis rather than the reproductiveness of the results" (Mitchell, 1983:190). As a qualitative methodology works around a system of 'theoretical adequacy' (Schutz, 1967), rather than any notion of 'statistical representation', the validity of one's interpretations will be judged by the reader, in response to how well any interpretation of the transcript material is tied to the broader theoretical arguments of the thesis. This raises some final issues concerning questions of textual strategy.

3.5b Textual strategies and the editing process

The act of writing has recently come under intense scrutiny, not least as it has been recognized that any textual strategy must impact upon precisely these issues of the authority of 'meaning' (Clifford, 1983; Clifford & Marcus, 1986). Just as it is no longer possible to argue for any "unconditioned description" (Geertz, 1983:132) neither can it be argued that ethnographic texts are objective, holistic accounts. Rather we need to understand that any act of writing is always a 'fiction'. We do not simply 'represent' cultures but 're-invent' them with our descriptions, and this recognition has recently spread from anthropology to geography (Barnes & Duncan, 1992; Sayer, 1989; Thrift, 1990). Central to these arguments is an understanding of the positionality of all knowledge, such that they have been connected to those debates explored in chapter 1.2.

Issues of how we write have also come under scrutiny in relation to the development of writing styles capable of capturing the ambiguous, fractured and discontinuous nature of the social world, and especially a postmodern one (Gregory, 1989). But the difficulty with many of these accounts (Olsson, 1978, 1980; Fred, 1993) is that they often seem to practice experimentation for experimentation's sake. Just as many of these techniques have failed to produce a more equitable authorial relationship (continuing to obscure, for example, many of those disempowered voices they seek to give space to) so too it is often only those in a position of some power within the academy that have the time (and money) to experiment in this way (McDowell, 1991). In relation to writings around postmodernism, the irony is that many of these texts are so difficult to read that one is left in a position where writings concerning a cultural aesthetic structured around the disintegration of the divisions between 'high' and 'low'

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11 Rose (1993), for example, notes how in Olson's (1978) 'playful exploration of the ambiguity of language', it is the female figure that continues to symbolize ambiguity. Thus she argues that these 'radical' textual strategies often act simply to re-enforce a traditional set of gender oppositions (Rose, 1993:178).
culture perpetuate just such a divide.

Therefore, just as this thesis aims to explore processes of time-space compression through people's everyday experiences, so too I have opted for a rather traditional writing strategy, and one in which I have tried to keep theoretical 'jargon' to a bare minimum (not always successful I am sure!). But this thesis too is an act of 'fiction', and this becomes clearer when the editing process is considered. This is a process governed not only by the whims of the author, but a wider set of power relations stretching from the field to the academy.

With so much primary material one cannot simply present all the interview transcripts. A decision has to be made over which material is presented, and how. There are, of course, a number of editing styles, ranging from the presentation of (relatively) unedited transcripts (in which the thoughts of the author are kept to a minimum, and the 'complete' transcript offered) to the use of 'soundbites' that support a particular argument (cf Parker, 1983; Widgery, 1993). Yet even in the case of the former a decision has been made by the author over which sections of the transcript to offer in this way, and this decision process is often left unexplained to the reader. In my own case, having decided not to conduct a detailed discourse analysis, it was felt unnecessary to present a 'pure', or 'raw' transcript. Thus, even at the stage of transcribing the interviews were 'cleaned up' (many of the "ums" and "ers" taken out, for example, except where it was felt these demonstrated to the reader the difficulty a respondent had in articulating a particular response). But to make clear that the interviews were a dialogue, within which the form of my questions influenced the type of material generated, rather than remove myself entirely from the final transcripts I have tried to 'write myself in'. This does not mean that I have preceded every quotation with the question or questions asked. But where this is necessary to understanding a particular response I have presented my questions with my own initial (J:) rather than assuming the role of some 'silent', and 'neutral' questioner (-:).

More importantly, the material has been subject to a fairly heavy editing procedure. Though I have attempted to present material in context, often the quotations presented are taken from different points within a particular section of an interview, and occasionally from different sections of the interview itself. In the case of the former this is illustrated with two dots ( .. ) and in the latter three ( ... ). Where I have presented sections from different interviews this is noted in the space beneath each quotation where I outline which session the quotation has come from (important in allowing the reader an understanding of how the degree of intimacy builds through the research).

But any editing process makes clear the continuing inequality of the research
process, such that those arguments concerning the power relations of the interview method, and the act of interpretation, need to be understood in this light. There may currently exist a certain hypocrisy concerning these issues within the academy. Where workers are encouraged to let the voices of their respondents' ‘speak for themselves’ this tends to ignore a wider set of power relations that structures the act of writing (Cook, 1992). As Susan Smith recognizes, any academic account is written not only for the author (and respondent) but a wider set of peers within the researcher’s academy (Smith, 1988). Not only does this readership encourage particular writing styles (Rose, 1993), but the pressures of an academic career demands a particular use of interview material. Research is still, and perhaps increasingly, governed primarily by a need to ‘get results’ (with important implications for those arguments concerning a more equitable research process). So too authors are continually urged to ‘get their message across’, to ‘tell a story’ that the reader can quickly and easily understand, and without ‘unnecessary’ repetition. What this means in practice is that many of those ambiguities of understanding captured by a qualitative methodology, and that are perhaps its greatest strength, are simply ‘written out’. In the current thesis this has often meant deliberately simplifying the account, and leaving out either a number of those alternative understandings presented by an individual respondent, and/or collapsing individual experience into those broader social categories (in this case class and gender) that still dominate the demands of a social science readership.

My own solution to this impasse has been to adopt a particular thesis structure. In the early chapters as many accounts as reasonably possible are offered both from each respondent, and from as many respondents as possible. The aim is to offer the reader the opportunity of building an idea of the different experiences of time-space compression as structured by a set of wider social positions, and the ambiguity of each individual’s experience. In parts this has required a certain amount of repetition, both because this is understood as essential in assessing those arguments around the ‘conditional’ nature of time-space compression (see chapter 1.4) and because only in repetition can such ambiguities come out.

Later, as the reader has (hopefully) gained an idea of both the character of each respondent, and the broader theoretical arguments of the thesis, the material is more selective. Quotations have been chosen that throw light upon particular theoretical positions, such that individual respondents may not appear for some time. In the end, then, issues concerning the honesty of interpretation, and perhaps therefore its ‘validity’, are partially reduced to that trust the reader has in the author.

In the next chapter I want to open my empirical investigation of time-space
compression by turning to a consideration of the re-organisations of presence and absence and an examination of how far these changes can be understood as leading to the emergence of less exclusionary systems of thought. This is done by looking at the different experiences generated by developments in communication technology. But the chapter also establishes a number of the broader themes taken up in more detail in subsequent chapters.
CHAPTER 4
THE TECHNOLOGY CONNECTION

4.1 Introduction

"... 'issues around the politics of communication converge with the politics of space and place: questions of communication are also about the nature and scope of community' (Robins, 1989:146) ... [and] rather than presuming a uniform effect in which, from a crudely technologically determinist perspective, new ICTs impose new sensibilities on peoples across the globe, it may be more realistic to conceive of them as overlaying the new upon the old."

(David Morley Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies, 1992:271 & 281)

In this chapter I want to begin an analysis of the diverse experiences of time-space compression with an investigation of three, closely related issues. First, I want to explore how my respondents are 'making sense' of a radically restructured global space, whether, and if so how, each is attempting to 'map' an increasingly 'placeless' world. Secondly, I want to examine the impact of processes of time-space compression upon people's sense of time and assess whether there can be traced a generalised and unsettling sense of temporal 'speed-up'. Thirdly, the analysis will establish how far re-organisations in the traditional relations of presence and absence can be understood as destabilizing an exclusionary set of cultural oppositions associated with a wider system of binary thought. Taken together, the answers to these questions will allow us to begin thinking through both the experiences of time-space compression and to assess whether these experiences, captured in the changing relations of presence and absence, are leading to the emergence of less exclusionary, or 'postmodern', systems of understanding. These answers will provide a framework for subsequent analysis, and each will be examined in more detail in succeeding chapters.

Since developments in information and communication technologies, or ICTs, has become a sort of leitmotif for everyday experiences of time-space compression (Thrift, 1986) the chapter investigates the changing relations of presence and absence through an analysis of the use of these 'new' technologies. But it argues against technological determinism pointing instead to the ways in which such technologies become inserted into a wider set of social relations that in turn articulate very different experiences of these processes. Before moving on it might therefore prove useful to offer a brief overview of a literature now emerging in cultural and media studies that has attempted to explore the 'social construction of technology', and the consumption of different ICTs,
in more detail.\(^1\)

Over the last ten to twenty years public debate has focused upon the impact and role of ICTs upon social relations at large. But, even as academics have begun to move against an earlier understanding of the determining nature of these developments (cf. McLuhan, 1964; Meyerowitz, 1985; Ong, 1977), as Morley notes: "Unfortunately, the theoretical disavowals of this position have not been reflected, in practice, by the abandoning of its premises in research in this field, where an agenda of 'how technology will change society' still persists" (Morley, 1992:221). In particular, commentators have focused upon the role of such technologies in the promotion of some sort of generalized, and distancing, 'technological gaze' through which social relations are reduced to the unequal interactions of an all-seeing, all-knowing eye/I and an objectified and static Other (cf. Baudrillard, 1988; Bech, 1992).

Here I shall argue that the development of such a gaze is crucial to an understanding of how my respondents seek to make sense of a restructured global space. In the light of arguments made in chapter 2.3c, the analysis of this 'aestheticized gaze' should allow us to make a set of connections between the re-organisations of presence and absence and the welcoming and containment of the broader processes of global change. In particular, the new ICTs may allow for the development of an all knowing archimedean perspective from which it remains possible for those in a position of some social power to 'map' a re-organised global space according to a traditional set of cultural exclusions, exclusions given shape by a set of traditional spatial oppositions (Dodds, 1994; Shields, 1991, 1992).

But, the deployment of this gaze is by no means inevitable and is certainly not determined by the nature of these technologies themselves. Rather, as Morley and Silverstone argue in their analysis of 'domestic' technologies, television's meanings need to be understood as "emergent properties of contextualised audience practices", and the analysis could be extended to technology per se, and the practices of its users (Morley & Silverstone, 1992:202). In this sense technology can be understood as a 'cultural text' through which a wider set of social relations are negotiated.

Further, arguing against a position of either 'textual autonomy' (cf. Lodge, 1977) or a pure 'reader's autonomy', Barker (1989) draws upon the work of Mikhail Bahktin to suggest that we understand the consumption of different 'cultural texts' as a dialogical process. Within this understanding, meanings are created in the ideologically saturated spaces between 'text' (or technology), 'reader' (or user), and 'audience'. It is this notion

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\(^1\) For a review of this literature see Morley and Silverstone (1992) in Morley (1992:201-212) and Morley (1992:213-248).
of an audience that is crucial. Such a structure may crudely be understood as that set of ‘conversations’ that surround, shape and are shaped by the production and consumption of any cultural good, these meanings themselves becoming transformed as each good moves around a wider ‘circuit of culture’ (Johnson, 1986).

This perspective has particular relevance to an analysis of a ‘technological gaze’ and fits well with that understanding of the gaze developed in chapter 2.3c. Where the gaze demarcates the material power to look, the deployment of a technological gaze is not determined by the nature of these technologies themselves. Rather, it is determined by the broader social position of any particular user and the ability that user has to assume both the power to look (and thereby position others) and to access those technologies that may foster that position. Attention is thus drawn to issues of class, gender, ethnicity, ideology and power that define the materialities of everyday life, and through which any user regularly negotiates their own subject position. These positions are also negotiated within the confines of a particular audience. In the case of the new cultural class respondents, for example, this audience might represent that localised ‘speech community’ (Gouldner, 1979) that promotes a (contradictory) project of liberal tolerance.

Importantly, then, this perspective allows for an understanding of the ambiguities the new ICTs may give space to. For example, though some women may now be seizing the right to gaze, any gaze they adopt is liable to remain more ambiguous than that projected by their male counterparts (chapter 2.3c). Where the gaze is a product of a modern epistemology, and the distancing nature of these new technologies may encourage the strict demarcation of Subject and Object, it is also possible to recognize how those subjects placed in a particularly ambiguous position by the emergence of less exclusionary epistemological structures (professional, white women, for example) may also react to the possibilities of these new technologies in a particularly ambiguous manner (chapter 1.2).

Neither can the use of these technologies be understood outside of a broader sociology that maps their differential consumption. As Morley and Silverstone (1992) recognize, for example, access to, and thus the meanings conferred upon, different ‘domestic’ technologies are powerfully structured by a set of unequal gender relations. So too issues of class are liable to affect the meanings constructed through different technologies, not least because not all can afford the new ICTs, or have much first hand experience of their use (cf Sivanandan, 1990). In particular a distinction might need to be drawn between the experience of those ICTs found within the home and the workplace, and between the new cultural class respondents (who often have expertise in their use
gained during their working lives) and the working class respondents who might, in general, be less familiar with these technologies. As Silverstone (1991) found, experience of technology within the workplace is often a crucial determinant in people's confidence with technologies found within the home.

But the structures of class, and especially gender, exert an influence beyond questions of simple access. They also help shape understandings of the nature technology itself, and thus the uses these technologies are liable to be put to. At the simplest level these understandings are structured by a traditional division between the 'masculine' world of work, and a 'feminine' space of the home and 'leisure' (Garmarnikow & Purvis, 1983). Rather than subvert this division, domestic technologies are often consumed in ways that re-enforce it. For example, within the home the technologies of domestic labour (the washing machine, hoover, and so on) tend still to be used predominantly by women. Where for men the home is a site of 'play' this is reflected in their control over the 'technologies of leisure' (the hi-fi, television and video) (Gray, 1987).

Further, the development of new ICTs has often led to a curious re-alignment of these oppositions in ways that continue to support an essential distinction between 'work' and 'leisure', and its connection to a whole range of other gendered oppositions; the 'rationality' of a 'male' public sphere, and the 'irrationality' or 'naturalness' of the feminine home, and so on (Cockburn, 1985; Zimmermann, 1983). Thus, where the computer, for example, is generally connected to the world of work, bought into the home in the shape of home computing its use tends to reflect these wider social divisions. For men, and boys, the home computer is often presented as a 'tool' for the 'serious' purpose of work or education, for women and girls as a technology of 'leisure' - for drawing up recipes, or keeping the family correspondence up to date (Rothschild, 1983). These distinctions tend to reflect a wider gendering of technology itself. For men technology is a skill to be 'mastered', and they may often connect their technical competence to the ability to assume a position of social and financial security (cf Turkle, 1984). For women, even where, and in contrast to men, they may master the most complex 'domestic technologies' (microwaves and cookers, for example) they tend to be

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2 Though it is important to recognize that this distinction is culturally and historically specific, and cross cut by the structures of class. For working class women, and women of colour in particular, the state has always intruded in the most obvious sense into their domestic lives such that for them this distinction may have less relevance (Hurtado, 1989). In the light of the current discussion of 'domestic technology' neither should the 'household' be treated as an unproblematic category. Morley and Silverstone (1992), for example, are especially concerned with tracing the ways in which communication technology can blur any simple distinction between the 'domestic' and 'outside' world, and more specifically with which households, in which contexts, are able still to secure these boundaries, how and why.
both excluded from, and less confident in, their use of 'male technologies' (computers, but also videos and televisions) (Gray, 1987).\(^3\)

As the space of the home itself is structured around a set of gendered oppositions it is not only access to these technologies that is influenced by gender, but the 'essential nature' of these technologies themselves. And though this may act to support the structures of patriarchy, the division can have unsettling consequences for men too, as we shall see.

To summarize, for a number of feminist scholars technology must be understood as working through a system of 'valences'. Different technologies are culturally defined as 'masculine' or 'feminine', and the same technology liable to have 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits. Thus Bush, for example, argues that:

"Tools and technologies have ... valence(s) ... A particular technological system, even an individual tool, has a tendency to interact in similar situations in definable and particular ways ... to fit with certain social norms ... and disturb others."

(quoted in Morley, 1992:230)

And Rakow adds:

"Practices involving technologies are constituted ... in and through relations of gender. Who does what with a technology for what purpose is, at least in part, a cause and effect of gender. Consequently, not only a technology, but also a social practice involving it are associated by gender."

(quoted in Morley, 1992:231)

These arguments are liable to be of radical importance to an analysis of that 'technological gaze' through which people may now be making sense of a re-organised global space. But they must also have an impact on other experiences associated with a period of rapid technological change and time-space compression; in the different articulation of feelings of temporal insecurity, or speed-up, for example.

Thus, though an analysis of consumption cannot ignore the 'materiality' of the object (Miller, 1987) these 'material attributes' are culturally encoded. They act in dialogue with the uses that a particular technology may give space to. For example, though consumers may move to uphold, or subvert, the distancing perspective of the television screen, this perspective is in part made inevitable by the presence of the screen itself. And access to, and understandings of, this 'distancing technology' is itself shaped by the

\(^{3}\) For Gray (1987) the main principle structuring this relationship is one that continues to shape a gendering of work more widely. Within this it is technologies that have a clear 'end product' (such as the electric saw, drill or sander, for example) that tend to become categorised as 'masculine', and those that are used in the day-to-day chores within which the end product is often immediately consumed (and thus rendered 'invisible') that are categorised as 'feminine' - the cooker, washing machine, iron and so on.
divisions of gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, and age. It is this dialogical process that secures for the new ICTs the position that Nobel describes:

"Close inspection of technological developments reveals that technology leads a double life, one which conforms to the intentions of the designers and interests of power and another which contradicts them - proceeding behind the backs of their architects to yield unintended consequences and unanticipated possibilities."

(quoted in Morley & Silverstone, 1992:203)

It is this more complex understanding of technology that I want to draw upon to explore the ambiguous experiences of a new alignment of presence and absence. And it is these very ambiguities that are often lost in those rather abstract accounts of a new 'postmodern geography' (Soja, 1989) that tend to obscure the more complex operations of power that shape our understandings of technology and thus the experience(s) of this space. What is needed, as Morley argues, are empirical studies that can answer questions about "how these media shift our everyday understandings of time and space, or about which media-forms influence which people in which ways in their conceptualization of duration and distance" (Morley, 1992:281, emphasis in original). Where notions of distance are inevitably connected to a set of cultural understandings concerning the nature of 'community' and 'identity' (chapter 2.1c) these explorations promise to reveal much about the wider processes of time-space compression and their connection to the possible emergence of a postmodern epistemology.

The current chapter is structured to reveal these different power relations more clearly. It starts with an analysis of the experiences of those most empowered (both in the sense of their broader social position, and their experience and expertise in the new ICTs) and moves on from George and Alex to explore the experiences of Paul, who shares many of their gendered understandings. From there it analyses the experiences of Dorian, Amanda and Pat respectively, and the rationale behind the position of each within this narrative should become clear as I proceed.

Before relating their experiences of changes in the nature of presence and absence, however, there is a brief introduction that explores the relationship of each respondent with technology itself. These relationships allow us to assess each respondent's feelings about a period of rapid change and thus about those feelings of temporal disorientation associated with the processes of time-space compression. Here I also clarify a number of those ambiguities that are implicated in the re-organisation of presence and absence and elaborate upon the essential gendering of technology and these 'technological experiences'.
4.2 Tapping into power: the experiences of George and Alex

"Thomas loved screens of every description. He loved the lie they sustained: that the world could be given shape by the four sides of a rectangle, and that he, the spectator, was in a position to sit back and watch, untouched and unobserved."


Both George and Alex work in environments where the use of the new ICTs, and the global connections they make possible, is a mundane part of everyday life. For both this has secured an easy familiarity with even the most complicated technologies, and this familiarity has important ramifications for their relations with the wider processes of time-space compression.

Working in animation, for example, Alex deals with a whole host of technologies that for many would be baffling. But in the descriptions of his office what stands out is not only the familiarity with these technologies that Alex displays, but the way in which for him even the most complicated piece of machinery (an automated camera that requires the ability to ‘switch’ time frames from one moment to the next, for example) is contextualised:

J: Well I was going to ask you about the technology you’ve got here?

A: Um, the light tester is it. We really haven’t - the only other stuff we’ve got is an old machine we bought last year, which is basically a bit of old camera from 20 years ago, which is really just a projector .. [but] quite a useful little tool. And that’s it technologically, I mean you know, this studio pretty much looks like an old Hollywood studio would have done, all those years ago .. we work in the old traditional way, just as they did in the ’20s and ’30s with the pencil and paper. And then we just have a few tools. We have a video camera in here, which is quite an expensive piece of hardware - about 10 grand - and what it does is it has the ability to take a picture, one frame at a time.

J: And you’re quite confident using that kind of tool, and that system, and that kind of level of technology, it’s just a tool for you?

A: Oh yeah, oh yeah very much. It’s very simple, isn’t it, it isn’t much more difficult than a stereo, you know. It’s got a small little programme, just a little mini computer for programming how many frames you want to shoot and where you want them. But it’s a very simple, it’s a very simple piece of technology.

J: I noticed the fax machine the other day?

A: Oh obviously, yeah, oh sorry yeah. Yeah we’ve obviously have got phones and faxes and all the usual photocopiers and all that. But that’s just the typical sort of office junk.

(Alex, session 3)

In the first place those more complicated technologies associated with the animation business are understood only in relation to other, more familiar, ‘domestic’ technologies. The analogy reveals a general ease with technology itself, an ease within
which the automated camera can be compared to the simplest of home stereos and which, for Alex at least, few would have difficulty in operating. Similarly, those new ICTs like the fax machine, that some find so 'disorientating', are not only an unremarkable part of his everyday world, but are so familiar that they have to all intents and purposes become invisible, hardly worth including in the category of 'technology' itself. These latter understandings in particular are central to that relationship Alex forms to a new alignment of presence and absence, at least as articulated through the experience of these technologies.

For Alex, then, the new ICTs - computers, fax machines and so on - are simply 'tools' to be mastered, and their mastery is easy. Described in this way the machine is stripped of its mystique, and also positioned within a traditional set of masculine understandings (Turkle, 1984). At a broader level, familiarity with the new ICTs is central to the work practices of the new cultural class (Pfeil, 1988) for whom technical know-how may play a vital role in their career prospects. It can, in other words, be understood as forming part of their cultural capital, and for George this relationship is given an extra dimension:

"I am the absolute last guy - I mean I am hopeless at DIY, cars. I don't understand anything about all that. I mean I have made a big effort recently to get into computers, and have computers, because they are necessary, and all that - but actually I couldn't give a toss! You know, I'm not - I've discovered this, it's really quite interesting - I'm really not interested in why they work, how they work. I can now you know, copy floppy discs and things like that but I find the whole thing a terrific bore really. It doesn't excite me, I wanted it to excite me, but you know.

And in radio, I work in radio, I know more than I think I know, in television indeed I know about satellite dishes, feedpoints etc etc. But I know what I need to know, and one of the things I absolutely know, is who it is who knows what I need to know."

(George, session 4)

In contrast to Alex, George at first seems anxious to distance himself from technology. In fact, however, his descriptions reveal only a more complex cultural capital. Whilst a working knowledge of cars, for example, is clearly too menial, George is still keen to display his technical abilities. He does, after all, know all about satellite feeds and 'stuff like that', but prefers not to work too closely with these technologies himself lest he becomes identified, one assumes, as a 'mere technician'. In some ways, then, George reveals those divisions within the new service class identified by Gouldner (1979) who argues for a distinction between a technical intelligentsia and humanist intellectuals.

George is happy to claim technical ability, whilst at the same time positioning an interest in technology per se as somehow 'beneath him'. Rather than get his own hands dirty he knows only what he needs to know (a distinction that implies a certain expertise
in itself) and, more importantly, who he needs to know. His own cultural capital is thus raised above that of Alex’s, and is more in keeping, perhaps, with someone of his managerial position, and class and educational background.

But Alex’s description also revealed an interesting relationship with time. Asides from the obvious intrusion of the automated camera, the office in which he works was no different from the studios of a nostalgic Hollywood. He does things the ‘traditional way’, and whilst this may be understood as an attempt to secure a certain professional respectability (claiming direct descendence from past animation greats like Disney, perhaps), it also reveals some of those ways in which people may be ‘handling’ that generalised sense of change often associated with a period of rapid technological innovation and time-space compression. This nostalgic imagery positions recent change within a broader sense of continuity. If it may be understood as securing for Alex a more comforting relationship with these changes, it also articulates a certain control over that change and this more complicated relationship is revealed by George too:

"The basic technology remains the same really. I mean obviously there are satellite links, and all that, but it’s still about reporters getting on a plane and reporting down a crackly phone line. In terms of technology it’s really only in terms of recording quality that there’s been any real change."

(George, session 4)

Even though he works in an industry that for many would be identified with the most rapid sense of technical innovation, for George it would seem that even the global news network is little different today than in years gone by. Once again, in some ways, this reveals an attempt to secure his own position (despite technical change the network is still dependent upon the skills of the journalist). But more broadly there is simply not apparent that all-encompassing, and quite disorientating, sense of change identified by Harvey (1989a) as central to a period of time-space compression. As we shall see, this more secure relationship with technological change is not one shared by the other respondents and even, to an extent, by Alex. But, at a broader level, these relationships to technology that both George and Alex articulate place them in an especially empowered position to deal with those wider changes associated with a re-organisation of presence and absence.

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4 For example, Alex took great pride in pointing out to me the draughtsman’s desks his company had recently bought from Disney. They were, he assured me, the same desks that Walt Whitman himself might once have used. This nostalgic imagery can thus be understood as just one way in which Alex seeks to contain the experience of contemporary change, and his attraction to the values of craft too is discussed in more detail in chapter 5. See too, and compare with, George’s nostalgic reference to the “crackly phone line” below.
To recap: In chapter 2.1c a set of connections were made between the relations of presence and absence and a wider set of ordering discourses associated with a modern epistemology. It was argued than an examination of the changing nature of presence and absence, and the different experiences of those changes, would thus reveal much about the broader connections between a period of time-space compression and the potential for the emergence of quite new, and less exclusionary, systems of understanding. Here I want to begin this examination with an analysis of how George and Alex are attempting to 'map' a re-organised global space, to reveal what such 'mapping exercises' tell us about these wider relationships.

But, how can we begin to trace such abstract issues in people's daily accounts? The first thing is to simply ask them to describe the experience of actually using something like a fax machine. By concentrating the analysis on the ways in which they describe their insertion into its 'imaginary' space we can begin to understand how far any disruption of the traditional relations of presence and absence are leading to a restructuring of those wider discourses through which a traditional global space has always been mapped.

For example, when Alex describes his use of the fax machine, within what has become an increasingly international business environment, his descriptions are revealing. For him such global contact is clearly "just the norm", but would seem to be operating outside of any traditional relationship between geographical and cultural distance. Asking him, for example, whether when he uses such technologies he thinks of himself contacting someone abroad, he says:

"Not really. I actually think it's just a telephone call - I mean that stuff's just the norm nowadays, isn't it. We did a commercial for - Spain, and we were in contact quite a lot, but you didn't get anything remotely Spanish out of it. I mean say someone rings me up, or I send a fax to someone in Shanghai - I just think 'someone from Shanghai, great!'."

(Alex, session 3, emphasis added)

As these technologies open up the possibility of truly global daily relations, it is interesting to see the impact this has upon a traditional global geography:

"Well I'll place them on a physical map I suppose. Just go - 'pting!, Shanghai, that's way over there, round the corner from that'.

... But the world's a very small place nowadays, and the way they do things is pretty similar to the way we do things. You're dealing with the Western World here - Australia, Asia, the whole of Europe pretty much thinks the same.

And that's what's nice about working in the film industry, because we're all basically doing the same thing. You know, it's totally, completely irrelevant whether it's in Algeria or Brazil, Calgary or some tiny town in the middle of Japan. The people on the phone are identical. You have the same little conversations, the same - no, it doesn't matter where they are at all. There is a total globalness about it, and they're all in cahoots with each other anyway. There's a great sort of network - they all communicate with each other, it's quite a tidy little club really. That's what
it's perceived as - there's even a book you can get now with every film club in the world in it."

(Alex, session 3, emphasis added)

The contact achieved through such technologies, then, is still mapped along the lines of a traditional geographical expertise. Shanghai is 'way over there', and its position plotted within the confines of a traditional atlas - 'round the corner from...'. But, though Shanghai may be spatially distant, as such technologies act to re-organize traditional relations of presence and absence, the geographically distant may no longer demarcate the culturally different.

Rather, we are seeing a more complex re-alignment of notions of distance and Otherness and one, I would suggest, that needs a more careful understanding of the space within which such contact occurs. Where notions of presence and absence have traditionally been conflated with that wider set of ordering discourses concerning the oppositions of sameness and difference, any collapse of geographical distance must necessarily bring a disorientating contact with the culturally different (whether liberating or threatening). Yet here the expansion of global business relations produces only an expanded space of the familiar. Rather than disorientating, Alex's conversations with 'someone from Shanghai' are in fact comforting, because the co-respondent is understood not as different but the same, defined first and foremost as an animator, like Alex himself, and with whom he can always guarantee 'the same little conversations'.

Rather than engendering any realignment of the oppositions of sameness and difference, then, such technologies may in fact be understood as acting only within the space of a geographically expanded West - sweeping from Asia to South America. Membership of this space is determined through access to, and a knowledge of, communication technology itself - and only those with this knowledge can join the club. The key to such knowledge then becomes no longer simply the atlas, and a traditional geographical expertise, but also the business directory.

But this space has not displaced an older space of geographical distance and cultural difference. Rather it simply overlays it. Just as in his telephone conversations Alex cannot hope to attain anything 'remotely Spanish', so we might suggest that this space of communication technology itself produces a second space - a space of the Other - defined in default through its position outside, or perhaps behind and beneath, this space of an expanded West and the 'tidy little club' of communication technology (cf Meyerowitz, 1985). It is this second space, a space of the 'authentic Other', that Alex works so hard to enter in his holiday travels, as we shall see (chapter 6). But what is important here is that, whilst within a business environment notions of presence and absence may be in the process of reorganisation, this restructuring continues to reproduce
the traditional relations of core and periphery, the familiar and the different, as these
technologies themselves produce a variated and multiple global space. The familiar is that
which lies within a space of communication technology, the different that which lies
without.

But these spaces are themselves multiple and complex. For both Alex and George
that space of the Other lying outside of communication technology may, when
deliberately sought out in their holiday travels, be exciting and desirable. When
experienced at ‘home’, however, it may also be deeply threatening, and its management
requires a new set of ‘handling’ mechanisms. Since this more threatening space is most
usually accessed through the medium of a global news network I want to explore its
‘management’ through the experiences of George.

As George moves to define the nature of this second space through the structures
of journalistic practice, so such technologies begin to assume new, and even contradictory
roles. As he says:

"As a general point, what is dangerous is that people sit on their sofas at home
listening to the radio, or watching their tele, thinking that they are, you know,
that it’s a window on the world and all that, and that they’re somehow getting
close to it. But in fact, without actually going there you can have no idea of what it’s
really like.

... so that’s what we do ... Because what you really need, what is absolutely
vital, is that we have people out in these places - I don’t know, Kabul say - seeing
with their own eyes, people who really understand what it’s like to live in these
countries, who can understand why these people do the things they do. Who can
understand, say, why the whites in South Africa are frightened, who can feel the
fear of the black masses coming up from Alexandria and looting, who can identify
with that fear ... And that function of really getting into a place is the foreign
 correspondent’s role."

(George, session 2, emphasis added)

As the experience of such spaces cannot hoped to be gained through
communication technology alone - as Alex understood - the task of describing such
spaces to us, the listeners, falls to those journalists prepared to undertake the risks of
embodied travel. But the way in which this space is described reveals much not only
about journalistic practice, but of those wider power relations within which such practice
is located. To ‘really understand’ such spaces one needs a certain expertise, and it is an
expertise constructed from a quite partial perspective.

Identifying only with the whites in South Africa, for example, South Africa itself
becomes not simply a space of difference, but the space of a threatening Other, defined
beyond the reach of Western communication technologies, where the looting black masses
might rise up at any moment. Within this positioning process any search for the ‘truth’
becomes in fact only a search for those truths defined as universal by the brave white
journalists sent out from the central metropolis. As all notions of difference and Otherness
are still, therefore, defined by those at the centre of traditional power relations, so this process acts to support a familiar set of spatialised oppositions around which the listener can 'map' her world.

At the same time, however, locating any notions of the 'truth', or 'reality', of experience as lying outside the reach of communication technology may, of course, issue a challenge to those who would seek to uphold the traditional relations of centre and margin, core and periphery. Crucially, then, as such technologies offer the possibility of a truly global coverage, the possibility also emerges of re-defining this relationship in ways that continue to support this traditional map. As George explains:

"What this means, of course, is that when something does then happen, we have people here who can then make sense of it .. [because] very often it's also a question of pointing out to the correspondents that actually they are living somewhere that's really quite extra-ordinary, quite bizarre - because people do go native, lose that perspective. It might be a fruitingly little thing - you know, just - I don't know - the very fact that actually the amount of vegetables on sale in Peking is very interesting when you've come from Russia or from Eastern Europe say."

(George, session 2, emphasis added)

Here, as before, whilst the nature of this space of the Other - that strange and 'bizarre' place - can only be captured and defined by those from the centre, the risk the correspondent runs is that through this contact with the Other he may become contaminated by it. 'Going native' he would then lose that critical distance necessary to discover its very Otherness. It is, therefore, only from the geographical 'centre' that the Other can be understood. From his archimedean point it is only George’s truly, and quite particular 'global perspective' (one curiously unavailable to his listeners it would seem) that is capable of shaping, and defining the nature of the Other itself. In other words, whilst it is necessary to go beyond communication technology to discover the 'truth', or 'reality' of the now 'present' Other, it is in turn only through George's technological gaze that the true nature of such 'discoveries' can be understood, and mapped in their 'proper' place.

Through such accounts we can suggest how, far from disrupting that wider set of spatialised oppositions around which a traditional set of power relations have been 'mapped', the re-organisations of presence and absence made possible by communication technology may in fact be acting to re-inforce those oppositions. This is because they make possible the construction of new systems of power-knowledge accessed through the archimedean perspective of a newly powerful technological gaze. If this gaze might be identified as the mechanism behind these systems (cf Dodds, 1994), it can also be suggested that these 'maps' are dependent upon a particular and familiar relationship between science and rationality. In contrast to the 'bizarre' behaviour of those outside the space of communication technology, for example, it is George's detached rationality,
constructed through his technological expertise, that gives him the perspective necessary to 'make sense' of this 're-ordered' global space.

Within geography this all-seeing/all-knowing and wholly 'rational' perspective has generally been connected to the activity of 'mapping' itself. As Crang argues: "Stereotypically, maps are part of an Enlightenment, Imperializing knowledge. They depict a world as object, the viewer as transcending it from some Archimedean point outside the space and time of those portrayed" (Crang, 1994a:341, my emphasis). Above all such maps inscribe upon the 'vagaries of everyday life' a false and objectifying order (de Certeau, 1985). More recently others have called for a less objectifying 'cartography', one that no longer assumes the vantage point of some transcendent and 'objective' observer (Bondi & Domosh, 1992; Crang, 1994a). But, in general, this perspective has been widely understood as a western, middle class and masculine view of the world (Massey, 1991a; Pile & Rose, 1992) and one that is argued by some still to dominate the structures of a traditional geography (Rose, 1993).

In other words, such maps are both a product and metaphor of the male gaze - and such a gaze is powerfully connected to the heart of the geographical imagination. In this sense the exercises of George and Alex may reveal a powerfully gendered vision, and it might be no coincidence that Alex, for example, constantly reminded me that geography was 'his thing'. Moreover, it is a vision that Alex, at least, carries beyond the technologies of the office to the spaces of the home, and one made more explicit when he talks of how he 'handles' the 'geographical overload' of contemporary television:

A: When I'm watching programmes at home I - if it's like a journey, you know, if someone's doing the old - I actually get out the Sunday Times Atlas of the World and follow it. And just sit there with it and they go there, and oh yeah he's there, because, you know. I just find that fascinating. I like to be able to relate what I'm seeing on the screen to a specific spot on the planet.

J: But is that a need to do that, or is it just a nice thing to do?

A: It is actually, no I actually have to do it.

And later:

J: And these changes are out there and you can switch into them as and when you want to?

A: Well I try and, the changes that happen I like to know about all the time. I am very interested in the changing world, and all that. So I like to take that all on board all the time. It's a constant interest.

So, I don't know, I just find that the world is an incredibly interesting place - and its history, and its geography, just a sort of interesting fascinating thing to just watch - watch it all unravel, you know. Because it all metamorphoses, if you imagine the whole world, it's almost like clouds going round the thing. I think the, the human, our existence is like that, always metamorphosing, and
swirling around ..

(Alex, session 4, emphasis added)

Here the 'placeless', or rather many placed, world of contemporary television is quite literally mapped onto the traditional projection of the Sunday Times Atlas of the World. Through the 'all seeing' television Alex is able to gain a 'total knowledge' of the world. By mapping this knowledge he is able to relate its shifting moments to a 'specific spot on the planet' and bind the possible vagaries of social action to a knowable point.

As well as providing for a sense of geographical (and thus social) order, this cartography allows Alex to secure a sense of temporal comfort. The temporality of change is contained within an unchanging and spatialized aesthetic. When overlain with an imaginative geography that itself inscribed a geography of Otherness, it can be seen how such a system imposes a knowable order upon the unorderable, a sense of geographical control on the increasing disorder of time itself.

Through this mapping Alex's gaze is thus made concrete. The changing world is made a resource that unravels for his own interest. Standing above such change, holding the world in his lap, this change is stripped of its power to affect him and becomes only a "fascinating thing just to watch". The 'placeless', temporal dislocations of time-space compression are thereby contained. Importantly, then, geographical expertise may form part of a wider system of cultural capital (Alex can, it seems, now know all there is to know) through which a sense of control over the dislocations of time-space compression is achieved. This relationship is repeated elsewhere not only by Alex but a number of the other new cultural class respondents, as we shall see, and it suggests that as geographers attempt to understand the experiences of time-space compression 'our' own complicity in the mechanisms of its control may need to be acknowledged.

But, that all-encompassing knowledge these technologies offer may also provide for less pleasurable experiences. Lest there is suggested a sense of their omnipotence, I want to finish my analysis of the experiences of those in a position of most power by describing that sense of unease these same technologies may also promote. For Alex, for example, this unease is strong:

J: I just wonder how we feel living in that sort of world, where we're getting live coverage from the other side of the world, whether it makes us feel that we know everything that's going on around us?

A: I think we do - this is more of a social comment - I think we do. I think it has a plus side and a bad side. I think the plus side is that it's good because it makes the world a smaller place, and as I believe in a kind of a one world situation I don't think that, you know, I don't think that we're in a situation now where we can keep up this kind of - little nations approach to the planet.

Having said that it's sort of blown up in our faces really, because the whole thing has just steamrolled off and suddenly hundreds of years of these petty
feuds have broken out. They're all planning it, which is just pointless and does nothing for our species at all. It's, you know, we saw it with Nazism, we see it all over actually. The Serbs and the Muslims, African tribes do it all the time. Idi Amin did it, you know, and it's the same old story.

(Alex, session 4, emphasis added)

Once again Alex begins to map his image of the world around a familiar set of spatio-cultural oppositions. The threatening world of the Other, in which 'petty ethnic feuds' may blow out of all proportion, is 'out there'. Geographically it lies beyond the civilised space of the West. Historically it is understood as backward, repeating the worst excesses of Europe's most terrible hour, and refusing to accept the new philosophies of universalism.

But, even as Alex moves to position, and thus contain, those more threatening developments his archimedean perspective makes him aware of, less reassuring feelings creep in. To be 'all knowing' carries for Alex a sense of dread every bit as strong as his sense of control. These Others are 'out there' and 'planning it', threatening to throw his more comforting and familiar world into disarray. There is here no sense of that 'waning of effect' with which others have suggested such images lose their power (Jameson, 1984). Rather those same technologies that allow for a sense of control may make those at the centre of social power aware of the fragility of their position.

Furthermore, these same movements would seem to underpin a sense of temporal discomfort similar to that which Harvey (1989a) describes. For Alex the future is not only bleak, but rushing towards him at a terrifying rate. These things have a habit of "steamrolling off", and are difficult to stop.

Thus, having started by describing how the new ICTs may promote, for those suitably expert in their use and already in a position of some social power, a system of control with which to contain the 'dislocations' of time-space compression, I have finished by painting a more complicated picture. In the next section I want to turn to the experiences of Paul for whom the ambiguities of these processes are even more pronounced. Even as he shares with George and Alex a position of gendered (and ethnic) empowerment, and certainly a number of their gendered understandings, his class position affords him less confidence in the use of the new technologies. And the insecurities he articulates in the face of rapid technological change describe a less secure position in relation to the processes of time-space compression itself.

4.3 The uncertain gendering of geographical knowledge: Paul

In the early 1980s the development of a number of new ICTs promised to transform daily life. Cheaper computers, for example, together with the fax machine and
modem, revolutionised business communications, and at home the wider availability of video recorders offered similar transformations in the nature of household relations. It was in this period that Paul worked in a local hi-fi shop, an experience that was crucial in shaping his attitudes to technology. It secured for him a sense of control over technological change. But it also, and importantly, located that control within a gendered understanding of technology that shapes Paul's relationship with the wider processes of time-space compression and which will, in the end, provide for a number of tensions in his accounts. Initially, though, Paul articulates few of those fears associated with a period of rapid technological innovation:

J: So do you, does it feel to you that this stuff moves too fast?

P: Well, they said that about the hi-fi. I used to work with the hi-fi and the thing I was doing it changed every month. The Japanese, they were so advanced they were building things, you know, and people were just turning them over. I mean you bought a new Amstrad - erm, amplifier, and within 6 months it was old hat. But you see I'm alright with that. Because, as I said, in the shop I was selling the first videos, the very first ones. So, I mean, I got in early, I know how they work, so that's alright with me.

(Paul, session 3)

Rather than threatened by a sense of temporal speed-up, Paul seems confident in his ability to take control of these new developments. He is proud to be part of a global industry whose personnel are shaping the future, and his place in this world is secured by his own technical expertise. This expertise is closely related to a wider gendering of technology that Paul promotes.

At home, for example, it is Paul who buys, and takes control of, the technologies of 'leisure' (video, television and hi-fi). And though it is his wife who must use those technologies associated with domestic labour (the microwave, washing machine and hoover) it is his technical expertise that determines the act of purchase. Talking about food technologies, for example, Paul argued:

"... that's just down to the wife. Because, I think the kitchen's a women's thing. I'm not really into - I mean she said I need, I want, a microwave, so and so down the road's got one, we'll probably go and buy the same brand. But I basically buy, and I think: 'well Christ, in the long run she's probably going to save on the electricity bills'. You see, I'm thinking financially - if over the year it will save me a few bob, I'm doing it that way you see."

(Paul, session 3)

In contrast to his wife, for whom the purchase of a microwave is thought of as a silly vanity, for Paul technology is a serious business. In the end it is he who has control over who buys what, because it is he who really understands the inner workings of the machine and can thus calculate the financial worth of different technologies.

In other words, within Paul's household access to, and the meanings conferred
upon, different technologies is structured by a familiar set of gender relations. Though he can, of course, use the technologies of domestic labour - "I mean it's all laid down in the instructions, and if you're not an idiot you can read the instructions and just turn, erm, button B to number 2 and - put the powder in" (session 3) - he simply doesn't. This is not because he cannot understand these technologies, only that he doesn't need to. In the same way it is Paul who takes control of those domestic ICTs that offer access to a wider social world (the television being the most important) and, crucially, who draws up the household's viewing agenda. This agenda itself reflects a set of traditional gender relations and, as we shall see, these relations are fundamental in determining Paul's mapping of that re-organised global space associated with a period of time-space compression. This is the first set of relationships explored below.

But, this attitude also helps determine his relationship with those feelings of temporal insecurity inculcated by processes of time-space compression. Though it is his wife who actually uses these technologies, it is Paul who understands their technical complexity. Thus, whilst his wife's relationship with technology is determined by use (whatever Paul's description) Paul's is determined by a relationship of knowledge (cf Morley, 1992). For him what is important is how a machine works (he could name not only the makes, but different components of the hi-fi, for example) and this technical know-how is understood as a male preserve. As Paul connects his technical expertise to a wider understanding of his role within the household this gendering of technology produces tensions. As head of the family it is his duty to keep up to date with the latest changes in technology and, where his expertise in this area is threatened, these later developments threaten both his masculinity and his position as head of the family. In other words, though a traditional gendering of technology describes the relations of patriarchy, those same relations can position men too in an uncomfortable position, and for Paul this is a position articulated as class and gender interact in complex ways. It is these feelings of temporal insecurity that are analyzed in the second section below, and in more detail in chapter 5.

First of all, then, Paul and I explored the ways in which he seeks to 'make sense' of a re-organised global space, in this case looking at his understandings of contemporary television and, more specifically, at the role of the television news in his household's viewing. Crucially, just as for Paul the new ICTs are a 'serious business', and thus a male preserve, so too are those issues that these ICTs give access to. Contrasting his own preferences, for example, to the programmes that his wife usually watches, Paul suggested:
"I think it's good to keep on top of these things, topical things, because - I don't watch a lot of sports programmes, the news is just there for my benefit really, Jill [his wife] would sooner watch a soap opera than watch the news. But I mean if someone asked me a question - on what's going on at the moment - then I actually know what's going on.

