'Structure Liberates?':

Making compliant, consumable bodies in a London academy

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I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

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Abstract

Mossbourne Community Academy, a celebrated highly disciplinarian secondary school, opened in East London in 2004. Operating under the ethos 'structure liberates', it actively seeks to culturally transform its largely ethnic minority student body and create 'a culture of ambition to replace the poverty of aspiration' (Adonis, 2008). With its regimented routines and outstanding GCSE results, Mossbourne has been heralded as a blueprint for educational reform, yet persistent structural inequalities are concealed beneath the rhetoric of happy multiculturalism and aspirational citizenship. Through pathologising the surrounding area as a zone of 'urban chaos', Mossbourne positions itself as an 'oasis in the desert' liberating students through discipline. This 'urban chaos' discourse draws on wider popular discourses of the pram-pushing 'chav' or the black, hooded gangster to portray 'urban children' and their families as regressive blocks to economic prosperity. Teachers compensate for incompetent parenting practices by becoming 'surrogate parents', while a masculine superhero-as-headteacher wields a 'zero tolerance' approach to cultivate an uncritical respect for authority. My research traces how Mossbourne processes, regulates, and reconstitutes the bodies of students and teachers through space and time. It also examines how students and parents negotiate or adjust themselves in relation to the institutional norms which bring raced and classed positions into focus by highlighting who needs to 'do' work on themselves to accrue value. More broadly, the research highlights how an intensely marketised education system does not mitigate, but reformulates, reproduces and re-intrenches inequalities.

Contents

Table of Figures

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Introduction

Approaching an Ethos

> Children who come from unstructured backgrounds, as many of our children do, and often very unhappy ones, should be given more structure in their lives. So it means that the school in many ways becomes a sort of surrogate parent to the child and the child will only succeed if the philosophy of the school is that we will in many ways substitute and take over where necessary…Therefore we want staff who commit themselves to that ethos. It's not a nine to five ethos, it's an ethos which says the only way that these children will achieve is if we go the extra mile for them. We have extension classes, we have enrichment classes, and we have Saturday mornings, etcetera…we can't have a staff here who just see it as an ordinary job where they are worrying about their total number of hours and the minutia of their contract. Because that's the only way it's going to work. The other thing about structure which again, underpins this philosophy, is that if they come from unstructured backgrounds where anything goes and rules and boundaries are not clear in their home, we need to ensure that they're clear here. So we run very tight systems here, you could call it a traditional approach or a formal approach.
> *Sir Michael Wilshaw, Principal*

This research focuses on Mossbourne Community Academy[1], a celebrated secondary school based in the inner London Borough of Hackney. Mossbourne opened in 2004 and its 'structure liberates' ethos purports to free children from a culture of poverty through discipline and routine. Mossbourne has become popular with parents, politicians and the media alike, continually held up as proof of the academy programme's effectiveness. It has served as a blueprint for numerous schools, while its sister school, Mossbourne Victoria Park, will open in September 2014. Mossbourne's wider influence on policy has grown. Former head Sir Michael Wilshaw was appointed Ofsted[2] Inspector General in 2012, while Education Secretary Michael Gove called

[1] The principal agreed that I could use his name, the name of the school and the borough. However the names of all other participants – and occasionally other specificities (see chapter three) – have been changed to make teachers, parents and students anonymous.
[2] Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

him ‘my hero’. The New Labour government opened over 200 academies as part of their public-private finance initiative for secondary education and the Coalition government has vastly expanded the programme; 51% of secondary schools are now academies (Marriot, 2013). Academies were originally created by New Labour to 'break the cycle of underachievement in areas of social and economic deprivation' by 'establishing a culture of ambition to replace the poverty of aspiration' (DFCS, 2009) (Adonis, 2008). Former Minister of State for Education Lord Adonis described how these schools would create aspirational cultures through a robust ethos and act as 'engines of social mobility and social justice' at the 'vanguard of meritocracy' (Adonis, 2008). Poverty is framed not as a structural, but a cultural issue tied to 'cultures of low aspiration'. However academies have not been welcomed by all, facing critique for operating outside of local authority control and being exempt from standard employment conditions.