.. my Mum watches it - she watches the news - she's got Sky now, and she'll make a point of watching the international stuff. God knows why, it comes from my Dad I suppose, because he always watched the news, that sort of stuff.

(Paul, session 5, emphasis added)

For Paul knowledge of world events is clearly a male domain, a division of labour suitably reflected in the household’s viewing (cf Morley, 1986). The division reflects a number of gendered oppositions. In the first place the outside world is rendered masculine, in contrast to the domestic concerns of the soaps, and of their female viewers (cf Geraghty, 1991). More generally, where the watching of soap operas has been positioned as a 'bodily' rather than 'intellectual' activity, the intellect (and knowledge more widely) is also constructed as male (cf Allen, 1985). The ability to 'keep on top' of world events is thus both a product of, and factor in, his masculinity, and once again geographical knowledge itself is masculinized. Only his mother’s interest in the news would seem to contradict this positioning process, but that too is quickly explained - she got it from his dad.

Paul’s gendering of geographical expertise is critical because where developments in the international news network threaten to produce that more disorientating global space associated with the processes of time-space compression, those same developments may undermine his geographical expertise - and thus his masculinity:

J: With all the international coverage, does it get confusing where all these places are?

P: Yes it does, yes. The news last night - the war re-started in Angola - there were 300 people killed. And I couldn’t work out where Angola was. Now - in Africa somewhere, but I wasn't too sure. But you do get, the Bosnians and the Croats, the Croatians - where are these countries?

(Paul session 5, emphasis added)

It is therefore vital that Paul can find ways in which to re-secure this less ordered global space, to 'map' its disorientating geography around a more familiar set of co-ordinates. His response is to draw upon a familiar hierarchy of place significance:

J: And what's more important - the local news or the international news?

P: That's a hard question - I mean I suppose I would be more interested in the bombing in Stoke Newington. That would be of more interest to me, because it happens on my doorstep. But then again I suppose if the world stopped tomorrow then -

I always buy the local paper to see what's going on in Stoke Newington or in Hackney in general. But if you actually do that, which I do, you always look for the articles that happen in Stoke Newington - as opposed to things happening in
Dalston or Hackney Wick (2 miles east) or something like that, only because it’s in my area.

But [the local and national television news] they just follow on from each other - and from the weather really.

(Paul, session 5, emphasis added)

By deploying a series of traditional spatial oppositions Paul can continue to map a re-organised global space around a traditional set of cultural oppositions - inside and outside, centre and margin - and thus reaffirm his knowledge of, and control over, a more confusing global geography. But, though local events might seem to have more significance (and allow him to ignore, when necessary, those events occurring outside his local area) Paul continues to exhibit his understanding of the world’s inter-dependence. The two news programmes simply follow on from each other, both are equally important, and Paul is at home in either. Through his understanding of the interconnectivity of social events Paul can thus celebrate his understanding of, and central place within, a truly global world.

In many ways, then, Paul shares a number of those understandings through which both George and Alex secured a sense of control over those new alignments of presence and absence associated with a period of time-space compression. For all the male respondents, a traditional geographical expertise, together with that truly global knowledge made possible by the new ICTs, was central to the continued ‘mapping’ of a re-organised global space. And this expertise, itself powerfully gendered, was made possible by a gendered consumption of the new communication technologies.

But, Paul’s accounts also point to a number of discrepancies for any analysis that would seek to position gender as the only determinant in these understandings. George, for example, was clearly more at ease with the re-organisations of this new global space than either Alex or Paul and this sense of ease can partly be explained with reference to his position as a ‘producer’ of that global news network through which the others have to struggle to ‘map’ their world. At a wider level of analysis, however, differences emerge in the experiences of Paul and Alex too, and these need to be explained in relation to differences in their class position.

Where Alex was quite at home with the latest developments in communication technology, despite Paul’s earlier claims, his is a less secure position. In particular Paul is concerned about developments in computer technology, an arena in which he has little first hand experience. Recognizing the importance of computers Paul has struggled to provide his sons with the latest equipment and, in line with a traditional gendering of the home computer (Rothschild, 1983), this importance is understood as relating to their educational and vocational potential. But, his pride in his sons’ abilities serves only to
emphasise his own unease, an unease that articulates those feelings of temporal insecurity central to a period of time-space compression. Asking him about these developments, for example, and whether he felt a sense of control over them, he answered:

"I can handle it, yeah. If I wanted to go into it I suppose I could, yeah. I mean I play my kids' computer. It's only a thingybob, it's not actually a, it's a keyboard instrument thing. But you should see and like Jack [his son] set it up and all. And he'll go bang, bang, bang, and he'll know how to do it.

I mean I could learn, but I don't think I'll bother with it, I think I'll just ride it out now ... But I mean computers - there was a story of a girl the other week who got a - a disease from a computer. It cause her stress or something.

But again I suppose computers have got their plusses. I suppose it's just the future really.

(Paul, session 3, emphasis added)

In contrast to the assured ease of George and Alex, Paul never quite convinces that he really is at ease with these developments. From claiming expertise on the "thingybob .. keyboard instrument thing" he slips to a position in which he can only claim that he could learn if he wanted to. It would seem that computers are an essential part not only of the future security of his sons, but also his own employment prospects, and thus the financial security of his family as a whole. In the face of his own inexperience all Paul can hope to do now is 'ride it out', and this lack of experience begins to articulate a fear of technology that can be understood as providing Paul with a vehicle through which to acknowledge a more general fear of the future itself:

J: But they'll [the kids] need those skills by the time they go out to work?

P: Yeah, definitely, yeah. And hopefully they'll have them too. But then again you've got so many mod cons and that, and they said they're ruining the earth with these ozone layers and whatever, aerosol cans. Which they never did. And then - it was years ago (laughter) everyone used to wear Brylcreme weren't it. I can remember my Dad using Brylcreme, and these days it's hair sprays.

But we never knew then we was ruining the earth so, because it's whether there is an earth for them in the future really. I think computers are the thing of the future, even though they've been here for the last 15, 20 years, it's still a thing of the future .. [and] all I'm trying to do is - I am living at the moment now just trying to get, I am living for the kids really, you know. It's for them that I'm trying to build a future for - that's my point of living at the moment. But it's so hard, there's nothing, nothing, I really don't know where the future is going to be.

(Paul, session 5, emphasis added)

A symbol of the future, and of the future well-being of his sons, technology now begins to be connected to images of death. Computers cause disease, and aerosols the death of the planet, and these environmental analogies provide Paul with the opportunity to describe feelings otherwise hard to articulate (cf Burgess, 1993). Where throughout Paul has constructed technological expertise as a man's goal, and the responsibility of the male provider, his own technical inexperience threatens both his masculinity and his role as head of the household. In part, then, these images need to be understood as analogies.
through which Paul can express to me (another man) those feelings of inadequacy that are so painful, but also so difficult to articulate.\(^5\)

But Paul is also beginning to express exactly those feelings of temporal insecurity that Harvey (1989a) has argued are to be found in a period of rapid technical innovation and time-space compression. Though a symbol of the future, in the shape of the computer, technology has brought the future into the present. And as these developments threaten to destroy not only his own future employment prospects, but also the physical possibility of his children's future (the earth may simply no longer be here), the same developments that allow a brighter future for his children may also destroy that future all together. There is thus articulated not only a fear of a less desirable future rushing towards him, and in which it would seem that he may no longer have a part (cf Harvey, 1989a), but a more disturbing sense of temporal dislocation (cf Kern, 1983).

In the next chapter I want to move on to explore how Paul, and the others, work to 'balance' these feelings by accessing a range of more comforting temporal structures. But, for now, I want only to emphasise the similarities, and the differences, that are articulated by Paul, George and Alex. In particular, though sharing a set of gendered understandings, that sense of security the new cultural class respondents exhibited in their feelings about developments in communication technology is not matched by Paul. This difference is a product of their different class positions. Whilst for the new cultural class technical know-how is a vital part of their cultural capital, and expertise in the new ICTs gained during their working lives is carried to their experiences of technologies found within the home (Silverstone, 1991), this is not the case for Paul. His lack of experience with these new technologies within the workplace forgives for him a far more disturbing sense of temporal insecurity, an insecurity expressed aptly enough through fears about future employment.

Positions of class and gender thus begin to move together. It could be argued that had Paul placed less emphasis on the gendering of these technologies his own worries (a product also of his class position) may have been less keenly felt. The argument would certainly gain support from an understanding of his wife's position. In her work for a

\(^5\) The analysis thus draws attention to the influence of gender within the interview process. But, whilst it is true that Paul often had difficulty 'confessing' to me the problems he experienced with technology, and this most likely was a reflection of his gendering of technology, I am not sure that he would have 'admitted' to these feelings more readily with a female interviewer. Indeed, I suspect that he would have found these sessions even more difficult with a woman. The role of gender within the interview process thus goes beyond any simple understanding of the 'silent' male and 'open' female respondent, a model that would rest upon rather static (and essentialist) notions of femininity and masculinity (cf Jackson, 1991b). Rather, these issues need relating to the wider discussion of the positioning process described in chapter 3.4a.
national high street bank she in fact earns more than Paul, and is well trained in the use of computers. Since we might expect the new cultural class women to share many of the employment securities of George and Alex, and certainly their technical expertise, the ambiguities of class and gender suggested here should emerge even more powerfully in their accounts. In particular I am concerned in tracing how these women negotiate technical developments that have done much to secure their own professional position, but that may also articulate the operation of a 'masculine' gaze.

4.4 Expressions of ambiguity: Dorian and Amanda

Both Dorian and Amanda are well trained in the use of the new ICTs. In their professional lives they share many of those feelings about technology expressed by George and Alex. Amanda, for example, is confident in her use of computers, faxes and all the other "junk" associated with a modern office, and for Dorian the new technologies provide an invaluable "tool" in her work in graphic design. Indeed, not only do neither seem to express any great feelings of disquiet at the pace of recent change, but as for George and Alex, technical know-how has proved to be a vital part of their professional cultural capital. Dorian, for example, has taken the opportunity provided by a recent employer to train herself in the use of the latest packages in computer aided design:

J: I was going to ask what kind of changes you've seen with the technologies coming through?

D: Well huge changes. And that's been brilliant for me because it means that I've been trained and I'm at the vanguard of that technology. Which guarantees my employability in the coming years.

... I'm not a computer buff, but I've picked it up quite quickly. I'm not obsessive about knowing everything. I just need to know enough to get the job done well, and to know what I'm talking about. It's just great really, I really enjoy it, though I know that it's caused a lot of redundancy, and shrinkage in business.

(Dorian, session 2)

In other words, as members of the new cultural class, both Amanda and Dorian are at the centre of a new division of labour, and this class position assures a certain confidence in the face of recent change (cf McDowell, 1991a). Dorian, for example, is at the "vanguard" of the latest developments, and this position is partly a product of her technical expertise. Though these developments might have a debilitating effect on members of a peripheral labour force, Dorian's own future is "guaranteed".

But, though both may in this sense seem to embrace a 'task orientated' view of technology that has been widely understood as 'masculine' (Rothschild, 1983), Dorian and Amanda are in fact anxious to distance themselves from the masculine overtones of a 'technology obsession' (cf Morley, 1992). Like Dorian, for example, Amanda too has no interest in technology for technology's sake, or the inner workings of the machine, an
interest that is positioned as both peculiarly masculine, and a waste of time and money:

A: ... well there's also a lot of wank talked about it as well, isn't there - you know, whether you should have this or that, to keep up with this system or that system - all that updating stuff is just a big rip off .. take the director, he is always whizzing round using everything, really manically.

J: Is there one thing that for you is the most amazing change?

A: No I don't think so. I don't understand any of it. I don't understand how a camera works. So it all just feels like progress, it doesn't feel like, you know, it's all part of the same thing that people can do that, and I'm glad that they can.

(Amanda, session 3)

In contrast to the male respondents, whose sense of security was based around a position of knowledge, Dorian and Amanda's security is based in their use of these technologies. In this sense they in fact portray a traditionally gendered understanding, and these differences are taken further by Dorian below. But, in this account Dorian also begins to express a less secure relationship with a period of technological change. In a conversation about the value of the past, for example, Dorian championed the importance of tradition. I was confused over where these feelings might fit with her desire for technological development:

J: So where does something like the computer fit in because computers for example change so rapidly?

D: Well that's alright. To me a computer is - a departure from the old. I mean someone - Mr. Bloggs who invented the computer has looked at typesetting, looked at the lovely letter forms, looked at the lovely piece of metal, looked at the things that have been handed down - and thought there must be a way of doing this quicker. So he's gone off and worked with bits of wire and electricity and computer chips and - I don't know what computers are made of - slugs and snails and puppy dogs' tails - and then he has come up with something which I don't understand and will never understand and it doesn't matter. I can just press a few buttons but I get the same result because of the thing it produces. It kind of reflects back, it does the same thing, it does it all beautifully. It can, and it can do something that looks backwards or it can - I can make up something that looks forward.

(Dorian, session 5)

Having identified with the privileged members of a new industrial elite, Dorian now seems far less confident over her power to control the rapid pace of contemporary change. In their descriptions of the workplace George and Alex drew upon a certain nostalgic imagery. Dorian too, it seems, can gain control over recent change only by positioning it within a longer sense of historical continuity - though the imagery she deploys is both more personal (seeking comfort in an imaginary childhood) and powerfully gendered (cf Squire, 1991). Embracing the computer as a 'departure from the old', Dorian is anxious lest this departure cuts her off from a more secure tradition represented by the rural craft of Mr. Bloggs. Yet, even as it is the computer that threatens
to depart from this tradition, so too it is only the computer that allows her to secure that sense of temporal control she seeks. In its form, Janus like, one can look both backwards and forwards in time, and in its function stand above and control time itself: "I can just press a few buttons but I get the same result" (time after time, after time).

Even for those most empowered by these developments, then, the pace of recent change necessitates the movement towards more comforting temporal structures. And, whatever their class position, both Dorian and Amanda in fact show powerful feelings of temporal disquiet. Amanda hinted at these feelings in her reference to the manic behaviour of her male director, a product of his masculine obsession with technology to be sure, but also an influence of these technologies themselves and the way in which they simply give one more tasks to do. I shall return to these feelings in more detail below, and in chapter 5.

For now, however, what is important is that both Dorian and Amanda share a position of some class empowerment with George and Alex, and some of their confidence in the face of recent technological change. But both also express rather more disquiet in the face of those temporal movements bought about by a period of time-space compression than either of the male respondents drawn from the new cultural class. Since they share many of the same skills, these differences are not the product of differences in technical ability itself. Rather, the differences that Amanda and Dorian express in relation to the wider experiences of time-space compression may be understood as moving through their experiences of communication technology, as technology becomes a 'window' through which they negotiate a more ambiguous social position.

To illustrate these ambiguities I want to compare the 'mapping exercises' of George and Alex, with the rather different ways in which Dorian and Amanda attempt to 'map' a re-organised global space. Though Dorian, for example, would seem to construct a cartography little different from that of George and Alex, her use of these technologies is structured by a different set of needs. Amanda, on the other hand, confronts the objectifications of a 'masculine' gaze directly, such that her consumption practices differ from those of George, Alex, Paul, and Dorian. Since all are using the same technologies, these differences must reflect the different position of each within a broader set of social relations, relations that are only given voice by the new ICTs.

Though she is drawn to the experience of other places and cultures, Dorian has a number of fears about physically embarking on trips abroad. These fears are powerfully gendered. I shall return to them in more detail in chapter 6 where I explore their relationship with a wider set of understandings concerning the nature of authenticity and
the exotic. Thus, for Dorian one of the most pleasurable aspects of recent changes in technology and, in particular, of the proliferation of programmes that now regularly describe far away places, is the way in which these technologies would seem to open up a 'window on the world'. Through their potential for a bit of 'imaginary travel' they allow Dorian to move around a number of those gendered fears associated with embodied travel, and have therefore been broadly welcomed.

Her understandings of these programmes offer an excellent opportunity to consider how Dorian is constructing a wider global geography, and in particular to assess how far her geography moves around that traditional set of cultural oppositions uncovered in the accounts of the male respondents. Discussing her passion for a particular type of documentary, for example, Dorian noted:

D: My favourite programmes are, well not actually holiday programmes because they’re too edited, but if there’s a documentary on about India, or Africa, or Russia, or wildlife, then it’s the most favourite thing that I can think of watching.

J: Why?

D: Because I suppose I’m very interested in the way that other people live, and exotic countries. You know, I’m a bit ‘armchair’ because I’m not, you know I don’t do it, but it really interests me, watching tribal programmes or - there was something on the other night about a team of surgeons going out to Timor or somewhere like that to correct a whole host of people who have cleft palettes. It was just fascinating, I do really enjoy it.

And, you know, if there’s an animal programme on, you know I don’t mean Your Cat or something, last week I was watching something on zebra, or about elephants, or about tigers, or about African Tribes then I just think it’s wonderful - seeing how people live in strange cultures, strange lands.

(Dorian, session 3, emphasis added)

This is an especially rich passage, and it would be easy to construct a number of readings. One could, for example, concentrate on her predilection for documentaries, rather than the "too edited" travel programme and what this says about a wider understanding of contemporary travel. But most obvious is the way in which her account continues to draw a traditional set of distinctions between centre and margin, core and periphery, and connects these distinctions to a whole series of racialised oppositions.

The geographically distant, for example, is understood as historically underdeveloped, constructing a familiar relationship between progress, science and geography (see chapter 2.1a). At a wider level of analysis these distant spaces are portrayed as lying outside of the civilised world of the Western metropolis. In the peripheral space of the African continent peoples and animals are conflated, and the disfigured inhabitants of Timor may only cure their afflictions with the aid of the visiting Western surgeons.

In part, then, the attraction of these programmes is that they allow the viewer to construct a geography of the world that moves around a traditional set of cultural
oppositions, and within which the viewer's own position is clearly located at the centre. But their attraction is also that they allow the distanced spectator to flirt with a world of difference without ever risking the dangers of embodied travel and the ambiguities of social interaction. Dorian may construct these readings because:

"The frame of a cinema or TV screen staves off the danger of spillage more effectively still than tourist hotels and fenced-off camping sites; the one-sidedness of communication further entrenches the Strangers on the screen as, essentially, incommunicado"

(Bauman, 1988, quoted in Shields, 1992:193, his emphasis)

Thus, to an extent, these understandings are already framed by the production values of these programmes themselves and the effect of the television screen. But the distanced gaze that demarcates a wholly static Other, and onto which Dorian can project all sorts of desires (does she want to be the surgeon bringing relief to the silent natives?) is also a direct product of her wider social position. In the first place it may only be those at the centre of social power who can afford a television set (or at least the costs of making, and watching, these rather expensive programmes), and certainly it is only those in a position of some privilege who can so easily assume the position of spectator rather than spectacle.

Like George and Alex, then, Dorian constructs an image of a re-ordered global space that is built around a traditional set of binary closures. And this geography is constructed with the aid of a powerful technological gaze. Furthermore, rather than simply the determined result of these technologies, this gaze is a product of Dorian's class and ethnic empowerment. Far from the gaze being exclusively masculine, it would seem that these technologies are opening up the opportunity to gaze for groups who might previously have been the object of that gaze - though it is difficult to equate Dorian's perspective with any radical act of 'resistance' (cf hooks, 1992).

At the same time it is important to recognize that Dorian's attraction to these programmes is also a result of her unwillingness to traverse a social space that still holds a number of dangers for women, and not least the possibility of sexual attack. Unlike Alex, for whom, as we shall see in chapter 6, the rigours of embodied travel hold few fears, Dorian's use of the 'imaginary space' of the documentary is in some ways defensive. She is a bit "armchair", less perhaps by choice, but because of the real (and imaginary) fears of moving through material space and this fear is only admitted to rather reluctantly - perhaps she feels she should be 'brave enough' to take these risks.

In this sense any gaze that she projects is always liable to be more ambiguous than that projected by the male respondents. Not least because it is a result of her desire to avoid her own objectification in the continued projection of a sexualized gaze and the
material consequences that gaze articulates. This ambiguity is a direct result of her wider social position, a position of some ethnic (and class) power in a patriarchal world, but it is one given voice by her use of the new ICTs.

In contrast Amanda uses these technologies quite differently. She is anxious to undermine a traditional set of binary oppositions and to use these technologies in ways that may promote relations of difference rather than exclusion. In this sense she differs not only from the male respondents, but also from Dorian. But these differences are complex. Though, like Dorian, she too accesses the ‘imaginary space’ of the new ICTs in order to avoid her own objectification, where Dorian celebrated this possibility Amanda is concerned that this access may raise questions about her own complicity in the objectifications of a technological gaze.

In Amanda’s work in mental health care the new ICTs provide a valuable tool because, as well as allowing for the silencing of alternative subject positions, they may also be used in ways that promote communication between different groups. In a multicultural environment the flexibility of the computer, for example, can allow for a more equitable distribution of information and, in the most literal sense, Amanda regularly uses the computer network to:

"... get translations, or ask it to write out things in different languages and things like that, which is incredibly useful in Hackney. Yeah, they’re really useful, a really useful tool."

(Amanda, session 3)

These technologies also allow for more a fundamental challenge to the traditional relations of exclusion. Their use can offer the possibility of undercutting that relationship between science and rationality central to the mappings of both the male respondents and Dorian. In its work with the mentally ill, for example, Amanda’s organisation uses computers in ways that simply invert this more familiar relationship:

"The [computers] also give our clients a lot more confidence. Because they’re quite logical - I mean they sometimes don’t feel logical (laughter), but in the end there’s always a logic to them. And I think that gives the mental health thing a whole new light. Because people are so sort of stressful aren’t they. But if you find people stressful you can always relate to a computer."

(Amanda, session 2, emphasis added)

Traditionally science has been understood as the logical and rational (Baudrillard, 1991). As such it must usually be positioned in opposition to the irrationality of the mentally ill, as mental health itself has come to be constructed through a series of oppositions around the ‘ordered’ and ‘unordered’ mind (Foucault, 1967). But here it is precisely the logic of the computer that marks out the possibility of its use by Amanda’s
clients. This consumption processes acts to position the mentally ill with the rational, logical world of science, and the ‘sane’ with notions of stressful irrationality. As the two systems are laid together, so they move to invert each other.

So too Amanda accesses that ‘imaginary space’ produced by the new ICTs in ways quite different from the other respondents:

A: And there’s a lot, again, a lot of our clients, we spend a lot of our time trying to get a free phone put in for them so they’ve got some contact outside. If you’re having a panic attack or something like that you can’t go out and find somebody. So it’s a contact. I think millions of people use it like that.

J: Because if you’re having a panic attack you can’t go outside to find someone.

A: And you can go straight to them, it’s actually personal because you can hear their voice, you can try to keep - you don’t have to wander round for hours and hours with everyone staring at you. Yeah, I mean for me it’s a lifeline.

(Amanda, session 2, emphasis added)

On first reading this account seems to be describing only Amanda’s professional use of the telephone. One assumes that she is the one ‘talking the client down’. Certainly this is an important aspect of her job and a familiar use of the ‘phone. But in her descriptions of the panic attack Amanda is also describing herself. In her work Amanda draws upon her own experience as an ex-user of the service and here it is her, as well as the client, who is using the telephone to avoid the objectifying gaze of others.\(^6\)

In some ways, then, Amanda’s access of this ‘imaginary space’ fulfils a similar purpose to Dorian’s - though she is negotiating a rather different gaze, and from a rather different position. But in other ways her use is radically different. Whilst Dorian used the possibility of this space only to construct her own set of exclusions, and in ways very similar to the male respondents, once again Amanda is moving to invert those distinctions that described the exclusions of their project. Rather than acting to separate the worlds of the rational and the ‘bizarre’, the telephone is being used in ways that hold out the possibility of contact. In the first place this subverts a traditional set of spatial oppositions and in the second locates the mentally ill within the space of the centre itself, along with ‘millions of other people’.

Amanda also distinguishes herself from Dorian in her unease with the ambiguities of these technologies. In particular, she is concerned that whilst this imaginary space may often prove quite liberating, it may also promote a view of the world she finds disturbing. Where the others accessed the possibilities of a technological gaze as a means

\(^6\) Clearly this raises some questions about the ethics of disclosure. But in our meetings Amanda said that she felt it would be impossible to understand her accounts without an understanding of her past, and was quite happy that this aspect of her past be included in the thesis. See chapter 3.
with which to secure a more ordered global space and celebrated the position of power
this gaze articulated, Amanda is far less easy about her own complicity in these
structures. Her understandings of the television, for example, are quite different from
Dorian’s:

“I get really pissed off with the television because I think the news concentrates
too much on foreign places, you know, to the exclusion of what’s happening here.
You know - everywhere else has an appalling mental health system, or everybody
else has shortages, and injustices, and racism - and we don’t. You know, it’s just
beyond us again - the evil over there. It’s very precarious isn’t it, you just observe,
and we don’t use it in any constructive way. I mean it could be a really good tool
couldn’t it. And it’s not used that way, it’s really just a way of bolstering up
ourselves.

.. I don’t like it when the news is vicarious about these accidents and
things like that. And they just go over and over it, drag out the mother crying, drag
out the men who are dead .. I don’t know why people enjoy seeing that - seeing other
people’s pain, but they must otherwise they wouldn’t keep putting it on, going over and
over it. But I can’t, I just can’t.”

(Amanda, session 3, emphasis added)

Here Amanda makes explicit her unease with that set of spatial oppositions
through which those in the West have traditionally ‘mapped’ their position in the world.
Far from challenging these oppositions, Amanda recognizes how the new technologies
often act to support them and, in direct contrast to the other respondents, it is a use she
clearly finds disturbing. But it is also a use in which she recognizes her own complicity.
As a viewer she is inevitably located in a position of some power, part of those who
simply gaze at the evils in the world beyond in order to bolster their own sense of
security.

What distinguishes Amanda from the other respondents, then, is a powerful sense
of reflexivity and her alignment with a more progressive political position. It is a
reflexivity that is carried to the interview. Amanda’s unease is not only a product of the
recognition of her own (unwilling) position within the voyeuristic audience of
contemporary television, but a comment on the interview process itself. Just as she cannot
understand the behaviour of the television crews who gaze at the suffering of others (nor
those who want to watch such footage), nor can she understand why I am making her
go over and over this painful subject. As the interviewer it is my gaze that now causes
her such distress.7

7 This was only one of a number of instances in which our sessions threatened to ‘boil
over’, as we tackled topics that caused Amanda considerable discomfort. The difficulty was trying
to recognize where these situations might occur, and it was never easy to spot in advance what
topics might engender these emotions. In many ways, then, my sessions with Amanda were the
most difficult for both interviewee and interviewer, and on one occasion we aborted a session to
reconvene later. I have included this instance here because I feel it demonstrates how the
’substantive’ and ‘methodological’ aspects of research often move together, and see chapter 3.
Further, though she earlier articulated a certain control over that sense of change associated with the contemporary period, her feelings of unease re-emerge when Amanda talks more directly about the impact of these technologies on one's sense of time, feelings that are intimately connected to one's sense of place. These feelings were in fact hinted at in an earlier description of the 'manic behaviour' of her boss. But here they assume a more disturbing edge, as Amanda connects the emergence of new ICTs to a profound sense of temporal and spatial 'dislocation':

J: I was thinking that [her organisation] is part of a national organisation, and a year ago you when you might have written or phoned a person at another branch, now you can fax then instantaneously, whether that starts to change our feelings of I'm sitting here in Hackney?  

A: I think it probably has. And it must have overall a quite disconcerting effect, it must have a disconcerting effect. Because you haven’t got the same sense of time and place have you? If you’re instantly in contact with someone in, Holland - which I’m quite often in contact with - then that’s, you lose that sense of Europe, of the distance, and of the sea between you and things like that.  

J: Is that important to have?  

A: Yeah I think it is actually .. I think I find the world a quite disorderly place anyway, and I think, all this stuff does hurry us up too much, and it makes you lose - like it makes everybody the same for a start.  

... I don’t know why but what keeps coming into my mind is the Stock Exchange and things like that, which I always think is foul. You know this high, MANIC, you know burn out by the time you’re 24, working class lads who are in the Stock Exchange. That seems weird, I don’t like that, it’s not helpful to anybody ...  

Adding in a later session:  

A: It’s scary isn’t it. Because it’s truly global. And these things encourage people just to move on, move around all the time. People never seem to stay in one place any more. It’s very scary. And it must have a terrible effect on people. I really think so. As I say it’s so common just to leave things, there’s no stability at all. And I, no, I don’t like moving, but I just don’t see how it can be any good for you, you know.  

... I don’t know. It’s all to do with identity I think, and you could get to the point where people just don’t identify with anybody, just go from one group to the next, one place to the next ... It all becomes so superficial doesn’t it, just surface. And it’s really boring, because you actually don’t know anybody.  

J: I asked you before whether we can block this stuff out, and whether you need to  

A: I don’t think you can actually, you know, it’s there all the time..  

(Amanda, sessions 3 & 5, emphasis added)  

From a position of some empowerment Amanda now comes closest to those feelings of radical disorientation described by Harvey (1989a). Though the image she deploys, of burn out on the Stock Exchange, is perhaps an obvious one, her feelings are
none-the-less profound. In the first place the impact of these technologies is a generalised and highly disturbing sense of temporal speed-up. But, where they have also undermined a traditional relationship between spatial and temporal distance, time and space are tied together in ways that promote a deeper rupture in the structures of identity itself (cf Giddens, 1991; Lash & Friedman, 1992; Kern, 1983).

For Amanda identity is constructed at a local level. Where these technologies have led to the emergence of a global uniformity their impact is to destroy the particularities of place, and of place identities. Under the fax we are all the same. Without a sense of distance there can be no sense of the differences between one place and another. At the same time, a global information network has led to an increase in population movement. The instantaneity of the new communication technologies has encouraged the continual movement of people around the globe, to the point at which people no longer stay in one place long enough to build a sense of who they are.

In some ways, then, Amanda would seem anxious at the loss of those traditional markers of cultural distinction that inscribe a sense of order upon the world. And certainly the structures of local identity are described in ways similar to a humanist understanding of place, and the ‘time thickened’ nature of an ‘authentic’ place experience (see chapter 2.1b). If so, even as she is describing a loss of control, this would position Amanda with the other respondents. Though they accessed these technologies in ways that re-inscribed a traditional set of spatial oppositions, and for Amanda it is these oppositions that are under threat, both would seem anxious to assert the importance of those binary systems that have characterised a modern epistemology.

In fact, however, Amanda’s feelings are more complex. Earlier she identified with the possibility of a new relationship of difference, rather than exclusion, and it is the threat to this relationship that Amanda finds so disturbing. For her, the problem with the new technologies is not that they destroy a sense of place, or at least not that ‘bounded’ sense of place identified by the humanists, but rather the impact they are having on social interaction. Amanda’s ‘sense of place’ is a product of social relations. It is important only in as much as it allows people the time to move beyond the superficial world, towards a better understanding of different subject positions. It is these relations that are under threat. As the new technologies encourage people constantly to move on they produce a world in which social relations are inevitably reduced to that distanced and superficial perspective she found so disturbing in the television programme. What is at issue is the possibility of ‘authentic’ interaction, where notions of authenticity describe an openness to difference, rather than some sort of positional closure (Haraway, 1990). It is also an understanding of authenticity that is intimately related to her understandings of time. It
is the (unnatural) simultaneity of the new technologies that encourages people to move (with 'long distance you might as well be there') and thus undermines the possibility of authentic interaction (cf Young, 1990).

In the end, then, Amanda expresses considerable unease with those technologies that articulate the experiences of time-space compression. And though this unease is in part a reflection of her more radical position (in the sense that she recognizes the objectifying nature of these technologies) it is also profoundly personal and deeply felt. In a position of some class and ethnic empowerment, and initially expressing a certain control over these experiences, Amanda's sense of unease is matched only by Paul's. These more personal feelings disrupt any simple sociology that would map the experiences of time-space compression only in relation to the assumed positions of class, gender and ethnicity, and reveals the need to look more carefully at the ambiguities of individual experience.

To clarify this argument I want, finally, to turn to the experiences of the last respondent. By virtue of both her class and gender we might, of all the respondents, expect Pat to articulate the most profound sense of disorientation in the face of recent change, and especially those changes bought about with developments in communication technology. With Paul we found this sense of unease to be structured by a lack of experience with those new ICTs found within the workplace, and that unease to be carried to his understandings of domestic technology. In light of his experiences, since Pat has never even used a computer or a fax machine, we might expect these fears to emerge even more powerfully here. But in fact for Pat such radical unease is not only conspicuous by its absence, but faintly ridiculous. Just as these technologies produce different feelings in different people, we need to be careful before producing an analysis that exaggerates any sort of impact. Pat's account therefore offers a useful antidote to the grandiose assumptions of high theory. In many ways it is also the most interesting because, though rooted in commonsense, her understandings reveal the most sophisticated negotiation of the current re-organisations of presence and absence.

4.5 Upholding commonsense: Pat

Though she was the oldest respondent, it was Pat who expressed least surprise at the pace of recent change. Indeed, far from disorientated by developments in technology she has barely noticed them. As she says: "I haven't really thought about it, I mean when you grow up with it you don't, do you" (session 3). Moreover, though having little experience with those new ICTs to be found within the workplace, it was Pat who owned
by far the most in the way of ‘domestic’ technologies. In contrast to the planned austerity of the homes of the new cultural class respondents, Pat’s house is filled with every conceivable gadget. She owns not just one but several hoovers, for example, and a number of cookers, freezers and microwaves. She has satellite television and a sophisticated video recorder, and in the kitchen can re-seal old carrier bags with her handy electronic bag re-sealer. But, though her obsession with technology might seem to undermine a number of assumptions about the role of class in determining access to technology per se, or at least domestic technology, this access is structured by a traditional set of gender relations:

J: Because you’ve got Sky tv here haven’t you?

P: Oh I know. I don’t watch it. I’ve never watched it. It’s a waste of time asking me about tv because I hardly ever watch it. And the films, they’re just - the new films I don’t like ‘em. If they’re not swearing in it they’re having sex. They’re not interesting - that’s everyday life I know, but I’m not interested in that - not watching other people anyway (laughter)!

J: So do you take much interest in buying all that stuff?

P: No. That’s all down to him [her husband]. I don’t know what it’s all for. I know my Nintendo - I can play that for hours, it keeps my brain active - it does! - but I don’t know what all the else is for. And I can’t work the video - even though he’s bought them buttons, I can’t, I can’t do it.

(Pat, session 3)

Though the buying of these products is dependent upon Pat’s income (rather than her husband’s) it is still her husband who determines what is bought, when it is bought, and who takes control of these purchases. In direct contrast to Dorian and Amanda, who both sought to challenge a traditional gendering of technological access, and technological expertise, it would seem that Pat is happy to subscribe to a familiar set of household relations. In fact, as we shall see in chapter 5, this process is a product of her quite different understanding of the role of technology itself, an understanding that secures for Pat a powerful sense of control over recent change. But what is interesting here is the way in which Pat locates these technologies within a traditional set of understandings. Asides from her Nintendo, and even though her husband has kindly bought her one of those ‘button things’, Pat has little working knowledge of even the most familiar ‘leisure technologies’, and technology itself is of sparse interest (cf Skirrow, 1986). This attitude extends to a broader discussion of her viewing habits. Though Sky tv might beam a world of global television into one’s living room, these programmes are of little significance for those who hardly watch them (an attitude that says much about the gendering of these programmes too).

But Pat does, in fact, watch a fair bit of television. In particular her favourite
programmes are soap operas around which, unless she has asked her husband to record them for later viewing, she tends to structure her evenings. And, since a number of these programmes are set in far away places, one does not need to turn to Sky tv to analyze the role of contemporary television in people's negotiation of a re-organised sense of presence and absence. Pat's favourite programme, for example, is Prisoner Cell Block H (often referred to as just 'Prisoner', or 'Cell Block'), an Australian soap made in the 1970s and now used as a cheap filler in the late night schedules of the independent channels:

J: You were saying that your favourite programme was Cell Block.

P: That's right.

J: And I wondered how we feel about that stuff?

P: Well I wouldn't go there if that's what you mean! No, I'd never go there because it's too far.

J: So is there a difference between Cell Block being Australian and Coronation Street being in England, or EastEnders being in London?

P: No, I just like the programmes, don't mean, don't care where it is. I suppose it's - everyday life isn't it. I don't like all these far fetched things. I just like everyday life, down to earth. And Cell Block's down to earth all right. And that old Fergie, she's a wotsit ain't she!

(Pat, session 3, emphasis added)

On this evidence the access to other places that these programmes allow is not leading to any radical sense of spatial, or cultural, dislocation. Again this is partly a product of the nature of these programmes themselves. Though soap operas carefully restrict the local space within which they are set, and a sense of local identity is central to the drama of the programmes (conflicts between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', for example, is a popular theme), this local space is rarely contextualised within a wider social geography. The traditional values of community that these programmes promote, and the exclusions they articulate, are thus portrayed as both universal and placeless (Shields, 1991; cf Geraghty, 1991). Where viewers identify with the programmes' characters and themes (inevitably spatial), rather than their locations, this may explain how for Pat these soaps are essentially all the same. Indeed, where Prisoner concentrates upon the experiences of a group of (white) working class women, Pat's identification with this programme in particular is easier to understand.

As with Alex, then, these technologies have allowed for a re-working of that traditional relationship between spatial and cultural distance. For Pat the familiar, everyday spaces of 'home' are no longer restricted to the near-at-hand. A white Australia is as familiar to Pat as London and even more familiar, perhaps, than Salford.

But once again this new relationship has not displaced an older one in which
geographical distance can still stand in for social distance, in a way that allows the viewer to work through the moral dilemmas these new programmes often articulate:

J: I was just thinking that if the news were on now it would probably be something about Yugoslavia, or

P: I'm not interested! Not really. It's their problem. There's enough going on over here to worry about...

.. It just doesn't bother me. Unless it's anything to do with us, then I would. But as far as the outside world goes, I don't care - it's as simple as that, I don't. If they want to do what they want to do then it's up to them.

I mean it's hard when you see the little kids that are orphaned and that. Then it's hard. But, well, it's not my problem, it's no good worrying about it is there. If they got to me I'd look after it, and that's it. But, I wouldn't go and get one.

(Pat, session 3, emphasis added)

Even though earlier she identified with a space some 12,000 miles away, here Pat is able to justify her feelings about the war in former Yugoslavia by drawing upon a traditional relationship between proximity and responsibility, physical and emotional distance (cf Horton & Wahl, 1956). Though it may be hard to ignore the suffering of the children, it is not Pat's role to take responsibility for another country's plight, or those who are geographically absent. In other words, the experiences that the new ICTs engender are still negotiated within a more familiar set of cultural understandings - in this case nationalism. Indeed it is instructive to note that the only time Pat used Sky television was during the Gulf war. Then she was powerfully concerned with "her boys", and praised Sky's coverage for "really taking you there", an experience that was both rather scary, but also exciting.

Pat's negotiation of a new relationship of presence and absence is, therefore, just as sophisticated as the other respondents. But, where for them these negotiations were conducted with a certain degree of reflexivity, at least in the sense that they all recognized the complexity of these developments, for Pat the ambiguities that these new technologies promote are not nearly as difficult to negotiate - not least because she simply does not recognize any contradictions in her understandings.

We might recognize a contradiction in her distinctions between Australia and the former Yugoslavia, one that can only be squared with reference to the continued operation of a traditional set of cultural oppositions. The cast of the Australian soaps, for example, are almost entirely white, working class women. In contrast the coverage of the war in former Yugoslavia, where men fight each other, has tended to concentrate upon its 'ethnic' nature and in a way that discourages any recognition of Europe's responsibility for the current conflict. But for Pat there are no such contradictions. Rather, for her the circle can be squared simply by turning to a commonsense understanding of
physical space:

J: So, with these changes in technology, with the live television and foreign programmes, does that make you feel as though you live in this world that always now seems to be coming into your living room, or is that something that you don’t worry about?

P: (pause) I haven’t thought about it. I mean when you grow up with it you don’t do you.

J: Well we talked earlier about people coming over here to England and that obviously annoys you. And we talked about how it’s also nice to go abroad on holiday. And I was thinking that with the tele now, and the radio, there’s so much coverage of other countries, that even though we live here we seem to know what’s going on everywhere.

P: Oh yeah. Well, the world’s so small now isn’t it. Course, even when I got married you didn’t know about foreigners very much, you didn’t see them. It’s so different now, and that’s not good. Well I don’t think it’s good, because the place is - not safe any more - I don’t know whether that’s foreigners.

J: And does this sort of stuff - I mean they’re obviously over here now - but do you think things like having so much foreign news, and having foreign programmes is part of having the same sort of thing?

P: Oh dear. I don’t know. I don’t know. How can it be? - they’re over there, that’s those sort of foreigners I like because they’re over there. It’s the ones that are over here that’s a pain. Just draining us dry - that’s what they’re doing, the majority.

(Pat, session 3, emphasis added)

Pat simply cannot understand how I can conflate the ‘para-social’ presence of the new ICTs with the embodied presence of the ‘real world’ (cf Horton & Wahl, 1956). Though television may bring these people ‘into’ our living rooms, it does not really bring them ‘over here’. For her my questions are both difficult and absurd. Where these technologies do not disrupt a continued belief in the primacy of embodied presence, an understanding rooted in the primacy of physical space and one that allows for the continued distinction between us and them, here and there, the impact of these technologies cannot be as disorientating as often assumed. For Pat the "philosopher’s paradox of presence and absence ..[has become] .. part of everyday life" (Shields, 1992: 195).

This not only raises questions about the universal nature of a re-organisation of presence and absence, but also about the ways in which we choose to investigate these processes. For Pat these relationships have changed, but they are not disruptive of a wider set of cultural oppositions and may often be negotiated with reference to a quite traditional set of spatial oppositions. More importantly, for Pat those developments in communication technology that have altered the relationship between presence and absence have not disrupted a wider set of corollary metaphors (of us and them, inside and outside and so on) because she does not recognize the premise on which that
disruption is based.

This is not to argue that other articulations of a new relationship of presence and absence are not causing Pat some concern. Here, for example, she is already hinting at her disquiet with population changes in her local area and in future chapters we shall see how these changes are having a dramatic impact on Pat's sense of security. But it is to argue that before theorists assume the dramatic impact of these new technologies they need to look more carefully at how they are being consumed, where, and by whom. For Pat it is only changes in her local area that are 'real'. Though changes in technology may have widened her field of leisure, those more disruptive changes bought about by the new ICTs, so celebrated in the academic literature, are simply irrelevant, a distinction based in commonsense. Her account thereby issues a challenge to those methodologies that still refuse to accept the 'validity' of these commonsense understandings (Smith, 1988).

4.6 Conclusions

Before moving on, then, we can make a number of conclusions concerning the experiences of a re-organisation in the nature of presence and absence, at least as articulated through the use of a range of ICTs and by those in a position of ethnic empowerment. Most importantly, though the traditional relations of presence and absence are in a process of re-organisation, the world is still being mapped around a familiar set of cultural oppositions. These oppositions are central to that sense of control people have over a re-ordered global space. Rather than undermining these oppositions the new technologies often allow for their strengthening and, in particular, through the operation of a powerful 'technological gaze'. The operation of this gaze re-emphasises the continuation of an older system of binary thought. It warns us against connecting the experiences of time-space compression and the current re-organisations of presence and absence to any shift to a more radical 'postmodern' epistemology, though the relationship between these changes in the nature of time and space and any change in these systems of understanding is also clearly influenced by gender, class and ethnicity. This is the argument that is explored in more detail in proceeding chapters.

But the present chapter also allows for some more specific conclusions and particularly as regards the impact of the new ICTs. First, an understanding of the 'maps' produced by these technologies needs a more sophisticated understanding of that space within which these technologies work. In particular we still need to distinguish between a world of 'para-social' and embodied presence and between 'physical' and 'imaginary' space. Drawing upon this distinction enables some to dismiss the 'disorientating' effects
of these developments in technology altogether. For others, as we shall see, it may allow a search for 'authentic difference' to continue in other arenas.

Second, none of these systems are a determined product of these technologies themselves, but reflect the wider social position of their users. In particular their use needs to be understood in relation to the 'difference that gender makes', though these differences may be complex and ambiguous. Though some may access these technologies in order to promote relations of difference, others who were (and still are) excluded by the structures of the gaze, for example, may now be seizing the right to gaze in ways that are difficult to understand as acts of radical resistance. So too this 'imaginary space' may be put to quite different uses by people of both different and the same gender.

Finally, differences of class are particularly important in shaping the experience of contemporary change and especially that control that different users articulate over that change. But these differences too are complex and need to take account of the ambiguities of individual experience and the meanings different users attach to technology itself. Broadly speaking, all except George and Pat (theoretically the most and least empowered respondents) experienced some feelings of temporal 'speed-up'.

In the next chapter I want to turn to these new experiences of time and temporality in more detail and in particular to the ways in which different respondents seek to 'balance' these feelings of temporal speed-up by moving towards a set of more comforting 'temporal shapes'. Once again I shall draw out differences in both the experiences of, and responses to, the processes of time-space compression as they are structured by class and gender.
CHAPTER 5
A TIME FOR EVERYTHING AND EVERYTHING IN ITS TIME

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I shall examine in more detail the feelings of temporal ‘dislocation’ argued to characterize a period of time-space compression. In particular I want to examine the changing nature of work and further those accounts that have connected an increasing sense of temporal insecurity to the emergence of new regimes of accumulation and the growth of more flexible modes of production (Harvey, 1989a).

Characterized at an aggregate level by a growth in service sector employment, a decline in traditional manufacturing, and an increasing role for the casual or ‘informal’ sectors of sub-contraction, for many people the experience of work is becoming increasingly insecure. In particular, the demands of new technologies have led to the emergence of what is often rather euphemistically termed ‘multi-skilling’, but what in effect amounts to a process of worker de-skilling (Aglietta, 1979, 1982). Attacks on unionization, together with a decline in the traditional means of welfare support, have paralleled the emergence of new work practices - and in particular the more ‘flexible’ routines of part-time work and ‘piece work’ unprotected by a minimum wage, or even the most basic health and safety legislation.

Within the workplace, restructuring has required workers to adapt to new work regimes. The old certainties of a ‘full’ working day, structured around a single task, have gone. Workers must now adapt to multi-tasking and face an increase in shift work, part-time work, and temporary employment contracts, together with an increasing risk of relocation or redundancy. As a sense of time is, in part, constructed through the experience of work (O’Malley, 1992), it is easy to understand how the general sense of temporal speed-up identified for the contemporary period may have much to do with this restructuring of the work environment. Nor is it difficult to understand why this new sense of time may be increasingly insecure and dominated by concerns about a more uncertain future.

Though these processes have often been connected to an increasing feminization of the labour force, this transformation of the old Fordist regime is affecting a traditionally skilled male labour force too (McDowell, 1991a). As such, a general widening of income differentials has emerged over the last decade or so between a highly paid ‘core’ labour force (of both men and women) and those weaker segments of labour associated with a ‘peripheral’ position; young, part-time, manual and service workers in both the ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ labour markets. These differences also relate to differing
levels of job security, and different work practices (Lash & Urry, 1987; Scott & Storper, 1986).

Within this context the current chapter makes two main arguments. First, starting with accounts drawn from Paul and Pat, the chapter argues that significant differences can be traced in the temporal experiences of working class and new cultural class respondents, and that these differences can be connected to their different positions within the core and peripheral labour market. Peripheral workers display considerable feelings of temporal insecurity. But, it is also demonstrated how even those within the peripheral labour force may 'balance' these feelings with access to a range of more comforting 'temporal shapes', and in particular the comforts of a more natural sense of time with which to hold at bay the insecurities of the social world. Cyclic time, and the possibilities of routinization are both identified as being of particular importance. The chapter recognizes the complexity of these different temporal shapes in ways that draw attention to both the individual basis of temporal experience and the many acts of resistance that characterize the imposition of new work regimes.

Secondly, moving on to the experiences of the new cultural class respondents, the chapter argues that though in a position of some employment security they too are experiencing significant feelings of temporal speed-up, and are seeking to balance these feelings in ways very similar to the working class respondents. For them this more natural sense of time is often associated with the home, as the home itself is constructed as a space outside of the insecurities of work time, and in particular those insecurities associated with the emergence of new communication technologies. Drawing upon a lifestyle aesthetic that promises the comforts of craft, the home becomes a space of 'retreat' from the ravages of time-space compression.

But the home is not hermetically sealed. The chapter therefore examines how different individuals negotiate the presence of those technologies within the home that

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1 The proposed shift from Fordism to post-Fordism has been extensively debated (see, for example, Gertler, 1988 and the reply by Schoenberger, 1989; Pollert, 1988). For example, it is open to question how far the current economic condition can in fact be characterised by a dualistic labour market, whether this labour market is anything new, and whether the experiences of work in the contemporary period are any more insecure than in previous decades (see, for example, Littler's discussion of the ship building and dockyard industries, Littler, 1982). Discussions of time-space compression, however, have tended to work with the assumption that a conditional shift from Fordism to post-Fordism (or 'flexible accumulation') can be traced, that post-Fordism is characterised by increasing insecurity both within the work place, and the labour market more widely, and that there is a growing divide between a 'core' and 'peripheral' labour force (Harvey, 1989a; cf McDowell, 1991a; and for a detailed account of the impact of this restructuring in different places, see Sassen, 1991). The present analysis works within these assumptions, and seeks only to explore the experiences of these 'new' work practices, and the kinds of responses that people might be making to these 'changes', in more detail.
may themselves bring a more disorientating sense of time. Nor can any analysis of the home proceed without recognition of a set of unequal gender relations and, in particular, the continued gendering of household tasks. The analysis therefore draws attention to the gendered nature of ‘time management’, and argues that the comforts of home are themselves powerfully differentiated by gender. Finally, it is suggested that the comforts of home are often rooted in an image of ‘family time’, and that this has taken on particular significance for a class who are themselves now participating in a new ‘baby boom’. This raises particular difficulties for those professional women who wish to enjoy the comforts of family time, but who have had to delay the start of a family because of continuing gender inequalities within the labour market.

5.2 Work and the comforts of ‘natural time’: Paul and Pat

First, though, how are these changes being experienced by members of a new peripheral labour force, and how are these workers negotiating these experiences? Since leaving school Paul’s working life has been characterised by considerable insecurity. Over the last ten years, for example, Paul has had no less that seven jobs, all within the local area and mostly within small retail outlets (though including both part-time and full-time employment). This rather insecure employment history culminated three or four years ago in a period of six months unemployment when the firm he was working for relocated to Coventry.²

In an attempt to find more secure employment, and in an effort to support a growing family, Paul reasoned that a larger employer might provide more security. A few years ago Paul therefore applied for a job as a bus conductor with London Transport (now London Regional Transport, or LRT). But, the current round of economic restructuring is affecting large firms as well as small. Moreover, this restructuring has been lent added pace by public sector privatisations, together with more widespread attacks on local government services, themselves often important sources of employment for many low paid service workers in large metropolitan areas. As London Transport itself faced the pressures of de-regulation, it too underwent a process of rapid change. The security of working for a large employer did not therefore materialize. As Paul explains:

² Throughout this period Paul was the primary ‘bread winner’ for his family. Only more recently has his wife gone out to full-time work, as a clerical assistant in a large high street bank. Her work now places her in a higher income bracket than his, and lends her considerably more employment responsibility and security. But, positioned within a traditional masculinity, this has led Mark to feelings of insecurity, rather than simply providing additional financial support. Paul’s attempts to reassert his masculinity in other arenas should by now have become clear.
"At the time .. I’d actually just got married and in that short period I had 2 kids. And I thought, ‘Christ! I’ve got to get something secure here’. So - but, I mean even London Transport at the time I was working there was pushing the conductors to go .. so they could bring all these one man buses in. .. I mean I worked there for 2 years, and I joined London Transport and when I left I was working for LRT. I mean that was 2 years! There was a complete change over in 2 years. And they forced that upon us."

(Paul, session 2, emphasis added)

In Paul’s work experiences we can identify precisely that sense of temporal speed-up and insecurity argued by Harvey (1989a) to characterize the contemporary period. As a member of the peripheral labour force Paul has little power to resist the overwhelming and increasing pace of change being forced upon those in low paid employment. As capital moves towards the faster turnover times of a more flexible regime of accumulation, so labour must adapt not only to the insecurities of a new employment market, but to an increasing rate of innovation and change within the work place itself.

But, such insecurities are not only the product of a sense of time going ‘too fast’. Rather, just as the introduction of new technologies has undermined employment security, so too they may be providing for a more fundamental dislocation in the nature of time itself. Central to such dislocations are the increasing demands of shift work, through which the working day is re-organised around less secure temporal routines:

"I was having to work split shifts .. [so] I was going home and I wasn’t seeing the kids, and she was working late. I don’t know, I just couldn’t handle it .. I think you’ve got to have the body clock to do shift work .. it just messed me up totally. I bought a video in the end and I watched videos when I got in from work, because everyone was asleep and whatever, and I’d sleep in the day .. And you don’t get much money for it."

(Paul, session 2, emphasis added)

As workers in the West have internalised a sense of ‘industrial time’ resistance to factory time has shifted away from fighting against the imposition of industrial time itself, to more limited acts of resistance directed against particular work regimes (Thompson, 1967). Here this argument is powerfully illustrated. Internalising the demands of the ‘new’ work practices, Paul understands his feelings of temporal dislocation to be rooted in his inability to adjust his ‘body clock’ to the changing demands of shift work.

Moreover, building upon the earlier and simpler sense of insecurity and change (structured within an understanding of a speeding up of linear time), these new work regimes threaten to undermine a more fundamental sense of time and temporality. For Paul a ‘natural’ sense of time is rooted in the body and structured by the cyclic repetitions of day and night, night and day. Shift work disrupts this routine. As he sleeps all day and works by night, essential social contact is limited, and the comforting framework of the family and family time is undermined.
Technology plays an ambiguous role in these developments. It is technological change at work that has led to the 'unnatural' demands of shift work. But at home it is also the video that allows Paul to adjust more easily to these changes, affording him some space in which to relax without disturbing his family (cf Morley, 1992). Yet this space is clearly an uneasy one. The 'false night' of the video seems to add to Paul's feelings of existing within a quite unnatural sense of time, a time within which the fundamental structures of nature are disrupted.

If we cannot make any claims to causality between Paul's changing experience of work, and a changing sense of time, we have at least demonstrated strong simultaneity between the emergence of these 'new' work practices and an increasing sense of temporal insecurity (cf Harvey, 1989a). Given this more limited claim how, then, does Paul respond to these changes? And how, in particular, does he regain that more natural sense of time he desires? Curiously the answer to these questions can be found within his work practices themselves.

After another period of unemployment Paul eventually gained work as a local authority cleaner (something akin to the old estate caretakers) on a nearby housing estate. Once again his search for employment was directly driven by a desire to gain security in such uncertain times. But, more interesting in the current context, is the way in which this work has allowed Paul access to a more comforting sense of time itself, one structured by the cycles of nature, and over which he can claim more control. Describing his new routine, for example, a number of things stand out:

"Every cleaner works his patch. I start off I do my lifts .. you do that once every say Monday and once on a Friday .. Tuesday afternoon, or a Thursday afternoon I'll go round and I'll do the lights. On Wednesday I might mop down 2 flights of stairs and the other I'll do on Friday. I work my own system .. [so] Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, as the week gets older, it sort of slackens off, so you have it easier Friday but it all comes full circle again Monday .. There's not, we have got a job sheet .. but you, you basically work it on your own.

.. [and] it's seasonal as well. When the snow comes you've got the heavy jobs .. Autumn - leaves. So we work on our own basis but it does actually come round. In the summer you've got the kids on the estate .. but when it rains they don't come out so much. You get to know how your job works out .. and it works itself out."

(Paul, session 2, emphasis added)

First, in contrast to those changes that were "forced upon" him at LRT, his work as a cleaner affords Paul a certain autonomy over his daily routines - though he has a work sheet, he works his "own system". In contrast to the uncertainties of change found in previous work, and over which he had little control, this autonomy allows Paul to construct a stable routine through which he can in turn reclaim a sense of control over his
own future. If every Monday he does 'his lifts', so too does he know exactly what Tuesday holds. Throughout his life, then, both at work and at home, Paul likes to structure his time, to plan every last minute. This ability to plan time allows for a sense of control over time and a reclamation of a future so threatening within the temporal dislocations of technology described in the last chapter and threatened by the new work regimes found above.

Secondly, and not surprisingly, in contrast to the uncertainties of a time of Science and Man, this sense of a knowable time is itself dependent upon the repetitions of a more 'natural', cyclic time. In contrast to the dislocations of shift work, or the 'false night' of the video, it is his work on the estate - out in the open, where he is in contact with the full force of nature and the seasons - that reinforces this sense of a more 'natural time' at a number of temporal scales.

Throughout the year Paul can plan his time according to the needs of the different (and recurring) seasons. This structure not only allows a certain sense of long term security, but connects his daily tasks to the unalterable force of the 'natural order of things'. As the week "gets older" the calendar itself is afforded a certain autonomy. As it "slackens off", for example, Paul is able to plan a less demanding day - secure in the knowledge that his tasks (and thus his employment) is assured as the cycle of the week "turns full circle" - and, as an autonomous structure, such security is placed beyond the whims of Man and the temporal insecurities of 'man-made time'. It is the repetition of things that eventually allows each job to "work itself out", in a way that connects Paul's own sense of time to a more secure, unquestionable and unchanging natural order.

Notions of routinization and planning are therefore essential to Paul, and these structures allow more subtle forms of resistance to the demands of the new work practices. For example, once these routines are firmly in place Paul is free to 'nick time' where and when he wants. The estate office that he works out of does not have a telephone and central office can only contact Paul by coming down to the estate in person, such that the line manager tends to time his visits according to the routine that Paul himself has established. Though this lack of contact clearly holds some dangers (Paul was worried, for example, about what might happen if a member of his family was taken ill and he had to be contacted quickly) it also allows for a significant degree of autonomy

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3 In another session, for example, as we discussed his home life Paul noted that: "I like to plan my time, yeah.. Like, we go to my Mum's every Sunday for dinner .. [and] I know what I'm doing Thursday, Friday, Saturday week in week out .. Thursday night's darts .. Friday night I'm out drinking, and Saturday night it's round Jill and Dave's for cards", adding in a later session; "Monday, I think my worst day is Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. I don't actually do anything - if someone ring's me up then I go out or whatever, but nothing's actually planned" (sessions 3 & 4, emphasis added).
belied by the strictures of the time sheet. As Paul says: "I can go and nick time here and there, there’s nobody to answer to. There’s no scrutiny. I can nip off the estate if I want, go shopping for a couple of hours" (session 2). The structures of time and space therefore interact in ways that allow Paul to resist the temporal regimes of the new work practices and the wider temporal insecurities of the contemporary period. And they enable him to position the estate as some kind of space of spatio-temporal 'retreat'.

To summarize, this sense of comfort is primarily based in Paul’s identification with the cycles of nature. Initially the seasons established a sense of time that moved Paul beyond the worries of his own, less secure, future. In other words, they established a sense of cyclical time with which to hold at bay a more threatening sense of linear time within which unemployment loomed. And, in contrast to the increasingly ‘unstructured time’ of the new work practices, that undermined the ‘natural flow’ of time, these more ‘natural’ rhythms allowed Paul to gain some control over time and to structure his time at work around his own needs. This process locates exactly those different ‘time types’ identified by Harvey (1989a), each of which may be invested with different meanings.

But, as was suggested in chapter 2.2d, these meanings are not always secure. The comforts of cyclical time, for example, are by no means inevitable. As Paul considers his long term future those same possibilities of repetition may also undermine his sense of security. For example, discussing changes in local authority employment, and within which the subcontracting of cleaning services to private contractors plays a major part, Paul explained how his own job of estate cleaner came about as the council sought to reduce labour costs by phasing out full-time estate caretakers. The danger is that in the future these changes may go ‘full circle’ and once again he will be left without a job:

"There’s so many changes. Even at the moment there’s changes going on .. Because, what it’s reverting back to is .. it’s come full circle and they want caretakers on the estates. So, first in, first out, that will probably be me out of a job again."

(Paul, session 2, emphasis added)

We can now make a number of preliminary conclusions. In the first place, as the meaning of any particular 'temporal shape' cannot be assumed, those temporal 'retreats' identified in Harvey’s thesis of time-space compression become harder to delineate (Harvey, 1989a, 1991). Secondly, though we may identify important differences in time consciousness between members of a core and peripheral labour force (as they are constructed through the material practices of work), it would be wrong simply to assume that all work practices undertaken by this ‘new’ peripheral labour force lead to a radical sense of uncertainty and insecurity (cf Harvey, 1989a). Rather, though Paul displays a general sense of insecurity in the face of recent changes in the nature of work and these feelings are rooted in the material insecurities of a more flexible mode of production, the
creative negotiation of industrial time itself also afforded a number of those ‘retreats’ through which these insecurities are held in check.

What is certain is that though within the ‘factory’ time itself may become a vital arena of conflict (as it becomes a metaphor through which these conflicts are articulated), the structure of these conflicts is not always so easily traced (Thompson, 1967). This argument becomes clearer when we also consider the work experiences of Pat.

Like Paul, Pat has experienced considerable insecurity in her working life. Whilst her children were young she worked from home as a machinist. Though this work allowed her to fit her hours around the demands of the children it was lonely, paid low wages, and offered little in the way of job security. After a period of unemployment, Pat therefore found work as a local authority home help. As with Paul, the move was planned on the assumption of increasing job security. But, though recently she has reduced her hours in order to have more time with her grandchildren, the work has offered something more than financial reward.

First, it has allowed Pat to secure an identity that reaches beyond her role of wife and mother and to assume a position of some importance in her local community. This role is vital, because it allows Pat to regain a sense of control over those changes that are so rapidly undermining the traditions of neighbourliness and community that for her have always characterized the local area. Her work as a home help both keeps her in touch with these traditions, and helps her keep them alive. For Pat they have become personified in the figure of "her old ladies":

J: Does it ever get boring following the same old routine?

P: No! It's better if you've got your own patch, your own old ladies .. I mean we can have a laugh, a nag and a jaw. You see I know all their family, they know all mine. They ask me to take the kids round and it's important for them not to grow up thinking the garden's all rosy. Some of those old people - it's terrible. But I tell you, they're the only honest ones left. .. They send them birthday cards and everything, and they love all that. It's like part of the family, you know what I mean. You trot round and see all these different people - and they all know you because you're the home help, you know .. No it never gets boring .. You all have a jaw, you know, and the others come out of their flats and you all have a jaw - no, it never gets boring.

(Pat, session 2)

As the keepers of a long standing myth of East End community spirit (Cornwall, 1984; Young & Willmott, 1957/1990), the old ladies are central to Pat's self-appointed role of local matriarch. As she 'trots round her patch' she keeps alive the traditions of doorstep solidarity, and enables their passing on to the next generation who might otherwise rapidly lose touch with their (white) roots. These traditions are held in stark
contrast to an area rapidly going down hill due, largely, to the ‘invasion’ of other ethnic groups (see chapters 4 & 7). Nostalgic tradition thus offers a sense of comfort in the face of recent change. This tradition is closely linked to a reassertion of local community and a control over local space that is itself under threat with the intrusions of globalisation. Time and space become tied together in the comforts of place.

But especially interesting is the way in which this comfort is itself made possible by the peculiar nature of her work. These closer relationships can only be forged when Pat sees the same old ladies week in, week out. Thus, her weekly routine both enables access to these more comforting values and is itself a source of some comfort. Like Paul, she too works around a daily time sheet and it is the sense of order that this allows that Pat finds so comforting. The work itself, for example, is "regular, always there" and on a daily basis frees her from the responsibilities of decision making. Its routine provides a more stable sense of time in direct contrast to the disorientating changes in her local area.

But, though the time sheet might seem to strip Pat of any control over her daily routine, as with Paul, it also provides for exactly that autonomy she desires. Its times provide only the loosest of frameworks within which she can ‘nick time’ as and when she wants. Once on her rounds Pat is free of interference from her area manager whose only concern is that she starts and finishes the day as set. Once she has her hours, for example, Pat is free to fit in her "special times" (a one-off trip to the doctors for a favourite client, perhaps) shaving a few minutes off one visit and adding some to the next. These minor acts of ‘resistance’ thus enable Pat to secure some control over her working life, but they are acts made possible by the nature of the work itself.

At a different level, this work also offers access to other values that might, at first, appear to contradict her desire to forge a new identity outside the domestic sphere. Discussing her day-to-day tasks, for example, Pat concluded:

"I like that sort of job. I like looking after people, always have done. And you can’t look after kids when they’ve grown up, so what’s the next best thing??"

Adding in a later session:

"And I do like housework, always have done - even when I was at school I always did my Mum’s housework .. And one thing I do enjoy is driving a hoover. I have to have the best mind - some of the ones I have to use at work, shocking! It’s sad, these old ladies hang on to their money, and for what? If you’ve got it spend it - and I certainly spend mine. You should see my hoover."

(Pat, sessions 2 & 4)

Rather than always oppressive, as is so often assumed, routine household tasks afford Pat a certain pleasure. In the first place they maintain a connection with her past,
accessing the memories of childhood and in particular those of her mother. In the second they forge a link across the generations, placing Pat within a more comforting space of inter-generational time.

The role of the old ladies too has subtly changed. Where before they offered proof of Pat's life outside of the family, now they re-affirm a role that Pat had feared lost now her own children have grown up. Looking after the elderly is, as she says, "the next best thing" (to having children of your own). In ways very similar to Paul, this work allows Pat to access a more comforting sense of 'natural time', here rooted in the body and the routines of the carer. As members of an extended family her clients allow the abstract values of work to become re-appropriated, as housework is invested with a sense of value often denied in the academic literature (and at home). And, once again, it is the nature of the work itself that allows Pat this act of re-appropriation.

The passage also allows us to question some assumptions about the disorientating nature of contemporary change, and especially as articulated by a 'rampant consumerism'. For Harvey (1989a), for example, building on Lasch (1984), the need always to update consumer products, a need amplified by the shorter life cycles of many of today's goods, is itself a determining factor in a generalised and disorientating sense of temporal speed-up. Yet here quite the opposite is true. Pat's ability not just to join in, but to stay ahead in the 'consumer game' is a key factor in her sense of social progress. It is a sense of progress that is aided by her visits to her old ladies and one given substance by her own family background.

In the previous chapter it was suggested that, rather than disorientating, domestic technology afforded Pat a certain sense of control over contemporary change, but that it was a sense of control not necessarily rooted in the use of these technologies themselves. Here, then, what is important to Pat is not just how the hoover actually performs, but how it is perceived to perform and that it can be unquestionably positioned as "the best". In this sense domestic technology takes on symbolic importance. It is its ownership, just as much as its actual use, that is important, and this complicates previous analyses. An interest in technology for technology's sake, or at least hoovers for hoovers' sake, is not, therefore, a peculiarly masculine obsession (cf Morley, 1992), and Pat's interest may subvert a whole

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4 This is, of course, a common use of technology. The ownership of an expensive stereo, for example, and displaying it in a prominent position within the house, is often as important as how good that stereo sounds, suggesting that technology can be positioned within traditional understandings of 'symbolic value'. These values can work across cultures. Morley (1992), for example, notes how in less developed economies simply owning a television set, whether that set works or not, is often a source of considerable prestige.
set of gendered oppositions. So too, it is Pat who owns by far the most, and the most expensive, domestic technologies, complicating any simple class analysis. Technology therefore plays an important role in people's temporal consciousness, but it is one that is not always to be found in its actual operation.

Finally, these values also undermine any easy understandings about the meanings attributed to different temporal shapes and the way in which those shapes can be connected to different material activities. In housework, for example, Pat experiences a sense of both cyclical and linear time and both are understood as allowing for a sense of control. Moreover, though in the previous chapter Pat showed few signs of a sense of 'disorientation' (at least as articulated through the use of the new ICTs), here she is clearly moving towards a number of more comforting structures. Pat's work as a home help, for example, is crucial in regaining a sense of local community under threat from recent changes in her area. The work also provides for a more comforting sense of time, holding at bay a sense of change, and allowing access to the comforts of 'family time'.

Within the diverse experiences of time-space compression it may therefore become more difficult to establish any simple relationship between feelings of insecurity and 'retreat'. But, however complex, we can in the end suggest that as Paul and Pat face an increasingly uncertain world both seek the reassurances of more comforting temporal shapes. And in the main those shapes that most often emerge as a source of comfort are the knowable repetitions of a 'more natural' cyclic time and the more secure structures of routine and planning.

So too, though the arena of work may provide for a number of temporal experiences (both comforting and disturbing), there is also suggested a very different experience of time amongst members of the peripheral labour force than might be found amongst their employers, and thus perhaps members of the new cultural class. Not least, this argument is suggested as both Paul and Pat seek to subvert the disciplines of work time through a creative temporal consciousness - whether such resistance takes the form of simply "nicking time", or the more complex comforts of routine given space by 'factory time' itself.

Turning to the rather different work experiences of the new cultural class respondents it will be interesting to see how far the same relationships emerge in their

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5 A concern with technology's symbolic value has usually been positioned as 'masculine' (Haddon, 1988) and traced only in relation to the technologies of leisure. Where technology is itself distinguished according to a wider set of gendered oppositions concerning the fields of 'work' and 'leisure' we might assume that few would want to boast about their ownership of the tools of domestic service. Pat's account can, in this sense, be understood as undermining a number of gendered oppositions concerning not only technology, but the arenas of 'home' and 'work' more widely.
accounts. I shall suggest that, though in many ways in a position of some employment security, they too seek to ‘retreat’ to these more comforting temporal shapes.

5.3 Work and the comforts of home

For Paul and Pat time at work is a constant battle against the demands of their employers. And, though complex, the new work practices lead to significant feelings of material insecurity. In contrast, we might expect the new cultural class respondents to be more at ease with those changes that the working class respondents found so disturbing, even to welcome those changes. As the new managers, technicians and servicers of a more flexible mode of accumulation, the new cultural class has emerged out of these changes (Lash & Urry, 1987). Many of the positions they hold are a direct product of increasing specialisation within the workplace, as this new class practices what Bourdieu (1984) has called a ‘naming strategy’. Thus already, for example, I have noted differences in the attitudes of the two groups towards technological change and especially towards changes in those technologies found within the workplace (see chapter 4). These differences are taken further by George as he discusses the increasing insecurity of the news business:

"News is fairly sort of insecure. I mean the buzz of it is that you don’t know what’s going to happen next .. Certainly the last few years have seen some phenomenal changes .. but the pleasure of working in the — [his news organisation] .. is that you are in the sort of flow of it, you know what’s going on, you have a sense of being in an organisation that’s dealing with what’s actually happening now. And there’s a certain innocent pleasure in that."

Adding in a later session:

"But I mean there have been changes in the — too, and I don’t mind that. It doesn’t worry me really. Partly because if I lost my current job I could probably get another sort of job in that line - probably within the —, or elsewhere if I wanted to, you know. And I have a certain interest in management in itself - it’s interesting, the whole science of management. The whole idea of managing change .. you need that feeling."

(George, sessions 1 & 4, emphasis added)

Here a number of things stand out. At the broadest level, far from radically disorientating, George identifies with those wider changes that signal a new round of time-space compression. In his work in one of the world’s largest news organisations George is in a position of some power. Rather than having to react to those changes that have produced feelings of such uncertainty in others, he is one of the privileged few who charts these insecurities, and the knowledge of world events this position secures lends him a sense of control. Whilst for the others I traced a general sense of temporal speed-up, for George this same restructuring provides a bit of a ‘buzz’.

156
At a different level the passage also describes the material inequalities of the new work practices. For those with the right experience, and qualifications, restructuring within the workplace itself holds few fears. In direct contrast to either Paul or Pat, George is confident in his ability always to find new work, should the need ever arise. But in practice he is in any case one of those who manages these changes, rather than being a victim of them. Whilst for those in the peripheral labour force employment restructuring carries very real material consequences (only one of which is unemployment), for the managers it is only a new and interesting ‘science’ to be mastered. The experiences of time engendered by a more flexible mode of production are, therefore, clearly differentiated according to the wider position of any individual within the core or peripheral labour force.

But, these feelings may not be matched by the other new cultural class respondents. Amanda’s account, for example, offers a more ambiguous experience of the new work practices:

J: I wanted to ask you about work, what you actually do, and also a bit about things like how we structure our day.

A: You mean survival, how we actually survive .. What do I do? um - I run an advice line. I work 28 hours a week. They’re sort of full days but it’s spread - one of the worst things about the voluntary sector as opposed to the statutory sector is you tend to run over your hours, everyone works harder, you know, you don’t have lunch, at least you don’t take an hour. I run an advice line which means that anyone can phone me up about anything to do with mental health - from suicide calls to mums whose kids have just got taken in under section to complaints about a psychiatrist to enquiries about drugs, HIV, questions about diagnosis, anything .. which is very stressful, because you never know if you pick up the phone whether someone is going to say - ‘oh I’m going to kill myself and I’m standing on the edge of’ - which happens - or it’s just a fairly .. Also people can come in and make appointments to come in and see me to get general advice .. At least a day a week I’m at the drop-in .. there’s the steering group every week to manage the projects .. Then I do work in planning services. I liaise with the statutory sector - so that’s a sort of putting on a skirt days and being posh .. then I do things like getting funding .. writing job descriptions and personal interviews, and - what else do I do - there’s thousands of other things. I produce a newsletter .. I do a lot of campaign work .. none of this was in my job description at all.

J: It sounds like you’re straddling an enormous variety of

A: Oh, it’s huge yes, it’s ridiculous - which I like in a sense, but it’s very stressful .. [and sometimes] I hate it, because the work I actually do has changed totally, and you can’t keep up with the changes .. [but] because I’m in the voluntary

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Here, however, we may need to make a broader distinction between higher management and other workers. Even within the media, for example, workers at all scales are facing increasing insecurity, the most obvious sign of which is the move towards shorter employment contracts. George’s position may, therefore, be a product of his managerial status and his security is not entirely matched by other members of this new core labour force who were interviewed (see below).
sector I am fairly autonomous. I don’t have to do training, I learn, you know, which bits appeal to me. .. [and] as far as getting another job, all this experience means I could, easily. Certainly in say the education system, virtually instantly. Yes, I could get a lot of jobs. And a lot of that is due to the experience that I have been able to pick up from working in a stressful environment.

J: And is that also because those kinds of jobs are expanding? There are more of those kinds of jobs.

A: Probably, yes - especially since the Griffith Report.

(Amanda, session 2)7

Amanda has undoubtedly profited from changes in the National Health Service that have reduced state care for the mentally ill and increased the demand for support from the charity sector. These changes have enhanced her own employment security and her chances of moving employers should she want to. The increasing rate of change within the workplace, and in particular the emergence of ‘multi-skilling’, is also understood as providing her with skills that can only improve her long term employment prospects, whilst the work itself is flexible enough to allow her to design her own work programme. In many ways, then, her experiences would seem to place her in stark opposition to the experiences of those in less privileged positions within the workforce.

But, these changes have also radically increased her work load. Within the current economic climate accurate job descriptions are a thing of the past. The demands of multi-tasking, in particular, are a cause of some stress. They necessitate rapid changes in her professional identity, changes that are instantaneous when dealing with clients on the advice line. In some ways we could almost suggest that Amanda’s work experience makes her an "excellent candidate ... for the kind of schizophrenic identity that Jameson depicts" (Harvey, 1989a:287). More generally there is certainly suggested a sense of exhaustion as she struggles to deal with the sheer pace of recent change within the workplace and the increasing demands of her job.

In other words, we need to be careful before automatically placing the new cultural class respondents in a position of employment privilege. Though recent changes may have increased their job security, those same changes have also dramatically increased the pressures of work. This adds a new complexity to our understandings of the divisions between a core and peripheral labour force and the different experiences of time that this division suggests. These complexities can be further illustrated by turning to the experiences of Alex.

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7 The Griffith Report initiated the first of a series of reforms in the National Health Service in the early 1980s. The White Paper that emerged out of the report was a major influence in the subsequent 'rationalization' of the service.
Like George, Alex enjoys the privileges of management and, like Amanda, works in a rapidly expanding service industry. But, whilst the core workers in this sector might enjoy more control over their labour power and, in particular, more autonomy within the ‘factory’, they are not exempt from the insecurities of economic restructuring. Not least, many of those sectors within which the new cultural class work - business services, or media and design, for example - are having to adjust to the rigours of global competition (King, 1990) and have always been characterised by a rather ‘flexible’ production process. Within graphic design, or animation, for example, production is geared around the ‘concertina time’ of the artistic process and, as these industries can only react to an increasingly volatile market, workers who are rushing to keep pace with demand one minute may find themselves unemployed the next. These pressures are increased where, like Alex, workers are self employed or, like Dorian, freelance, and secures for these workers in general a more ambiguous experience of the new work practices.

A number of these ambiguities are displayed by Alex. In the first place, whilst Paul and Pat both sought to resist the demands of ‘factory time’, as the owner Alex’s task is to take control of the factory floor and to reduce the costs of overtime. Certainly he has a high degree of autonomy within the office and shares that sense of employment security displayed by both George and Amanda. But, even as he claims some control over an increasingly unstable work experience, it is interesting that Alex also moves to control the experiences of work time in ways very similar to the working class respondents:

"When I started there might be a month when there wouldn’t be any work, in which case I’d just help on another job for a few weeks, or just take the time off and enjoy it - go on holiday .. I think I’ve sort of got used to it now, in fact you cease to feel insecure after a while .. I mean obviously we can go through periods when we can’t get any work, and then suddenly they’re all on the phone again .. But I mean hopefully we’ll carry on, and I presume they’ll be little glitches again - you just go with it, that’s the market. .. [In terms of the working day itself] it’s a very flexible day, if I want it to be. We are subject to the famous media deadline, but I would say .. [now] both of us [he and his business partner] have settled down, both of us have got children, we make a lot more effort to sort the job out well in advance .. Also because of the economy of it - it’s all union regulated so you can’t afford overtime and all that .. Really the trick is to sit down and think it out in advance, to really structure it up well. If you get stuck you just pass the job onto someone else, and come back to it later."

(Alex, session 2, emphasis added)

Though clearly more secure in his employment prospects than either Paul or Pat, Alex still moves to contain the insecurities of a volatile market within the more comforting notions of cyclic time. Within the workplace too, though the work itself may be rather pressured, these pressures are made more manageable by the act of caricature. More significantly, Alex attempts to control the flexibility of the new work regimes in
ways very similar to Paul. In Alex's descriptions the post-Fordist animation process comes to sound more like a traditional Fordist assembly line. Each job is 'structured' well in advance and different components of the same campaign are regularly drawn by different animators (one taking the head, another the background, and so on).

This would suggest that, though in a position of some empowerment, Alex too is experiencing considerable insecurity in his working life and, not least, some generalised sense of temporal speed-up. Crucially, then, both Amanda and Alex seek to control these feelings in very similar ways. Most importantly, both attempt to separate the world of work, and the temporal insecurities it articulates, from a more 'natural', more 'authentic' sense of time to be found within the home. In this separation technology takes on an especially interesting role.

In the office, Alex is surrounded by the most advanced technologies (see chapter 4). He has to deal with a powerful example of what Adams (1992) called the 'multiplicity of contemporary times' (see chapter 2.2d). The animation process itself, for example, commonly necessitates the simultaneous management of a whole host of contradictory temporal rates - from 'real time' (what one sees on the screen) to the minute fractions of time (1/24th of a second) through which each frame conveys a sense of movement. So too, as his business has become increasingly international, as well as keeping pace with overseas competitors, Alex must regularly negotiate business contracts across different time zones. If at work time is increasingly multiple, 'fast', and fundamentally insecure (what 'time' is it?) it is all the more important that at home Alex can access a very different, and more secure, sense of time.

Most obviously this is done by accessing a more 'authentic' sense of time rooted in those images of craft and the countryside now often found within the homes of the new cultural class (Wright, 1985). This demands that the space of the home itself is kept free from the intrusions of modern technology:

J: There almost seems to be a separation between things at work being done very efficiently, and all the phone calls being made before you go home and you seem to be quite good at juggling different jobs around. And then when you go home it's much more about relaxation and shutting everything out, being with Sue and being with the kids?

A: Oh very much so, yeah. It is more like that, yeah .. I think it's also a concession - do you remember in one of the first interviews we were talking about living in the country. It's probably a concession to that, you know. It's a slightly more - farmhousy type existence. And it probably just fits into the fact that I'm never going to live in the country, so I can countrify my home. I mean, you know, the furniture at home is all pretty farmhousy stuff, there's not that many concessions to city life I suppose - or one's conceptions of city life.

Having said that you'd probably go to a farmhouse and they've probably got a microwave, you know, all the latest bits (laughter) - and we're all sitting round dreaming of what an Arga might look like in the corner. So I suppose,
yeah, I tend to reject the technology at home. I don't need it, I don't want it, you know. I live with it here and I don't want it there.

(Alex, session 5, emphasis added)

This act of geographical separation is not, of course, complete. In the office too Alex seeks to contain the impact of the new technologies within a more comforting set of associations. In the previous chapter, for example, I suggested that it may be no coincidence that Alex has surrounded himself with the craft objects of a more romantic age (the Disney drawing boards, and the "classic" office furniture, for example). The technologies of the late twentieth century are themselves housed in a converted stable mews dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. Its heavy oak doors and the antique bicycle hanging from the rafters offer Alex a much valued space of peace and quiet in marked contrast to the hub-bub of contemporary city life outside. So too, the space of the home is not 'unpolluted' by modern electrical appliances. Besides a telephone, hoover and washing machine, Alex owns a television, video and hi-fi.

But, crucially, the home is perceived as, and consciously designed to articulate, a space beyond the modern world. Where the technologies of work are understood as complex and potentially disorientating, those of the home are characterised as more basic, solid "tools". The attractions of craft, and of a reassuring rural tradition symbolized by the imaginary Arga in the corner, thus emerge as important foci of a more comforting, slower moving, and more stable sense of time. These objects gain their power as they interact with a long standing opposition between the fast moving world of the metropolis and a more 'natural' space beyond (Williams, 1973). It is an opposition that has continued to be articulated in the lifestyle aesthetics of a new cultural class from the late 1960s onwards (Jager, 1986). The appeal of Habitat, Ikea and a number of smaller retail outlets, for example, is that they offer the pleasures of the countryside, and a rural craft tradition (together with advice on how to combine that tradition with a high-tech functionalism), at affordable prices - though their products may now be consumed in an increasingly ironic, and self-conscious manner.

As the arena within which these objects are to be found the home emerges as a powerful site of temporal 'retreat' and Alex vigorously protects this space from the infringements of a metropolitan global system (Sassen, 1993). Alex makes a huge effort, for example, never 'to take his work home', and this act of separation was carried to the interview process too. All our meetings were conducted in his office and, as was

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8 In this sense Alex displays an ability to 'have it all' and I come back to the ways in which he negotiates the contradictions of his attraction to the icons of a British heritage movement, with his continued desire to enjoy the benefits of life in the modern world, in chapter 7. And see chapter 6 and the discussion of a new 'mix and match' aesthetic.
suggested in chapter 3, the geography of the research process might have been an important influence on the persona that Alex presented.

Importantly though, this image of the home as a more 'natural' space is not one confined to Alex alone. Amanda too uses the opportunity of going home to access a very different sense of time. In chapter 4 I traced Amanda's growing unease with the superficiality of contemporary social relations. Her unease was connected to the emergence of new communication technologies and their impact on the 'authenticity' of social interaction. At the same time increasing feelings of temporal insecurity were uncovered, articulated most powerfully in a sense of the speed-up of linear time. This itself was understood as a key factor in Amanda's unease with the nature of the 'outside world' in general and, at a more personal level, similar feelings can be traced in her exhaustion at the pace of recent change within the workplace.

Not surprisingly one of the main ways Amanda deals with these feelings is simply to shut this world out and to seek a 'retreat' into the more familiar space of the home. The depth of her relationships with close friends, and especially her daughter, for example, offers both a 'retreat' from the uncertainties of the social world 'outside', and access to a more comforting sense of time with which these more disorientating experiences can be held in check:

J: Well, I was just trying to put this together from when you were saying that it sometimes felt very out of control out there, and I wondered whether the home, and the family traditions, and passing the good things down to Jen [her daughter] are ways of keeping stability for you in all this?

A: .. Oh yeah, in those times of particular stress, when the world's getting on top of me, then I want my close friends, and Jen around me, and I deliberately say - you're doing your bit, you don't have to worry about it all, and you can't.

J: One of the classic ways to look at these things I suppose would be to say well if things are getting out of control around us, then to look back and to look for a continuity over time.

J: Oh yeah, yeah. I'm very traditional. You know, like I always celebrate Christmas and Easter. Even though I'm very definitely not religious I like to have those events in the year, that I can stick to. I'm just very traditional, it's nice to have those markers.

Like, you know Jen and I, if you looked at our lives then we have very definite markers, you know very important ongoing things - you know, like we always have a cuddle in the morning, which probably doesn't do a hell of a lot of good, but it's traditional, it's a tradition. And so we have these set things that we always just do .. and I think it's only with Jen now that I can really switch off.

(Amanda, session 6)

Amanda's account is familiar. When the outside world is getting 'too much' many of us try to concentrate on the 'little things', and reassure ourselves that we 'can't do it all'. So too, when faced with a world in which social relations seem to be increasingly
superficial, many of us turn to our close friends and family. In the most obvious sense the home becomes a refuge from the outside world.

But Amanda's account raises other issues. The routine acts of affection between Amanda and her daughter are rooted in, and give rise to, a more 'authentic' sense of time. For Amanda depth relations are only possible when people give time for their expression (see chapter 4). They cannot emerge within the hectic world that is a product of the new communication technologies and, as we shall see below, technology itself precludes the very 'authenticity' of human time. Here, then, the traditions of the morning cuddle re-establish a more 'natural' sense of 'family time', the comforts of which are not dissimilar to those discovered by Pat in her role as carer. At the same time, though Amanda may not believe in Easter or Christmas as religious institutions, they provide exactly the sort of markers in the 'natural' calendar she would like to see and which are under threat with the intrusions of communication technology and a placeless and timeless world. Together, and in ways very similar to Alex, these traditions work to 'slow down' a sense of time going 'too fast' and to re-inscribe a more 'authentic' sense of time. Moreover, overlaying any universal temporal experience is a clear geography of temporality. The home offers comfort as it offers a qualitatively different sense of time.

The difficulty, of course, is that the home cannot always be closed to those less reassuring temporal shapes associated in particular with communication technology. However hard people may try to exclude these new technologies most of us still use them and, indeed, welcome their presence. Where for Amanda these technologies offer both a source of comfort from the stress of the daily grind, but also preclude that more authentic sense of time she seeks, this raises particular difficulties. For example, for Amanda the ability of the video recorder or answer machine to play around with a sense of linear time is:

A: Quite unnatural isn't it. I think we probably miss out on certain things, by being able to do that. I think we probably miss out on some kind of spontaneity, spontaneous reactions to things, and the ability to think of better things to do with our time. You know, like Kenwood House is really lovely in a certain mood, and Oxford Street can be wonderful in certain moods, or whatever.

And you'd have to put it in its time, because the shops are only open so long, and you can only go to Kenwood House in the open air, and when it's sunny and it's nice. So you'd have more of a sense of, as you say, of time, because there are certain things you do in the day, and there are certain things that you do at night. Whereas now you can watch videos all night if you want. I know a load of people who do that. It quite, quite disturbs people who do. You know it's quite a common ailment. I think you have to be, I know that so called 'normal' people do it as well, but I think you probably are quite distressed in some way if that is what you do, and you do it a lot. You know, literally if time's gone haywire, and you're watching videos all the time, then there's something a bit funny about it.

J: Well, I just wondered if using the video and the answer machine adds to that
because you're ignoring the natural structures

A: That's right. You're losing the social aspect of it all. As I say, negotiating with people about, you know, like not to phone now - 'I'll phone you back tomorrow, or later', or something like that. And now you don't have to bother to negotiate that. You don't even have to bother to think about them really, which is quite a con really. It's a con really, pretending not to be there when you are actually there. I think maybe we've got an element of guilt somehow.

It is conning somebody. You know it's almost a, it's conning them. It's much more honest to say 'I can't deal with it, I'm sorry, I just can't deal with this, I'm too tired'. That's not nice to a friend is it? When you think about it.

J: Well, I know you were saying last week that it's quite important for you to structure your time and you get quite anxious if you don't

A: Yeah, but usually I can think of better ways of doing it than this.

J: And is it only the answerphone and the video that fuck around with that notion of time?

A: I'm not sure if videos do you see, because they preserve the past for me too (laughter) - you can count them up there. I mean it's very definite that when I'm in certain moods, when I'm very very stressed the books I read are Trollope, and Jane Austen and things like that. And the films I see are Rebecca, and Orson Welles, Philadelphia Story, Some Like it Hot, you know, all those..

J: Is that a nostalgic longing for a Golden Age?

A: No no no it's, well yes - it's safer. It's safer, it's like Jane Austen has a happy ending.