Hackney is a socially and economically mixed borough where poverty and gentrification co-exist. Forty percent of Mossbourne students receive free school meals, while two-thirds of students come from ethnic minority backgrounds with black African, black Caribbean, Turkish, Bangladeshi and Indian students comprising the largest groups (Ofsted, 2010). These statistics used to indicate Hackney’s poverty and ethnic diversity are frequently juxtaposed with Mossbourne’s outstanding test scores; in 2012, 89% of students received five A* to C grades[3] at GCSE[4] level compared to 59.4% of students nationally (Ofsted, 2012). With the exception of a Charedi Jewish girls' school, the pass rate of other Hackney secondary schools hovers between 48 and 66% - well below Mossbourne's average (HLT, 2013). This capacity to generate results has continued throughout the sixth form. In 2010 ten A-level students received conditional offers from Cambridge, while 70 were accepted at Russell Group universities (Percival, 2011).

Mossbourne has dazzled politicians with these results and received a revolving door of visitors keen to replicate its magic recipe; this accumulation of accolades against the odds is the stuff of Hollywood films. I watched Mossbourne's public eulogisation while working at the school; my curiosity regarding its ethos and methods sparked my interest in sociology and led to the development of this thesis. Surveying the largely proud student body, I could not help but feel pleased to see children who might have endured a crumbling school with

[3] Including Maths and English
[4] General Certificate of Education

substandard provision experience a sense of achievement and potentially gain access to a slice of the 'good life'. But this uplifting tale seemed to ignore the more complicated stories underlying its glossy veneer of success. Les Back writes about trusting your interest as a researcher and pursuing niggling feelings of uncertainty while others seem certain (2007:173). Mossbourne's road to a brighter future is paved with the soaring rhetoric of the self-made citizen, however this road and the demands made along it are rarely questioned, but positioned as an unexamined social and cultural good.

Mapping the Questions

This research centres on how raced, classed and gendered subjects are (re)produced in urban space through the discursive practices of the market-driven neoliberal school. It examines how hierarchies are being reformulated, as race and class are lived in and through one another in complex ways. Tony Blair pronounced at a Specialist Schools and Academies Trust annual conference in 2006 that 'education is the most precious gift a society can bestow on its children' as he called for more academies (Blair, 2006). This research interrogates the social and cultural dimensions of this gift grafting 'suitable' forms of capital onto students. I will focus on the conditions underlying this gift's exchange with children, parents and teachers, conscious of how value is generated from the power, perspective and relationships that create the initial conditions of possibility for this exchange (Skeggs, 2004).

My research examines how Mossbourne's 'structure liberates' ethos does not govern from a standpoint of neutrality, but through the daily imposition of norms. As described below, headteacher Sir Michael Wilshaw's interpretations of Hackney and its residents are presented as 'common-sense' truths. Although Mossbourne's public discourse states clearly what the school is attempting to do and implements a policy with which to do it, my questions are concerned with what the discourses deployed by Mossbourne *actually do* and how they are translated into everyday practices of the self (Foucault, 2001[1989])? How do individual pupils, teachers and parents come to act on themselves and others in relation to Mossbourne's discourses?

The research examines how Mossbourne fits within a wider trajectory of education policy and local governance, and how its discourse draws on historical representations

rooted in empire, industrial capitalism and the development of classificatory mechanisms which constitute raced and classed forms of personhood. I interrogate how Mossbourne governs through a range of disciplinary practices before asking how students, parents and teachers interpret and receive its practices from a variety of situated positions. The research builds a complex, yet incomplete picture illuminating how neoliberal modes of governance play out in daily practice against a backdrop of renewed belief in a meritocratic society and social mobility as the post-war settlement crumbles and income disparities widen. It provides a contextualised study of the education market in action, showing the implications marketised reforms and a result-led focus have on the shaping of subjectivities.