(Amanda, session 3)

Amanda's feelings are complex. However 'unnatural' these technologies they clearly provide an important refuge from the stress of everyday life. Her use of the video, for example, is not dissimilar to Paul's. For both it provides a space of relaxation. And for Amanda it can offer access to a world of nostalgia into which she can retreat when contemporary life gets too upsetting. But for Amanda the video also raises some important ambiguities. Even as it offers these comforts, it may also disturb that more 'natural' sense of time she seeks. At the simplest level it does this through its ability to ignore the natural cycles of day and night and this ability is highly disturbing. Here too, then, Amanda's unease is similar to Paul's. But for Amanda this unease is primarily rooted in the effect this new sense of time has upon a wider set of social relations. Once people can ignore the natural structures of time, the possibility also emerges of less honest relationships. If one can control the timing of one's interaction with others, one can also avoid the responsibilities of negotiation. One can, in her terms, "con" other people such that, once again, the impact of communication technology is to undermine 'authentic' interaction, and the authenticity of this interaction is powerfully connected to issues of time.
To summarize: though in a position of some empowerment, the new cultural class respondents are also experiencing considerable unease with changes in the nature of work. As with the working class respondents, Amanda and Alex sought to control these feelings by moving towards a more comforting sense of time. For both this was possible by accessing a more 'natural' sense of time found within the home. When the home can be held apart from the intrusions of communication technology it is possible to draw upon the comforts of tradition, craft and nature found in a new lifestyle aesthetic. For Amanda this more natural sense of time was also clearly related to the routines of the family and a more 'authentic' 'family time' connected to the pleasures of parenting and child care. This more authentic sense of time itself gave space to a more authentic sense of social interaction.

But, the presence of technology within the home may complicate these simple relationships. Its presence may be both comforting and disturbing. Furthermore, this ability to clearly separate a world of 'work' and 'leisure', the public and the private, is not universal. Most importantly it may reflect an ability to deploy a gendered system of time management. If for some men the home provides a space of 'leisure', this is less often the case for women (Brunsdon & Morley, 1978; Dalla Costa & James, 1975). For them, the pressures of household tasks often mean that the home too must be considered as a site of work, and these pressures are clearly increased for women who work outside of the home (Cowan, 1989; Wilson, 1977). These oppositions may be more complex than often assumed. For Pat, for example, routine household chores offered a certain comfort. But, at a broader level, they do suggest that the ability to construct the home as some sort of refuge from the "ravages of time-space compression" (Harvey, 1989a:292) may be powerfully differentiated by gender.

To finish I want to consider the impact of these gender relations upon people's ability to construct a system of 'time management'. Turning first to George I shall contrast his ability to clearly separate the worlds of work and home, with the rather different experiences of Amanda and Dorian. I shall suggest that for George the home has come to be constructed as a space of a more 'natural', 'feminine time' and that this construction, reflecting a wider gendering of household tasks, is central to the comforts that the home offers. Finally, however, I shall suggest that however unequal, the comforts of home, and especially of family time, are essential to the successful negotiation of the wider insecurities of the new work practices. This places those professional women who want children, but who, because of the continued inequalities of a gendered labour market have had to delay the start of a family, in an especially difficult position.
5.4 Time management and the (gendered) comforts of family time

In the previous section only George emerged completely unscathed from the pressures of the new work practices and it was suggested that his sense of control over the latest round of employment restructuring was rooted in his position of managerial privilege. This class analysis is not, however, enough. Though his own position within the news organisation might be secure, on a day-to-day basis George’s working life is highly pressured. His ability to deal with this pressure has less to do with a position of class privilege, than his ability to clearly separate the worlds of work and home and to construct the sense of time found within each in sharp opposition. It is an ability that is rooted in a position of gendered empowerment. Consider, for example, George’s own description of the skills of time management:

"What I am actually good at is - and what all journalists are good at - if the phone rang this minute and Bush has had a heart attack, you know, I would be haring off there, I would happily work until midnight or more because you get a buzz out of it, firing off and making all the decisions. And when I’m at home I just footle about like anyone else .. play with Suzy [his daughter], spend some time with my family .. just lean around, which is fine because there will be busy times, you know."

Adding in a later session:

"I mean I’m pretty good at it, really, managing my time. And I think managing time is a sort of - is a very important thing to be able to do."

(George, sessions 1 & 2, emphasis added)

What stands out is the imagery with which George chooses to describe the different worlds of home and work. Time at the office is "frantic". And, though he may get a certain ‘buzz’ from "haring off" here and there, it is clearly rather pressured. The imagery is also powerfully gendered. The public sphere is a rational world, a world in which one must “fire off” in all directions and be prepared to make instantaneous decisions. It stands in sharp contrast to a slower moving, more gentle domestic sphere dominated by images of family and children. At home George can just "lean around", free from the pressures of work and of making decisions. He can "footle about" and this ability to deploy a clear system of time management is something that is both essential to his sense of well-being, and something he is rather good at.

For George, then, the home offers comfort from the pressures of work as it becomes positioned within a qualitatively different sense of time and this sense of time is clearly connected to traditional images of femininity:

"I suppose time, time when you are at home, or on holiday, is sort of just time. You get up and the day goes on and then it ends. Time in the office, very often you are up against furious deadlines .. whatever. They are very different
disciplines I suppose, although I quite like them both."

(George, session 1)

Though George speaks of two quite distinct systems of time management, where
time at the office is fast and something that must be tightly controlled, time at home is
essentially a more ‘natural’ time, one that simply flows beyond the needs of time
discipline. As the public and the private are held apart through a traditional set of
gendered oppositions, time itself is powerfully gendered. Time within the home is a more
natural, more feminine time, images that draw upon a long-standing feminization of
nature and the ‘natural’ (Rose, 1993). But, rather than suggesting that we can identify
some sort of essentially ‘gendered time’, the differing experiences of time between men
and women can quite easily be related to the different, and unequal, material practices
of each. For George time at home may simply flow, because the home itself is not a site
of work. Though he may draw great pleasure, for example, from the sense of family time
that is offered by the presence of his daughter, George has a nanny to take care of the
more mundane tasks of child care and a wife to take care of the house work.9

Not surprisingly, these comforts are less easily available to women. Amanda, for
example, has difficulty in separating the experience of work and home, and therefore the
experiences of time found within each, because the home itself is also a site of labour.
Moreover, for her, the ability to clearly separate the two may be symbolic of a deeper
difference between men and women and, in particular, a tendency, unique to men, to
categorize one’s emotions. Whether this tendency is unique to men or not, the inability
to categorize can be quite debilitating. It is certainly made more problematic by the
tendency of communication technology to shatter that geographical distance that
previously allowed for a clearer separation of different experiential domains:

J: Is time at home very much time with Jen [her daughter] and away from the
office?

A: No, I’m not able to separate either at the moment, it’s driving me mad. It
always seems that chaps are better at that sort of thing. I was talking to the
director today - his Mum’s died - and he just said, ‘I just don’t think about it at
work’. He just, he just cuts off from it. Whereas I was on the phone to Jen’s Year
Head and burst into tears in the office - I just can’t do it, you know ..

J: So things like getting Jen up for school, getting her dinner, are those helpful
markers?

A: I think they probably are. I mean they’re a real pain in the neck and I enjoy it
when she’s not there, but, um, I think in some ways they’re probably quite nice,
yeah.

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9 The presence of a nanny clarifies that in an analysis of domestic labour class and gender
cannot be entirely separated. See Gregson and Lowe (1994).
And in an earlier session, talking about the telephone:

A: It’s quite intrusive I suppose isn’t it, some modern technology. Like the phone, like there’s loads of times when I wish - like I always have to have the phone on, especially when Jen’s not here, because, in case something’s happened to her. So I always have to answer the bloody thing, I can’t afford not to. And it does feel intrusive sometimes. Because it can get you anytime. It doesn’t matter what you’re doing, you’re sort of summoned to it.

(Amanda, sessions 3 & 4)

In contrast to George, Amanda is less able to separate the world of ‘work’, from a space of domestic ‘leisure’. Even at home her daily routines are dictated by the demands of her daughter’s meal times, school times, and bed times. Far from being able to distinguish a ‘lazy time’ at home from the increasingly pressured world of work, these domestic tasks add to an already hectic schedule. Her time is, quite literally, not her own, and the emotional commitment that these tasks engender often spills over into her ‘professional life’.

But, though undoubtedly a source of pressure, the demands of her daughter also offer Amanda a certain comfort. These comforts are not dissimilar to the comforts that we found in George’s descriptions of family life and, crucially, they are comforts that Alex too has recently discovered. Earlier, I argued that Alex’s ability to separate the worlds of work and home was dependent upon his ability to clearly distinguish two quite different systems of time. The first was located within the increasingly fluid sense of time now found within a world of international business relations. The second was a sense of time that drew its strength from that more ‘natural’ sense of time found within a new rural aesthetic.

But, this more natural sense of time might in fact draw its strength from a quite different sphere. Three years ago Alex and his wife had their first child. She was born at much the same time as his partner at work was also starting a family and, at the end of the interview period, Alex added to his family with the birth of twins. Already, we have seen how the arrival of his family gave Alex a new perspective on his professional life. Since both he and his colleague have had children, for example, a lot more effort has been made to control their work load. At the same time, the arrival of children would seem to have transformed that sense of time found outside of work. As Alex says:

J: And at home who makes the timetables? With the baby is that now very much around her?

A: Yeah, that’s it. Yeah, very much around her. Yeah, basically there’s - it’s quite nice really, there’s a routine basically, whereas there wasn’t a routine before, apart from just getting up, going to work, and coming home again.

J: And those routines are actually quite nice are they?
A: ( Interruption as people come through the office) I wouldn’t say I quite like it, it’s just there really .. you just adapt to it. You know, rather than think that’s something’s been imposed on you, and that you have to come to terms with it. I just find it’s a simple process of adaptation .. I just think, oh great, it’s bath time now, you know, and all that kind of stuff, you know.

And we have a, it’s much more simple, we have a lot of friends just dropping in now. So you end up with just as good a social life - it’s just different. Instead of meeting them in a common place, they just tend to breeze around to our place, and we just knock them up some food and open a bottle of wine, you know.

(Alex, session 2)

Once again we need to interpret this passage with an eye to the context of the interview (cf Paul, chapter 4.3). For example, Alex is clearly wary of articulating the joys of fatherhood and his caution can be related to both the presence of a male interviewer and, perhaps, of other people in the office. The routines of child care are not, he stresses, something that he explicitly treasures, but only something that he has adapted to apparently quite effortlessly. His reticence may be related to his desire not to transgress a traditional model of masculinity, and not to admit that one can’t have it all.

But, these pleasures are none-the-less there. Bath time, for example, and "all that other stuff", is clearly something that he enjoys and this enjoyment can be connected to a particular temporal experience. The presence of children has created a routine that was previously lacking and one that stands in sharp contrast to the more flexible experience of time found within the workplace. They have also provided him with greater access to the "simple" pleasures of life, whether that be of friends dropping by and sharing the family meal, or the activity of bathing itself within which a powerful physical bond is created between parent and child.

In other words, the suggestion is that children provide access to a more ‘authentic’ life experience, within which the experience of work is re-appropriated. This authenticity is intimately related to a particular model of time. If we now return to Amanda’s account, we can see that it is these same pleasures that she enjoys. As for Pat, they are connected to the routines of the carer, routines that, for both Alex and Amanda, provide the markers of a more ‘natural’ sense of family time rooted in traditional notions of parenting and the comforts of family. The difference between Amanda and Alex, of course, is that whilst for Alex (and George) this more natural sense of time stands entirely separate from the pressures of work, for the female respondents they are routines that must also be considered part of the working day.

The analysis points to a need not to romanticize, or essentialize, our understandings of the family and family time. The ‘authenticity’ of family time, and in particular of that more ‘natural’ sense of time found in the routines of child care, is not essentially gendered but constructed through the activities of parenting, such that it may
be open to, and desired by, both men and women. But, as these activities currently tend still to fall to women more than to men, for women these pleasures are liable to be both more intense and more ambiguous, as they are tied to the gendered inequalities of domestic labour. Though comforting, they may also come to represent a 'double burden' and for lone parents like Amanda these pressures are likely to be radically increased. So too, in the light of recent coverage of abuse within the family (Cream, 1993), the family itself can no longer be considered as some sort of sacred space beyond the evils of the outside world.

But, it does suggest that the perceived pleasures of family time may be of crucial significance in people's ability to negotiate the pressures of the new work practices. This in turn suggests particular difficulties for those professional women who want children, but who, because of a series of contradictory social pressures, have had to delay the start of a family. To bring out these contradictions I want, finally, to turn to the experiences of Dorian and to position them within a re-reading of the literature about gentrification and social and economic restructuring.

Like Amanda, but unlike George or Alex, Dorian has a number of difficulties in separating her experiences of work and home:

"I don't think I negotiate them very well. I have this very strong work ethic, and I find it extremely difficult to switch off from work. It's a problem. I always have the experience of time going faster than I want it to - I very rarely think that time is dragging."

(Dorian, session 2)

This difficulty may, of course, be common to anyone who invests a considerable amount of intellectual and emotional energy in their work, as Dorian clearly does. It may also be a comment on either her gender and/or her single status. In either case, as for the other female respondents, for Dorian the home is also a site of domestic labour and this clearly raises difficulties in establishing it as some sort of space beyond the pressures of work. But I want to argue that it is also a difficulty that is more extreme for Dorian than for any of the other respondents and that this difficulty can be connected to two things: first, it is rooted in her inability to access the home as the site of a qualitatively different sense of family time; second, that this difficulty is a product of her contradictory relationship with a wider set of social processes, and ones that secure for Dorian a

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10 For single mothers in particular recent political events have furthered the ambiguity of these pleasures. As the traditional nuclear family is changing single mothers have recently been cast as the agents of social decline. This positioning has bought with it very real material consequences - ranging from reductions in family benefit, to the imposition of regulations that forbid the granting of child benefit unless the mother names the child's father, such that attempts can be made to illicit child maintenance (an act that has obvious ramifications for domestic violence).
radically unstable sense of time itself. I want to take this latter point first.

Within the 'consumption school' of gentrification different analysts have tended to emphasise arguments concerning the life cycles of the new cultural class (Ley, 1988a; Williams, 1986). Among these authors, it was widely assumed that once these households had children they would leave the inner city to establish traditional nuclear families within the suburbs. But, as more recent research has shown, this may not be the case. Within Stoke Newington, for example, members of the new cultural class are choosing to have children, but also to stay within the inner city (Butler, 1991). Where this process has come to be connected to a wider set of demographic and social changes, and to a powerful gendering of those processes, it may signal particular difficulties for some members of an expanding female professional class.

In the developed Western economies the last twenty years or so have seen considerable economic and demographic change. People in general are marrying and having children later. This tendency is particularly marked within the new cultural class, in part because the same period has seen a rise in the number of professional working women (Rose, 1989) not concomitant with changes in the attitudes towards, or provision of, child care (Beneria & Stimpson, 1987; Tilly & Scott, 1987). As a patriarchal labour market still subordinates the role of reproduction (in its broadest sense), and the tasks of reproduction still tend to fall to women, this has meant that professional women who want children have often had to wait until they are more established in their careers so that they can afford the costs of private child care and more readily assume a return to work after the birth of their children (Tilly & Scott, 1987).

As the children of the first post-war 'baby boom' are now reaching their thirties these processes have combined to produce a second, if less pronounced, 'baby boom' and Butler (1991) found that, in Stoke Newington, child support networks have become an important means through which gentrifiers have sought to establish both a local (class-based) identity, and a wider sense of class membership. For those women in the new cultural class who want children these movements necessitate the negotiation of a contradictory identity, one that may be played out in their experience of time and temporality.

Anxious to establish herself in her career, for example, Dorian decided to delay having children. This can be understood as both an economic necessity (born out of the continued inequalities of the reproduction process) and a reflection of her desire to negotiate the wider patriarchy of the work place. At work she often has to play the role of the 'thrusting career woman', one that is still not easily reconciled with the desire for
children (cf McDowell & Court, forthcoming). Now in her mid thirties, however, this decision is causing her some anxiety, as it in turn connects with a wider gendering of time.

As she says: "I think at my age, at 35, it's a time when I think many women, particularly myself, are forced to take stock of our lives" (session 4, emphasis added). Dorian clearly feels that the time to have children is rapidly 'running out'. But, this should not be understood as evidence of some essentialist understanding of Dorian's 'ticking biological clock'. Rather, in chapter 2.2d I argued that, in the West at least, images of biological time have tended to be connected to a powerful gendering of the 'beauty myth' (Wolf, 1990). The same processes can be understood as attached to, and interacting with, ideas about the 'natural age' of childbirth. Though in recent years the age at which women can safely give birth has dramatically increased, these changes have yet to have a significant impact on social attitudes. Public hostility to the possibilities of conception by older women needs to be understood as emerging from something other than an awareness only of the increased risk of foetal 'abnormality' in more mature women. It also says much about the 'natural' age of parenting, and the age at which single women can 'reasonably' be expected to attract a mate. The same attitudes clearly do not apply to men.

The absence of children is thus causing Dorian distress at two levels. First, it is providing for a deeply felt and personal sense of lack, and one that is increasing (in our sessions Dorian regularly returned to the subject of her age, and of children). Second, her childlessness has had the ironic effect of marginalizing her position within that class she has fought so long to gain access to. As her progression up the career ladder has meant the delay of having children, but as friends and neighbours are all now starting families, Dorian feels herself excluded from a number of local social networks.

In other words, these processes have combined to secure for Dorian a certain unease with both her personal, and social identity, and this unease is reflected in her attitudes to time itself. As she says: "I tend to suffer from paranoid feelings that everybody else is getting on happily with whatever they're doing, and I kind of, you know, inside I'm mad, I'm just not doing it, I'm not coping" (session 2). Within the ambiguities of her position, of course, it may be difficult for Dorian to know exactly what

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11 Once again these conversations need to be understood within the context of the power relations of the interview process. The allusions were clearly quite flirtatious. On more than one occasion, for example, Dorian talked of the problems of finding a satisfactory partner, before moving on to speak of her joy at meeting someone to whom she could talk so easily. This flirtation is clearly a two way process, and the material analyzed here might have emerged in a quite different form had Dorian been talking to a (straight) woman.
she 'should' be doing.

I have concentrated upon these issues at some length because they allow us a better understanding of Dorian's difficulty in locating the home as some sort of retreat from the "ravages of time-space compression" (Harvey, 1989a:292). Dorian's inability to clearly separate the experiences of home and work has less to do with a simple gendering of household tasks (after all, both Amanda and Pat found some comfort in those tasks, however ambiguous) than her inability to access the home as the site of a more comforting sense of family time. Contrast her descriptions of home, for example, with those of the other respondents:

"To me a house is a very potent symbol, and when I think of the future I think of the house that represents me and children. It's a symbol of wealth, and it's a symbol of happiness. If I have a picture of a rosy future it's symbolized by a big old house.

.. [and] that might be partly nostalgia for what was nice in my childhood, which was coming home, past the old houses, to a fire in the front room and sitting there with my mother after school."

Adding in a later session:

"But in reality, the present, this house, you know, is just somewhere as a symbol of security. [Where] I can shut the door and tell the world to bugger off, and there's just me."

(Dorian, sessions 1 & 5, emphasis added)

At first, it would appear that for Dorian too the comforts of home offer a powerful imaginary refuge from the outside world. This refuge is rooted in the power of the home to conjure up images of a nostalgic childhood, and from the role of the home in providing for some deeper and more basic sense of existential security (cf Saunders, 1990). But, on closer reading, it is exactly this sense of security that is lacking. Dorian's image of the perfect home can be located in the past, or the future, but never in the present. Where these comforts are explicitly related to the presence of children, and of an inter-generational time (she talks of both her mother, and of children) they articulate precisely those contradictions that Dorian wants to escape. The old house, with children, is a symbol of wealth and of future happiness, but as she has tried to build that wealth so too, ironically and inescapably, she has delayed having a family and thus access to that happiness. A powerful sense of pathos may therefore be connected to the memory of childhood itself. The more she remembers this idealised childhood, the more the memories remind her of her own sense of lack. Far from being a symbol of comfort, then, for Dorian the home becomes a only house, somewhere into which she can quite aggressively retreat, and tell the outside world to "bugger off". The comforts of home, and of family time, are far from universal. A consideration of the impact of these wider, and quite contradictory, social processes therefore allows us an understanding of how those
‘retreats’ identified within a thesis of time-space compression are themselves powerfully differentiated (cf Harvey, 1989a).

5.5 Conclusions

To conclude: as social theory moves away from a traditional emphasis on time and social change, towards a much needed ‘re-assertion of space’ (Soja, 1989), we need to be careful lest this move blinds us to the continuing strengths of temporal analysis. In this chapter, for example, I have explored the experiences of time and temporality engendered by changes in the regime of accumulation to make some wider conclusions concerning the unequal social impact of the new work practices. The analysis has not moved to separate a spatial and temporal analysis, but worked towards their re-combination - most obviously in its attempt to consider the space of the home as site of comfort and of a more comforting family time. This has necessitated an emphasis upon the subjectivity of temporal experience, one rooted in differing material conditions, rather than working with some sense of a universal, and objective ‘public time’.

Though here, in an attempt to move the analysis away from technology towards some of those other arenas within which time-space compression is experienced, I have concentrated only upon experiences of time within the world of paid work (and therefore, in the corollary arena of ‘leisure’), the chapter also allows some more general conclusions concerning the experience of time in a period of time-space compression.

First, significant differences can be traced in the experiences of time between some members of a core and peripheral labour force. Whilst the latter are experiencing considerable feelings of temporal insecurity, articulated most powerfully by worries over future employment, the former enjoy a certain autonomy, and security within the workplace. But, both groups are experiencing a more widespread sense of temporal insecurity and speed-up, and react to this by moving towards a number of more comforting ‘temporal shapes’.

These are often to be found within a more ‘natural’ sense of time located in images of nature and the countryside. For the new cultural class respondents, for example, these images have drawn them towards a new rural aesthetic, through which the home itself has come to be positioned as a site of temporal retreat beyond the insecurities of work and modern technology. The home may also be the site of a more ‘authentic’ sense of time, one rooted in the daily rhythms of family life, and of a more authentic family time. Though access to this was found to be powerfully differentiated by gender, and a wider gendering of household tasks, for all it remained an essential means through which to negotiate the more unsettling aspects of the new work practices.
A fuller understanding of these acts of ‘retreat’ is essential, because it moves us beyond the work of other theorists, towards an understanding of how people may ‘balance’ the insecurities of a period of time-space compression with access to a range of more comforting temporal experiences (cf Harvey, 1989a). But, the meanings attached to different temporal shapes are neither socially homogeneous, nor stable for any individual. Certainly they can never be tied to a single material activity, or arena. Rather, the experience of time remains deeply subjective, and the task of any materialist account is to relate these subjective experiences to the different material activities and interests of different social actors. For example, the comforts of the home and of family time are not universal. They may be particularly problematic for those professional women who want children but who, because of a set of contradictory social processes and of a wider gendering of time itself, have had to delay the start of a family.

In general, though, whether understood through images of the home, of nature, or of family relations, all the respondents seemed drawn towards the possibility of a more ‘authentic’ life experience, and issues of authenticity were intimately related to issues of time. To explore these arguments further I turn in the next chapter to the question of ‘authenticity’ itself in more detail, considering its connections to traditional constructions of the ‘exotic’. I explore these connections through a consideration of contemporary travel and the proliferation of those holidays and foods that now offer an ‘authentic exotic’ experience (MacCannell, 1976, 1992). Where she was excluded from this more comforting relationship at home, it will be particularly interesting to see how Dorian draws upon these experiences to gain that more authentic sense of time she seeks.
CHAPTER 6
IN SEARCH OF AUTHENTICITY (OR TRAVELS IN CULTURAL CAPITAL)

6.1 Introduction

"Travel tales are, to one who does not travel, the ultimate bore ... If there's anything worse than a traveller telling travelling stories, it's two or more vying with each other to see 'who experienced the worst conditions and who saw the most incredible thing' ... Whenever I see two people wearing Peruvian yak-hair jumpers, I recoil in horror. Snatches of their conversation drift across. 'So you say you have done the Guatemalan/Katmandu circuit? Yeah? Don't tell me you went to that amazing backstreet dive in Tangiers? With the guy with the AK 47? Wow, he's really amazing ... Travellers seem to ignore the fact that what they're gasping at it is, to some people, normal life ... To hear them talk you'd think the whole Third World was one big Technicolour shebang co-hosted by Mother Theresa and Andy Kershaw ... Not only is it ludicrous, it's patronising. But travellers don't care."

"... So what if you ate chili-seasoned snapper under the cherry moon ... If you nip down to Tesco's you can do this in Colwyn Bay."

(Flic Everett, Did I mention the yaks? 1994:42-43)

From the early 1980s the travel industry has enjoyed a period of considerable growth. In particular, as recent years have seen a significant reduction in the relative cost of overseas travel and the emergence of the package tour, the number of people who regularly holiday abroad has dramatically increased. This expansion can be understood as one of the clearest illustrations of processes of global restructuring and, for those who enjoy a certain degree of economic power, draws attention to one of the more pleasurable aspects of those processes. Thus, though others may find these travellers' tales insufferable, their analysis clearly offers an excellent means through which to examine some wider arguments concerning the contemporary experiences of time-space compression and the differential power relations that these processes articulate.

Not surprisingly this expansion has generated considerable academic interest, interest that has tended to focus upon the 'politics of travel' and the operation of a powerful 'tourist gaze' (Urry, 1990). These accounts are most usually positioned within a traditional understanding of the holiday. Attention is focused upon the holiday as a space of social inversion, within which the practices of everyday life become transformed (Shields, 1991). This transformation is dependent upon a set of unequal social relations. This chapter explores the different experiences of this expansion in foreign travel by people in different social positions. It focuses upon the way in which people in different positions of relative empowerment within the space of the European 'centre' negotiate their position of ethnic and cultural hegemony.

It looks at a notion of the holiday as carnival, an understanding that is dependent
upon the tourist's ability to reduce the peoples and cultures of other places to the static backdrop of their activities. For example, for the stereotypical British holiday maker a holiday in Spain may offer little more than the opportunity to transfer the pleasures of the British seaside resort to the more reliable weather of the Mediterranean. The emphasis is upon making the different more familiar and those same processes that have led to a proliferation of 'traditional' English pubs up and down the Spanish coast may also allow for a re-invention of the traditions of home. At the same time, if the tourist requires a taste of 'local culture', a range of suitably 'traditional' events can always be provided - a spot of flamenco dancing, perhaps, or an organised trip to the bull fight - events that must present the local culture as static and changeless, and ones often witnessed only from the security of the tour bus.

The same period has also witnessed a remarkable growth in the market for 'alternative holidays', and this growth provides another focus of the present chapter. Alongside the package tour, and in many ways emerging as a reaction to it, has been a proliferation in those holidays offering the 'real' experience of Spain (or India, or Thailand, or Peru). Here the emphasis is upon interaction rather than spectacle. They promise the chance to immerse oneself, if only for a while, in a truly different world. They are, in other words, centrally concerned with issues of difference and 'authenticity', and though this authenticity may be rooted in some notion of 'backstage' behaviour (MacCannell, 1976), it is more often connected to the area's inaccessibility. India, for example, is somehow 'more authentic', and more 'authentically different', than Spain, and Nepal more authentic than both.

Within this industry notions of authenticity have become intimately connected to traditional understandings of the 'exotic'. In its original form to be exotic was to be 'outside' (from the Greek *exo*) whilst, from at least the sixteenth century onwards, an etymology of the term reveals its shift in meaning to being outside of *Europe*, and the then-known world (Hanks, 1986). The authenticity of these different places is, therefore, primarily dependent upon their social distance from the metropolitan centre and the inauthenticity of the modern world (see chapter 2.1a), and this search for authenticity articulates its own set of unequal social relations. In the first place these authentically different spaces are treated as no less of a resource than the beaches of Spain. Both offer the opportunity to escape the familiar routines of home, but these more exotic holidays may be available only to those of considerable social and economic power. Secondly, this notion of authenticity is itself predicated upon a traditional set of unequal cultural oppositions. Finally, whatever their intention, I shall demonstrate that the travellers who undertake these trips may be doing little to challenge the distancing perspective of a more
traditional tourist gaze.

An analysis of these travellers' tales therefore offers an excellent opportunity to consider the unequal power relations articulated by a new round of globalisation, and to assess how far the experience of these processes has led to the emergence of less exclusionary systems of thought. These relations have been considered by others, and their accounts allow us to trace their complexity. The binary categories of the familiar and the different, for example, are geographically and historically specific and tend towards a certain fluidity. Their operation also cannot be considered outside of the impact of a wider set of social relations, most obviously those of race and ethnicity, but also those of class and gender (Blunt, 1994; Mills, 1994).

Thus, overlaying these different holiday experiences is a quite particular sociology. Here, for example, I shall argue that a concern with the authentic is limited to the new cultural class respondents. Indeed I shall suggest that for them this search for authenticity has become caught up within a wider system of cultural capital and class distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). At the simplest level, their experiences allow them to distance themselves from those less 'sophisticated' tourists unconcerned with, but also perhaps less able to afford, the 'real thing'. They may also provide the means by which an individual differentiates his or her own position within the new cultural class itself, as different travellers strive to outbid each other with tales of difference and the authenticity of their travel experiences. But at the same time, and in contrast to the desires of those tourists who seek out only the familiar, geographically displaced, this search for difference is understood by the new cultural class respondents themselves as part of a wider celebration of cultural difference and the promotion of a project of liberal tolerance. It is a project undermined by the actual practice of overseas travel.

For the working class respondents the foreign holiday fulfils quite different criteria. Primarily it is understood as allowing for an inversion of the oppressive routines of their everyday lives. At the same time, rather than a celebration of difference, it also provides the opportunity to reclaim a position of cultural hegemony under threat at home. Overlying any easy class analysis is the 'difference that gender makes' and the influence of gender impacts upon the understandings and practices of both the working class and new cultural class respondents.

These same stories may also allow us to construct a deeper understanding of the experiences of time-space compression itself. In particular, I shall argue that, whilst seeming to stand in stark opposition, the travel experiences of both the working class and new cultural class respondents in fact fulfil a similar function. Both allow for the construction of a more comforting relationship with time. For the working class
respondents this is achieved as their holiday experiences allow them to re-construct the unequal relations of empire, thus allowing for a sense of historical progress currently being undermined at home. For the new cultural class respondents it is to be found in the notion of authenticity itself, as the authentic is understood as offering a more 'natural' sense of time similar to that traced in the notion of 'family time' explored in the previous chapter.

In this sense the chapter can be seen as a response to, and elaboration of, a number of those arguments made about time in chapter 5. Where both the working class and new cultural class respondents were seen to be experiencing increasing feelings of temporal insecurity at work, it is not surprising that each should continue to seek out more comforting temporal experiences in other arenas. It also offers an introduction to chapter 7, seeking to contextualize a number of that chapter's arguments. For example, there I consider changes in the nature of Stoke Newington and, with the working class respondents, concentrate upon their sense of loss as the area they grew up in has changed beyond recognition. This sense of loss is especially strong in relation to changes in the area's ethnic diversity and their travel experiences need to be understood in relation to these feelings.

To clarify these inter-relations I want to precede my examination of people's overseas travel experiences with a broader discussion of another of the most obvious manifestations of time-space compression; the rapid proliferation of previously unavailable and 'exotic' foods in the supermarkets and shops of the developed economies. As Harvey recognizes, for example:

"The market place has always been an 'emporium of styles' ... but the food market ... now looks very different from what it was twenty years ago. Kenyan haricot beans, Californian celery and avocados, North American potatoes, Canadian apples, and Chilean grapes all sit side by side in a British supermarket."

(Harvey, 1989a:299-300)

These foods represent a true 'globalisation' of everyday tastes and styles and, as with the expansion in overseas travel, their consumption differs in important ways according to the wider social position of different individuals.\(^1\) The arrival of the specialist delicatessen, for example, has long been recognized as one of the key indicators of an area's gentrification (Sassen, 1991). This not only suggests that the original (white) 

\(^{1}\) Here we need to recognize that to claim this 'globalisation' of everyday goods as anything significantly new is to assume a certain Euro-centrism. In the same way my analysis is concerned only with the experiences of those at the centre of these wider power relations, and it is recognized that the negotiation of these products by other groups is liable to be quite different (cf Massey, 1993a; and see chapter 2.1a).
working class residents of these areas may be less able to afford these types of shops, but that the type of goods that they sell are of less interest to these residents. In this sense an analysis of the consumption of these foods allows us the opportunity to contextualize the understandings liable to emerge in an analysis of people's foreign travel experiences rather better. For example, for Paul and Pat, the emergence of these foods clearly threatens a sense of national identity, one that can only be reclaimed through their travel experiences. In other words, to fully understand their travel experiences we first need an understanding of how they are negotiating a range of foods now available at home that, for them, symbolizes the unwelcome presence of the previously distant and different.

More importantly, however, I want to use an analysis of these foods to clarify the differing and rather complicated notions of authenticity deployed later in the chapter. First of all, though both sets of respondents are concerned with the impact that a proliferation of these foods has upon our understandings of cultural authenticity, important differences emerge in the understandings of the new cultural class and working class respondents. For Paul and Pat food is an important symbol of national and ethnic identity. Issues of authenticity are only important in so far as they impact upon one's ability to maintain a series of distinctions between the 'domestic' and the 'foreign', and thus to safeguard a coherent cultural identity.

In contrast, the new cultural class respondents have broadly welcomed the proliferation of these foods. But, though for them these foods fulfil a quite different purpose, for them too they have generated a profound reflexivity centred on precisely this ability to define a food's authenticity. Most obviously this is because the increasing availability of these foods throws into doubt the possibility of ever really finding an 'authentic difference', and thus positioning one's interaction with that difference as a form of cultural capital. Put bluntly, once the Chinese restaurant hits the high street, it is more difficult to use one's consumption of Chinese food as the means of some wider project of class distinction. It also becomes more difficult to understand these foods as any 'more authentic' than other 'local' produce and thus to position their consumption as a way of accessing that more comforting sense of time that the authentic is understood as offering, and for which the new cultural class respondents search in their travel experiences.

One of the ways in which the new cultural class respondents react to these difficulties is clearly to actually go abroad. Though the consumption of these foods is quite enjoyable, they can only ever provide 'a taster' for 'the real thing'. But I also want to demonstrate that another way in which people may work around this impasse is to set their understandings of authenticity and difference within a more fluid continuum. This continuum allows for a number of significant moves. In the first place, if our
understandings of difference are never static, it allows individuals to continue to construct a hierarchy of difference within which it is still possible to use the consumption of these foods as a means of class distinction. More importantly, it also allows people to access only that level of difference they desire. On the one hand this means that people can continue to enjoy some notion of cultural difference, without ever letting that difference they desire overwhelm them. On the other, where these different levels are defined only according to the understandings of the consumer, it is always possible to access some notion of authenticity and the more comforting relationship with time it is understood to represent. In other words, despite (or, perhaps, because of) increasing reflexivity, for the new cultural class respondents issues of authenticity can be understood as describing only a new, and entertaining ‘word game’. The parameters of this game, and thus the meaning of, and possibility of access to, authenticity itself, are always set by the new cultural class respondents themselves.2

These ‘word games’ take on particular significance in the travel experiences of the new cultural class respondents and provide one of the themes taken up in more detail in the second part of the chapter. They clearly define their own set of unequal power relations and, not least, are articulated quite differently according to an individual’s gender. But, at a more general level, rather than being representative of some deeper act of cultural appreciation, both the consumption of these foods, and these wider travel experiences, may only represent the enjoyment of an increasingly superficial ‘commodification of Otherness’ (hooks, 1992). This in turn continues to allow people’s limited interactions with difference to stand as a form of cultural capital and enables the new cultural class respondents to both welcome, but also contain, the wider processes of globalisation (May, 1993).

Before moving on to explore these issues, however, I want first to look at the rather different experiences of Paul and Pat. I focus upon their efforts to maintain a strict division between the ‘domestic’ and the ‘foreign’, a distinction that has become more complex with the emergence of these exotic foods.

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2 Analyzing authenticity as a new ‘word game’ has a number of benefits. Far from suggesting that these games are unimportant, or unrelated to material politics, understanding who is able to define the limits to these games, and for whom these issues may be reduced to semantics, emphasises the unequal social relations inherent to the marketing and consumption of these ‘new’ foods. Most important is that this analysis allows us to understand how issues of authenticity may now be defined only in relation to the ‘rules’ of the consumer (it is ‘authentic’ because Marie Claire, or Time Out, says it is), rather than in relation to (and in negotiation with) the object, people or culture, for whom authenticity is being claimed. For a discussion of these word games, see Harvey (1989a:44-51) and compare with Foucault (1972) and Lyotard (1984).
6.2 **Roast beef and yorkshire: defining the ‘English’**

Far from welcoming the expansion of these exotic foods, for Paul and Pat their proliferation is understood as something approaching a process of cultural invasion. To demonstrate this argument I want first simply to look at the type of food that they regularly enjoy. Pat’s diet, for example, is strikingly ‘traditional’:

J: Well, the other thing that I wanted to ask you about tonight was about food, and what we like eating.

P: Anything - as you can see! (laughter). Yeah, I do like food I must admit. And I do like roast beef - ENGLISH - and yorkshire.

J: What about in the week, I mean what sort of stuff is it usually?

P: Pork chops tonight. And roast potatoes, and pudding. Or anything - corn beef and chips, anything that’s quick, convenient, you know. When you get home you don’t want to start..

(Pat, session 4)

After a long day at work Pat’s main concern is convenience. Rather than search out the new and the different, her taste is for anything "quick", foods that will reduce the (gendered) task of everyday cooking. Yet it could be suggested that the enjoyment of these foods also derives from something other than simple convenience. A ‘traditional’ dinner of meat and three veg’, followed by pudding, for example, is certainly anything but quick or easy to prepare and if this is so then it is also quite likely that the notion of convenience she draws upon may well in fact symbolize something quite different.

Every week, for example, and just as Paul and his wife go to his mother’s, Pat’s family descends for Sunday lunch. These meals, and the foods that are consumed, form part of a vital ritual through which membership of the family group, and of a wider national identity, is regularly re-enacted. Almost invariably the Sunday meal is roast beef and yorkshire pudding - ‘English’, as Pat puts it - and this use of food as a symbol of national identity continues through the week. In other words, Pat’s ordinary tastes are not structured by a desire for the convenient, so much as for the English: on special occasions roast beef, but otherwise the traditional meat and three veg’ - long time a symbol of a traditional (white) Englishness. Here convenience is standing in for an unexamined signifier of ethnic and national identity and the ability of food to take this role suggests that Pat is still able to use different foods to clearly symbolize different cultural systems. The passage also suggests Pat’s deep hostility to any changes that may undermine her sense of a coherent national identity. If food does indeed represent these deeper cultural systems, changes in the nature of everyday food is liable to have an important and disturbing effect.

But, one of the most obvious effects of an expansion in exotic foodstuffs is
precisely to increase the difficulty of constructing these categories of the familiar and the different, the domestic and the foreign. As foods that were previously consigned to the shelves of the delicatessen, or the specialist retailer, now reach the supermarket and corner shop, the problem is that they have tended to become consumed within a wider 'national' diet, as Paul explains:

"Because you can buy packs of them [pizzas], mini ones or whatever in the supermarket now. That's with all foods. You can buy frozen lasagna and frozen - so if I'm going through the freezer I'm looking at, I wouldn't look through the Italian section, or the Spanish section. It would just be - I mean I've never actually had lasagna, but from my school days of spaghetti and whatever I've had that, but I never took it to be Italian, or whatever - food's food.

... now curry - that's foreign, because you have to go out for that, or get a take-away, you can't get that frozen."

(Paul, session 6)

The ability to position these foods as symbolic of different cultures has not, of course, completely disappeared. Though he may now look for them in the frozen meals section, rather than in the Italian (or Spanish) section, for Paul lasagna, pizza and spaghetti are still somehow, and at some deeper level, Italian rather than English. But these categories have become less distinct and their boundaries more difficult to police. We can ask, for example, whether lasagna is somehow more Italian for Paul than spaghetti, and whether this difference lies in the food itself, or in his exposure to them. Similarly, is it only recently that Paul has 'learnt' that these foods are 'foreign', and if so what might lie behind this learning process? For some, of course, this blurring of cultural differences may be widely welcomed, but for those anxious to defend a national identity constructed in strict opposition to a series of marginal Others, their dissolution is more threatening.

In the face of such complexities we clearly need a better understanding of the ways in which both Paul and Pat are defending those categories so central to their identity. The answer is that, though these categories may have become less distinct, they have not (yet) completely disappeared. Already, for example, Paul is providing a way of resurrecting these boundaries in different ways, drawing a distinction between those foods that one can buy in the supermarket and those which one has either to travel for (to a restaurant perhaps) or order take-away. What is beginning to be suggested is that the wider process of consumption - the 'where' and 'how' of the buying and eating of these foods - may play as important a part in their designation as Other as the 'origin' of the foods themselves. This in turn suggests that, for those who desire it, the opportunity still remains to use food as a means of drawing up a wider set of distinctions between the 'foreign' and the 'domestic', and that this ability may be quite important. For Pat, for example, it is an ability that gains its clearest expression in her understandings
of the take-away:

P: I mean I don't mind going round the Chinese sometimes, I mean I like Chinese and all that, I'm not against their food (laughter)! - and it saves always cooking doesn't it.

J: So is that because you enjoy trying other foods?

P: No! not at all! It's just that there's Chinese round here, and Greek round here. If there were English I'd use that, but there isn't, so you can't.

J: So these foods are still 'foreign' to you?

P: Well it is still foreign isn't it. A lot of us think of it as foreign, foreign muck.

J: So would it be better if instead of having a Chinese around the corner there was a Fish and Chips?

P: Well, there is a Fish and Chips, but he's Greek, and it's always greasy, so Chinese is better.

J: So would you prefer it if instead of having to get 'foreign' take-aways you could get 'English' ones?

P: Yeah. But like how can you? How can you?! Like you see I like Pie and Mash, now that's English, and I sometimes bring that home when I've been up there [Dalston] shopping - but that's about the only thing you can get that's English. And as for a fish shop, there's not an English one round here, not any more.

(Pat, session 4)

Like Paul, Pat is able to use the process of consumption to secure a clearer distinction between the familiar and the different. For both, in a world in which the ability to draw up a strict system of cultural difference through the foods now bought in the supermarket and regularly cooked at home has become more problematic, the take-away offers an important means by which to re-inscribe these boundaries. Thus, the designation of these foods is not a product either of Pat's unfamiliarity with them, or of their novelty. Chinese food, for example, is neither unfamiliar, nor significantly 'new'. Neither is there for Pat any anguished reflexivity over their authenticity. Rather, their location in the take-away is itself enough to describe their position. They are 'foreign', and this necessarily bestows certain characteristics. Though fish and chips, for example, may be quite healthy, when cooked by a Greek they become 'bad' for you (in this case because they become unbearably "greasy"). For Pat, foreign food is a pollutant (in more ways than one) and the presence of this "foreign muck" is resented. This presence both threatens a wider sense of the Englishness of the local area - where have all the (English) fish and chips shops gone? - and, by default, works to strengthen these categories of national distinction.

Curiously, though, this resentment does not seem to preclude Pat from enjoying the actual consumption of these foods. Though she would obviously prefer a traditional
fish and chip dinner (though not a "greasy" one cooked by a Greek), she is not averse to a bit of Chinese. In part her enjoyment lies simply in the opportunity any take-away offers to avoid the responsibility of having to cook another family meal. But what makes this pleasure more confusing is that, having earlier used food as a deeper symbol of national identity, it would seem that she is now quite capable of separating a culture’s food from its people. It is not 'their food' that Pat resents, but them.

This may, of course, be a common distinction, and it is certainly one continued by Paul. Unlike Pat, Paul often enjoys an evening out in one of Stoke Newington’s Greek restaurants and, on special occasions, he and his wife will go for a curry. The difficulty is reconciling Paul’s enjoyment of these restaurants with his deep resentment of other changes in his local area, and particularly Stoke Newington’s increasing ethnic diversity. Once again the answer lies within the process of consumption itself. In the first place, far from undermining a set of racial stereotypes, these restaurants are marketed around the appeal of a clearly subordinate Other, one that gains its power as it appeals to traditional understandings of the exotic. Secondly, in Paul’s case at least, his enjoyment is predicated on his ability to clearly separate the pleasures of the restaurant from a wider set of changes in his local area. This control of local space is vital to his negotiation of the wider processes of globalisation and is a theme that I shall return to in more detail in chapter 7. For now, however, consider Paul’s description of a visit to some of his favourite restaurants:

"Like I like to go to the Crazy Horse [and] they go round doing little photos of you, have the belly dancers and all that .. all that’s going on while you eat your food which is nice .. and if you go to an Indian restaurant it’s all sort of dull and dark and whatever - it’s like you’re in a little mini India really, you’ve got the music and background, pictures of the tigers and whatever on the walls. It’s nice. I mean it’s nice while I’m there, but it’s just the food, I wouldn’t take no interest outside of that ...

[Because] the Stoke Newington I grew up in, it’s not Stoke Newington any more .. it’s like an invasion, all these different groups coming in and invading your territory .. I mean it used to be, if you wanted Pie and Mash then you’d go to Dalston, or seafood on the fish stalls - but there was never like a fucking Kebab, or Indian, or - I mean if you wanted something different then you went up West or whatever - now they’re all over .. before long it will be a Brixton, or - it will be something like that, they’ll take over completely and if they’re all over the place what’s the point of living here, you wouldn’t want to live here really would you."