The thesis approaches these questions by putting Mossbourne's institutional discourse in conversation with the narratives of students, teachers and parents, placing the macro, micro and shades in-between in relation to one another. I have used a mixed-methods approach meshing 200 pages of ethnographic data generated over 18 months with 46 semi-structured interviews with 20 parents,[5] 20 teachers and six interviews with sixth form students. From the interview cohort, I also followed more closely a group of 17 year nine and eleven students from September 2010 to July 2011 using ethnographic and participatory methods. Employing a range of qualitative methods allowed me to examine the research questions from numerous angles. I have drawn on a range of thinkers to encompass the variegated terrain presented by Mossbourne and, in extension, Hackney, as a site of study. In order to examine struggles for power and value where subjecthood and subjectification occur in simultaneous, complex ways, I have drawn on a range of theoretical traditions. These include feminist, cultural and postcolonial theory, and most centrally, the work of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu. Before outlining these theoretical tools and discussing how the thesis approaches issues of selfhood and value within a neoliberal educational climate that draws on a racialised nostalgia for a homogenous past, I will introduce headteacher Sir Michael Wilshaw's vision of Mossbourne to sketch out the institutional premise.

The Architect's Blueprint

Sir Michael's[6] vision is of crucial importance not only because he was handpicked by Lord Adonis to act as head, but because Mossbourne's authoritarian management style

[5] Mothers were disproportionately represented in this 'parent' category, with 16 mothers and four fathers participating.
[6] Throughout the thesis I call the principal 'Sir Michael', as this is how most of the participants referred to him.

means his vision filters down and is applied by teaching staff daily. As its chief architect, Sir Michael cultivated his approach at St Bonaventure's comprehensive Roman Catholic boys' school in Newham, boosting its test scores radically. He received a knighthood for his services to education in 2000. Sir Michael believes a clear philosophy and 'radical' leadership make a school successful, something he realised 'not by reading a book about it, but by trial and error and experience'. He implements his culture-changing ethos with unswerving conviction and support from his Senior Management Team.[7] Cultivating a position of supreme authority, Sir Michael does not casually banter in corridors; appointments are made through his personal assistant. Sir Michael sets the fundamental parameters of the institution, delegating daily tasks to the SMT and reserving his direct participation for assemblies, staff briefings, and special occasions. His leadership is clear as he routinely paces up and down the corridors, momentarily pausing in doorways to scrutinise lessons.

My interview with Sir Michael took place in June 2009 near the end of my first phase of fieldwork. Although a time was arranged weeks in advance, his PA summoned me to his office via email after rearranging the slot several times to fit around his schedule. His corner office was a glassy room overlooking the playground at the top floor of the building. Looking relaxed as he lolled up and down in his black leather executive chair, Sir Michael wore a pinstriped suit and smiled wryly, bemused that yet another person wanted to interview him. Clearly accustomed to the format, he answered my questions with ease and none of the reluctant suspicion displayed by some of his subordinates.

Sir Michael described his two-part vision of the 'structure liberates' ethos as resting on a philosophy that altruistically seeks to provide poor children with the same opportunities that wealthier children enjoy in order 'to show that poor kids, working-class kids can do as well as middle-class kids do'. He describes the second part of his vision as

> ...the belief that children who come from unstructured backgrounds, as many of our children do, and often very unhappy ones, should be given more structure in their lives...[8]if they come from unstructured backgrounds where anything goes and rules and boundaries are not clear in their home, we need

[7] Referred to throughout at the SMT.
[8] I have used ellipses to indicate when some speech or text has been omitted.

to ensure that they're clear here.

Sir Michael's ethos places the desire for working-class kids to have the educational advantages automatically afforded to the wealthy alongside assertions that these students come from unstructured, unhappy families. The implementation of 'tight systems' results in what Sir Michael calls a 'traditional or formal approach'. This corrective approach self-consciously hinges on applying rituals and routines that provide the structure Sir Michael sees as absent from the home.

Yet not all children are seen to require this cultural intervention. Sir Michael goes on to clearly differentiate between those who need structure and those who come to school with structure built-in:

> ...you need more structure rather than less through experience in dealing with urban children and that you can be a lot more relaxed and free and easy in a nice, leafy middle-class area where the ground rules are clear before they come in, where children go home to lots of books and stuff like that. You need lots of rituals and routines...

The term 'urban children' or 'Hackney children' is used by several teachers to describe a largely ethnic minority and working-class student body. A raced and classed urban child is produced and contrasted with a middle-class and predominantly white child from the leafy suburbs. Sir Michael feels routines are not necessary when dealing with the middle-class child because they come from disciplined homes with 'lots of books'. Sir Michael ties unstructured backgrounds to unhappiness before moving on to make unstructured unhappiness synonymous with the working-class, ethnic minority 'urban child'. The tight structures and boundaries implemented at Mossbourne are seen to aid this urban child by instigating academic success that in turn creates happiness; the middle-class child does not need 'liberating'.

While poverty is briefly mentioned, Sir Michael's concern centres on the creation of opportunity and parenting practices. He singles out class, not ethnicity, as the single biggest hurdle to students achieving academic success:

> I think class would be the biggest issue. A child going home to a home which doesn't value education, doesn't support their child, where there are

> no books, where there is no experience of higher education...that's the bigger problem.

Class, or more specifically, working-class parents, are the 'problem' with their detrimental parenting skills and misplaced values. Although class might be a problem, Sir Michael thinks it can be remedied, reflecting on his own experience as the mixed-race son of a postman. He has mentioned in interviews that he is a quarter Indian and born in India; after describing himself to me as mixed-race, Sir Michael quickly jests 'People think this is just a suntan'.[9] Class, not ethnicity was the problem he overcame:

> Economically I am working-class, but in terms of attitude, middle-class because my parents were always aspirational, even though they didn't have any money. I think class is about attitude to life, as well as a financial position and what sort of job you hold.

For Sir Michael class is a malleable position that can be shifted by the individual's adoption of more appropriate aspirational attitudes. Teachers are explicitly asked to expedite this transformation by acting as 'surrogate parents' who remedy deficit cultures, transforming students through applying correct parenting practices and pushing children to succeed.

Sir Michael emphasises how Mossbourne creates a culture and belief structure that works in urban areas. Building new belief systems is meant to allow students to invest in new ways of thinking about themselves that alter their future. He feels Mossbourne's mission is to drive up standards across the borough through leadership and showing what the borough's students can achieve, proclaiming: 'We'll spread the message of Mossbourne to other schools. Mossbourne will become an empire'. Sir Michael's desire to apply the Mossbourne 'credo' to other institutions is being steadily realised after working as education director for the ARK academy chain, as executive headteacher at the nearby Haggerston School, and now Ofsted inspector general. Although Sir Michael appears to acts as a sovereign authoritative figure, his approach is not only the vision of one man, but draws on and subverts various cannons of knowledge to arrive at this self-evident approach. How can we theoretically approach this vision of urban children in need of cultural transformation through discipline?

[9] How Sir Michael interprets and negotiates this 'suntan' comment within institutional life is very different than the accounts offered by Sara Ahmed (see 1997, 2012).