(Paul, session 6, emphasis added)

This passage allows us to answer some of the more complicated questions posed by Paul’s rather ambiguous attitude towards the contemporary ‘globalisation of everyday life’. First, his visits to the Crazy Horse are so enjoyable, not because they complicate a traditional set of cultural understandings, but precisely because through his visits to restaurants like this those understandings are re-enforced. Both the Greek and Indian
restaurants he visits are consciously marketed around a series of cultural stereotypes, playing with familiar images of the exotic pleasures of the Orient. Their decor adds spice to the already spicy food and allow the diner the fantasy of 'imaginary travel'. Indeed in the Crazy Horse these fantasies are given added weight by the performance of 'traditionally exotic' entertainments, captured on polaroid for the visitor to take home.

These evenings provide for a sense of carnival. Within the restaurant everyday behaviour, and prejudices, can be suspended, precisely because these pleasures subscribe to traditional understanding of a servile and frozen culture displayed only for the benefit of the visiting tourist (cf Urry, 1990) and for Paul this carnival atmosphere extends to the realm of sexuality, as he enjoys the spectacle of the exotic belly dancer (cf Short, 1991). These stereotypes are, of course, quite crude and - if we understood Paul’s account only in terms of a suitably ironic attraction to the pleasures of kitsch - it might be possible to dismiss them as of having little, or no importance (cf Shields, 1991). But Paul’s understandings are not those of the more ‘sophisticated’ consumer. These images are important because, for Paul, they actually represent an ‘authentic travel experience’ (cf Shields, 1989). For him the Indian restaurant is a “mini India” and the restaurant’s imagery impacts upon those understandings of Indian culture that he carries beyond the restaurant doors.

This brings me to my second point. Though Paul may enjoy these evenings out, he has absolutely no interest in these cultures outside of this carnival atmosphere. For Paul difference is all very well when safely contained within the restaurant. But when it spills outside, and onto the street, the pleasures of ‘exotic travel’ are quickly replaced by fears of cultural invasion. These understandings need placing within a historical context. When in the past Paul fancied something a bit different he went ‘up West’, to London’s West End, and the city’s central districts have long been associated with the conspicuous consumption of Others. Though most commentators have tended to focus upon the gendered and class based perspective of a traditional flâneur (Berman, 1983; Clark, 1985; Harvey, 1985; Pollock, 1989; Wilson, 1991; Wolff, 1990), the city centre has also traditionally been the space within which visitors could gaze upon the exotic (cf Walkowitz, 1992). In the nineteenth century, for example, this was largely a case of visiting one of the new department stores, in which the wealthy consumer could enjoy the spectacle of empire before returning to the sanctity of the suburbs (Ley & Olds, 1988). This system of spatial control has a long and varied history (see, for example, Juvenal, 1974), but recently has come under threat. In a period of accelerated globalisation it is, in a sense, inverted. Where once Mark could go up West, secure in the knowledge that he could always return to the (white) spaces of Stoke Newington, in the contemporary
period the spaces of the centre - and curiously therefore, of the Other - invade the outer seclusions of the familiar. They threaten to turn Stoke Newington into another Brixton, a space within which, for Paul at least, all sense of Englishness has gone. In other words, our understandings of ‘global’ processes always need to take account of how those processes impact upon peoples understanding of local space and of their sense of control over that space. These processes have also led to quite different responses from different people (see chapter 7), but for Paul they are clearly resented. Once divorced from a series of more reassuring stereotypes, and outside of the carefully policed site of the restaurant, the objects of Paul’s gaze threaten to overwhelm him and this allows us to understand the ambiguous nature of the social relations that these foods express. Within the restaurant their consumption can actively enforce a traditional set of cultural oppositions and so safe guard Paul’s sense of ‘Englishness’. Outside of the restaurant the purveyors of these foods threaten to destroy that sense of Englishness.

We can now make a number of preliminary conclusions. For Paul and Pat food is powerfully symbolic and the expansion of these exotic foods is understood as representative of a wider process of cultural invasion that is undermining the traditional categories of cultural distinction. Both therefore seek ways in which a more reassuring set of cultural oppositions may be enforced and this most often takes the form of a spatialised consumption process that is carefully policed. Curiously, this allows them to both enjoy these foods, but also to continue to reject, and contain, the presence of a more diverse population that threatens Stoke Newington’s sense of Englishness. In the second part of this chapter I shall demonstrate how Pat uses her experience of overseas travel to reclaim that position of ethnic and cultural hegemony she fears has been lost at home. Before that, however, I want to turn to the rather different experiences of the new cultural class respondents. They seek to celebrate the increasing diversity offered by today’s foods and to celebrate a wider project of which these foods may be only a part.

6.3 Power and the ‘real exotica’: a little taste of something different

In contrast to Paul and Pat is the obvious pleasure (and a certain pride) that the new cultural class respondents take in their consumption of exotic food. Remembering Pat’s consumption of the ‘traditionally English’, for example, here is Dorian’s description of her weekly diet:

".. most days .. I might have an Indian meal, or a Chinese meal, or a vegetarian take-away, or pasta .. I never go in and have a cheese omelette - never, it’s boring .. And on the weekends it’s largely the same sort of pattern (laughter). If I go out for tea, I may have tea in an Italian patisserie .. I love it, I love it because it’s different - it’s a little taste of something more
exotic, like lemon grass in soup .. So that's a very very rich fund of joy and um, experience for me .. [and] I can't imagine not having them, I don't know what I'd eat .. [and] even though they're now over here, I suppose I do see them as belonging to another country, another culture."

(Dorian, session 3, emphasis added)

Dorian's diet is truly diverse and the increased availability of these different foods has opened up a rich source of pleasure in her day-to-day life. These pleasures are dependent upon their ability to summon up images of elsewhereness and, though Dorian recognizes that many of these foods are no longer 'new', for her they are still representative of "another country" and "another culture". In other words, and as for the working class respondents, it would seem that for Dorian food can be understood as symbolic of cultural identity. But, where for Paul and Pat, this symbolism provided for a threat to their cultural hegemony, for Dorian it allows for a rather different project. In particular the consumption of these foods is understood as allowing for "an increased knowledge of other cultures" and thus a deeper interaction with difference that, like her move to an area like Stoke Newington itself, is understood by Dorian as forming part of a wider project of liberal tolerance. As she says: "it's very important for me to, sort of, educate myself, [to] be very sure that people are people or whatever" (session 3).

But the diversity of her eating habits also suggests a rather different attraction. The important difference between her consumption habits and those of the working class respondents is that, rather than seeking to maintain a traditional set of cultural oppositions, for Dorian the pleasure of these foods is that they allow the consumer to play with these distinctions. In this sense the proliferation of these foods might well be understood as forming part of a wider 'postmodern sensibility' that has sought to complicate our understandings of cultural identity and dissolve a whole system of vertical and horizontal differentiation (Chambers, 1987, 1993; Lash, 1990; and see chapter 2.3a). For example, it is no coincidence that Dorian's desire for transgression extends to other arenas of her life. In particular she has become tired of that "ridiculous set of rules" that inhibits a wider "appetite for life" and defines a series of canons that must always be adhered to. Just as her taste in food seeks to complicate our positioning of the familiar and the different, her taste in music, for example, seeks to blur the distinctions between 'high' and 'low' culture. And, considering those arguments made in chapter 2.3a, that sought to position the postmodern as of interest only, or largely, to the new cultural class (Featherstone, 1992; Lash, 1990), it may not be unimportant that Dorian herself explicitly locates this tendency within an attraction to the postmodern:

"I mean I love Tom and Jerry and I love Mozart. But I couldn't tell you much about either. And I think that's great too. I think it's wonderful to be able to, well to listen to Mozart, I was listening to some 17th century music on Saturday night - I
couldn't tell you what it was - but it was just great, it was just wonderful. Anyway I came home in the car and turned on my Madonna tape and I was singing along.

And I think it's just you know, there's so much of life it's a pity to limit it, by saying, you know 'this is O.K, this is not O.K' ..

.. And that's the nice thing about postmodernism .. It has a little sort of picture of granddad on the mantelpiece, metaphorically speaking, but then it says, 'oh yeah! We're going to do it all differently, and it's going to be pink! And its going to be blue!' and um, it's just wonderful.

(Dorian, session 4, emphasis added)

The enjoyment of a postmodern aesthetic has come to form a central part of the cultural capital of the new cultural class. This was reflected in the research process itself. For example, both Dorian and Alex often drew attention to their knowledge of 'postmodern culture', most usually through references to architecture. As was argued in chapter 2.3b, this attraction may well articulate a contradictory process by which an aesthetic based upon the dissolution of high and low culture, and the implosion of centre and margin, has itself come to form part of a wider system of social distinction. Certainly this is the case for Dorian, whose attraction to these foods also needs to be understood as evidence of her desire to distance herself from the homogeneity and restrictions of a childhood lived in a (white) East London suburb. Thus Williams (1986), for example, has understood gentrification as a process of social distancing, through which a new urban class seek to leave behind the constraints of the suburbs, and this process is well illustrated by Dorian as she describes her attraction to the 'vigour' of life in Stoke Newington. For her the inner city lends a feeling that:

"life is more real, more powerful, and I'm more involved. When I go and see my mother, who lives in a rather polite area, in a bungalow, you feel that it's so bland and it's blandness that I fear I think. It's like a kind of mental death."

(Dorian, session 3)

But this involvement need not take the form of material interaction. Within the 'interesting' mix of the contemporary inner city it is quite possible, for some, to enjoy the fantasy of interaction from a safe distance. Dorian, for example, may be extremely 'interested' in the variety of cultures that surround her in Stoke Newington, but this interest does not lead to deeper involvement:

"I mean a few weeks ago 3 Asian girls walked past in the most highly coloured saris and, they were absolute strangers to me, but I wanted to say to them; 'what is this you are wearing, why are you wearing it?' I mean obviously I didn't, but I am very interested in it, yes."

(Dorian, session 3)

Taken together these passages lead us to question the radicalism of this new aesthetic and the underlying rationale behind Dorian's avowed liberal interest. First, it could be suggested that for Dorian the pleasure of life in Stoke Newington, for example,
is precisely that it allows for a 'postmodern' celebration of surface, within which any deeper knowledge of that which one is celebrating is not only unnecessary but irrelevant. The danger of this attitude is clear. Whilst for Dorian a love of Indian food may in itself represent: "a good thing, an enriching thing. I mean, you know, how could I have lived without Indian take-aways, what would I have done before they came here?!" this interest may not (indeed need not) lead to any challenge to the material exclusions of racism that a deeper project of cultural appreciation is aimed at and that her avowed liberal doctrine would seem to warrant: "But do I wish they would all go away? of course I do (laughter)!" (session 3). This is the attitude that allows her to celebrate 'a bit of local colour' offered by the girls in saris without either feeling the need to become more deeply involved (to find out, for example, what the saris do symbolize), or seeking to understand the realities of life for the Indian community in her local area. It also allows her to enjoy the music of both Madonna and Mozart without knowing much about either. This positions the postmodern with a superficial cultural aesthetic, rather than with a radical epistemology that seeks to challenge the exclusions of modern thought, and later this will require a more detailed analysis of how we are to understand postmodernism itself (see chapter 8).

Secondly, rather than representative of any genuine interest in difference, or of a desire to challenge a system of social and cultural exclusion, this new aesthetic might in fact represent only a new and quite instrumental cultural capital. For example, though of "another country" and "another culture" Dorian's culinary interests do not preclude the possibility of mixing and matching these different foods as and when she wants. For Dorian, the Chinese meal is little different from the vegetarian one, suggesting that both are seen only as proof of her interest in the 'alternative' and 'different'. Indeed the irony is that, whilst an interest in these foods is portrayed as evidence of some deeper liberal project, both their marketing and their consumption continues to move around an understanding of their 'exoticism' (Cook, 1993). This maintains a whole series of exclusionary social distinctions, quite aside from their prohibitive cost. First, it maintains that distance between centre and margin that their proliferation supposedly undermines. Secondly, an interest in these foods, the knowledge of world geography that their consumption would seem to demand, and the stamp of liberal approval that they confer, stands as a means of distancing oneself from those less knowledgable, and less 'politically correct' than oneself.

It is the contradictions involved in the use of these foods only as a new form of cultural capital, and one that works within a continuing and quite exclusionary
distinction between the familiar and the different, that I want to explore in more detail. Most importantly, as the cultural capital of the new cultural class has come to move around proof of one’s access to the ‘authentically exotic’, this competitive process works to replicate a whole series of unequal social relations.³

For example, one of the problems faced by members of the new cultural class is that the recent proliferation of these foods has increased the difficulty of ever finding the truly and authentically different. This is the problem that Paul drew our attention to in his discussion of Italian food and one of the ways the new cultural class respondents seek to work around this difficulty is to begin to construct a more fluid continuum of ‘authentic exoticism’. For example, those foods that Dorian enjoyed in her local delicatessen, and that articulated an exciting exoticism, do no such thing for Amanda:

A: I mean Safeway’s or Sainsbury’s is hardly multicultural is it?! I mean yeah yeah, you can buy lasagna, but you know, that’s hardly multicultural is it. You’re not going to buy a swordfish are you, with its head still on and all the gristy bits still inside like you would down Sandringham Road, for instance [in Dalston]. So that’s fairly sanitised - sanitised foreign..

J : So there’s a kind of level is there of authentic foreign food?

A: Yeah. Something like lasagna is now English, and Chinese is more or less English isn’t it. And Asian is more or less English. I suppose I see African food as more foreign, and West Indian food..

Adding in a later session

.. It’s not really about it being foreign in terms of where it comes from - it’s more if it’s got bits in it then it’s foreign .. I think that’s got a lot to do with it, it hasn’t been cleaned up for you, sanitised like modern food has, because it comes from poorer countries - well that’s not particularly true is it because the Caribbean isn’t particularly poor is it. Or maybe their cuisine is.

(Amanda, sessions 5 & 6, emphasis added)

Whilst for Dorian Chinese food was still excitingly different, for Amanda one needs to be move further afield if one is to find the truly exotic. The difficulty, of course, is that with the current expansion of these foods, this notion of distance is less easily defined. Certainly it cannot be reduced to geographical distance, but rather needs to be understood in relation to the nature of these foods themselves. Thus for Amanda, for example, these more exotic foods are not the foods of Asia, but the more ‘natural’, more

³ This process dominates the ‘lifestyle magazines’ of this class. Taking two at random, two recent issues of Marie Claire both contain articles advising their readers on how to find the ingredients necessary for an ‘authentically exotic’ meal. The first concentrates upon the salads of southern France, the second on how to make a ‘sandwich with a difference’ (try nan and lamb, perhaps, or Italian cheese with focaccia). This process also has the effect of re-inscribing an understanding of the ‘traditionally English’ (in this case, muffins with smoked fish and scrambled egg), and these articles tend to be accompanied by a handy list of local suppliers (King, 1994a & b).
authentic foods of Africa and the Caribbean. In other words understandings of the exotic and the authentic are becoming conflated, as Amanda understands both through reference to a notion of social distance that is inevitably racialised (Short, 1991). It is only those foods not yet sanitised by modern food regulations or packaging that offer Amanda the authentic experience she desires and the attraction of this experience is that it can be understood as allowing her access to a more ‘natural’ experience beyond the inauthenticity of the modern world. This process also allows Amanda to construct her own system of social distinction. Where the less knowledgable, and less adventurous, (white) shopper may settle for the sanitised Lasagna of Safeway’s, Amanda tastes are a little more radical. She demands both the more different and the more authentically different foods only available on the market stalls of Sandringham Road. Her understandings suggest a similar process to that uncovered in the accounts of Paul and Pat. Once again the ‘how’ and the ‘where’ of buying these foods begins to play an important role in their designation as Other.

In other cases this competitive urge may, of course, be quite amusing. In another session, for example, George drew great pride from being able to differentiate between the "legitimate", or authentic use of cappuccino (as drank in Italy), and the way it tends to be drunk here (May, 1993). This suggests that the exclusionary nature of these processes is dependent upon their context. Defining the relative authenticity of Italian food, for example, does not have the same consequences as defining the relative authenticity of different African foods, or defining all African food as somehow authentic, because, in the case of Italian food, notions of the authenticity are not being used to suggest a sense of social distance. Here, however, defining the relative authenticity of these foods does have a more serious edge. Amanda’s continuum moves around the continued operation of a whole series of racial stereotypes and articulates the exclusionary politics of these new consumption practices. Whilst Amanda can choose whether to buy her food in Sandringham Road, for members of Dalston’s West Indian and West African communities the area’s shops may represent anything but a leisure resource.

It also suggests that, as understandings of the authentic are placed within a more fluid continuum, and one whose limits are defined by the desires of the (white) consumer, it also becomes possible to define almost any notion of authenticity that these consumers may desire. This has obvious ramifications for those who may wish to enjoy
something 'a little different', but who don’t have Amanda’s ‘courage’. This is important because, though understanding the authentic as a more 'natural' space beyond the intrusions of the modern world may well be something that those with the appropriate cultural capital desire, those same experiences may also threaten to overwhelm. This is most obviously the case for those who conflate issues of authenticity with a set of racist understandings. In these cases the possibility of constructing a more fluid continuum of authenticity may provide a useful safety net. Consider, for example, Dorian’s description of her ideal curry:

D: For me the experience of going into the Anglo Asian [in Stoke Newington Church Street] is very Anglified, because everyone who eats there tends to be middle class white (laughter) and the traditional Indian restaurant decor has been changed to a more upmarket acceptable level, so in that sense here it is a little bit more watered down. When I go to Brick Lane, because the Indian community is larger, and I think probably, well I can see a lot of poverty, there is more of a sense that you might actually be in - I can’t think where they come from (laughter) somewhere in India (laughter). So that feels more real.

J: And which do you prefer if you’re going for an Indian?

D: Um, I suppose I prefer the former [Anglo Asian] because, um - it’s nearer and because it’s, say a restaurant within a local, it’s still predominantly, or largely, a white area. I feel a personal sense of safety, and that’s partly because of my prejudices that I will still rather be with the same people who have the, let’s face it, the same colour and the same parents as me, and partly because, um - Brick Lane is a dicky area.

(Dorian, session 3, emphasis added)

Here notions of the authentic become more complicated. Though Brick Lane may in one sense offer the "more real" experience of difference, it is a difference that threatens to overwhelm. As notions of authenticity are understood less in terms of cultural specificity (Dorian continues to feel no compulsion to find out where the staff of the restaurant or the area’s residents ‘really’ "come from", for example) than in relation to issues of colour (and class), it is in fact the "watered down" version of the exotic that Dorian prefers. Any desire for difference is thus caught up within a wider set of cultural tastes. Even within Stoke Newington it would clearly be possible for Dorian to find the sort of restaurant that for Paul was representative of a true "little India", right down to the tigers on the wall and the choice of music. One suspects, however, that for Dorian such a restaurant would not only be inauthentic, but unacceptable. Thus, it is not only

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4 At the time of our meetings Sandrignham Road was infamous within Hackney for its crack dealing. Amanda’s understandings thus fit well with traditional understandings of the exotic that define it as that (always delimited) flirtation with a dangerous Other (hooks, 1992; Short, 1991). Just as the appeal of the "gristy bits" may lay partly in her revulsion (they are, in other words, attractive because they are also slightly repellant) the attraction of Sandringham Road may be that Amanda can choose when, and whether, she wishes to enter this clearly defined zone of Otherness. Cf Keith’s (1993) account of Sandringham Road as a racialised ‘symbolic location’.
that in the Anglo Asian the experience of difference is made safer through the presence of other white diners, but that the class of those diners, and the restaurant's decor, are also more acceptable. In other words, though Dorian may wish to consume the Other, this consumption is negotiated within the demands of taste, class and colour. Most importantly it is only enjoyable when rendered safe, and this safety is always possible for those able to define the level of authenticity that they desire.

Before moving on, to see how these issues are played out in people's overseas travel experiences, we can make a number of conclusions. In direct contrast to Paul and Pat, the new cultural class respondents have generally welcomed the proliferation of exotic food. At face value this is because these foods offer them the chance to display their liberal politics and to celebrate the blurring of social distinctions articulated by a new postmodern aesthetic. At a deeper level, however, their consumption practices reveal that these foods may only form part of a quite instrumental cultural capital. In the first place the conspicuous consumption of these foods allows them to distance themselves from those less knowledgable, less wealthy, and less 'politically correct' than themselves. On the other, these practices also reveal that, far from working to challenge a set of traditional cultural oppositions (between the familiar and the different, the foreign and the domestic, for example) the marketing and consumption of these foods often in fact upholds these distinctions.

This is especially the case as some members of the new cultural class start to compete against each other to see who can find the most exotic or most authentic new food. This process can be understood as emerging out of two needs. First, to continue a process of social distinction. Secondly, to gain access to that more 'natural', more authentic experience that people desire. This process tends to produce a quite exclusionary continuum of authentic exoticism constructed around a racialised understanding of authenticity, though this is by no means inevitable (the relative authenticity of pizza, for example, is defined in quite different ways than the relative authenticity of Red Snapper).

Finally, this continuum has the ironic effect of enabling consumers to consciously choose the level of authenticity that they desire and this may often be done according to a wider set of racist understandings. But, the new cultural class respondents are also quite reflexive. Dorian, for example, was plainly aware of the racist nature of her practices and an awareness of this reflexivity is useful because it moves us away from

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5 The Anglo-Asian is one of Church Street's more expensive Indian restaurants.
positioning these processes as inevitably racist (cf hooks, 1991), and points us instead to an understanding of the practical politics these consumption practices articulate. The inequality of this new consumption ethic is not that as a white person to eat African food is necessarily to construct that food as somehow 'more authentic' than an 'English' meal of fish and chips and thereby to construct a whole series of exclusionary understandings. Rather, it is simply to recognize that the ability to choose what one eats, and what one associates with that food, is the product of one's class and colour and it is this that necessarily defines an unequal politics of consumption.

In part two I shall show how this rather detailed analysis of authenticity in turn allows us a more sophisticated understanding of people's overseas travel experiences. In particular I shall show how, having worked around a continuum of authenticity at home, the new cultural class respondents use that continuum always to gain access to that experience of authenticity that they desire and that promises refuge from the inauthenticity, and insecurity, of life at home. In this sense, whilst this first section has outlined the politics of globalisation, the second is designed to return to the experiences of time-space compression in more detail and, in particular, to issues of time. But, to begin that section I want first to turn to the experiences of the working class respondents, to see how they seek to recover that more comforting sense of time they desire and that sense of cultural hegemony they fear has been lost with the appearance of these foods at home.

6.4 All around the world

The recent expansion in (relatively) cheap overseas travel is one of the clearest symbols of time-space compression. The advent of the charter flight and package tour means that the experience of the foreign holiday is no longer restricted to the wealthy. These developments have the effect of complicating any simple sociology of time-space compression based around issues of economic empowerment. For example, though every year Paul and his family still go on holiday to the south-east coast of England, rather than to Spain, both Paul and Pat have holidayed abroad. In fact of all the respondents except for George it was Pat who had travelled most extensively. Foreign travel could be described as her passion and, cashing in on some life insurance, she has recently travelled to North America, Egypt, and most of Europe, not by charter, but on Concorde. Neither the remarkable pace of these developments (and the ramifications they have for traditional class relations), nor the irony of transport technologies that can now get one from London to Cairo in less time than it takes to get up the M1, have been lost on Pat:

J: You were telling me about that trip you did to Egypt - that sounds amazing!
P: Oh that was a day yeah! It used to be South End for the day on the back of a motorbike didn’t it, now it’s Egypt (laughter)! .. I mean for the youngsters, like my littluns, to go on a plane is nothing, is it, to them - absolutely nothing. You’re just going away, you know. But to go on a plane! I’d never heard of it when I was a kid. We saw ’em, but that was about all! And we never had the money, you know - so now I suppose I want to make up for lost time.

..J: You were saying that a lot of your friends have moved to Yorkshire and that that was miles away?

P: Well it is isn’t it?! It took us 6 hours to get to Yorkshire, it’s terrible.

J: But you can get to Egypt in a day.

P: That’s right! - well if Concorde hadn’t gone the long way round so we could go through the sound barrier and that, it would have been an hour and finished. I mean 6 hours to get to Yorkshire, it’s a joke. We took some Pie and Mash up there as well, and the time we got there it was - er! the liquor had all gone thick and, er!

(Pat, session 3)

Rather than an extended holiday, Pat’s visit to Egypt was a day trip. Leaving London at 7.00 a.m, she was home again in time for EastEnders (or at least would have been if they hadn’t got snarled up on the M25). Thus, though there remains a need to construct a material sociology to the experiences of time-space compression, such accounts warn us against always and only positioning the ‘dislocations’ of such developments in the world of the jet setting business person (or the successful academic) (cf Massey, 1993a). Where Pat’s experience of travel has moved from day trips to South End on the back of a motorbike to the pleasures of supersonic flight, her experiences offer a unique opportunity to consider the ‘disorientating’ effect of these developments and of how the processes of time-space compression are being negotiated in people’s everyday lives. Moreover, they suggest that as well as establishing this sociology around issues of economic power, we may also need to take into account a more sophisticated understanding of cultural capital. To illustrate this argument I want to compare the travel experiences of Paul and Pat, with those of the new cultural class respondents. I shall concentrate upon their different experiences of overseas travel and the differential power relations articulated by each. I shall also use these accounts to make some more general conclusions concerning the role of these travel experiences in people’s negotiation of the wider processes of time-space compression itself. I shall make three main arguments.

First, far from being ‘disorientating’, the possibilities for foreign travel offered by these new transport technologies are understood by all the respondents as opening up new and highly pleasurable leisure opportunities. In particular the ‘holiday’ is understood as a clearly circumscribed space and time within which one may safely enjoy a temporary inversion of everyday life. Secondly, such travel may also be understood as allowing for
a series of mechanisms through which the wider temporal dislocations of time-space compression are managed and contained. In effect, access to the technologies of globalisation allows each to set up a series of oppositional 'retreats' to the wider dislocations of time-space compression. Pat, for example, uses her holidays to search out a more comforting relationship with the past and the new cultural class respondents to seek out the more 'natural' realm of the authentic.

Finally, though in this broader sense we may understand such travel as serving a similar 'purpose' for both sets of respondents, we must also recognize that these experiences are in fact quite different for each group. In essence these travel experiences allow for a continuation of those processes revealed in the consumption of exotic food. Where for the new cultural class respondents they form part of a (quite contradictory) championing of difference and Otherness, through which one might gain entry to a more comforting realm of the authentic, for Paul and Pat they serve as a means to challenge the oppressive class (and gender) relations of home, often through an explicit subordination of Otherness. This also means that what each is searching for on holiday, and the type of holiday that each group enjoys, is quite different. For Paul and Pat the overseas holiday can be understood in the context of the holiday as carnival, in which their interaction with the cultures of those places that they visit is structured by the most crude 'tourist gaze' (Urry, 1990). For the new cultural class respondents this gaze is anathema. They search out the 'real' experience of these places and draw a strict distinction between the 'tourist' and the 'traveller'. My aim is to demonstrate that the unequal power relations that each experience describes, and the wider relationship with the processes of time-space compression that they articulate, may be less different than is often assumed.

6.5 The empire goes on holiday

Though writers concerned with tracing the experiences of globalisation and time-space compression through people's travel experiences have tended to concentrate upon the experiences of overseas travel (MacCannell, 1976, 1992; Urry, 1990), it is important to recognize that these experiences are not equally available to all. Every year, for example, rather than go abroad, Paul and his family go away to a holiday camp on the south-east coast of England and an analysis of these holidays allows us to construct a more sophisticated understanding of Paul's experience of overseas travel. Consider first Paul's description of a typical day in Suffolk:

"Down there it's all madness. Because you don't know - you get there and the caravan, you've got to sort the caravan out and do this and that - I go down the pub, me and Dave go down the pub, leave the girls to sort out the, they make the beds,"
they've got to put the sheets on or whatever, put the food away. We just sort of get there, park the cars up, dump the luggage and, down the pub. Then they sort it out .. Because we’re lucky enough to like, we normally book up the same time, so we’ve got about 4 caravans in a row, so we’re all sort of like neighbours really, all next to each other.

Nothing’s organised. We just see what - like of a night time we take the kids down to the front - about half ten, eleven o’clock. And we gradually walk the length of the pier, like you can stop off, they’ve got little golf thing, model village. And then you hit the funfair, because .. whatever money I take - that’s spent. I don’t keep nothing back .. [then] go back, the kids are knackered by then so we end up playing cards ‘till two in the morning or whatever. And that’s, you know, that’s that night then.

(Paul, session 4, emphasis added)

These trips can easily be positioned within a traditional understanding of the holiday as carnival (Shields, 1991). In contrast to the strict routines of home, and which were themselves argued in chapter 5 to represent one of the ways in which Paul sought to control the less secure temporal experiences associated with a period of economic restructuring and time-space compression, the week in Suffolk is a time of ‘controlled de-control’ (Featherstone, 1992). The budgetary constraints of home, for example, are temporarily forgotten, and rather than always watching the clock, the family live life as they want to. The evening stroll along the pier allows the children the chance to escape their usual bedtime, and staying up late to play cards allows the parents to forget the demands of work and child care.

But this sense of carnival is also not equally available to all. Though Paul and Dave may enjoy the break from work that the holiday affords, no such break is possible for their wives. Indeed, for Paul, this sense of carnival is only enjoyable when he can locate it within a more familiar setting and a more familiar set of (unequal) social relations. Rather than offering any radically new experience, these holidays tend only to transplant the experiences of home to Suffolk. Every year Paul and his family travel down to the same site with the same friends, choose a caravan next door to their in-laws, and once there rarely leave the campsite. Everything they want is laid on, from the supermarket that sells exactly what they can buy at home, to a ‘traditional’ evening’s entertainment of cabaret and dancing in the campsite’s club house. The attraction of these holidays, then, is that they allow Paul the chance to invert the usual routine without threatening to overwhelm him with the unfamiliar and different. They could, in fact, be taken anywhere, and this is the theme that emerges most powerfully in both his and Pat’s descriptions of their trips abroad.

For example, every other year Paul also goes away with the local darts team. Last year they went to Spain, two years before that to Tenerife, and the time before that to the Canary Islands. This was Paul’s first time abroad and, though we need to take into
account the context of the holiday (an all male trip designed, primarily, to do a lot of drinking, and to play a little bit of darts), his descriptions hardly encapsulate a desire to experience the radically different. Certainly when in Tenerife he enjoyed some of the organised trips around the island, but for Paul the attraction of going abroad is largely that it allows him simply to invert the usual routines of home, but this time in the more reliable weather of the Mediterranean:

P: The thing is, to take a holiday in England you’re taking a chance, because of the weather conditions. You go to Yarmouth, or go anywhere, and it can rain for the week. You’ve booked 2 weeks holiday, your summer holidays, you go somewhere in England and it could rain for 2 weeks. And then you’re fucking pissed off! So, at least if you go abroad you get the weather, even if it’s a bit commercialised now.

J: Does it make you sad that these places are so touristy?

P: No, not really. I mean, if you look at Spain, ninety percent of the tourists go to the coastal part of Spain. But if you go into Madrid and into the capital cities and whatnot of Spain, you, you find your bullfights and tradition there. So if you want that sort of holiday then you go there. But if you want the summer part of it, and the younger part, then go to the coast. So there’s, I think there’s a lot of Spain left for Spain, for the Spanish people. I suppose it is sad for these little coastal places that they’ve turned into fucking .. but for the country as a whole I suppose, for the tourist trade it’s good.

J: So you don’t want to go and explore the Spanish ways, and the Spanish culture and stuff like that.

P: No, not really.

J: But it’s still there if you want to, it’s just not something you want to do?

M: Yeah, I mean there’s things about Spain. There’s the horses, they’ve got the best dancing horses things. And then I’ve never seen a Flamenco thing, but I don’t really want to see anything like that .. I’m quite happy to just sit on the beach all day and get drunk - not a lager lout - but I do my own sort of, own thing. If I want to go and see something I’ll go see it, maybe when I’m older.

(Paul, session 4)

For Paul Spain can be divided into a series of different ‘zones’, any one of which may offer the holiday maker the experience they desire. The coast is a zone of simple leisure, of ‘summer’ as Paul describes it, quite distinct from the ‘Spanishness’ of the interior (cf Shields, 1991). These zones both allow the visiting holiday maker to plan the holiday that they want, and allow the Spanish to defend something of their ‘culture’. Though Paul is careful not to describe himself as a lager lout (and does not even seem to consider himself a tourist) he is quite reflexive about his demands. He may want to see ‘a bit of culture’ when he is older (and his understandings of Spanish culture display none of the worries about its authenticity that we shall find in the accounts of the new cultural class respondents), but for now, and as in Suffolk, the pleasure of Spain is to be
found not in its difference from home, but in its similarities. The Spanish holiday allows Paul simply to enjoy his traditional holiday activities (in this case sitting on the beach all day, rather than working) in guaranteed sunshine. He enjoys the escape from the daily routine that Spain offers, but is uninterested in any experience of Otherness. Like the holiday camp, Spain is simply a resource for his pleasure, and this understanding of the foreign resort is one that can also be traced in Pat’s accounts.

Every year Pat leaves her husband at home and, with her daughters, descends on the hot spots of Tunisia. These trips allow them to escape from their everyday roles of wife and mother, cook and cleaner. The pleasure they offer is not to be found in the difference of Tunisia, but more simply in the temporary inversion of the gendered restrictions of everyday life that these holidays make possible. Once in Tunisia, for example, unless it is to visit the hotel beach, neither her, or her daughters, leave the hotel. They also tend only to book into those hotels where one can guarantee a full English breakfast, and a decent, or in other words an English, evening meal. For Pat the purpose of these holidays is not to search out the new or the different but simply to escape the pressures of life at home. Their joy is that where at home she has to make all the decisions, on holiday she doesn’t have to worry about a thing:

J: So is it a chance to let your hair down, getting away on holiday?

P: That’s right. And you don’t have to dress up - there’s no men about that you care about. You don’t have to bother. It’s really nice. Free, you know, you don’t have to worry about anything. Not what to get for dinner or - it’s just nice.

J: So when you go to Tunisia where do you stay. Do you stay in a hotel?

P: Yeah. The one we went to last time we’ve stayed in twice actually because it’s a nice hotel. And there’s always something going on, you know, it’s not, there’s always something entertaining.

.. there’s a kind of safety factor there as well. You’ve got the Thompson’s people there if anything goes wrong .. [and] I like to be told what to do. I don’t like having to make decisions, you know. No, I mean it’s so much easier isn’t it. I mean you get out the plane and the coach is waiting and, everything, you know. It’s just, it’s much, much easier.

(Pat, session 3)

More importantly these trips allow Pat a powerful sense of social progress and the chance to experience, if only for a while, ‘how the other half live’. She has planned her holidays around the ‘grand tour’, aiming to see the seven wonders of the world before she has to stop, and during our sessions took enormous pleasure in comparing my more limited travel experiences with her own. Thus, whenever she travels, Pat likes to travel in style and this was never more the case than on a recent trip to America:

"I do like travelling in luxury, you know. I do such horrible work all week long that I think, you know, I just fancy being waited on like - see how the other half live for a change .. It must be the job I suppose, I see so many people, my old
ladies, 'Oh can't afford it, oh no, no I won't, I won't get it, no'. And they've got nothing, never been anywhere. Why not?! You're only going to live once, there's no coming back - unless you haunt someone (laughter). When you get to my age you've got to rush to get it in haven't you, to fit it all in. I don't want to end up like them, stuck in a room somewhere, never having done nothing, seen anything. I'll get there, I'll see it all. Blimey! - that's all I work for, to get away ..

.. going to America we took the QEII, so going in you saw the Statue of Liberty, the skyscrapers - all that. That was nice, really nice .. but what really fascinated me in America was the lights. 'Stop' and 'Go'. They're different to here. You see it on the movies, and I, it just seemed unreal that we were there. The hotel was just - oh Jesus! - I thought here we are. And you ordered breakfast and it comes up, just like the pictures. On a table, they wheel it along, and the sides come up, and you've got - God! I thought I was Diana Durbin or something, you know (laughter) oh it was terrific!"

(Pat, session 3)

In other words, for Paul and Pat, the expansion in overseas travel is not to be understood as opening up an opportunity to search out the 'authentically different'. Rather, it can be better understood as simply allowing for a continuation of the kind of holidays that they have always enjoyed and ones that allow for a temporary inversion of the everyday pressures of life at home. If this means the possibility of the usual carnival atmosphere in the more reliable weather of Spain, all well and good. But it also means that a trip to America is every bit as desirable as a trip to Italy - indeed the former is probably more desirable, because it better allows them to proclaim their social position (it costs more to go to Orlando than to Florence).

But this passage also offers some important clues to Pat's negotiation of the wider experiences of time-space compression itself and allows us to assess those arguments that understand these developments in transport technologies to be so radically 'disorientating' (cf Harvey, 1989a). As a child Pat could only stare longingly at the planes passing over head. Now it is she who is jetting around the world. But the disorientation that this ability to fly from one country to another creates is not to be found in some existential notion of 'spatial' or 'cultural disjuncture'. Rather it can be located quite simply in the effect this new mobility has upon Pat's own understandings of her class position. The trip to Egypt, for example, was clearly slightly 'weird'. And its weirdness was, in part, a product of being in Egypt one moment and stuck in a jam on the M25 the next. Primarily, though, Pat's sense of wonder emerges as she reflects upon the ability these developments have to whisk one to a world of unimagined luxury one minute, and return one to the familiar drudgery of home the next. In this sense her description of the Egyptian trip is particularly illuminating. There Pat and her husband enjoyed a lightening tour of the city. Putting together her sense of amazement at the sheer opulence of their welcome with her description of the surrounding Egyptians, moves us considerably further in our understandings of how she is experiencing this revolution in transport

201
J: That [the trip to Egypt] sounds incredible! So how did all that come about, what
did you do there?

P: Not a lot - see the pyramids, and then they took us to a hotel for a meal. And
there was the red carpet laid out on the concourse, you know. And on the camels,
blowing trumpets, heralding you in. Concorde, it was - it was unbelievable. You
felt like a queen - you did! You felt like that, they made you feel like that,
everybody said so.

And the coaches - wow! And they showed up. And because in Egypt it's
so DIRTY and all that. And on the coaches, and everybody's waving, all the poor
beggars, you know. And things, and waving, with a police escort as well. If you
didn't get out the way, that was tough! They never stop for anything. Because
only having the day there they wanted us to see everything, you know? Everybody scuttling out the way - lights were nothing! straight through .. they
never stopped. You see people running out of the way, you know, it was just -
they're not civilised like we are, they don't care about life I don't think. They'd
run you over as soon as look at you .. And when you came back in the nighttime,
I couldn't believe I'd been to there - the ceremony, the hotel, the food, it was
absolutely fantastic, worth every penny.

(Pat, session 3)

Once again Pat's pleasure emerges most strongly from the possibilities of social
inversion that this trip allows. Though at home she may be treated as a skivvy, in Egypt
she is 'Queen for the day'. But the possibility of this inversion is also intimately
connected to her image of the surrounding Egyptians. At home Pat's sense of Englishness
is under threat from the 'invasions' of other ethnic groups into 'her area'. The attraction
of trips like these, rather than a trip to New York, then, is that they allow the visiting
tourist the nostalgic comforts of empire. The exuberance of the 'natives'' welcome, for
example, confirms an image of a benign imperial age. Lest there is any suggestion that
Pat's presence in anything but warmly welcomed whenever she waves the Egyptians
happily wave back. This spectacle defines a sense of national progress, reversing the
decline of the past forty years, and Pat's presence confirms her own privileged position
within the new (or old) world order.

This is, of course, an extreme example. But the relationships described here are
similar to those being described in her trips to Tunisia, and Paul's holiday in Spain. In
those, as here, the ability to treat these other places as a resource for the inversion of the
social relations of home is dependent upon the ability to silence the intrusions of another
culture. In Spain and Tunisia this is done through physical exclusion; in Spain Paul
chooses to stay in the 'coastal zone', in Tunisia Pat and her daughters rarely leave the
safety of the international hotel. Here it takes the form of a powerful 'tourist gaze' (Urry,
1990). Both describe the unequal power relations inherent to the recent 'globalisation' of
the holiday industry, but they also describe the opportunities these trips afford to forge
a more comforting relationship with time and it is this that allows us to tie them more
securely to an analysis of time-space compression itself.

In Egypt, for example, Pat is afforded a sense of social progress through a re-living of the nostalgic fantasy of empire. Seen only through the glass of the coach windows, the silent Egyptian spectators have no power to interrupt that fantasy. In other words, Pat uses her holidays abroad to construct a more comforting relationship with the past and to reclaim a sense of social progress. This experience is quite possible with a visit to America, but it is easier to achieve in a visit to the 'less developed world' and is certainly evident in her descriptions of one of the rare moments in Tunisia when she did leave the hotel:

J: If you go round on these tours do you think you see the real side of these countries?

P: You do see the real side yeah. Well, less so in America but in Tunisia - all the poor places, and this road where there's just one tap coming out of the wall and they all share it. I mean it was unbelievable. They were bloody poor - just like years and years ago, just like the Olden days. I suppose that's why I like it, because I've never had any inclination to go anywhere that's new - New Zealand, Canada, anywhere like that.

(Pat, session 3)

Here there is no question that what one sees on these trips is anything but authentic and for Pat it is this unquestioned authenticity that allows for this more comforting relationship with the past. The poverty that she sees is quite 'real' and through the poverty of the surrounding Tunisians Pat is able to take a nostalgic glimpse at the 'olden days'. Safe in the knowledge that she no longer has to suffer these conditions, these images can serve to reassure her of her own social progress, and of the progress of Britain. In many ways, then, Pat's understandings might seem to stand in stark contrast to the increasing reflexivity of the new cultural class respondents and an 'alternative' travel industry more widely. For the 'sophisticated' traveller, the authenticity of these sights could not be accessed through so crude a tourist gaze. Indeed, such a gaze would be understood as undermining their very authenticity. But, in other ways, the understanding of authenticity that emerges here is quite similar to those that emerged in the consumption habits of the new cultural class respondents considered in the previous section. Pat understands her attraction to Tunisia and Egypt, rather than to America and New Zealand, to be a result of her interest in historical monuments. But we could suggest that this attraction has more to do with an attraction to the 'past' itself. As Tunisia is 'more real' to Pat than America, this suggests that once again notions of authenticity are becoming conflated with notions of development and social distance. Pat is attracted to those countries that afford her the greatest sense of social progress. Because these power relations have become conflated, these are also the countries that allow for the greatest
inversion of the social relations of home. One can 'lord it up' in Egypt far more effectively than in America.

What is different from the experiences of the new cultural class respondents, of course, is the way in which these holidays are understood by Paul and Pat themselves. Rather than a search for difference, and as we might expect having considered their consumption of exotic food, the foreign holiday is largely a chance to continue the traditional pleasures of carnival free of the interruptions of the English weather. In their package tours, for example, they explicitly reject any interaction with difference, preferring instead to isolate themselves from the culture of these other countries. But, if they do desire some 'contact', this is achieved through the type of event that most obviously articulates the operation of a powerful tourist gaze and their sense of social progress is often directly related to the opportunity these holidays afford to claim a position of hegemony over the residents of these other countries. This is in complete contrast to the avowed intent of the new cultural class respondents. They are concerned not with isolating themselves from difference, but with searching it out. What will be interesting is to see how far this search for the 'alternative' holiday does indeed provide for a less exclusionary set of social relations.

6.6 Travellers' tales: in search of authenticity

For the more 'sophisticated' traveller the type of holiday enjoyed by Paul and Pat would clearly be anathema and, over the last few years, a whole industry has emerged that markets itself in direct opposition to the sanitised experience of the package tour. These are the companies that offer the 'alternative holiday experiences' so attractive to some members of the new cultural class. When Dorian goes abroad, for example, rather than seeking to closet herself in the protective security of the international hotel, her interest is in seeking out precisely this alternative experience, to: "have a look at other cultures, and buildings and other ways of life. To see other people, and eat different foods". Only then can these holidays serve as "a sort of mental refresher, in that you then become once removed from the relentless wheels of your own life" (both from Dorian, session 2).

In one sense this secures a quite traditional understanding of the holiday; the holiday as a time of leisure, in contrast to one's working life at home. But what is important is that for Dorian these experiences are no longer available in the type of resort favoured by Paul and Pat. As she says: "whenever I've gone away I've hated going to the Ibizas and the Majorcas. I've tried to go to places a bit off the beaten track, so you can see a bit of the real life of these places" (Dorian, session 3, emphasis added).
In other words, it would seem that for the new cultural class respondents these 'alternative' holidays serve a similar purpose to the consumption of exotic food. First, they allow the more adventurous holiday maker to distance themselves from the mere 'tourist' and to use their holiday experiences as a means of social distinction. Secondly, they offer an opportunity for the experience of real difference and, possibility, of access to a more authentic world now under threat with the growth of the holiday industry itself. Indeed, as the proliferation of exotic food at home has placed both this access to authenticity and the possibility of using such access as a means of class distinction in jeopardy, the alternative holiday may now be the only means by which these adventurers can assure either. This is certainly the understanding that Dorian takes to her travel experiences:

"I have a problem with the word authenticity, because I feel like it's an illusion. Like restoring this house is an illusion. So one makes compromises. You can't have the authentic. And all you end up with is a sanitised version of the authentic. I mean you can have the authentic if you travel out into the bush and into deepest India, or on safari, you can yes. But, I don't think you can have the authentic very easily in terms of the past, certainly in England."

(Dorian, session 3)

For Dorian her taste in exotic food remains just that - "a taster". To really experience that difference she desires one still needs to travel, to "actually go to these places" (Dorian, session 3). Though at home the processes of globalisation may have rendered a search for the authentic more problematic, for those willing (and with the money) to travel far enough it is still possible to reach the truly exotic, and the truly authentic. Thus, once again Dorian secures a familiar relationship between authenticity and social distance. The authenticity of the African bush, for example, is certainly a product of its distance from the metropolitan centre (cf Williams, 1983). But it is also authentic because, in contrast to somewhere like Majorca at least, it is still a place less often visited by other European travellers. In other words, as in her choice of restaurants, this suggests the emergence of a continuum of authenticity, here constructed around the routes of the travel industry itself.

But, as notions of authenticity are understood only in relation to some kind of spatialised retreat from modernity, this positioning process also suggests a certain naivety on the part of the traveller. Certainly, Amanda, for example, finds the proliferation of this type of holiday more than a little ridiculous and, for Alex, these trips miss the "whole point":

"If you try and separate the two - the modern and the old - then you're making a big mistake, you're on your way to missing the whole point of the country. Because, you know, they aspire to the same things, they want the bigger, comfy car, they want to ring up granny in Darjeeling or whatever .. [I mean] when you first arrive, which is usually in the big city, then the first thing you think is 'gosh!"
I could be anywhere, the city centre looks like Croydon. .. [and] your first thought is 'oh god! let's get out of here because it reminds me of home, I want to see the pampas grass and the steaming volcano and lots of poor people scratching for a living' then you're really going to miss the whole point. Because, OK that might happen a few weeks later, but it's the whole mesh and the way it all meshes together that makes the country - and in fact, it's that very difference in the two elements that makes the country."

(Alex, session 5)

In contrast to Dorian, Alex is taking a more sophisticated stance - suggesting that within his search for difference any questions of a historically static, and thus deeply exclusionary, authenticity has finally been displaced. Like Dorian, he may also travel in order to step outside the familiar world of home and it is within the spaces beyond the modern city that the difference he seeks can most easily be identified. But there is no claim that these spaces are any 'more authentic' than the city of arrival. Rather, true difference, and thus the authentic itself, can only ever be found within an understanding of cultural change - in the interaction of the country and the city - establishing an identification process that would seem to challenge Dorian's exclusionary understandings.

But, Alex too remained deeply concerned with issues of authenticity, suggesting that his search for the authentic has merely become more sophisticated, rather than abandoned. For example, earlier we saw how in his business trips to Spain Alex neither sought, nor expected to find, anything of the "real Spain" (see chapter 4.2). But, when travelling for pleasure, it is exactly this more 'authentic Spanish experience' he seeks. Indeed this search for the authentic becomes something of "a quest". Rather than dependent upon any simple notions of spatio-temporal distance, then, the possibility of two quite different 'Spanish experiences' begins to suggest some sort of depth relation.

In chapter 4 it was suggested that any re-ordering of contemporary global space needs to be understood in relation to those more sophisticated notions of a multiple and culturally saturated space recently developed within geography (Shields, 1991). Considering their experiences of communication technology, for example, I suggested that George and Alex constructed what I termed a 'second space of Otherness'. This was the space that existed outside of the space of communication technology, lying somewhere behind, or below, an expanded space of the West defined through communication technology itself (cf May, 1994). This is the model that Alex applies when he travels for pleasure. On holiday, where any search for the authentic has been rendered problematic by the processes of cultural change and the geographical extension of modernity, rather than rely upon simple notions of geographical (and temporal) distance the authentic is now defined within a more sophisticated understanding of a space below or behind the common tourist experience. It is a product of what MacCannell (1976) has called a
'backstage encounter'. Thus, as in the world of business, there is a multiple spatiality through which Alex can continue to seek out the truly different:

"I mean I find it incredible when people go abroad - the first thing I always head for is the kind of little cafe around the back, you know and just go in there, and you know. Whereas you go in the cafe in the station kind of thing and it's just full of other backpackers - people from all over the world, which is quite interesting sometimes, sort of watching all these people you might be in a bar with. But it's certainly nice to go round the corner where, you know, and just go and point and say I'll have what you're having and you get some sort of horrid purple liquid and a cup of coffee that tastes like mud (laughter) you know. I think that's the best way to start .. [it's like when I'm abroad on business] my ideal scenario would be to stop over the night. Head into town, ignore the hotels, and go and find a little B and B round the back. Sit on a street cafe and then just soak it up. And then, and then you get an, you know, feel Spanish."

(Alex, session 3, emphasis added)

Here, rather than concentrate upon Alex's quite derogatory (if partly ironic) understandings of these other cultures, I want to advance the argument about the role of these travel experiences as part of a broader project of cultural capital. Notions of authenticity and difference have been made more sophisticated. They are now defined, not through any simple notion of social distance, but through their location beyond the realm of the 'tourist' and in the world of 'backstage behaviour'. This suggests that for the true traveller issues of how one travels are now as important as where one travels:

J: So to you the package tour is anathema?

A: To me personally yes. Because - because I don't think you're really going to sit down and have a really interesting conversation with the local, the local person if you arrive in a group of 50. It just won't happen if you're being flown around in an air conditioned coach. The conversation is much more likely to take place in one of their buses, you know, crawling up some mountain with a goat in the back and another 10 kids on the roof. That's when you're going to get a little repartee going.

(Alex, session 5)

Though the merely wealthy may now undertake a trip to Africa, the realm of the truly authentic and different is now open only to those prepared to search out these hidden spaces - those who are prepared, as Alex says, to "do their homework". These spaces are to be found, by those in the know, in Spain as easily as Africa. Moreover, preferably they are to be reached not through transport technologies that act to distance the traveller from any interaction with the locals, but through seeking out, and joining, those backstage spaces where the locals themselves congregate. Thus, as the possibility of authenticity is understood to lie within the material interactions of the backstage encounter, Alex moves to explicitly distance himself from any objectifying 'tourist gaze'.

Whilst, like Pat, Alex's holidays may also be constructed around a desperate scramble to see the accepted 'sites', those sites he seeks will differ markedly from those
sought by Pat and must be experienced in a rather different manner. Whilst she may seek out Rome's Colosseum, for example, and enjoy these sites from the comforts of the air conditioned coach, Alex (though undoubtedly 'getting that one in') is as likely to search for that elusive little cafe, or bus route, known only to his friends or, of course, other purchasers of the 'Lonely Planet'. Shifting notions of authentic difference away from any simple understanding of spatio-temporal distance, towards these more complex spaces, also has the effect of positioning these travel experiences more firmly within the realm of cultural, rather than only economic capital. To reach the truly different one must not only have enough money, but know the right people and read the right books. Though this manoeuvre may form part of a quite genuine challenge to Pat's objectifying tourist gaze, it is as likely that for a class of often limited financial means it may also form part of vital strategy of class distinction.

At the same time, however, positioning an understanding of authenticity within a world of material interaction may also raise a series of difficulties for those within the new cultural class who would in fact prefer a more controlled access to difference. Though Dorian, for example, may desire Alex's travel opportunities, these opportunities are in fact always blocked by a number of fears:

"If you asked me where I'd like to go on holiday I'd say - um, Egypt, or India, or Tunisia, but that whole experience is blocked for me, by fear. There's a lot of fear in me about exposing myself to a strange place. If I went to Egypt I'd have to make sure that I stayed in a plush hotel where I'd have my own shower, and white sheets. I mean I have been to Tunisia quite safely, but I am scared about going somewhere and being shot down, or kidnapped, or not being able to get back to my home .. [or] going and living in an Islamic country and feeling that I can't walk down the street in a skirt. Or going and living in India and worrying about whether my bowels are going to give out .. there's an element of me wanting to be able to control my environment which is quite easy if I can shut my own front door and draw the net curtains .. I want to be in England and know that there's a doctor around the corner and a car outside ..."

(Dorian, session 3)

In part, these fears need to be understood in relation to a wider gendering of these new travel orthodoxies. But Dorian's fears also relate to her understandings of difference itself. As in her choice of restaurant, whilst Dorian may desire a world of difference it is in fact a desire only for that difference that will not overwhelm. This concern clearly acts to limit those material backstage encounters through which she may hope to gain that authentic experience she seeks. It is therefore vital that where Alex also defined notions of authenticity through a particular system of knowledge, this move may hold out the

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6 The irony of these alternative holidays is that, whilst set in diametric opposition to the sanitised world of the coach tour, they are in fact constructed around similar goals. The travel experiences of both Alex and Pat, for example, might fit within some notion of a reconstructed 'Grand Tour'. Both are part of a 'must see' culture (cf Shields, 1991).
possibility of a more radical set of manoeuvres. These manoeuvres may in fact liberate Dorian from any crude alignment of authenticity with material interaction and define the possibility of access within her own set of understandings, rather than delimit it through any connection with the Other itself. Where Dorian *prefers* the plush hotel, for example, within the increasingly sophisticated world of the 'post-tourist' (Feifer, 1985) such environments need no longer separate the truly *knowledgeable* traveller from the authentic experience they crave:

"I mean I went to this evening in Tunisia put on for the tourists - but in fact it was far more real than they thought it was, in its disorganisation."

(Dorian, session 3)

Thus positioned it becomes possible both to enjoy the safety of the 'tourist event', whilst moving to position one's ironic enjoyment as a marker of class distinction. More importantly, such practices shift the possibility of authenticity away from material interaction *per se* and towards a *system of knowledge* defined by the consumer herself. Dorian need not *meet* the performers, for example, to recognize that beneath their performance the sophisticated spectator may still recognize 'authentic backstage behaviour'. These accounts are important because they allow us to understand how the new cultural class respondents may both reflect upon the increasing difficulty of reaching the truly different or authentic experience they desire, and also always guarantee the possibility of this access.

They also suggest that, whatever the intention of these travellers (and Alex, for example, seems genuinely concerned in moving beyond the projection of a traditional tourist gaze), these 'alternative' travel experiences may only replicate the exclusionary cultural oppositions they are designed to challenge. Both Alex and Dorian, for example, are centrally concerned with accessing a more authentic space beyond the intrusions of modernity and an expanded travel industry. But, however sophisticated their understandings of authenticity become, neither have really challenged a traditional conflation of authenticity and social distance. In the Tunisian evening, for example, for Dorian the event's authenticity was determined by the disorganisation of the performance. The implication is that the event would have been quite different in England. For Alex, the authentic continues to be described through a series of 'more natural' organic metaphors. The authentic Spanish experience, for example, is something that one just "soaks up" and the more authentic cafes are those round the back in which it is the bodily that takes precedence. If one cannot speak the language one can only point at what one wants (and this is, perhaps, somehow more authentic than asking for it), whilst what one gets is a murky cup of coffee tasting reassuringly 'basic'. This is turn suggests that the experiences sought by Alex and Dorian are not so far removed from
those that Pat seeks in her visits to Egypt or Tunisia. Both are concerned with accessing a more comforting sense of time under threat with changes at home. For Pat this is possible as these other spaces are set in opposition to the development of her own world. Her subordination of the people of these less ‘developed’ countries (whether through the exclusion of the tourist hotel or the projection of a nostalgic imperial gaze), allows her to reclaim a position of hegemony and personal progress currently being undermined at home. This is not the desire of Alex or Dorian. Their desire is only for access to a more ‘natural’ space, but this is also only possible when these other countries are positioned in opposition to the progress of the modern world.

Further, the practices that eventually allow the new cultural class respondents this experience are also not far removed from the more obviously exclusionary practices of the traditional tourist. Though Alex, for example, consciously sought his interaction with difference in ways that would seem to challenge the operation of a traditional tourist gaze, in the end his practices may only work around a more familiar set of understandings:

"At the end of the day you’re always going to be a tourist, they’re always going to see you as passing through. But .. if you make the effort, if you’re polite, courteous, and you know, honour their customs and stuff like that then, you know, you don’t get any flak .. [and in the end] you can get in and understand it, understand it completely - I just think it takes longer than the time I’ve ever had to really, to actually get into the culture.

But I can certainly glean an awful lot - in a very short time - if you want to learn, because it’s there, no-one’s hiding it, it’s there, if you’re willing to scratch around and, you know, there’s loads of museums and stuff, and you’ve got the sort of culture and the history. I mean it’s all there, on display, it’s just whether you want to go and have a look at it.

(Alex, session 5, emphasis added)

Throughout, both Dorian’s and Alex’s accounts have continued to be dominated by a series of visual metaphors. For Dorian one travels to "have a look at other cultures" and "to see other people", whilst for Alex his entry into a world of difference is made possible as these cultures are "there, on display" for those who know where (and how) to "look". Moreover, rather than suggestive of any genuine cultural appreciation, and far less a desire to challenge the material exclusions of cultural inequality, Alex’s account suggests only the operation of a quite instrumental cultural capital. This knowledge of others is only available to those willing to "scratch around" and the knowledge this investigation affords allows him to differentiate himself from those less knowledgable than himself. There is also no understanding that an equitable relationship with others necessitates the mutual desire for interaction. To gain that knowledge he seeks Alex is quite willing to 'make the right noises', to respect their customs "and stuff like that". He is, in other words, entirely willing to 'con' other people and demands access to their
world whether they want it or not.

Ironically, the only new cultural class respondent completely uninterested in these 'alternative' holidays was George, and his account allows us a better understanding of the experiences of the other respondents. In his work George regularly travels the world (during the course of our interviews, for example, he visited America, Russia, Germany, France and Belgium), and everyday he is concerned with tracing the 'truth' behind the impressions of the casual visitor (see chapter 4.2). On holiday, then, the last thing on his mind is to continue this search for the 'authentic experience' of these other countries. Rather, though he too continues to seek out some more 'natural' life experience when abroad, this is not connected to a belief that he is 'really finding out' about the places that he visits. In many ways, in fact, his holidays have more in common with Paul and Pat's than with the other new cultural class respondents, but they also allow us to further our understanding of the role of foreign travel in people's search for a more comforting sense of time.

Every summer, George and his family visit his brother's villa in the mountains of southern Spain. Once there he rarely leaves the village, preferring instead simply to spend some time with his wife and daughter:

"They [holidays] are just a way of relaxing, a way of spending a lot of time with my wife and child .. Just sort of relaxing into somewhere, just relaxing, just sought of collapsing into some - place .. Living a life that means getting up very late and going to bed very late because that's the way the Spanish live. And living a life that is absolutely meshed in, a village where everything works together, not sort of going to work and then coming home ..

.. I'm not a sort of 'traveller' as such - I mean I don't go off trekking across Bhutan or, you know, walking across Afghanistan .. In Spain I hardly even head off out of the village really. I mean one could go to Granada. You know if I was a different kind of person I probably would have blasted off for a night to Seville to see the Expo, I'd - but I don't want to. I just want to read books, lie in the sun, play, go shopping, cook. Just sort of wind down, you know. So in a way I suppose it's a fairly sort of superficial view that I would have of places, but it's a question of what I'm after. And whether I'm kidding myself that I have anything more than that, which I don't think I do."

(George, session 4)

Here, George too clearly makes a connection between development and authenticity. The holism of village life, for example, allows for a more 'natural' sense of time and this is powerfully related to traditional oppositions between the country and the city (Williams, 1973). It may also be related to those images of a more 'feminine' time found within the home and traced in the previous chapter. But, though George continues to draw up these oppositions, his holidays are not seen as part of any wider project of cultural capital and he makes no pretence that what he is experiencing is the 'authentic' Spanish life. Rather, like Paul and Pat, George quite consciously treats his holidays simply
as an escape from the pressures of work and this may well be because, for a person in his line of work, there is simply no need to travel when not at work to improve one's cultural capital. Ironically, then, this has the effect of emphasising this aspect of the travel practices of the other new cultural class respondents and from here we can make some broader conclusions.

6.7 Conclusions

In this chapter I have considered two of the most obvious manifestations of time-space compression: the recent proliferation of exotic food, and the growth in overseas holidays. Once again significant differences have emerged in the experience of these processes between the working class and new cultural class respondents. Looking first at this expansion in exotic food, I have shown how for the working class respondents their proliferation threatens to complicate a familiar set of cultural oppositions and undermine a sense of national identity. This would position the emergence of these foods as one of the most 'disorientating' moments of recent change. But, I have also shown how their consumption practices work always to re-inscribe these more familiar categories and in ways that allow Paul and Pat to re-secure an exclusionary national identity. In contrast, though the new cultural class respondents have generally welcomed the emergence of these foods, and the experience of difference that they promise, their consumption practices suggest only a superficial 'commodification of Otherness' and the use of these foods as part of a quite instrumental cultural capital. In both instances I have drawn attention to the images that continue to shape both the marketing and consumption of these foods and warn us against understanding their emergence as signalling a radical re-alignment of a more traditional set of unequal power relations. Further, where for the new cultural class respondents the consumption of these foods is understood as part of a wider 'postmodern' lifestyle aesthetic, this will in turn require a more sensitive examination of what we mean by postmodernism itself. In particular we need to establish whether it is to be understood only as part of a superficial cultural aesthetic (in which the consumer is free to 'mix and match' the cultures of the world at will), or as a more radical challenge to a modern epistemology.

In the second part of the chapter I considered the phenomenal growth in the holiday industry and, in particular, the growth of both the package tour and the 'alternative' holidays market. Here too, significant differences emerged in the experiences of the working class and new cultural class respondents. For the working class respondents the ability to travel abroad has signalled only the displacement of the traditional holiday to the more reliable weather of the Mediterranean. Their concern is
with a geographical displacement of the familiar, and the power relations these holidays articulate (in the physical exclusion of the international hotel, for example, or the operation of nostalgic imperial gaze) allows both Paul and Pat to recover a position of hegemony that is under threat with changes at home. Thus, far from 'disorientating', changes in the international travel industry have been broadly welcomed. Where the pace of recent developments has led to a sense of disorientation this is not to be found within the ability these holidays have to provide a sense of 'culture shock', but in the ramifications these holidays have for a traditional set of class relations. The ability to travel abroad is understood as a symbol of class progress and this sense of progress is often achieved through a conscious subordination of the people of these other countries.

In contrast, the new cultural class respondents use these holidays to continue their search for the alternative and different. In many ways their travel experiences replicate those processes uncovered in their consumption of exotic food. Both stand as a means of declaring one's cultural capital and, though in the case of overseas travel this is dependent upon an ability to distance oneself from the traditional 'tourist', their travel habits in fact work only to uphold the traditional exclusions of a tourist gaze.

In this sense both these sections have been concerned with a more detailed examination of the differential power relations inherent to a period of rapid global change. But the chapter also sought to relate these changes to the experience of time-space compression itself and, in particular, to people's search for a more comforting sense of time. In the case of the new cultural class respondents this was done through an examination of that search for the authentic that dominates their consumption practices at home and abroad. It was argued that the new cultural class respondents have established a sophisticated continuum of authenticity through which they are able to define notions of authenticity itself. This allows them always to gain access to that more comforting sense of time that they desire and to control their interactions with difference so that the difference that they seek will never overwhelm them.

This continuum works by constructing a traditional relationship between authenticity and social distance and is often conflated with racialised understandings of the exotic. In this sense access to these foods, and these 'alternative' holiday spaces, can be understood as one of the ways in which people are negotiating the increasing 'inauthenticity' of modern life. The analysis allows for an understanding of how the processes of time-space compression that are argued to be so disorientating may themselves provide the means through which people 'handle' contemporary change. Though the working class respondents were less interested in issues of authenticity per se, for them too the foreign holiday allowed for a recovery of a more comforting sense
of time and one based in similar notions of relative social progress.

This chapter can be understood as an elaboration of a number of arguments made in chapters 4 and 5. It has been concerned with tracing the ways in which different people are negotiating the experiences of time-space compression, drawing attention to the 'mechanisms' through which this change is 'handled' and to the differential power relations these mechanisms articulate. It allows us to continue to question the impact of time-space compression upon a more traditional set of cultural understandings, but also to draw distinctions between the experience of these processes by people in different social positions.

It can also be understood as an introduction to the next, and final, substantive chapter. There I want to 'bring the argument back home', to see how this globalisation of everyday life is being negotiated in the spaces of the local high street. Already, significant differences have emerged between the working class and new cultural class respondents, in particular concerning their desire for that 'difference' (however constructed) that the processes of globalisation bring. Analysis of these differences continues in the next chapter. There they produce a number of tensions between the new cultural class and working class respondents, as each group strive to construct quite different images of the new 'global village'.
CHAPTER 7
BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME: BEYOND A 'PROGRESSIVE SENSE OF PLACE'

7.1 Introduction

Having traced negotiations of time-space compression through a variety of experiential arenas - from the workplace and the experiences of communication technology, through the markets and restaurants of north London, to the shores of imperial Egypt - I want in this last substantive chapter to bring the argument 'back home'. Throughout the thesis I have been concerned with how the processes of time-space compression are negotiated in the day-to-day lives of my respondents and, since our everyday lives are always negotiated within the quite unique circumstances of a particular time and place, it would make sense to finish my account with some images of how each respondent seeks to construct a 'sense of place' within the globalised reaches of Stoke Newington. Bringing things 'back home' in this manner is important not only because the 'global' processes of time-space compression are themselves always constructed through the specific interactions of the 'local' (Morley, 1991), but because at a deeper level place continues as the arena within which people construct their everyday identities (Thrift, 1983).

A concern with 'place', and how far it remains possible to construct a 'traditional' sense of place within a period of rapid global change, has therefore, and unsurprisingly, continued to dominate much of the literature within geography around the wider processes of globalisation and time-space compression (Cooke, 1989; Entrikin, 1991; Relph, 1976: Sack, 1988). But, despite a proliferation of debates around the 'global' and the 'local', there are a number of problems with the way in which these debates have proceeded. In particular, they have become somewhat polarised and this polarity may have blinded geographers to the complexities of emergent place identities and led to the failure to outline either a more developed, or a more grounded, politics of place. Drawing attention to these issues, in chapter 2.1b I reviewed a series of debates between David Harvey (1989a, 1993b) and Doreen Massey (1991b, 1993a). For each the emergence of this 'global sense of place' offered the possibility of quite different political projects. But, both were criticized for failing to locate their accounts within a more developed understanding of the politics of place and it was argued that Massey (1993a), in particular, has failed to understand how a sense of place constructed by one group of actors may only obscure or subordinate the constructions of another.

It is this more developed politics of place that I want to attempt here. Looking first
at Paul and Pat, we shall see how for each recent changes in the local area have bought about a powerful sense of loss, as the arrival of other ethnic groups threatens to undermine an image of the Stoke Newington's essential 'Englishness'. In contrast the new cultural class respondents offer a more complex picture. As this class has moved to the inner city precisely because of its more 'interesting' cultural mix, we might expect the new cultural class respondents to broadly welcome evidence of global change (Butler, 1991; Wright, 1985). As in the consumption of 'exotic' food, however, I want to show how the ways in which these changes are negotiated in fact allows the new cultural class respondents to both welcome the arrival of these other ethnic groups, whilst negotiating their presence in ways that allow for the formulation of a securely 'bounded' and equally exclusionary sense of place constructed through the objectification of these other groups (cf May, 1993).

By concentrating upon these processes of objectification we once again move towards the projection of an 'exotic gaze' and the realm of aesthetics. Here the structures of a reformulated 'tourist gaze' (Urry, 1990) are carried beyond those more specific sites of 'spectacle' within which its operation has usually been traced, to the daily encounters of the contemporary high street (cf Featherstone, 1992). Just as place itself might come to be understood as offering some sort of locus of temporal 'retreat' (Relph, 1989), so too the very 'mechanisms' through which a sense of place is established can themselves be understood as a means through which to secure a more comforting sense of time in the face of an uncertain and changing world. Indeed, drawing upon this notion of an 'exotic gaze' I shall argue that the ways in which Stoke Newington is being constructed by the new cultural class respondents suggests a series of powerful historical parallels. Though I shall suggest a number of important departures from the gendered public spaces of the nineteenth century metropolis, the accounts of my respondents suggest exactly the perambulations of an earlier urban flâneur. I shall argue that an examination of this 'pre-history' of the contemporary flâneur allows for a deeper understanding of the ways in which the late twentieth century inner city is being constructed by some members of a new urban class (cf Frisby, 1991).

I shall finish by turning towards a consideration of the area's history and the attraction of each group of respondents to a sense of local 'heritage'. For the new cultural class respondents in particular, Stoke Newington has come to be understood as a kind of Victorian 'retreat', but one that articulates a series of exclusions for both the area's ethnic minority residents and the working class respondents. Indeed, I shall uncover a series of tensions between the two groups of respondents, as each construct quite different understandings of the area's past. But these conflicts are by no means simple

216
and cannot be located within any simplistic class analysis. In particular, for Paul and Pat the presence of the new cultural class in Stoke Newington has become complicated, as on the one hand they are welcomed as further support against the invasions of other non-white residents, whilst on the other these "yuppies" serve to undermine an image of the area they wish to maintain.

Moreover, though I hope it shall prove possible in this way to bring together a number of those themes that have structured the thesis as a whole, my intention is not to close the account to other readings. Rather, as place itself remains a deeply subjective experience, so each respondent will of course bring to these themes a rather different interpretation, suggesting that any account of the negotiations of time-space compression must always be localised. Indeed the control of local space provides one of the ways through which Amanda, for example, seeks to construct her own, quite exclusionary, 'global geography' of the area, whilst Paul constructs a rather different geography of class and ethnic exclusion. Thus, though throughout the thesis I have tried to draw out some themes around which we may group the ethnic, class and gendered experiences of time-space compression, these processes are always negotiated in quite unique ways by each individual. If such an argument disrupts that very sociology I have tried to construct, it at least provides a more accurate picture of the contemporary experience. I hope, therefore, that in this final chapter - where I consider the interaction of these processes within the specificity of place - that both these wider themes, and these more personal experiences, make clear how the 'global' processes of time-space compression are always negotiated within the structures of a highly localised and powerfully individual set of understandings.

7.2 The loss of a sense of place

For many residents the most significant change in Stoke Newington over the last twenty or thirty years has been those changes in the area's population traced in chapter 3.2b. The social and ethnic diversity of the area has increased dramatically in this period and, whilst many of the area's new cultural class may have been attracted to Stoke Newington precisely because of this 'exciting social mix', for people like Paul and Pat these changes have been anything but positive. In particular, whilst each draws upon quite different constructions of the area's 'original' character, for both these changes have undercut a powerfully localised identity forged through the alignments not only of class, but a particular construction of Englishness. Recent changes especially have engendered powerful feelings of disempowerment, as the area they grew up in has changed almost beyond recognition. Here I want to concentrate upon the rather different experiences of
these changes that Paul and Pat, Dorian, Amanda, George and Alex articulate in the face of this rapid ‘globalisation’ of Stoke Newington’s ‘village life’.

Dominating the accounts of both Paul and Pat is an overwhelming, all encompassing, and highly distressing sense of change. For both, the Stoke Newington of their youth was a slower place, structured around the unchanging working class traditions of close knit family and neighbourhood networks. These networks lent a sense of belonging through an inter-generational history of ‘dwelling’ (Relph, 1989). But, whilst the area can be positioned within a broader ‘East End tradition’ (Cornwall, 1984; Young & Willmott, 1957/1990), for Paul Stoke Newington also enjoys a rather different history. Growing up in the 1960s, for him the area’s many parks, churches, and even its ‘castle’ (the Victorian water works) lent the area a certain ‘suburban respectability’ and rural charm, in stark contrast to neighbouring Hackney and the “cor blimey what’s-‘is-name” of Hoxton to the south. In part, therefore, Paul’s sense of disorientation can be understood as the rural retreat of his youth has been destroyed by the impact of an encroaching metropolitan global system that has rendered impossible the passing on of this more comforting, and powerfully localised, temporal identity to his children:

"The place I lived in changed - changed one hell of a lot. I mean Church Street alone has just gone, yuppified .. and it’s upsetting, annoying. You want to try and build something for the future for your kids here sort of thing, where you grew up so it’s generation, generation, generation. But the way the changes are going so quick, it’s not going to happen .. I mean I’ve still got people here, close family ties in the area, where I was born and brought up, but a lot, a lot of it’s changed .. [and] there’s nothing you can do. It’s like an invasion, changing places, yuppy places, and there’s nothing you can do about it. Why can’t people just leave things alone, it was a lot better, people seemed a lot happier, but now everyone seems busy, rushing about. Whereas before you could go into a shop and talk to someone for half an hour, chatting or whatever, now there’s shops cropping up and people are changing, and going, and whatever .."

(Paul, session 5)

In chapter 5 we saw how, in the face of rapid change within the work place, Paul was drawn to the slower moving structures of a more ‘natural’, cyclic time. Here too, as he articulates a loss in that sense of ‘dwelling’ and a powerful sense of temporal ‘speed-up’ argued by Harvey (1989a & b) to characterize the contemporary experience of place, Paul’s sense of disorientation centres on the loss of that inter-generational continuity previously possible within the unchanging rhythms of a highly localised life. Beyond a system of spatial location and geographical belonging, therefore, place (and the structures of local community) can be understood as holding out a series of explicitly comforting temporal identities and for Paul it is these that are now under threat. As elsewhere (cf Young and Willmott, 1957/1990; Wallman, 1982 et al) these community ties were forged through a number of local institutional networks - the traditions of neighbourliness, for
example, or the social interaction of the local corner shop. Here Paul understands the loss of these institutions as coming with the emergence of other social groups in the area and particularly as the corner shop of his youth has given way to those new outlets demanded by the area’s "yuppies".

But for both Paul and Pat it is the arrival of other ethnic groups in the area that has had the biggest effect on this sense of community, as Pat explains:

"People, I think, that’s the biggest change. They’re not neighbours any more. I often think if my grandmother could wake up and see it now, she wouldn’t believe it. You know if you saw a Chinaman, or a black man then it was unusual, now it’s unusual to see a white man, which a lot of us are upset about because it’s not London any more like it was, because all of us are moving out, that’s the problem .. if you left your front door open all night it wouldn’t matter, but now - god! .. I remember what it used to be like, and what it is now. It’s unbelievable. I wander around and I remember. You can walk from here to Dalston and you won’t see another one, not like me. Now I don’t think that’s very nice, but I’m not allowed to say that .. but we’re still here, keeping the flag flying."

(Pat, session 1)

Where for the new cultural class respondents the arrival of other ethnic groups in the area may offer an exciting cultural diversity, for Paul and Pat these groups are destroying a powerfully localised identity forged through the traditions of local community life. And just as Paul draws upon a series of racial stereotypes concerning the area’s increase in crime - "I mean I’m not biased, I think I’m not biased, but there is the crime rate, which the police always seem to blame on the black people, right or wrong" (session 1) - so too, for Pat, it is the arrival of the area’s non-white residents that is destroying a sense of local community embodied in a tradition of honest neighbourliness. These changes engender a sense of disempowerment, made worse by the silencing of any opposition. For Pat, in Hackney one can no longer voice the feelings she wants to express, a frustration encouraged by her experiences working for the local authority but one that also encapsulates her difficulties ‘admitting’ to these feelings with me.

Unsurprisingly then, the arrival of other ethnic groups has led to a series of tensions within Stoke Newington, as a predominantly poor population have had to fight for scarce local resources. Where for the new cultural class respondents the cultural diversity of the area can be enjoyed as something approaching a ‘leisure resource’, for both Paul and Pat these other groups are effectively to blame for a demise in their own material living standards. In a common move, rather than associate economic recession or the decline in local service provision with central government, both seek to relocate the cause of this decline with the area’s most recent immigrants. As Paul says:

"I mean you’ve got a lot of Kurds coming in now, and they’ve got their part, all the shops, all the little shops in the high street, all the green grocers. It annoys the local people because they work 24 hours a day, trade wise they’re cutting these fellas throats. That annoys people, and they’re getting houses, causing resentment
with people who've been on the waiting list for years and years and years. I mean you can see it, so there's always going to be friction."

(Paul, session 1, emphasis added)

As these changes are understood as destroying the area’s very 'Englishness', they serve to undermine a broader set of social relations. In the previous chapter we saw how when in the past Paul fancied something 'a bit different' he went "up West", to London’s West End, and how this pattern supported a vital system of socio-spatial control. I also suggested that in Pat’s trip to Egypt there could be traced the operation of a powerful imperial gaze, with which she sought to reclaim the relations of empire so under threat at home. But with the processes of time-space compression and globalisation, for Paul and Pat at least, it would seem that the relations of empire are being challenged, as Paul’s system of socio-spatial control becomes inverted and the subjects of Pat’s imperial imagination take control of her own metropolis. As she relates:

J: So what are your favourite bits round here?

P: Oh I don’t know, dear me. There’s not very many now - everything’s changed now hasn’t it. I mean I used to work at Simpson’s [local textile factory]. That was beautiful, and what have they done to it? - Kurds! They’ve put Kurds in the library, I mean it’s wrong! I think it is. There’s nothing left, not a lot.

The high street’s got no shops left in it any more, and you should have seen what was there! ... Lions, Stevens that big shop, Dabblers, all gone - everything. And what is there now? Indian shops, not an English one left. And what shops were further down, Sainsbury’s, where they used to pat the butter within wooden things and that. That’s gone, all gone. We used to have a Lipton’s down there, but that’s been taken over by Indians, or Pakis - I’m not sure which - so I don’t go there any more ..

They give them all these places, the Kurds have got their cafes and god knows what, x thousand pounds for them - but what is there for us? nothing, nothing at all.

(Pat, session 1)

In other words, this sense of change has been amplified as the arrival of other ethnic groups in Stoke Newington has undermined a sense of cultural hegemony. For Pat in particular these broader movements are inextricably bound up with changes in her own life-world. Simpson’s, for example, had always been a symbol of national pride and its change in use serves to reinforce the sheer pace of change that has overtaken her and led to such feelings of insecurity. Changes in her local area have cut Pat off from the slower moving, more comforting world of her childhood (cf Squire, 1991). At the same time, whilst Sainsbury’s wooden butter pats symbolized a world where one had time to stand and chat with the local shop keeper, their craft suggested a reassuring English (rural) tradition. It is this that has now gone and for Pat its passing is related to the arrival of other ethnic groups in the area. For Pat, then, a deeply personal sense of loss is connected to a broader sense of national decline (cf Wright, 1985). With changes in the
area’s ethnic mix an overwhelming sense of change prefigures a challenge to both a fundamental sense of ‘belonging’, long associated with the comforts of place, and a wider history of national hegemony being lost as the area seems to be losing its sense of Englishness altogether:

“I mean it is a strong place, because I was born here and I don’t think I’ll ever actually leave ... but I mean more and more, the Kurds have only come in for the last, year or so, and they took over a lot of our road, but before that it was the Indians, there was an influx of them .. it’s a fucking worry. I suppose if you lived in Brixton a hundred years ago there probably weren’t no black people. But Britain got - like Birmingham, it’s full of Indians and blacks .. they come to these areas and they stay in these damn areas. I suppose in the back of my mind they’ll pull down St. Mary’s and build a big mosque or something. It would be a mess wouldn’t it .. them taking over, and you’ll probably get people moving on .. and they’ll take over completely and then who wants to live here.”

(Paul, session 6)

Unsurprisingly, then, each is concerned with preserving an image of the area that may hold at bay these recent changes, feelings that suggest the importance of the past. It is the tensions that emerge as Paul and Pat try to hold on to this sense of the past that I shall outline in the second part of this chapter. For now, however, it is important to recognize that whilst the past may hold some comfort, the process of remembrance itself cannot always be positioned as necessarily comforting. Whilst Pat, for example, may seek to preserve a series of local landmarks, her memories themselves would seem to offer little comfort in the face of recent change:

J: So memories of these places for you, are they good because you can remember how it used to be, is that how it works for you?

P: I don’t know really. (Pause). No, it just makes it worse, more painful.

(Pat, session 5)

If nostalgia is ‘memory with the pain removed’ (Lowenthal, 1985) there is nothing nostalgic about Pat’s memories.

7.3 Gazing upon the ‘exotic’: the new urban flâneurs

But, whereas for Paul and Pat the loss of the area’s Englishness has led to a powerful sense of disorientsation, for Dorian and Alex it is the very possibility of constructing an image of Stoke Newington around the comforts of the traditional ‘English village’ that holds at bay that wider sense of disorientation associated with a period of time-space compression. Here, for example, is Alex describing Stoke Newington Church Street in ways very different from either Paul or Pat:

“Coming through Church Street I suppose you’ve got that glorious shot of the church spires and the trees and the park, and all that .. it’s a real sort of postcardy thing. The only thing that’s missing is a cricket pitch ...
Adding in a later session:

"It's very Englishy, and I think it will probably remain so, you know. And, er, I mean I am English and I do like England's Englishness I suppose ... So, whilst I accept, you know, multi-cultural society and stuff like that, I probably wouldn't if Stoke Newington became sort of radically Muslim in its feel - then I probably wouldn't feel that comfortable living here any more, you know."

(Alex, sessions 1 & 4, emphasis added)

Far from losing its sense of Englishness it might seem that, for Alex at least, Stoke Newington remains the quintessential English Village - right down to the dreaming spires of St.Mary's church and the imaginary village cricket pitch. If so it could be suggested that for Alex, as it seems for a number of the area's middle class residents (Wright, 1985), the joy of Stoke Newington lies not only in its relative isolation, but as these landmarks promise access to a simpler rural world geographically and historically remote from the pressures of contemporary urban life and global change.1 Far from embracing processes of globalisation and time-space compression, then, through these icons of a classic English heritage Alex is able to construct a radically 'bounded' sense of place and secure a more comforting sense of time (Harvey, 1989a).

Yet, where he lives little more than half a mile from one of London's largest mosques and is surrounded, even as he strolls towards the 'village green', by residents from all around the world, it is difficult to understand quite how Alex maintains this image of the area's essential Englishness. Asking him, therefore, whether the image of Church Street he held lay in conflict with the area's obvious cultural diversity, the continued presence, for example, of a highly visible orthodox Jewish community, he replied:

"Well I used to think they were pretty weird, well they still are pretty weird, but I know that they're weird now. I sort of know enough about them, you know .. You know, I don't think I have to learn any more about them. As I've actually lived in quite a few of these countries anyway - the Far East and stuff like that - I feel I know quite well about all that, that whole sort of ethnic thing. You know, I could probably go into it a lot more, but it doesn't really interest me ..

And, so you know, the mosques that are around are quite small anyway, they're really quite unobtrusive because the ethnic minorities around here are all quite poor, they haven't really got the money to do anything grand. Otherwise I think they would, and then you would be more aware of these other cultures. And the West Indian culture is very much a street culture anyway. You know, you're not going to find any architecture, ever - even in Brixton, or Notting Hill - their contribution is really sort of out on the pavement, you know, like the way

1 Unlike Islington, for example, Stoke Newington has no tube link, and this sense of isolation was seen by all the new cultural class respondents as lending the area a certain 'hidden charm'. Without such well developed transport connections the area certainly lagged behind the gentrification of other nearby areas, and it was this 'underdevelopment' that was seen by many within both the main study, and my pilot study, as the main reason the area could offer a space of retreat from the pressures of contemporary urban life.
they live their lives."

(Alex, session 4, emphasis added)

Just as his image of the area's Englishness seems constructed only through the imaginary landscape of rural England, at one level Alex maintains this image of Englishness through simply ignoring the presence of other ethnic groups. In other words, Alex's sense of place may be dependent only upon the visual landscape, such that where the area's West Indian population is understood through the racial stereotyping of a "pavement community" (incapable of its own architectural 'contribution') this population has no power to disrupt the area's Englishness because it has no power to construct its own visible landscape. And where other groups may have this power - the local Muslim community, for example, has built a number of mosques in the area - these icons are in turn simply rendered invisible.

Yet if in this sense - through the simple denial of processes of globalisation - Alex may continue to construct a markedly 'bounded sense of place', this denial is by no means straightforward. In the previous chapter we noted Alex's attraction to the pleasures of 'exotic' travel, through which he constructed a particular form of cultural capital. And in chapter 4 this cultural capital provided for a powerful sense of control over a re-organised global space, a sense of control structured around a position of both ethnic and gendered empowerment, as well as through any more obvious position of class empowerment.

Brought up in a colonial family (his father was an engineer who travelled around much of the British empire) it is therefore this sense of geographical expertise, one that lays the foundations for a particular form of cultural capital, that allows Alex to construct this image of the area. This knowledge enables him to construct a particular notion of authenticity (with which he was so concerned in his travel experiences) and through which, far from welcoming the presence of other ethnic groups, he may in fact deny their impact upon a continuing space of 'little England'. As before, notions of Otherness

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2 As we shall see it is also this very landscape that is a source of conflict between the new cultural class respondents and Paul and Pat, though one that has no simple class division as both groups are often drawn towards the preservation of the same local landmarks. For Paul and Pat, however, the area's identity is secured through both this visible landscape, and the personal memories it holds. In contrast, for Alex, a sense of the past is conveyed through only a particular iconography and the landscape he wishes to see (particular types of pub, for example) has often obliterated the landscape through which Paul and Pat secure their memories. Further, Alex's vision simply renders invisible the presence of any group who may contradict his landscape ideal, such that his imagery has much in common with an earlier landscape tradition. In the eighteenth century, for example, the working landscapes of Norfolk and Suffolk were (re)presented as vistas of pleasure for the landed aristocracy, a (re)presentation that necessitated the obscuration of the areas working class populations (see, for example, Cosgrove, 1985; Daniels & Cosgrove, 1988; and cf Rose, 1993).
continue to be defined not by these Others themselves, but from the space of the centre (see chapter 4.2). Through his travel experiences Alex claims a knowledge of these other groups greater than their knowledge of themselves. Thus, where he has "actually lived" in these other countries he is, in effect, able to claim that the presence of these groups outside those countries renders their presence in Stoke Newington somehow inauthentic, and as inauthentic they have no power to disrupt his own sense of the area's 'Englishness'. Just as multi-culturalism itself is understood as nothing more than a 'language game', as having no importance beyond the constructions of his own cultural capital, so in effect it is his interest that effectively decrees the 'authenticity', and thus the visibility, of these other groups.

But, even as he may wish to preserve an image of the area's Englishness so, as in his travel experiences, Alex may also desire access to a world of cultural diversity. Thus it is important that through defining access to these alternative cultural spaces as lying not within any system of mutual consent, but through his own intellectual interest, so in fact does he always leave open the possibility of entering these spaces whenever the desire takes him. This ease of access is repeated as Alex describes his attitude towards Stoke Newington's different class geographies:

J: So there's not like a great imaginary boundary for you? Because you know, some people say there's like the high street and Church Street and

A: Oh yeah I see. I understand that people do do that. There is a sort of snobism about being west and east of the high street .. there's a bigger ethnic mix over there. But, you know, it doesn't bother me much, it's just the way it is. You know, it's just like uptown and downtown, you get a microcosm of it, it's just there, it's just part of London .. [and] I prefer it, I prefer to have a big mix, this street, that street ..

it just depends on how the mood takes me actually .. I'll go through that area, indeed I often wander around there .. [just like] that day [when we met in The Prince William rather than the Magpie and Stump] I didn't want to go in and hear lots of sort of yacking professionals in the Magpie - which is probably the worst pub in the area actually for being a sort of single class, I mean it really is thirtysomething that pub .. [and] I don't have any - stigmas - about how I fit into the British class system. You know, I feel actually quite happy - I'm quite happy having a week staying in a stately home say, I don't feel that I'm out of place, or I'm quite happy to go to someone's grotty council flat, put my feet up and watch Match of the Day with a few beers. It just really, you know, it just doesn't bother me. A lot of people here, its very working class, and no it doesn't bother me .. because Stoke Newington's also fairly, very relaxed about who lives next door, and what have you.

(Alex, session 1)

Here Alex's descriptions of his trips around Stoke Newington begin to sound more than a little familiar. In his analysis of Flaubert's L'Education Sentimentale Harvey (1989a) describes the ease with which the book's hero, Frédéric Moreau, "glides in and out of the differentiated spaces of the city" and positions this ease of movement as lying
in Frédéric’s class position: "it was the possession of money that allowed the present to slip through Frédéric’s grasp, while opening social spaces to casual penetration" (Harvey, 1989:a:263-4). But, as Massey notes, "Did not Frédéric, as he ‘casually penetrated’ these social spaces, have another little advantage in life too?" (Massey, 1993a:60). The contemporary geography of Stoke Newington is structured by the material relations of both class and gender, no less - indeed perhaps more so - than any spaces of the nineteenth century metropolis (cf Birkett, 1990). Just, as we shall see, Alex’s ease of movement in and out of these spaces of class presents a very different picture from the geography of the area’s pubs described by Paul, so too the British pub is still structured around the exclusions of gender (Hey, 1986). Within Stoke Newington, where Alex’s geographical mobility decrees a system of social mobility open only to those in a position of class and gendered hegemony, so too - as he defines access to these alternative cultural spaces through his own cultural capital - this mobility describes the material inequalities of culture and ethnicity. The sense of ease with which Alex moved around the spaces of the globe (chapter 6.6) is repeated as he wanders through Stoke Newington’s ‘global village’.

Alex’s sense of mobility is important because it draws us towards an understanding of those unequal material relations that may make possible the construction of both a distinctively ‘bounded sense of place’, constructed around the icons of an exclusionary English heritage, and the potential enjoyment of a wider set of global interrelations through which for Massey (1993a), for example, a sense of place is always in fact constructed. In other words, rather than lying in stark opposition, it may prove possible to re-align that ‘bounded’ sense of place Harvey (1989a & b) identifies, with a conception of place drawn through a wider system of global flows. Indeed, where throughout the thesis the new cultural class respondents have been drawn towards notions of difference and Otherness, and have actively sought out the pleasures of cultural diversity (even if such an interest took the form only of a quite instrumental cultural capital), it would seem essential to attempt this re-alignment. This task becomes easier when we turn to Dorian, for whom the area’s historical associations may provide a means for exactly the re-alignment of these seemingly contradictory processes.

I have already hinted at a series of parallels between Alex’s accounts and accounts drawn from another age entirely - comparing the descriptions of his trips around the local area to the wanderings of Flaubert’s Frédéric Moreau. In the light of those connections drawn in chapter 2.3c, similarities between the leisure interests of a contemporary new
cultural class and their nineteenth century predecessors should come as no surprise. There I considered the importance of the aesthetic as a mechanism for the control of those more disorientating changes associated with a period of time-space compression and a wider ‘aestheticization of everyday life’ was connected to both the exclusionary gaze of an earlier urban flâneur, and the emergence of the contemporary new cultural class (chapter 2.3b). Here I will argue that a consideration of these parallels between the late nineteenth century and the contemporary period will help us to build a better understanding of the ways in which the new cultural class respondents are constructing their images of the contemporary inner city.

Analyses of the nineteenth century metropolis have tended to draw upon the descriptions of contemporary commentators, and most particularly, perhaps, on the work of Charles Baudelaire. For Baudelaire the hero of the age was the urban flâneur and the essential modern experience could be captured in the Parisian cafes or boulevards through which the dandies strolled. As they opened up the working class districts of Paris, Haussmann’s boulevards constructed a city of dizzying social diversity. It was this world that the flâneurs surveyed, attempting to pull from the myriad impressions of this new social space a catalogue of types with which to populate the reconstructed metropolis (Benjamin, 1985). As they considered themselves invisible, for the flâneur the city became nothing more than phantasmagoria, an impression of sights and sounds displayed for the pleasures of a roving eye. Yet it was, of course, only those insulated from the poverty of the city who could construct this distanced perspective, position its other residents as nothing more than a colourful backdrop. In other words, the flâneur’s interrogating gaze delineated the perspective of class privilege. As the cafes themselves marked out a space of class exclusion, even as they opened up the city’s streets the new boulevards along which the flâneurs strolled articulated a space of increasing social distance (Berman, 1983; Harvey, 1985).^3

Crucially, then, it is this sense of social distance that also pervades Dorian’s description of the contemporary inner city. More significantly, it would seem that the Victorian architecture of Church Street allows Dorian to position today’s experiences of Stoke Newington within a different world entirely:

"It’s [Church Street] a narrow, straggly street, quite nicely curved, lined with mostly nineteenth century stuff. Little groups of shops. I like the park at the other

^3 Though throughout his life Baudelaire’s own political allegiance shifted and changed, his writings were always deeply political. This notion of a new social geography of class exclusion, carved out by the boulevards of Haussmann’s Paris, for example, is captured most powerfully in his poem The Eyes of the Poor in which he interrogates the political positions of the new urban class. See Berman (1983); Harvey (1985), and for a fascinating account of the role of space in the political upheavals of nineteenth century Paris, Ross (1988).
end, and the two churches - it curves nicely round there. It can be dreary on a winter's day, and cheery and delightful on a summer's Sunday afternoon if you want a tea shop, like the Vortex, where you can go if you need a nice bit of writing paper, or if you want to see a bit of life. I feel you can do that round here, because it feels kind of sharp. It has a feeling of variety, of variety in class and colour, and therefore a slight feeling of alternativeness because there are lots of little cultures - lots of gay little cultures - which feel fairly safe in terms of violence. [so that] on a cheerful day, when the sun is shining, I think 'oh, how quaint, here's another culture to look at!' so I like the fact that there are lots of races - as long as they don't make too much noise. [it makes it] slightly bohemian, slightly off beat, and I like that very much."

(Dorian, session 1, emphasis added)

Thus, even as Dorian's descriptions bear comparison to Alex's image of an English country village (once again attention is drawn to the church spires and, here, to the pleasures of an English tea shop), Dorian is in fact constructing a quite different image of the area. Rather than seeking to banish any reference to the social diversity of contemporary metropolitan life, it might seem that it is the area's very social diversity that Dorian celebrates. But, just as the Vortex Jazz Cafe is a haunt only of the area's middle classes, this sense of diversity is perceived only through a parallel sense of social distance. For example, even as she is drawn to that feeling of "sharpness" that the area's social diversity would seem to offer, this sharpness never projects the area's other residents beyond the realm of the visual. Indeed Dorian may enjoy such diversity only when the area's other residents are safely contained within this visual narrative. She enjoys only those groups "who don't make too much noise". And thus, rather than seeking out the potential challenges of material interaction, the area's "gay little cultures" are reduced to the sights of an afternoon stroll, part of an agreeably "alternative" lifestyle aesthetic for those insulated from the realities of life in multi-cultural Britain.

We need to be careful, of course, before taking these historical parallels too far. Here, for example, there also emerge a number of significant departures from traditional understandings of the nineteenth century. Though there may recently have emerged accounts that challenge any crude generalizations, the flâneurs of the previous century were in large part male (cf Walkowitz, 1992). As 'respectable' women ventured out only in the presence of a male companion, the gaze of the nineteenth century demarcated a strictly gendered system of visual control (Wilson, 1991), articulated within a strict division of public and private space (Pollock, 1989). As such the nineteenth century metropolis was structured around the exclusions not only of class, but especially of gender (Wolff, 1990) and as Dorian moves freely around Stoke Newington, projecting her gaze upon the area's other residents, we may be witnessing the emergence of a quite new urban flâneur. Further, whilst the emergence of this figure is intimately connected to a
series of shifts in the nature of contemporary gender relations, it could also be suggested that it reflects a change in the wider geography of the city itself.

Though in the nineteenth century the city's new department stores and grand exhibitions also articulated a series of connections to a wider global geography, displayed through the products of imperial expansionism (Ley & Olds, 1988), in large part the city remained structured around the divisions of class and gender. Moreover, the flâneurs maintained their own quite distinct local geography. Emerging from the seclusion of the inner suburbs, to which they returned each evening (and of which Stoke Newington was then one) the flâneurs traversed the central districts of the city and the object of their gaze was the city's working classes, and women. Thus, as processes of globalisation have changed the nature of the city itself we may be witnessing the emergence of a quite different gaze. Though Dorian's social mobility is made possible by her position of class empowerment, her gaze is directed first and foremost at Stoke Newington's "quaint" little ethnic communities, celebrating a position of ethnic and cultural hegemony in the projection of an 'exotic gaze'.

Moreover, where in the past the flâneur traversed the spaces of the central city, it would seem that they now patrol those very inner suburbs to which they previously retired. Rather than London's West End, it is the contemporary inner city that is home to the new urban flâneur, attracted by the area's very cultural diversity. A distinction has emerged between a 'residential' and 'downtown' flâneur. And, where processes of gentrification have themselves bought an increase in female headed households within the inner city (attracted, in part, by cheaper housing costs) (Rose, 1989) it is now women, as well as men, who form part of this 'new flâneurial class'.

In other words, the gaze now operates outside of those more specific sites of 'spectacle' in which it has hitherto been traced (cf Featherstone, 1992). It is through Urry's tourist gaze that the contemporary high street is now negotiated (Urry, 1990). This gaze may be allowing these new urban flâneurs to use the inner city as nothing less than the point of departure for a more exciting, though sometimes overwhelming, set of journeys:

D: But you see I think I see everything through my own personal filter really, which tends to be very short range.

J: Is that - is that something you feel you need to do?

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4 Though here attention is drawn to Walkowitz (1992) who has traced the journeys of middle class female reformers into the working class districts of the East End at the end of the last century. Just as these women act to 'complicate' any simple reading of the gendered gaze of the nineteenth century, so their accounts often drew upon a series of racialised images. For example, descriptions of the 'dark masses' who threatened to invade the respectable areas of the West End and central city dominate their journals.
D: I think so, yes. I think, well I think about the Turkish families and what their families must be like back at home - then I block that out because I think God they are probably very poor, how terrible. Then I think of the Asians and part of me thinks how wonderful the Indian colours must be and Indian cities and then I get frightened about that because I see myself as running down the streets in Bangkok or somewhere like that and feeling trapped in an alley - so I shut that one off. So, I need to keep - I think control, sort of block out things.

(Dorian, session 6)

This gaze remains powerfully selective. Here, for example, Dorian seems oblivious to the fact that the area’s Turkish community may exist in conditions just as bad in Stoke Newington as at ‘home’. More important in terms of the current discussion, however, is that this imaginary travel may also still be structured around a set of gender differences. In chapters 4 and 6 I traced a set of gendered fears that acted to limit Dorian’s travel experiences. So too here it would seem that even when embarking upon those imaginary journeys made possible through the projection of this exotic gaze, these fears may return to haunt her - tumbling her, for example, into a rather confused global geography. In contrast to Alex’s ease of movement, then, Dorian’s own perambulations around Stoke Newington may still be delimited by the articulation of a number of gendered fears. Indeed, as the public spaces of the contemporary city continue to be structured around a set of gendered exclusions, and not least the fear of sexual attack (Valentine, 1989), Dorian tends to move around the area only in the safety of her car. Because of this, any gaze she constructs will always remain more ambiguous than one constructed by her male counterparts, just indeed as the gaze continues to act as a system of sexual objectification directed predominantly (though not exclusively) at women (cf Mulvey, 1975; Rose, 1991; and see chapter 2.3b).

Considering these issues it is important that, for Dorian at least, these fears only emerge when she confronts a set of contemporary global connections and her image of the area is in fact powerfully nostalgic. Moreover if, ironically, she may well (by virtue of her gender) also have been excluded from that bohemian world Stoke Newington’s past would seem to open up to her, her nostalgic imagery in fact opens up the possibility of a quite different set of imaginary journeys. In the nineteenth century women, as well as men, undertook the journeys of empire and, even as there is a need to avoid too crude an understanding, these journeys can be understood as allowing those (white, middle class) women who undertook them to step outside (if only for a time) the oppressive gender relations of ‘home’ (Mills, 1994). These journeys challenge traditional stereotypes concerning the masculinity of the imperial imagination (cf Short, 1991), though the ‘masculine’ role of the traveller that these women acquired may only have been achieved as they re-asserted another set of cultural stereotypes built around the racial superiority
Thus, where Dorian may wish to celebrate the area’s cultural diversity, yet avoid any reference to a more threatening set of contemporary connections (that may shock her liberal sensibilities) - the present Turkish community may, after all, be depressingly poor - it is the area’s Victorian connections that hold out the possibility of undertaking a more comforting journey:

J: Well, coming back to Stoke Newington again. It’s a very mixed area, and you said that’s part of the attraction of living here. But in the earlier meetings you were saying how important it was for you to have a sense of things like the local history, and it seemed like you were attracted to the Englishness of the area - so I wondered how those two fit together?

D: Well - I suppose they satisfy different parts of me, or perhaps they’re both fantasy. I think perhaps they’re both the same thing, part and parcel of the same thing: that I can imagine a Victorian house with a happy family, and beautiful fireplaces and lovely old furniture; and I can imagine jolly chaps in turbans serving up beautiful Indian food. And there are all these wonderful coloured people who are so nice and friendly and sing glorious songs on Sunday, and I’m wilfully not looking at some other reality.

Adding in a later session:

... so it may well be unconsciously that I’m living here as some kind of twentieth century translation of some English memsahib living in India .. but, I mean that’s the joy of living round here. Stoke Newington’s a very fertile place to build a fantasy - I can be what ever I want.

(Dorian, sessions 3 & 5, emphasis added)

For Dorian the attractions of Stoke Newington lie, in particular, in the preservation of the area’s Victorian architecture. Her own house, for example, has become something of a shrine to Victoriana - from numerous books on the period, through to the ‘original’ fireplace and chaise longue that lends her living room the air of a Victorian parlour. Indeed we might suggest that it is an era she is obsessed with and when in another session I asked her to bring along a favourite possession it was no surprise that what she bought was a treasured Victorian perfume bottle given to her by the friend of an ex boyfriend:6

5 Blunt’s account is more subtle. By drawing attention to the way in which these women had to negotiate notions of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ (through such things as the ‘appropriate’ way for women to travel) Blunt draws attention to the essential fluidity of these categories and our understandings of ‘home’ itself. In a similar way, of course, not all these women were positioned equally as regards the categories of ‘race’ and ‘culture’ - the experience of (white) Irish women in the colonization of Australia, for example, may have been very different (See Blunt, 1994).

6 This method of favourite objects served a number of purposes. In the first place it was intended to act as a spring board with which to initiate a discussion about consumption. Whilst I have not, in the end, considered this part of the research in detail the method also allowed access to those often deeply personal understandings through which each of the respondents constructed a sense of their own identity. As is often the way, these sessions also tended to lead in rather unexpected directions and shed light upon other issues entirely, as here.
J: Oh, it's a perfume bottle is it?

D: I think so yes. It's antique Indian silver.

J: So, the obvious question, why did you choose this?

D: Well - I chose it because it sort of combines a lot of things for me. It's a - I love the chain too that's part of it - it's silver, which means it's precious without being sort of brassy. Silver has a purity about it which I love. It's a sweet idea, I think it's supposed to be an okra, you know, a ladies finger. I love the thought that it was made in India maybe a hundred years ago, something like that, and with the chain it makes a nice heavy piece of jewellery which is nice to wear.

So I like the material, I like the form, I like the function. I like, I think it must have been a perfume bottle for ladies to sniff at when they were getting the vapours. I love the craft in it.

(Dorian, session 4, emphasis added)

Whilst her choice of object opens up a number of potential readings, here I want to concentrate upon how it might inform our understandings of Dorian's quite particular construction of the local area. As in her attraction to the historical charms of Church Street, once again Dorian is drawn to the object's craft - the 'solidity' of its construction, as well as its age. Thus, just as the bottle confers a number of pleasant memories, so too its very form holds within it a number of more comforting temporal references similar to the proposed attractions of heritage. Most important, though, is that the bottle serves reference to a particular reading of Indian culture through which she may secure a more comforting sense of history and with which it in turn becomes possible to construct a more comforting reading of those global interconnections within which contemporary Stoke Newington must be located. With the perfume bottle it would seem that Dorian can fantasize that it is she who is sniffing gently to avoid the vapours, just as in her home she can imagine those "jolly chaps in turbans" serving up beautiful Indian food. Thus, as the area's architecture lends credence to the imaginary pleasures of a bygone Victorian age, in her fantasies Dorian may step outside not only the contemporary inner city, but bypass a set of gendered exclusions that would act to limit her pleasures whether in the contemporary, or nostalgic, spaces of home. Drawing upon a series of racialised stereotypes built around the passivity of the Indian subject, these fantasies allow Dorian to position herself with the role of (paternalistic?) memsahib. The area's Indian community become understood not as bearing reference to any contemporary global connections, but as signifiers of another era entirely - the British Raj - when her beloved Victorians (so celebrated in Stoke Newington mythology) controlled the processes of global change, just as she wishes to do, through the relations of empire.

Her fantasies thus bear a striking resemblance to the nostalgia of Paul and Pat. Rather than celebrating either that radically 'bounded sense of place' Harvey (1989a & b)
identifies, or drawing a sense of place through a more ‘progressive’ system of global interrelations (Massey, 1993a), Dorian is drawing upon a set of imaginings that allow her to celebrate a quite exclusionary national identity understood through a nostalgic re-imagining of a set of global relations given flavour by her local setting. In other words, rather than the presence of Stoke Newington’s other ethnic groups being at odds with a ‘bounded’ sense of place constructed around the icons of an imaginary English past (and place therefore representing any simplistic ‘retreat’ from the processes of globalisation and time-space compression), Dorian’s sense of place is constructed through the historical objectification of contemporary global change. Even as this construction serves to contain the spatial 'implosions' of globalisation, it also serves to secure a series of more comforting temporal references in the face of time-space compression itself.

The danger of such a reading, however, is clearly that it produces too static an understanding of the binary structures of cultural objectification. Rather than singular, or static, in the previous chapter we saw how Dorian in fact constructed a shifting continuum of this exotic presence, moving around an explicitly racialised consumption of the area’s Indian restaurants. So too whilst here these fantasies may be enough to contain the presence of Stoke Newington’s Indian community, the danger remains that other groups may shatter her illusions. Continuing from her description of the “jolly turbans”, for example, Dorian noted:

".. and I'm wilfully not looking at some other reality. It came home to me once lying in bed here, and awoken about 3 o'clock, and I was under my duvet in my brass bed, with 3 cats and a teddy. And outside there was this black guy saying 'You know it's right, and I know it's right, you white cunts so why don't you do it'. And he was saying that time and time again, and I was so struck by that was the reality that exists, and yet I was foolishly hiding behind my curtains and my duvet, in this imaginary reality that was just an escape of mine.

J: So these two places don’t wipe each other out, they can co-exist?

D: Well, they do co-exist because that chap talked to this white cunt. This is the reality, far more the reality than my fantasies about the Victorian household.

(Dorian, session 3)

Once again, for Dorian, the potential pleasures of cultural diversity are powerfully structured by a series of racialised oppositions. Where Dorian is drawn to the Indian community, then, it should come as no surprise that the figure that shatters her historical illusions is a member of the area’s West Indian or West African communities - "[a] black guy saying 'You know it's right, and I know it's right, you white cunts so why don't you do it’" (emphasis added). Where the Indians may be silenced through the structures of a nostalgic gaze, it is a member of the area’s black community that quite literally breaks
that silence and pulls her back into the less comforting world of contemporary Stoke Newington.

Ironically then, even whilst Dorian constructs some sort of continuum of ethnicity with which to control any interaction with cultural difference, this continuum continues to move around a traditional system of racialized oppositions (cf Dyer, 1988; Short, 1991). And, whilst she may deploy that continuum in order to construct a more comforting, and powerfully nostalgic image of her local area, so those very oppositions must move always to undercut her constructions and tumble her back into the more threatening spaces of the contemporary inner city.

7.4 Histories of conflict

".. Stoke Newington is not so much a literal place as a cultural oscillation between the prosaic reality of the contemporary inner city and an imaginative reconstruction of the area's past as a dissenting settlement .. For those who want it, this imagined past will keep looming into view. In the midst of the greyness, the filth and the many evidences of grinding poverty, the incoming imagination can dwell only on those redeeming traces which still indicate a momentary 'absence of modernity' ..

[But] what exactly is it that keeps breaking through? The reappearance is not simply of the past as it 'really' was: indeed, sometimes the authentic trace of history is exactly what has to go .. [such that] Although it can be imagined as an English settlement with roots in the Domesday book .. we should remember that .. The different populations in the Stoke Newington area have different senses of place and these are certainly not always congruent with one another."


For both Dorian and Alex, Stoke Newington's historical associations, and especially those conveyed through its remaining Victorian architecture, formed a vital part in the projection of what we might term a system of cultural nostalgia, through which each sought to construct a more comforting picture of inner city life. Rather than through the lens of contemporary inner city decline, for each the area seemed to be constructed only through the icons of a powerful local 'heritage' (cf Wright, 1985; 1991).

Indeed as the past itself has come to be understood as a space of security and certainty in the face of the discontinuity and insecurity of the contemporary world (Lowenthal, 1985) so we might expect that sense of history Stoke Newington supposedly affords to form a valuable link to this more comforting space for all the respondents. In chapter 5, for example, I traced how Alex attempted to 'balance' the modern world of work with a more comforting sense of continuity accessed through the historical charms of his office mews. And, whilst both Paul and Pat continually compared a more favourable past to the ills of contemporary Stoke Newington, in the previous section we also saw how Dorian was drawn to a sense of temporal 'solidity' to be found within the
craft of the antique Indian perfume bottle.

Yet, as the selective (re)imagination of an emergent 'heritage industry' have sought to present a more comforting image of Britain's (inter)national past - in the face of contemporary national decline (Crang, 1994a; Hewison, 1987) - and access a continued space of 'dwelling' in contrast to contemporary local change, so questions have increasingly emerged over just what it is of the past and, more especially, whose past this industry might be celebrating (Jacobs, 1990). Within debates around inner city regeneration in particular, critics from the left have tended to understand the landscapes of heritage as nothing more than an attempt to draw attention away from the obvious social inequalities of contemporary society and a mechanism for the halt of capital flight (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1990). Even as any (re)presentation of the past must always be powerfully selective, acting either to (mis)present, or obscure alternative historical readings, so too it has been argued that monies spent on local 'preservation' have drawn investment away from a more pressing set of social needs and been concentrated on presenting a nostalgic image of the contemporary inner city of benefit to only to its new middle class residents (Wright, 1991). If this is indeed the case we might expect a number of tensions to emerge between the heritage demands of the new cultural class and working class respondents.

Certainly within Stoke Newington redevelopment has been concentrated around the heritage demands of an economically powerful and vociferous middle class (Wright, 1985). Whilst in Church Street itself, for example, there has been a proliferation of shops and pubs catering to a mainly middle class clientele (whose fronts, if not themselves suitably restored, certainly draw attention to the surrounding Victorian architecture) interest has also centred on the restoration of the area's Victorian cemetery, Abney Park. Likewise, demands have continued for an extension in conservation status for many of the area's streets. Where in 1974 Clissold Park was declared an 'Urban Conservation Area', for example, in 1982 conservation status was extended to the whole of Church Street and the adjoining streets of Shakespeare Walk and Milton Grove, as the area's new residents demanded the geographical extension of history (Figure 4). Supporting the demands of this class, the local authority recently spent a great deal of money on the restoration of the area's Victorian charms, installing in 1986, for example, a set of 'traditional English gas lamps' along the length of Church Street at the cost of some £27,000.

Whilst not all Stoke Newington's middle class residents have supported the nostalgic redevelopment of their local area, it may be no coincidence that the heritage demands of the new cultural class in particular have concentrated upon the preservation
only of the area’s Victorian landscape. For George, for example, it is these physical reminders of an age long past that lends the area a powerful sense of history. And it is through this sense of local history that he is able to obtain a sense of “ownership” over the local area itself (session 6).

This attraction to Victoriana has widely been seen as an attempt by the new cultural class to forge, through historical association, a more secure class position and a historical legitimacy for their own rather ambiguous position in the contemporary inner city (Jager, 1986). It therefore came as no surprise that both Dorian and Alex, for example, had spent a great deal of time reading up on local history, concentrating in particular upon that period in the nineteenth century when their own houses were again occupied by a local middle class. Moreover, all the new cultural class respondents had been quite explicitly drawn to the purchasing of an old house. Whilst these houses can be understood as offering a set of more comforting temporal associations based around the attractions of rurality, craft and continuity (with which to hold at bay the perceived superficiality of contemporary urban life), they must also be understood as offering a more secure set of class associations. Here, for example, is Dorian talking me through the joys of life in her Victorian terraced house:

“I suppose they represent a nostalgia for a bygone era which I think, especially in the ’80s, we all shared - and a nostalgia for craft which you don’t find in new houses. I don’t know why I want to possess it, but I feel like I want to. And I definitely feel, in a sentimental way, that old houses have a sort of soul about them which I don’t feel new houses do.. partly because they’re solid, partly because of the proportions - high ceilings and gargoyles which have a certain substance to them...

.. There are things which make up a Victorian house for me. I find the details in the house very very pleasing. And I love the thought that it’s got a

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7 Amanda, for example, found the installation of the lampposts “obscene”. For her not only did they represent an obvious waste of scarce local resources, but offered a deliberately selective reading of the area’s past. She questioned, for example, why one would want to celebrate an age within which the majority of local people would have existed in poverty even greater than today’s, or why the local authority should not have spent money celebrating the area’s long history of cultural diversity, for example. As such Amanda drew upon a common understanding of the heritage issue on the left.

8 Whilst appearing only briefly in the previous chapter, George’s absence in this final chapter is even more noticeable. It relates to two things. First, it reflects a real difference in the importance of the local area to the different respondents. Whilst George liked Stoke Newington (and especially the sense of the past the area affords) he in fact spends little time there. This was reflected in the interviews, in which he had little to say about his feelings towards, and experience of, the area. In this sense his absence here is quite strategic and warns us against over-determining the role of place in people’s experience of time-space compression. At a different level it is a reflection of the interview process itself. George was an extremely skilful interviewee (a skill he practices at work), and continually steered the conversations away from any discussion of his ‘personal’ life. Thus, whilst he talked at length about his experiences of change at work, or of his business trips abroad, for example, he had little to say about changes in his local area, his life at home, or of his holidays with his family. (And compare with Alex, chapters 3, 4 & 5).
history, it's got over one hundred years of people living here and having friends round and sitting by the fire. And I like the fact that probably before this house was built there were fields and it's sort of in touch with - *history, roots, which aren't necessarily my roots actually, but which they somehow seem to connect with.*

(Dorian, session 1, emphasis added)

Yet as Dorian concentrates only upon the architectural details of the house it could be suggested that for the new cultural class respondents, rather than based in personal experience, this sense of the area's past may be secured simply through the *aesthetics* of a by-gone age. Such understandings raise interesting issues over the notion of historical 'authenticity'. For Dorian, for example, when faced with the realization that the lamp posts in Church Street were only reproductions, it seems that a sense of history can as easily be secured through visual detail alone:

"Oh no, it's not so much a question of what's old and what's new but something that I find beautiful is often beautiful because it seems to *feel* old .. as long as it *looks* like the original."

(Dorian, session 1, emphasis added)

Where notions of historical authenticity can be secured through simple aesthetics, the new cultural class respondents take on the power simply to "buy into" that sense of local belonging and historical continuity they seek. For Dorian especially this power articulated precisely the complex project of the new cultural class: an attempt to secure a more 'respectable' class position constructed through the historical landscape of an earlier Victorian bohemia, and to use that aesthetic as a new form of 'residential credentialism':

J: So what does the area represent to you?

D: *It represents history, it represent the power to buy into history, and the past, and property. And escape from those sort of lower middle class Jewish suburban standards. It feels like I'm slightly rebelling against Mum's standards, because I don't want to live like that at all.*

Adding in a later session:

[And] the fact that [here] you can walk along and you see the evidence of the past brings it - makes it very real.

(Dorian, sessions 1 & 4, emphasis added)

Yet even as they identify a very real need for this sense of history, an aestheticization of the past also offers something more significant for these historical shoppers. Where history itself is reduced to a scrap book of past architectural styles (Chambers, 1987), and historical authenticity to nothing more than the ironic category of the 'postmodern consumer', the possibility emerges of 'having it all', of enjoying a sense of the past that never precludes a celebration of the contemporary. For Alex, for example,
those changes in the local pubs that have sought to draw upon the area's historical connections, are ironically enjoyed as nothing more than a celebration of the lifestyle aesthetics of his class:

"I mean take the *Magpie and Stump*. That was an awful pub, a seedy old place with about 3 people in there. They moved in there, and I think they've done a very nice job, inside, made it more traditional, and now they do good, very good, business. Yeah, I'm all for it.

And that's actually going back a few years. But most pubs, having said that, now are definitely, you know most pubs now are definitely decorated in a historic, you know, a looking back flavour in some way. In fact what they're actually doing is creating a new look. You get a pub like *Steptoes* where they've got all the old rubbish strewn all over the ceiling, and it creates a sort of olde worlde, but if you actually think about it then it's pure eighties (laughter), you know, and it will be deemed as such .."

(Alex, session 1)

And just as in his converted mews office it's not a:

J: .. kind of weird feeling sitting in an olde worlde building, but talking to someone on the other side of the world?

A: No, I don't think so, no I don't think so. I mean, looking at it - when you say it - there is a definite kind of anomaly about that. But I can't, I mean personally, no. I think it's great! I think, you know, why not!!

(Alex session 2)

For another group of residents, however, such pleasures are far from ironic. Just as Dorian's attraction to Victoriana articulated an exclusionary politics of contemporary ethnic relations, that sense of history the new cultural class respondents seek might in fact obscure an image of the area's past others would like to see preserved. When Paul thinks of the *Magpie and Stump* (previously *Marlow's*, and before that *The Red Lion*), for example, there emerges a quite different set of understandings:

"When I talk to my mates, I'll say let's go down the Red Lion tonight, it's not the Red Lion now, but I'll say to him the Red Lion and he'll know what I'm talking about. But like one of these yuppies and I said do you want to go down the Red Lion, they wouldn't know what it is. But we've always called it the Red Lion, it's always been the Red Lion even though it's called *Marlows* now [in fact the Magpie and Stump]. It's the Red Lion to us, so - things like that, I couldn't get used to the new names. It's the Red Lion to me, it's always been the Red Lion, I ain't going to call it nothing else, and I mean why change the name?! It's called, what's it called now? Magpie and Stump, but it's still got a big Red Lion thing out there ain't they! Why change the name of the pubs! It used to be a nice pub, I mean the Red Lion, it's a nice name for a pub. The Magpie and Stump! Why bring in the yuppie names, why not keep the traditional thing?! .. [I was] proud of it. I mean Eric Bristow used to play darts in the Red Lion .. [and] me and my mates, my mate's dad had the pub, we used to play

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9 Alex's consumption of the past thus bares a striking resemblance to Dorian's 'mix and match' of cultures in her consumption of exotic food.
football in the cellar, practice darts, play darts .."

(Paul, session 1)

As names convey a sense of ownership, for Paul and Pat changes in the names of the local pubs (and there have been a multitude of such changes to be sure) signify nothing less than the appropriation of their own past. Even more significantly, their sense of the past moves around a very different set of understandings than those constructed by the new cultural class respondents. Where for Alex the Magpie and Stump conveys a playful historical aesthetic, it is an aesthetic that looks beyond the history of the local area that Paul and Pat draw upon and moves, in effect, to deny that history. Whilst for Alex the pub used to be a "seedy old place with about 3 people in it" for Paul the pub holds a series of important memories rooted in personal experience rather than aesthetic appreciation.

Thus, though for the new cultural class respondents the conversion of Church Street into a simulacrum of Victoriana may offer a pleasing visual landscape through which they can secure their place in an (imaginary) national past, for Paul and Pat those same changes have moved to destroy a sense of the past built through a longstanding (local) history of shared experience. Remembering Paul’s sense of loss at the passing of the local comer shop, contrast Dorian’s enjoyment of those "interesting little shops" to be found in Church Street’s pleasing nineteenth century parade with Paul’s understanding of these redevelopments:

J: So what do you think of the new lot coming in?

P: I don’t know. I don’t like what they’re doing to the pubs. And the shops - they have this little, funny little shops - you know down Church Street - which are changing over. The traditional shops which were there have gone now. There was a barber there, I can remember he used to do a short back and sides, like hair cut. He’s gone, a lot of the old shops have gone. I mean, what the hell, what is there now? a kite shop! I never seen a kite shop before. And wine bars, I mean that’s, that’s a new thing .. A kite shop, I can’t see a kite shop serving any purpose, apart from I suppose yuppie people buy kites, I don’t know! .. . I mean in the past you used to be able to go in to a pub, any pub, and see all your old mates, but now, I don’t know ..

(Paul, session 1)

Where both Paul and Pat sought to draw upon a sense of the area’s past to hold at bay a set of more upsetting contemporary changes, as their sense of the past moves in conflict with an aestheticized history of the area promoted by Stoke Newington’s most powerful new arrivals such access may simply no longer be available. And where a sense of place has long been connected to a deep rooted sense of ‘dwelling’, the obscuration of this past must have powerful consequences.

But we need be careful not to offer too neat a sociology of these conflicts.
Certainly at the root of these tensions lies quite different understandings of the past itself. But where Wright (1985) has tended to set these understandings in stark opposition, we might also find the two groups drawing upon quite similar local histories. All, for example, drew pride from the area's more distant past and, though Paul and Pat seemed more interested in the area's royal connections, they too drew a sense of pride from the area's more famous past residents - amongst them those liberal non-conformists Wright understands as of interest only to the area's new liberal classes. At the same time it would seem that Paul is quite capable of his own acts of resistance. He has been a prime instigator, for example, in gaining a preservation order for his own local pub, deploying the techniques of a 'middle class heritage industry' to safeguard his own past (and future).

For Paul and Pat an interest in these royal connections may, of course, be more than coincidental. Through them the area is connected to a deep rooted sense of Englishness, and it is this identity that also secures for them a more ambiguous relationship with Stoke Newington's middle class residents than would be suggested in any easy understandings of a 'local'/yuppie' divide (cf Crilley, 1990; Short, 1990). Whilst both certainly resent the way in which these new residents have rebuilt 'their' local area in the image of London's lifestyle magazines, it seems even they may have their uses:

J: Is there another side to it with these yuppies coming in? Have they actually helped bring back that old history?

P: In that side of it yeah they have, yeah. Well if it's stuff like that then that's always good for the community, good for the area. It's holding it back, keeping your tradition, you're keeping what you like there. You think well that's not going to change for a few years ..

.. I mean in the past say there weren't black kids in Dynever Road say. There are now, I mean you go to school now - not saying it's all black kids, I mean there are Asians and whatever -it was erm - I mean over the years it's just got worse and worse and worse.

So now at least it's come full circle. You're getting a lot of white people coming in, but you're getting into yuppie sort of white people now so it's sort of, it's come - Stoke Newington's always been a really nice place to live.

(Paul, session 1)

Far from the conservation of areas like Abney Park Cemetery being of interest only to the area's new cultural class residents, it might seem that these residents are in fact often preserving a series of local landmarks important to Paul and Pat too (cf Wright, 10 These connections have certainly entered local folklore. During my pilot study, for example, whenever I asked anyone about the area's past the first stories inevitably concerned King Henry's walk down King Henry's Walk, and how Cromwell's round heads (or King James's cavaliers, depending upon who you believe) had stabled their horses at The Three Crowns. Inevitably, of course, and much to Pat's disgust, The Three Crowns has more recently been renamed The Samuel Beckett (more in line, one presumes, with that bohemian atmosphere the area's new residents wish to project). Embarrassing, perhaps, as it has been my 'local' for the past couple of years.
1985). Though the cemetery holds very different associations for each, it would seem to offer a powerful hold on the area’s underlying ‘character’ for them all. At a deeper level these new residents are preserving another set of traditions both Paul and Pat would wish to see upheld. As they have pushed up the prices of property they, at least, hold at bay the ‘invasions’ of non-white residents and preserve Stoke Newington’s essential ‘national character’.

Thus, even though it may be tempting to draw up some notion of a more or less ‘authentic’ past, the one based around a working class oral tradition celebrating the localised memories of personal use, the other an aestheticized (and quite imaginary) national past, the issue would seem to lay less with any elusive sense of ‘historical authenticity’ (cf Bondi, 1993) than the material politics each position articulates. As the kite shops and wine bars of Stoke Newington’s new cultural class continue to replace those local corner shops through which both Paul and Pat reaffirmed their sense of local identity, this new landscape secures not only a particular version of the area’s past, but also its present.

Furthermore, in common with other experiences of gentrification (cf Williams, 1986) this material re-imagination of the local area, and that sense of disempowerment it articulates for many of its working class residents, lies not only in the forces of economic change but also as these new residents take control of the institutions of community life itself. As Pat articulates:

J: What about the other people coming in? Because in the last few years there seem to be a lot of rich people, is that different from when you were little?

P: Oh yeah, because around this block there’s what? There’s that road, one, two, three, over the back, solicitors, an architect - because I started up a Tenants’ Association because we couldn’t get anything done. And I got talking to a bloke and said let’s do it, and we did, and we got a lot of stuff, we got a lot of things done, pavements and the roads, they did it. And we asked - we had a meeting in a hall - and the people that came from around here! Just these 5 streets. They were so posh! crikey! - I stood down very quickly, I said there was no way, I'll

11 Though Wright (1985) is correct to draw out those conflicts that may still emerge over just how the site gets ‘preserved’. Where the area’s new middle class residents may wish the cemetery to remain in a romantically ‘wild’ state the local working class, he argues, will wish for a rather better state of repair. Such differences undoubtedly emerge as each wish to draw upon a rather different set of associations. Where the new cultural class residents may enjoy the cemetery’s ‘rustic’ feel, Pat wants to be able to find her grandmother’s grave (and remember the time she got her head stuck in the railings attempting to do so!). And there are, of course, other uses that may well conflict with the associations of either. Abney Park is a well known cruising ground, and for the gay community it seems to have acquired its attraction less because of its rustic feel than the proliferation of its ruins (see Binney, 1994).
just help, you know - it's unbelievable. You didn't realise how it had come up, unbelievable.

(Pat, session 1)

Even as she may welcome the arrival of these more 'respectable' (white) neighbours, those same newcomers make Pat question her 'right' to a role in the local neighbourhood. For Pat, whilst these new neighbours re-secure a sense of the area's national identity, their arrival has also undermined the last vestiges of her local identity.

7.5 The 'global village': geographies of power

Far from singular then, it would seem possible to find within Stoke Newington a whole number of place identities and ones not always congruent with each other. Indeed with the changes of recent years it might seem that the geography of the local area has itself become increasingly fragmented. In particular there now exist a series of imaginary local boundaries demarcating 'Stoke Newington proper' from the less desirable spaces of Clapton to the east of the high street, and Dalston and Stamford Hill to its south and north respectively. That "cultural oscillation" that defines Patrick Wright's image of the area is concentrated around the areas of Albert Town, and Church Street in particular, where the new cultural class have congregated and where, alongside the landscape of imaginary England, there is still to be found a predominantly white working class. Though these boundaries must always, of course, remain somewhat fluid, life here is indeed very different from life in the poorer multi-racial areas beyond, such that they have begun to form a series of frontiers around which the local populace have constructed their own local geographies of global change. And, even as they remain 'imaginary', these geographies delineate a very real material politics.

Though the area's new cultural class residents may occasionally undertake an adventurous sortie to the high street's Turkish grocers, for example, one is far less likely to encounter a Turkish audience in the Vortex Jazz Cafe of Church Street. Rather than representative only of economic power, these geographies articulate the material limits of social and cultural mobility. As such these local geographies may provide for an excellent illustration of the material relations that shape processes of globalisation and time-space compression at the local level and, to finish, I want to contrast Paul's sense

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12 Property prices in the area, for example, are often directly related to the distance of the property from Church Street (and thus Dalston), even if - especially for the area's estate agents - these boundaries seem remarkably fluid. When I rented a flat in Clapton, for example, the advert located it on 'Stoke Newington borders', whilst the same agency promoted our next flat (no more than a mile from the first) precisely on the basis of its distance from Clapton and its location in the heart of Stoke Newington "proper" (even if for most of our neighbours we clearly live in Dalston)!
of restriction to that sense of socio-spatial mobility enjoyed by the new cultural class respondents.

For them, the joy of life in an area like Stoke Newington may well be that it is an area where one can seem to 'have it all'. With a quick trip down the high street to Ridley Road market, for example, one may flirt with that world of difference offered by the processes of time-space compression (but which for other local residents may offer only the cheapest place to shop), whilst in Stoke Newington this world of difference is never more than a stroll away from the more comforting space of little England still to be found in the cafes and cemetery of Church Street. In other words, this control over local space may well represent a vital means of control over the processes of time-space compression itself even if, as Amanda makes plain, these geographies are often far from simple.

In many ways, Amanda has positioned herself as something of an outsider to the cosy world of thirtysomethings that for her Stoke Newington has become. In particular, rather than ethnically or socially diverse, for Amanda Stoke Newington has become a predominantly white, middle class area representative not of any agreeable 'village England' but only an unbearable national reserve and hypocrisy. As such the proximity of the more ethnically diverse spaces of "Hackney proper" represent a vital means of escape. Contrast, for example, her description of Stoke Newington with her understanding of Ridley Road market, a mile down the high street in Dalston:

"I know it sounds wanky, but it just feels more real down there [Ridley Road]. It's more interesting, you get caught up in things and have conversations with people on the street and things like that [which] you don't tend to do round here - or else you might talk about double glazing, or where your kids go to school (laughter) .. It's so restrained, so BRITISH round here, the stiff upper lip, you're polite to everyone but you don't actually say anything.

.. and it gives my daughter so much more confidence as well. She's much less frightened of things that are, that are outside the norm, you know what you might perceive as the 'norm'. She doesn't get scared if some West Indian woman sort of envelops her to her bosom and sort of goes 'oh lord, wonderful child, isn't she pretty?!' or something like that .. It might be contradictory, but there I can actually feel more at home [because] I don't have to put up a front in the same way as you do round here - you don't have to put on a show.

(Amanda, session 1, emphasis added)

It would be easy to construct a reading of this description that would position it with the understandings common to the accounts of the other new cultural class respondents. For example, in the last chapter Amanda was increasingly concerned with accessing a space of cultural 'authenticity' (and with which to hold at bay the temporal dislocations of time-space compression). Here too she seems to be drawing upon a notion of the authentic constructed around a series of racial stereotypes. For her Ridley Road's West Indian shoppers, for example, are representative of an essential demonstrativeness long associated with images of blackness and through which there may be established a
space of temporal distance between the 'cultured reserve' of the white community and the 'spiritual passion' of a more primitive form of social interaction (cf Short, 1991).

At the same time these trips to the market seem to be undertaken in the spirit of cultural 'education' that positions them perhaps, no less than for the other new cultural class respondents, within a quite instrumental cultural capital:

"I just, I don't know how to say half these things without sounding terribly wanky - it's just that, I LEARN things, I mean it's, it's humbling sometimes .. for instance, there's a lot of Africans and West Indians that I talk to, colleagues and friends at work - more Africans - who really sneer at us because we are the so called 'civilised society' but we've lost a big part of ourselves. Whether it's a spiritual part, or a bit that you can't really, you know it's not logical , it's not material, and that's really quite recent for me."

(Amanda, session 1, emphasis added)

Yet even as there must remain some validity to such a reading, it is a reading Amanda herself would vigorously reject. Rather, and in direct contrast to the other new cultural class respondents, Amanda is appalled by any notion of cultural 'voyeurism'. Where Dorian, for example, sought out the pleasures of cultural diversity only from the distanced perspective of a powerful tourist gaze, Amanda actively seeks out the challenges of material interaction. Her conversations at work, for example, form part of a quite genuine attempt to challenge the operations of a racialised mental health service with perspectives drawn from other cultures. And, whilst she would never claim to be able to 'enter the Other', her attempts in this direction are part of a broader challenge to the established social 'norms' around which her own professional field operates, and in turn to the broader social constructions of race and ethnicity.

It is important, then, that Amanda recognizes her own social mobility and locates that mobility in a position of both class and ethnic empowerment. For her the trips to the market are understood as the quite conscious enactment of a system of 'controlled de-control' (Featherstone, 1992; see chapter 2.3c). Through this process of partial immersion Amanda can 'balance' her desire for a life unconstrained (in some ways) from the prohibitive social roles of everyday life (cf Goffman, 1959) with the privileged existence offered by life in Stoke Newington's middle class enclaves. Thus, even as she continues to mobilize a series of racial stereotypes (not least around notions of black sexuality) she never attempts to deny that her mobility describes a quite privileged social position made possible, in part, through her command over local space:

"It really depends on the mood, doesn't it. But that's probably why I like the area - you can fit different bits in. If you're feeling a bit posh you can put on a skirt

13 In our last session, for example, Amanda and I discussed this very reading and, for her, to draw up any continuum of 'spirituality', for example, would be to re-inscribe exactly those racial stereotypes she wishes to challenge.
and high heels and dress up and go and have a posh meal, or else you can go down Dalston .. [to] various West Indian places, friends’ places, or to a West Indian party or something like that, in a very short skirt (laughter). You can choose the lot round here - it gets the adrenalin going .. it’s a bit of a contradiction really, because it means I’ve got the best of both worlds. It doesn’t have all the problems that the rest of Hackney’s got - on the whole it doesn’t have the violence that Ridley Road has got say. Stoke Newington’s nice because it’s close to things that are interesting, but you can also get away from it because it’s sanitised, and safe - a bit of a cop out really.”

(Amanda, session 1, emphasis added)

As Stoke Newington itself becomes fragmented around a broader global geography, for Amanda the area’s distinctive local geographies secure a conscious system of spatial control. Her reflexivity is important because it demonstrates how those mechanisms through which the processes of time-space compression are negotiated, and that often articulate a set of racist understandings, are not necessarily the product of a racist individual, but lie in the practical politics of everyday life. For those in a position of some class and ethnic empowerment this politics describes a world of social mobility not open to those in other positions and this sense of mobility, and the exclusions it articulates, may be quite consciously recognized by the new cultural class respondents themselves.

To summarize: for the new cultural class respondents at least place may represent a vital arena of ‘retreat’ from the ‘ravages of time-space compression’ (Harvey, 1989a), even if their accounts have uncovered a rather different construction of place from that identified by either David Harvey (1989a & b) or Doreen Massey (1993a). As Stoke Newington becomes (re)constructed in the image of a mythical English village, or the bohemian world of a by-gone Victorian age, it is possible for those exercising a certain social mobility to enjoy an exclusionary, and quite ‘bounded’ sense of place, constructed through the objectification of a wider set of ‘global’ inter-relations. This sense of the past the area affords also allows for a more comforting sense of time and enables the new cultural class respondents to secure a more ‘respectable’ class position. At the same time, through the projection of a powerful exotic gaze, and the construction of a strict imaginary geography, those exercising this mobility can choose that level of access they require to a world of increasing social and cultural diversity - ’will it be the Anglo Asian, or Ridley Road tonight?’ . In contrast to those more schematic accounts reviewed in chapter 2.1b, this draws attention to a material politics of place and demonstrates the unequal power relations inherent to recent change.14 There are in Stoke Newington a

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14 Here I do not mean to exaggerate the difference between my own position and the arguments made by Massey (1991b, 1993a). She too concludes that the effects of time-space compression are socially differentiated according to the position of differently empowered social
variety of place identifications and that image of the area that the new cultural class
would wish to construct may act only to obscure the constructions of less powerful
residents. I have, quite strategically, sought only to explore the understandings of Stoke
Newington's white residents but, as Patrick Wright (1985, 1991) makes plain, there could
also be described a quite different set of geographies each articulating a very different
sense of place. And, despite that commodification of these other worlds that would seem
to dominate the accounts of the new cultural class respondents, the experiences of these
other groups are no "mere hallucinations" (Wright, 1985:231).

But, it is important not to reduce divisions in the area to conflicts between its
'black' and white residents. It would seem to me that Stoke Newington is increasingly
divided along the lines not only of colour, but also of class.\(^{15}\) Therefore, I have also
sought to explore those conflicts that may emerge between different groups at the 'centre'
of racial power, in order to re-emphasise the influence of class on the experiences of time-
space compression. Though in many ways in a position of some ethnic empowerment,
for Paul and Pat Stoke Newington's emergent geographies clearly offer less enjoyable
experiences. For example, already I have shown how that image of the area's history that
some of Stoke Newington's new middle class residents are constructing is, in many ways,
acting only to obscure that sense of the area's past through which Paul and Pat construct
a powerfully localised identity. And, even as Albert Town itself remains (or has become
again) predominantly white, the area's 'Englishness' may offer scant compensation for
that sense of disempowerment both Paul and Pat feel in the face of such dramatic local
change. As the kite shops and wine bars of Church Street demarcate a space of increasing
social distance, that geography of the local area Paul and Pat articulate reflects a sense

actors within a wider set of socio-spatial relations. She draws attention not only to the inter-
relations of the 'global' and the 'local', but the influence of scale more widely (cf Smith, 1993). It
is not only that some people are experiencing time-space compression, and some not, but that
different actors are placed in different positions in relation to the flows and interconnections of
these processes. These differences affect people's understandings of place, and articulate a material
politics. The key difference between her account and mine, however, is that I have tried to
demonstrate these arguments with empirical analysis. This has allowed a clearer understanding of
how those images of place constructed by one group may often directly subordinate the
understandings of another (as in the case of the new cultural class and working class respondents,
for example). They may also draw upon a reading of these inter-relations that is anything but
'progressive' (as in Dorian's understandings of Stoke Newington's Indian community). It is this
difference in the two accounts that the chapter's title is meant to suggest.

\(^{15}\) For example, though in many ways Stoke Newington, and Hackney more widely, has so
far avoided the kind of conflicts that currently rage in Tower Hamlets, evidence of inter-racial
violence is certainly increasing. But, violence is also increasing amongst the area's different ethnic
minorities. Whilst writing this chapter, for example, the Turkish cafe at the end of my own street
was burnt out by a local Turkish mafia demanding 'protection money'. Conflict in the area is thus
complex and cannot be reduced only to the divisions of 'black' and 'white' (cf Keith, 1993).
of increasing impotence.

Pat, for example, rarely bothers even to venture out of the house these days and it is possible to explore Paul's understanding of these changes through the changing geography of the area's pubs. Far from articulating a sense of control over, or pleasure in, these changes, for Paul the area is essentially under invasion from both residents of another colour, and of another class. As he has been forced first from his pubs in Church Street to ones further into Albert Town, and now these too have become haunts of the area’s "yuppies", with his loss of access to these pubs there would also seem to be lost that very sense of 'dwelling' so vital to a sense of place:

"Yeah, like I said, like Green Lanes is a strictly Greek, or Turkish area, they go there. They've got odd little spots - like in Chaucer Court they've got a caf. Is it the parade of shops just off Newington Green? and they go into a caf there. And there's one, off of Nevil Road, they play pool, that's their little spot.

Now, the Nevil Arms is a black man's pub, used to be a black man's pub. All black people used to drink there. So they don't sort of intermingle, they have their own little spots.

Adding in a later session:

The yuppies use there own wine bars. So there's no where you can go really. Like, the Shakespeare, that used to be a nice little family pub but that's changed over now. That's gone very yuppified, you don't see no black people going in there, or you won't see the Greeks going in there .. and we've been pushed out, or into a corner - where are we supposed to go?

(Paul, sessions 1 & 6)

Thus, far from universal, the ‘ravages of time-space compression’ are articulated across a space of increasing social inequality - one structured by the complex interactions of gender, class, race, and sexuality - and the 'comforts' of place too, so vital to a sense of control over these processes, are powerfully differentiated.
8.1 Towards a sociology of time-space compression

"These new people could not afford the places where we all ate, and danced, and exercised. So in some ghastly sense, they were both ubiquitous and invisible at the same time. You didn’t have to notice them unless you wanted to. Often, I would sit in a restaurant and be literally unable to follow the conversation going on around me, so mesmerized was I by the Lao busboy, or the Haitian dishwasher - our new fellow countrymen. Who are they? I thought. Who are we? I thought. So I did not know any more what a nation was, or a family, or a boundary, or a decent life."

(David Rieff, Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World, 1993:23)

The eventual form of this project is not what I had in mind when I began the research three or four years ago. This is, of course, inevitable. Over the course of any investigation new literatures emerge, our ideas develop, and the issues we want to explore change. But in my case not only is the final form of the project different from that which I had imagined when I started, but the aims of the research have changed. Before making some conclusions, it might therefore be useful to review the history of the project and re-emphasis the questions it has tried to answer.

Initially I set out to explore a set of rather abstract set ideas concerning the nature of time-space compression itself. In The Condition of Postmodernity Harvey (1989a) suggested that the nature of time and space could change, were changing, and that these changes were having a dramatic impact on people’s understanding of themselves and the world around them. The impact of this book was enormous, sparking a series of debates across the discipline and beyond (see, for example Bird et al, 1993). People were excited and, it seems, continue to be excited by the idea that the very parameters within which individuals make sense of the world might be in a process of re-organisation. It was argued that the emergence of new technologies, of new work practices, and of changes in the taken-for-granted world, were having a dramatic impact. Ideas that up until then had largely been restricted to the world of science fiction (Gibson, 1986, 1989; cf Kern, 1983) - ideas about elsewhereness, heterotopia, and cyberspace - began to appear in the work of social theorists (Hopkins, 1990; Shields, 1989; Soja, 1990), and continue to do so (Probyn, 1992; Sidaway, 1994). Early on people did suggest the impact of these changes was likely to be quite different for different people (Dear, 1991) and that Harvey’s argument that they were inevitably ‘disorientating’ was open to debate (Deutsche, 1991; Massey, 1991a). But few questioned whether these changes were happening at all, or that they would have a profound impact on people’s lives. No-one had yet attempted to open
these debates to any sort of grounded empirical analysis.

Initially, then, my project was simply aimed at breaking into a set of debates that were becoming increasingly hyperbolic. I especially wanted to challenge the claim that these changes might lie beyond the possibility of empirical investigation (Jameson, 1988), a claim seeming to hold particular dangers for the way in which geographical debate might develop in the future, and that itself seemed to rest upon the assumption of inappropriate methodologies. By deploying a qualitative methodology I thought it might be possible to get a clearer idea of what was changing and of how these changes were being experienced by different people. I also thought it might be possible to move beyond a literature that was polarising the impact of these changes as either ‘good’ or ‘bad’ (cf Harvey, 1989a; Deutsche, 1991; Massey, 1991a) and to engage with debates about the emergence of a newly fragmented and incoherent ‘postmodern’ identity (Jameson, 1984, 1991).

I thought that if I could only persuade people to talk about their experiences of actually using something like a fax machine I might be a position to unpack a few of these rather vague notions about elsewhere/mess, in-betweenness, and so on. But social science methodology is ill equipped to investigate such ‘existential’ questions, and as the empirical research proceeded a more interesting set of questions began to emerge. For example, it soon became obvious that when using the new communication technologies, people were thinking less about new ideas of space and time per se, than about the impact these technologies were having upon a wider set of cultural understandings. But, although the use of new technologies was not leading to some sort of existential anguish (where am I? who am I? what time is it?), it was re-organising traditional concepts of social distance (Jameson, 1984; Shields, 1992). At the same time, whilst undoubtedly different for different people, these experiences did not seem to be either radically ‘good’ or ‘bad’ for any individual, but seemed to be eliciting both positive and negative responses.

In response to these observations, I began thinking more carefully about the ways in which different social actors might be negotiating these changes and the type of ‘mechanisms’ they might be employing to handle them. The answers to these questions have formed the substantive structure of the thesis. At the same time, the investigation shifted to an analysis of the differential power relations a period of rapid global change inevitably articulates. This emphasis took me in two directions. First, the burgeoning literature around globalisation raised questions about the ways in which cultural-economic changes (whether in the nature of technology, of food and travel, or of people’s experience of the places in which they live) might be affecting a traditional set of power
relations concerning race and ethnicity in particular (hooks, 1992; Keith & Pile, 1993). I wanted to discover how changes in the nature of space and time were affecting traditional notions of social distance, and whether changes in the nature of the material world were indeed altering the way in which people constructed a wider set of cultural understandings - about the foreign and the domestic, or the familiar and different, for example. As a white researcher it seemed most sensible to focus upon the nature of these changes as they were being experienced by individuals at the 'centre' of existing power relations. Debates around globalisation also raised the possibility that these changes might be experienced rather differently by differently empowered social actors within the centre itself. I was especially interested in the differences that might emerge according to a person's class and gender. Taken together, this change in emphasis shifted the research from an investigation of time-space compression itself, to the construction of a broader sociology of time-space compression and globalisation.

The shift in emphasis also enabled me to forge a clearer connection between the experiences of time-space compression, globalisation and the possible emergence of new epistemologies, and to consider the extent of any perceived shift from the modern to the postmodern. Here I have drawn most closely on Shields (1991). I have characterized a modern epistemology as one working around a system of binary closures, or dualisms, that inevitably articulates a set of hierarchical power relations. A postmodern epistemology is one that seeks to de-construct, or fragment, these dualisms and celebrate a transgressive hybridity. This is, in many ways, a rather crude division but it is the one that, through ideas of presence and absence, most obviously connects the epistemological challenges of recent years to the processes of time-space compression. It is also the basis on which the modern and the postmodern are still differentiated in much of the academic literature (Bhabha, 1992; Derrida, 1976; Lyotard, 1984; Seldon, 1985).

These epistemological issues are clearly related to the wider sociology that I have tried to construct. A traditional distinction between the familiar and the exotic, for example, is an excellent illustration of an exclusionary modern dualism, and one that could be under threat given contemporary changes in the nature of time and space. Tracing the extent to which different individuals still deploy these distinctions therefore allows us an understanding of how far the processes of time-space compression have indeed led to any radical change in people's understanding of the world around them, their relationship with others, and their understanding of themselves. It also allows for a more subtle sociology of those changes. People who have been positioned at the margins of such dualisms by virtue of their gender, for example, are liable to react to these changes quite differently from those who have a vested interest in their continued
operation (straight, white, middle class men). Finally, through focusing on the postmodern I was able to limit the scope of the investigation. A number of theorists have suggested that an interest in postmodernism might be confined to a limited group of people, and most specifically to a new cultural class (Featherstone, 1992; Lash, 1990; Pfeil, 1988). For this class the dissolution of a traditional system of binary thought has complex and often contradictory ramifications, not least as it relates to the use of cultural, as well as economic capital, in the construction of a class position (Bourdieu, 1984). It therefore seemed sensible to concentrate the analysis on members of this class, and to use their experiences as something of a ‘test case’ for future research.

8.2 Thesis aims and conclusions

The thesis therefore had three aims: to consider the processes of time-space compression in more detail and some of the ‘mechanisms’ through which people might be handling a period of rapid global change; to construct a more developed sociology of that change and to explore the role of class, gender and ethnicity in individual’s experiences of these processes; and to assess the relationship of these processes to the emergence of less exclusionary systems of thought and the emergence of a postmodern epistemology. These are the ‘questions’ I have tried to answer in each of the substantive chapters, although throughout the thesis I have tried to answer them together.

I began with an analysis of the consumption of the new communication technologies. These have often been used as a sort of *leitmotif* for the processes of time-space compression (Thrift, 1986), but too often analyses have tended towards a certain technological determinism (Entrikin, 1985; Morley, 1992). I considered the way in which these technologies have themselves become ‘socially constructed’, and drew on people’s experiences of technology to establish the basic argument of the thesis. In this sense, chapter 4 sought to offer preliminary answers to all three of the questions posed above by examining the changing nature of presence and absence.

Although changes in communication technology are re-organising the relationship between presence and absence, I argued that these changes have not undermined a traditional sense of social distance. Even in the ‘no-where’ space of the fax machine, for example, people continue to make a distinction between ‘here’ and ‘there’. This distinction is capable of supporting a whole set of exclusionary oppositions between ‘us’ and ‘them’, the ‘familiar’ and the ‘different’, and inscribes a familiar hierarchy through which those at the centre of power continue to define and subordinate a culturally constructed Other. The processes of time-space compression, at least as experienced through communication technologies, have not led to the emergence of less exclusionary
systems of thought. Moving on, I argued that accounts of global restructuring need a more sophisticated understanding of space itself. In particular, I showed how people were still drawing a distinction between first-hand and mediated experience. This had two effects. On the one hand it allowed those people who wished to search out the 'authentic' experience of other places and other people to continue this search in other arenas. Alternatively, it enabled others to dismiss the 'disorientating' effects of these technologies as somehow 'unreal' and unimportant. Finally, I drew attention to the differential consumption of these new technologies according to class and traced a powerful gendering of a traditional system of geographical knowledge around which many people still organize their experience of the world.

In chapter 5 I considered arguments connecting the emergence of new work practices to a less secure experience of time, and in particular to a sense of the 'speed-up' of linear time and a less comforting sense of the future. Significant differences emerged between the experiences of the new cultural class and working class respondents, and these differences were connected to their respective positions within a core and peripheral labour force. For my working class respondents economic restructuring has increased feelings of temporal insecurity. In contrast, the new cultural class have, in many ways, secured their employment through restructuring, and these respondents displayed far more confidence in their ability to 'handle' these changes.

But both groups were experiencing some form of temporal insecurity, and responded in similar ways. For example, both were drawn towards the comforts of a more 'natural' sense of time rooted either in the cycles of nature or, for the new cultural class respondents, in a new craft aesthetic. The home, in particular, emerged as a space of 'retreat' from the insecurities of the outside world. It was often seen as the point of access to a more comforting sense of family time that drew its power from an understanding of the 'authenticity' of family routine and childcare. This necessitated a recognition of the gendering of time management. I outlined the particular difficulties faced by professional women who wish to enjoy the comforts of family time, but who have had to delay having children. Not all arenas of 'retreat' identified within a thesis of time-space compression are open to everyone. By describing people's access to these differing 'time types' the chapter drew attention to the many and complex ways in which people are 'handling' time-space compression, and concluded that these experiences may be less 'disorientating' than often assumed.

Chapter 6 continued to examine some of these 'handling mechanisms', demonstrating how these mechanisms may themselves articulate a set of unequal power relations. It concentrated upon the recent proliferation of 'exotic' food and the expansion
in overseas travel. Not only are these two of the most obvious manifestations of time-space compression, but they draw attention to some of the more enjoyable aspects of recent change. Once again important differences emerged in the experiences of the working class and new cultural class respondents.

For the working class respondents the emergence of exotic food was shown to undermine a traditional set of cultural oppositions, thus threatening their sense of national identity. By contrast the new cultural class respondents have welcomed the appearance of these foods. But their consumption habits suggest that these foods are being consumed only as part of a quite instrumental cultural capital through which members of the new cultural class can display their liberal tastes for the alternative and different. These foods form part of a new 'lifestyle ethic' that is explicitly related by the new cultural class respondents themselves to a superficial postmodern aesthetic - an aesthetic which allows members of this class to flirt with a world of difference without in fact ever relinquishing their position of hegemony. This flirtation does not challenge the exclusionary structures of binary thought, or the material politics of racism, and these consumption practices are only open to those who enjoy a position of social mobility and a certain economic power (Sivanandan, 1990). In other words, the appearance of these foods, and a 'transgressive' postmodern aesthetic, has not led to less exclusionary systems of thought. This finding suggests the need for a more careful examination of what is meant by postmodernism and the postmodern.

In chapter 6 I also argued that these new foods may also represent one of the key mechanisms through which people negotiate a more disorientating sense of time and space, and in particular a contemporary 'crisis of authenticity'. Understood as somehow 'more authentic' than other 'local produce' such foods offer people contact with a more 'natural world'. But this search for authenticity is complex, and is a concern only of the new cultural class respondents. Where it became caught up within a wider system of cultural capital these respondents produced a sophisticated 'continuum of authenticity', one which relied upon a familiar conflation of the authentic and the exotic, and still constructed authenticity around an exclusionary sense of social distance.

The search for authenticity also dominated the travel experiences of the new cultural class respondents, and these too were caught up within a wider project of class distinction. Though their accounts did not in fact differ much from the more obviously exclusionary practices of the package tour, the new cultural class respondents themselves drew stark contrasts between these travel experiences and the practices of the mere 'tourist'. Though an analysis of contemporary travel can no longer draw upon a simple class analysis (all the respondents, for example, had holidayed abroad) important
differences do therefore still emerge between people of different class backgrounds. For the working class respondents the foreign holiday continues to be understood within a traditional understanding of the holiday as 'carnival'. It may also, however, offer a means through which to reclaim a position of hegemony which is under threat at home, and this is achieved, most obviously, through the nostalgic enactment of the relations of empire. The experiences of both groups therefore demonstrated the material inequalities articulated by the expansion in overseas travel but also showed the need to make our analyses of these processes more sophisticated with a detailed examination of the role of cultural, as well as economic, power.

My analysis of the unequal social relations articulated by a new round of time-space compression continued in chapter 7. Here the differences between the new cultural class and working class respondents emerged more powerfully than before. It was shown how the interests of the former often directly impinge upon the interests of the latter. This is most obviously the case where each group tries to construct an image of Stoke Newington’s history around quite different understandings of the past. The heritage and leisure demands of an economically powerful class are working to destroy the sense of the past through which the working class respondents build a sense of local identity (cf Wright, 1985, 1991).

An interpretation of the area’s historical associations also allowed me to move beyond the rather schematic accounts dominating debates within geography about a new ‘global sense of place’. Whilst the working class respondents are experiencing a powerful sense of loss as the area they grew up in has seen considerable social change, the new cultural class respondents have broadly welcomed evidence of this ‘globalisation’ of their local area. Once again, however, their interest in this change does not convert to any material challenge to the politics of racism or to the championing of less exclusionary systems of thought. Indeed, it was suggested that we may be witnessing the emergence of a ‘new urban flâneur’, for whom the contemporary inner city is understood as nothing more than a colourful backdrop displayed for their leisure. A number of parallels were therefore suggested with the nineteenth century, and in particular in the operation of a powerfully aestheticized gaze. The wanderings of this new urban flâneur articulate a world of differential social mobility. In the nineteenth century this mobility was predicated upon a position of class and gendered empowerment. In the late twentieth century it also works around a position of ethnic and racial power. The new flâneurs may be women as well as men, and for both the gaze allows for the formation of a quite exclusionary sense of place constructed through the objectification of less powerful local residents and, in particular, members of Stoke Newington’s ethnic minorities. This
establishes neither the strictly 'bounded' sense of place identified by Harvey (1989a), nor the more 'progressive' sense of place identified by Massey (1993a), but suggests that the processes of time-space compression are leading to a more complex politics of place. This politics was illustrated in my consideration of Stoke Newington's newly complex local geographies, geographies that articulate the exclusions of class, gender and ethnicity.

In relation to its aims the thesis has, therefore, been largely successful. Its most significant contribution may be to 'calm down' a series of debates in danger of becoming both too abstract and somewhat exaggerated. It has demonstrated, for example, that the experiences of time-space compression are powerfully differentiated by class, gender, and ethnicity, and located these differences in a material analysis. It has also shown that these experiences may be less 'disorientating' than is often assumed. This is because the same processes contributing to a new sense of time and space often also allow people to identify a series of 'coping mechanisms' through which the more disturbing experiences associated with a period of rapid global change are held in check. These mechanisms identify important continuities between an earlier period of urban modernism and the late twentieth century. Such continuities - suggested in the operation of an aestheticized gaze, for example - warn us against understanding the current experience of time-space compression as having led people to radically new ways of understanding the world around them. They articulate a traditional set of unequal power relations, tend to rely upon the continued operation of a familiar set of cultural oppositions, and demonstrate how the processes of time-space compression have not (yet) led to the emergence of those less exclusionary systems of thought associated with a postmodern epistemology.

I believe the thesis may also make some wider contributions to current geographical practice. In particular, though recently we have seen the emergence of more sophisticated models of space (Gregory & Urry, 1985; Soja, 1980, 1985; Shields, 1991) geographers have yet to develop a detailed understanding of time (though see Harvey, 1985, 1989b; Pred, 1981; Stein, 1992; Thrift, 1981, 1983). Time-geography, for example, continues to treat time as a neutral 'resource' and has paid little attention to either the subjective experience of time, or to how that experience differs for differently empowered social actors. By constructing a material analysis of these subjective experiences, and locating this analysis within a more developed sociology, the thesis extends the work done in time-geography. This may have both general and specific importance. At the broadest level it may act as a corrective to the current and often rather vague call for a 'reassertion' of space in social theory (Soja, 1989; and see chapter 5). More specifically it may enable geographers to construct more sophisticated models of human agency (cf
These contributions are possible because the analysis has been based upon a sensitive qualitative methodology. Rather than resort to the assumed readings of a number of cultural ‘texts’, I have traced the ways in which processes of time-space compression are negotiated by the people who live out these diverse and contradictory processes in their day-to-day lives (cf Gregory, 1993; Harvey, 1989a; Hopkins, 1990; Pred, 1993; Shields, 1989; and in relation to time, Kern, 1983).

Inevitably, however, a project of this nature has its limitations, and raises questions requiring further research. Three areas stand out, concerning: methodology; politics/epistemology; and corroboration. I will address the three together.

8.3 Taking things forward

Methodology: one of the most innovative aspects of the research has been the use of a qualitative methodology to ‘unpack’ a rather abstract set of theoretical debates. Beyond this, however, I have also sought to demonstrate how an understanding of the interview process itself may greatly enhance the process of interpretation. For example, throughout the thesis I have drawn attention to the tensions negotiated within each interview, and highlighted how these tensions may affect the interpretation of the substantive topics under discussion (see, for example, chapters 4.3, 4.4, and 5.4).

I have drawn upon techniques pioneered elsewhere and which can themselves be understood as drawing upon a broader ‘therapeutic tradition’ (Burgess et al, 1988a & b). More recently geographers have sought to extend this work with reference to the ideas of psychoanalysis and, in particular, to an awareness of the role that the unconscious may play in social interaction, and thus the construction of meaning and interpretation more widely (Pile, 1991a). Combining an awareness of the unconscious with the models of subjectivity and meaning more usually deployed in the social sciences may prove difficult (Elliot, 1992; Pile, 1993) and I have deliberately chosen not to open my account to these issues. Rather, my interpretations have been reached in relation to a set of theoretical debates explored in the social sciences, and in accordance with a ‘realist’ understanding of meaning (see below). But, an awareness of the techniques of psychoanalysis does not, in itself, convert a social science method into ‘therapy’, and others have been careful in pointing out that the therapeutic goal is neither the aim of a social science method, or an interview format that social scientists are equipped to deal with (Burgess, 1992a). In as much as these techniques can add sensitivity to the conduct and interpretation of the interview process they are, therefore, extremely useful. They may add much to the kind of
approach I have advocated here and offer one way in which these approaches might be developed in the future.

**Politics/epistemology:** throughout the thesis I have sought to explore the continued dominance of dualistic ways of thinking, and have located these binary structures within a modern system of knowledge. Recently, however, it has been questioned how far people do in fact construct a sense of identity through these simple binary processes (Pile, 1994), and whether a distinction between a ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ epistemology can be made in this manner (Gilroy, 1993). Both arguments raise questions about the nature of my research, and how it may be developed in the future.

First, it can be argued that a binary system of thought is incapable of describing the contingent and essentially fluid nature of identity. This argument has recently been made by Pile (1994) who illustrates his argument by reference to traditional concepts of gender and sexuality. For example, though the feminine has often been set in opposition to a hegemonic masculinity, the historically and geographically specific nature of both concepts in fact militates against such easy oppositions (see Jackson, 1991). Pile therefore argues that to think within the limitations of these dualisms maintains an exclusionary system of power-knowledge. But he also seems to suggest that any analysis tracing the continued operation of these dualisms risks their perpetuation. A radical geography, Pile argues, can no longer work within these oppositions but must move instead within a ‘third space’ set outside the unequal oppositions of centre and margin. It is only within this space that a politics of radical Difference can be celebrated (and cf Haraway, 1990).

Secondly, some people have long constructed their identities outside of these binary opposites, and in ways that undermine the periodization I have drawn upon here. The politics of diaspora, for example, articulate identities formed in relation to a multitude of positions (Gilroy, 1993). This politics has a long and complex history, and certainly pre-dates the current turn to a ‘postmodern’ epistemology. This history warns us against drawing too clear a distinction between the ‘modern’ and the ‘postmodern’, at least in relation to these dualisms and as portrayed here. Both arguments clearly have important implications for the way in which I have chosen to structure the thesis. I should like to address each in turn, and relate them to future areas of political and epistemological concern.

It has long been understood that the categories of binary thought are both artificial (though carrying very real material consequences), and exclusionary (see, for example, Rose, 1992; Said, 1978), and this indeed has been my own starting point. But, to argue
that any analysis that continues to draw attention to these oppositions risks their legitimation is, I would suggest, wholly incorrect (and cf Livingstone, 1994). Before we can move towards those less oppressive systems of thought many in the academy would like to see, we need to trace how far these oppositions continue to structure the way in which (some) people understand the world around them. This, and not the legitimation of these systems, has been one of the tasks of this project (cf Rose, 1993). Although I support the call for a politics constructed outside of these binary oppositions, articulating the form this politics would actually take has so far been extremely difficult (see, for example, Young, 1990). One of the main contributions of my thesis has been to demonstrate that, whatever the desires of theorists, a more radical politics is still a long way off. The processes of time-space compression have not (yet) challenged a traditional set of ordering discourses structured around the exclusions of binary thought.

I recognize, however, that in structuring my methodology around a 'realist' distinction between practical and discursive consciousness (and excluding the role of the unconscious) I do, to some extent, perpetuate the sort of dualisms I have attempted to analyze and challenge. The unconscious is one of the structures that Pile (1994), for example, uses to demonstrate the artificial nature of these dualisms. But, the relationship between psychoanalysis, the unconscious, and dualistic thought, is in fact complex (see, for example, Finlay, 1989). Further, I am not arguing against a call to make our understandings of social identity more sophisticated. Rather, I am simply suggesting that we need to be aware that these more complex theoretical positions - an awareness of the unconscious, for example - are not usually recognized in people's day-to-day lives. However we understand these dualisms (they are artificial, and theoretically insupportable), they continue to structure the way in which my respondents make sense of their world. For debates that claim political relevance this would seem an important finding, and one that suggests the need for further research (see below).

Gilroy (1993) is right to draw attention to the difficulty in periodicizing the 'modern' and the 'postmodern'. To set up these rather crude distinctions is clearly to ignore the continuities between the two (Berman, 1983; Eagleton, 1985). Further, if one of the defining characteristics of postmodernism is a challenge to meta-narratives, then to argue for some kind of shift to a condition of postmodernity is itself contradictory (Luckhurst, 1992). In this sense, it could be suggested that my own analysis has relied upon a false and over-simplified narrative. But this is the narrative shaping debates within geography around these issues, particularly as regards the impact of time-space compression (Deutsche, 1991; Harvey, 1989b; Massey, 1991a), and the thesis has been structured in relation to the claims it set out to examine; namely, that the processes of
time-space compression may be leading to new ways of understanding the world and, in particular, to a challenge to the structures of binary thought through which individuals in the West have traditionally mapped their social position. These binary structures have tended to be understood as characterizing a modern epistemology (Shields, 1992). I have concluded that no such simple shift can be discerned and, considering the difficulty in constructing so crude a distinction between ‘modernity’ and ‘postmodernity’, this should come as no surprise. But, if a modern epistemology cannot be characterised simply around the operation of dualistic thought (Gilroy, 1993), then in future geographers may need to be more careful not only in the way in which they explore these processes, but also in the way in which they use these terms.

In general, geographers have been rather lax in their use of the term ‘postmodernism’. In particular, a number of authors continue to conflate postmodernism with a range of techniques that in fact precede the ‘postmodern turn’: most obviously with the technique of deconstruction (Cloke et al., 1991). Deconstruction sets out to challenge the claims to exhaustive knowledge (and thus to power) underlying a system of binary thought (Seldon, 1985). Whilst it has certainly been used within ‘postmodern philosophy’ (see, for example, Lyotard, 1984), the two are not synonymous. Deconstruction is also a technique used in a number of other schools, ones that often oppose the positions adopted within a ‘postmodern’ account.

Feminism, for example, is centrally concerned with challenging a set of exclusionary dualisms, and feminists often rely upon the technique of deconstruction to achieve this aim (see, for example, Rose, 1993). This has often led to a conflation of feminism with the aims of postmodernism and at time this may be useful (for a debate, see Nicholson, 1990). Here, for example, it has allowed me to simplify a number of complex epistemological debates, the better to relate these debates to the processes of time-space compression, and the distinction between modernism’s concern with dualism, and postmodernism’s rejection of binary thought. At the same time, however, feminists have also often forcefully opposed postmodernism, and especially its relativism and obsession with surface, which is seen to problematize (if not deny the possibility of, or need for) a material politics (see, for example, Bondi & Domosh, 1992; McDowell, 1991b). In future geographers need to clarify what exactly they mean when they employ the term postmodernism.

One solution may be to deploy the distinction made by Cloke et al (1991) between a postmodern ‘object’ and ‘attitude’. Whilst the former describes a new cultural aesthetic (and one that may be quite superficial), the latter relates to a philosophical challenge, though one that denies easy categorization. A postmodern attitude expresses a general
concern with, and sensitivity towards, difference, and challenges the exclusionary ‘norms’ of a modern epistemology (cf Huyssen, 1984). The concept has much to recommend it. For example, though it continues to allow us to distinguish between a ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ attitude, this cannot be made in relation to any simplistic distinction between modernism’s concern with material politics, or social justice, and postmodernism’s denial of these concepts. Rather a postmodern attitude is one that is concerned with excavating the form in which ideas of social justice are described, and deconstructing the universal nature of these claims (cf Harvey, 1993a). This allows us to see both the continuities and differences between the ‘modern’ and the ‘postmodern’, and avoids forcing commentators into an unhelpful position wherein they must take ‘one side or the other’ (cf Pile & Rose, 1992). Further, where this attitude insists upon postmodernism’s radical edge it allows workers in other traditions, such as feminism, to make use of the contributions of postmodern philosophy without embracing the relativism and surface obsession of the postmodern object.

In the current thesis this distinction between object and attitude can be seen in chapter 6.3 where I described the attraction of the new cultural class respondents to a new ‘lifestyle ethic’, there taking the form of a consumption of ‘exotic’ food. In its superficial concern with the alternative and different, this ethic perfectly describes a ‘postmodern object’. Where those same processes continue to act as a form of class distinction, and to rely upon a racialised understanding of social distance, they do not articulate a ‘postmodern attitude’ (cf Lash, 1990; chapter 2.3a). It is this more sophisticated understanding of postmodernism that needs be explored in future research.

**Corroboration:** finally, the thesis has traced the experiences of time-space compression amongst only a limited group of people, and in a particular time and place. It has concentrated upon the experiences of four members of a new cultural class, and compared these to the experiences of two working class respondents. Arguing that it is members of the new cultural class who best express the contradictions and ambiguities liable to emerge in a sociology of time-space compression, their experiences stand as something of a ‘test case’ for future research. But, by its nature, research that relies upon a qualitative methodology cannot make generalized claims. What is needed now is corroboration (Sayer, 1984).

For example, the experiences of my respondents will not necessarily hold for other members of the new cultural class. The new cultural class itself is part of a diverse and fragmented new service class, different members of which display quite different characteristics (Butler, 1991). Its members are concentrated only in the large metropolitan
areas and, since 'space makes a difference' (Gregory & Urry, 1985), the experience of time-space compression even amongst similar groups in other places is likely to be quite different. More obviously, the thesis has examined the experiences of only white respondents. Since issues of ethnicity are clearly central to the experience of time-space compression and, in particular, to the ways in which different people seek to relate these experiences to a broader set of cultural understandings, what is now needed is research that examines the experience of those in less privileged positions (Massey, 1993a). This may well lead to quite different readings of the epistemological issues explored above, and certainly a comparison of these different experiences is now vital (Rose, 1994). How, for example, do members of Stoke Newington’s ethnic minorities negotiate the objectifying gaze of the area’s new cultural class residents?

This research will not be easy. But, I hope this thesis has made the reader think through some of their own experiences of time-space compression and provided some suggestions for the way in which empirical research into these issues might develop in the future. If nothing else, I hope that it has demonstrated that this sort of research is no longer out of reach. Geographers are now contributing to the most sophisticated of theoretical debates and, given the sensitivity of a qualitative approach, it would now seem that these debates can be opened up to empirical analysis.
APPENDIX 1

THE PILOT STUDY

An initial pilot study was undertaken some six months before the main fieldwork began. Eight local residents were interviewed, two times each, and the material from these interviews formed the basis of a report submitted for the upgrading procedure from M.Phil to Ph.D status. Included here are the contact letter and advertisement used to attract respondents, together with a summary of the characteristics of those who replied.
Dear Resident,

LIVING IN STOKE NEWINGTON

Would you be interested in spending some time talking about your experience of living in Stoke Newington?

I am a research student at University College London writing a thesis on the changing experience of living in London, and I am particularly interested in the changes that are going on in Stoke Newington. I am approaching a number of residents in your area.

Among the things I would like to talk about with you are:

What is 'your' city? How you experience the everyday and 'special' places of London and Stoke Newington.

How important is living in Stoke Newington to you?

Your experience of the changes in Stoke Newington.

The discussion will be informal, lasting about an hour, and may if you are willing, involve a second meeting of the same length.

I shall be in your area next week and shall call one evening to explain more about the project and to see if you are interested in talking to me. If you are we can then arrange a time convenient to you for us to meet.

Thankyou for your help.

Jon May (Department of Geography, University College London)
1.2 Pilot study advert to attract new cultural class respondents

**LIVING IN A POSTMODERN CITY**

Would you be interested in spending some time talking about your experience of living in Stoke Newington?

**HOW IS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF 'SPACE' AND 'THE CITY' CHANGING?**

**DOES IT MAKE SENSE TO TALK OF A LOCAL PLACE ANYMORE?**

**DOES YOUR EXPERIENCE OF LIVING IN STOKE NEWINGTON EXEMPLIFY MORE WIDESPREAD CHANGES OF EXPERIENCE - OF BOTH THE CITY AND YOURSELF?**

I am a research student working on the changing experience of 'space and the city' in the postmodern world. I am looking in particular at the changing experience of living in Stoke Newington, through talking with local residents. The meetings are informal, lasting about an hour, with a second session if you are willing.

If you are interested in finding out more about my project and would be willing to talk to me please contact:

**JON MAY**
DEPT. GEOGRAPHY
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
26 BEDFORD WAY
LONDON
WC1H OAP
TEL: 071 637 0540 (Daytime)
081 693 7576 (Evening)

- or leave a contact number with the owner.
### 1.3 Pilot group occupations

* denotes pilot respondent

(f) = denotes female respondent

(m) = denotes male respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Age/ Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(m)* Unemployed (previously machinist)</td>
<td>mid 30s/Bangladeshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f)* Primary School Teacher</td>
<td>early 40s/White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Freelance Writer/Translator</td>
<td>early 30s/White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f)* Fulltime Student</td>
<td>mid 20s/White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Opera Singer</td>
<td>mid 30s/White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f)* Local Authority Cleaner</td>
<td>early 40s/White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f)* Art Teacher</td>
<td>early 30s/White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f)* Journalist</td>
<td>early 30s/White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Social Worker</td>
<td>early 30s/Jamaican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f)* Local Authority Clerical Worker</td>
<td>late 40s/Nigerian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)* Unemployed</td>
<td>early 20s/White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Mail Drop 40
Replies 9

Replies from advertisement 0
Replies from other sources 2

Respondents Interviewed 8
APPENDIX 2
CONTACT LETTERS AND REPLIES

Included here is a selection of the letters and adverts used to contact respondents for the main project, together with details of the community groups and businesses contacted, and a break down of all those who replied. All letters were sent on university headed paper, and included a reply slip and pre-paid envelope, though the exact wording of each letter changed according to the individual or group being contacted.

2.1 Contact letter (new cultural class)

Department of Geography
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
26 BEDFORD WAY LONDON WC1H 0AP
Tel: 071-387-7050 Fax: 071-380-7565

LIVING IN STOKE NEWINGTON.

Dear Resident,

My name is Jon May and I am doing a three year research project at UCL, which is being funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. The research is trying to find out how different people feel about their local areas.

I am writing to you to see whether you would be willing to talk to me about your feelings for Stoke Newington, and your experience of living here? The project would involve a small number of meetings, and I am able to offer a nominal payment for each meeting, in appreciation of the time you can spare me. Stoke Newington has been chosen because it is an area of such diversity, but I am particularly interested in the experience of professional people living in the area - those, for example, working in the media, journalism, finance, education or the social and therapeutic fields.

A small number of people have already participated in the study and found it an enjoyable experience. If you would like to know more about the project perhaps you could complete the reply slip and return it to me. If you prefer, I can be reached on the phone numbers listed below.

Thank you very much for your time, and I hope very much that you are interested in the project. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

JON MAY
2.2 Professional groups contacted for new cultural class respondents

* denotes replies

*City and Hackney Mind  
Hackney Citizen’s Advice Bureau  
Hackney Housing Association  
Hackney Women’s Centre  
Hackney Youth Unemployment Project  
Off Centre  
City and Hackney Association for Mental Health  
Women’s Therapy Centre  
Family Services Centre  
Hackney Welfare Rights Forum  
Hackney Wel-Care  
Hackney Women’s Aid  
Ananda Marga  
*Women’s Media Resource Project  
Child Guidance Service  
Hackney HIV Centre  
Hackney Anti-Deportation Campaign  
Homerton Row Mental Health Unit  
Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association

Replies 2
### Occupation, age and ethnicity of new cultural class replies

* denotes respondent  
() denotes those responding from Professional group contact letter or other sources  
(f) = denotes female respondent  
(m) = denotes male respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Age/Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(m) Medical Doctor (retired)</td>
<td>early 60s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Polytechnic Lecturer (Arts)</td>
<td>early 40s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Classical Music Composer</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Primary School Teacher (Hackney L.E.A)</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Primary School Teacher (Hackney L.E.A)</td>
<td>early 40s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Secondary School Teacher (Hackney L.E.A)</td>
<td>early 40s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Computer Support Services (Universities)</td>
<td>late 40s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Freelance Theatre Designer</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Freelance Theatre Director</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Freelance Therapist and Charity Worker</td>
<td>early 50s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Self-employed Craft Designer (Furniture)</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Self-employed Craft Designer (Furniture)</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) *Freelance Graphic Designer</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Financial Adviser</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f/) *Full-time Charity Worker</td>
<td>late 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Solicitor</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) *Radio Editor</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) *Self-employed Animator</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Further Education Lecturer (Hackney L.E.A - Arts)</td>
<td>early 40s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Educational Adviser (Hackney L.E.A)</td>
<td>mid 40s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Further Education Lecturer (Hackney L.E.A - Computing)</td>
<td>late 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Self-Employed Craft Designer (Fashion Shoes)</td>
<td>early 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Television Producer</td>
<td>mid 40s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Television Editor</td>
<td>mid 30s/Jamaican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Freelance Television and Video Editor</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f/) *Social Worker</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Unknown</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Self-employed craft shop owner</td>
<td>early 40s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Freelance Computer Adviser</td>
<td>mid 30s/white</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1st Mail Shot 31  
1st Mail Shot Reminder 31  
2nd Mail Shot 29  
2nd Mail Shot Reminder 29  

Replies 29  
Respondents Interviewed 5
2.4 *Special interest and community groups contacted*

* denotes replies

Asian Women’s Welfare Association
*African Language Centre
Hackney Black People’s Association
Asian People’s Association
Pakistani Women’s Welfare Group
*Pakistani Welfare Association
North London Muslim Community Centre
*Turkish Cypriot Cultural Association
Hackney Muslim Council
*Muslim Welfare Society

Replies 2
LIVING IN STOKE NEWINGTON

Hello! Would you be interested in talking about your experience of living in

Stoke Newington?

My name is Jon May and I am doing a research project at University College London. The project is trying to find out how different people feel about their local areas. Stoke Newington has been chosen because it is such a mixed area and I would especially like to talk both to people who have lived in the area a long time, and to people who have come to Stoke Newington from abroad, whether recently or in the past.

The project involves meeting, individually, a small number of times, when you would talk about your experiences of living here. All meetings are strictly private, and a payment of £5 is offered for each meeting.

Residents who have already participated in the project have found it very enjoyable. If you think you might be able to help perhaps you would be kind enough to return the slip provided - or, if you would prefer I can be contacted directly on the telephone numbers below - and I could then explain to you more about the project.

I do hope you might want to talk to me, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

JON MAY

TELEPHONE: DAY 081 806 0751/071 637 0540 EVENING: 081 806 0751

YES I would like to hear more about the project:
If working, what do you do?
CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER:
Advert:

WHAT'S IT LIKE LIVING IN STOKE NEWINGTON TODAY?

Author writing book about everyday life in Stoke Newington today needs to talk to local people about their life in the area.

Earn £30 just talking informally, and confidentially about your life here.

I don’t want to talk to 'experts' - just ordinary people, aged 20-50 years old, who have always lived in the area. I would especially like to hear from any members of the area’s minority communities.

CONTACT JON MAY 081 806 0751

Residents' and Tenants' Associations contacted:

Clissold Estate Steering Group
Rectory Road Residents' Association
East and West Bank Action Group
Clissold Residents' Association
Brooke Road Residents' Association
Hawksley and Woodles Residents' Association
Palatine Housing Area Action Group
Shakespeare Walk Residents' Association
Spenser Road and Cowper Road Residents' Association
Springfield and District Residents' Association
Becker's/Morris Blitz T.A
Brett Close T.A
Cowper Road T.A
Datchler Estate T.A
Gordon Lodge T.A
Hawksley Court T.A
Hoxleigh Road Estate T.A
Hillcourt Tenants
Kennaway Estate T.A
Leswin Road Residents' Association
Lordship Grove T.A
Milton Gardens T.A
Londesborough/Knebworth T.A
Nelson Mandela T.A
Park Crescent T.A
2.7 Occupation, age and ethnicity of working class replies

* denotes respondents

(a) denotes replies from Advert,
(c) denotes reply from Community Group Letter
() denotes replies from Other Sources
(f) denotes female respondent
(m) denotes male respondent
?? denotes respondents who aborted interview process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Age/Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(f)*</td>
<td>Local Authority Home Help early 50s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)(a)*</td>
<td>Estate Cleaner early 30s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)</td>
<td>Retired (previously Merchant Navy) late 50s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)()</td>
<td>Retired (previously Coalman) early 70s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)(a)</td>
<td>Unemployed early 20s/black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)(a)</td>
<td>Traveller late 20s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f)(a)</td>
<td>Traveller mid 20s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)(a)</td>
<td>Barperson mid 20s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)(a)</td>
<td>Estate Cleaner late 50s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)()</td>
<td>Self-employed Caterer late 20s/Jamaican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f)()</td>
<td>Bank Clerk mid 20s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)()</td>
<td>Self-employed Mechanic late 40s/white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)(c)??</td>
<td>Machinist late 20s/Pakistani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m)(c)??</td>
<td>Student Teacher late 20s/Nigerian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f)(c)</td>
<td>Retired (previously unemployed) early 60s/white</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total mail drop 55
Replies 2

Adverts placed 10
Replies from advert 6

Community and tenants group letters 35
Replies 4

Replies from other sources 3

Total replies 15
Respondents interviewed 2
REFERENCES


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284


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