Subject Making / Making Subjects

Foucault's work on how docile bodies are produced through disciplinary mechanisms is pivotal to the thesis. Foucault describes how the bourgeoisie's rise to become the politically dominant class in the eighteenth century was obscured by 'the establishment of an explicit, coded and formally egalitarian juridical framework' supported by a representative parliament (1991a:222). The concurrent development of disciplinary mechanisms was the inverse 'dark side of these processes'. He frames education as a site for social control where the individual is disciplined through space and time. This thesis explores how the employment of 'tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms' works as a 'counter-law' against the supposedly egalitarian principles found in policy rhetoric (1991a:222-3). Foucault describes how the disciplines are 'systems of micro-power that are essentially non-egalitarian and asymmetrical'; they comprise society's foundations, ensuring the submission of bodies while introducing 'insuperable asymmetries' (1991a:222-3). 'Mechanisms of power' are applied to 'regulate' the body through physical and cognitive disciplining, limiting unpredictability and reducing inefficiency. This is evidenced in Mossbourne's eradication of the staff room as an inefficient space where problematic collectivities form, as chapter four shows. Docile bodies may be 'subjected, used, transformed and improved'; mechanisms of power incorporated in the body's 'productive efficiency' make it more useful (1991a:219). Power rests in the minute detail and the 'apparently insignificant tricks' of the disciplines, yet these subtle micro-actions cumulatively maintain macro structures of power. Student and teacher subjectification occurs not only through the mind as a conscious, internal process, but also through regulating the body's practices and aesthetics. As chapter five shows, one student had to have his eyebrows re-drawn each morning by his teacher to restore appropriate aesthetics, or face isolation. Processes of subjectification do not need to rely on manipulating the ideas and beliefs constituting human consciousness, but can operate through subtle mechanisms of power existing within institutions and regimes of truth. I draw on these theoretical perspectives to show how these mechanisms inscribe and cultivate flexible, obedient bodies.

Sir Michael's discourses can produce the effects of truth as power circulates through them. Instead of searching for 'truth', Foucault argues that the effects of truth are produced through discourses that are neither inherently true nor false, but made true

through the application of power and knowledge. Power is not an entirely repressive force, but also productive of new knowledges that allow norms to be created. The designation of Mossbourne's catchment area as urban, deprived, and locked in a culture of cyclical failure through Sir Michael's rhetoric, as well as historical and policy interventions explored in chapter one and two, allows Mossbourne to intervene and remedy this failure; once described and identified, problems can be observed, measured and managed. Sir Michael also problematizes the family as a source of underachievement. Foucault argues that over the eighteenth century the family shifted from being a model for the state to functioning as an instrument of the state – 'the privileged instrument for the government of the population' (1991b:100). Mossbourne's 'surrogate parents' replace inadequate families, as the family is supplemented, if not usurped, by the ethos' demands. As chapter eight shows, working-class mother Bernadette resents Mossbourne's attempts to direct her son's leisure time, while chapter five shows how interventions like the after-school chicken shop patrol manage student's negotiations of liminal public spaces.

Foucault's work on subjectification is instrumental for understanding how students and teachers comply with Mossbourne's seemingly oppressive structures. As Rabinow comments, 'What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasures, forms knowledge, produces discourses' (1984:61). Both teachers and students come to submit to discipline because they can see the fruits of their labour through the production of quantifiable results, as explored in chapter five. Or, as sixth former Derek relates in chapter seven, Mossbourne may have made him a 'little robot', but he feels this is worthwhile. Behind apparent acts of submission there are benefits to be gained. Foucault describes how government has become about 'disposing things: that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, and even of using laws themselves as tactics – to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be achieved' (1991b:95). I examine Mossbourne's governance in terms of how it arranges things, rather than simply how it imposes rules onto subjects.

While Foucault's work on discursive regimes and power is helpful for thinking about subjectification within the neoliberal market state, his refusal to base his theory in social forces like the state, the ruling class or society can make it difficult to empirically address how class and race are being discursively (re)produced by an

institution on a daily basis (Beechy and Donald, 1985). In addition to gauging how Mossbourne governs, I want to query to what ends and how its subjects are disposed. A Foucauldian critique allows me to map the subjects Mossbourne intends to create, but it does not offer an insight into the formation of those subjects. Which students need to become 'little robots' to fit in? How does the missing staff room affect teachers? Feminist and postcolonial theory, as well as Bourdieu's metaphors of capital, address and connect these patterns, providing an account of power relations which allows me to empirically examine the (re)production of difference.

Legitimate Cultures

Bourdieu's approach to capital and class allows us to understand how Foucault's non-egalitarian systems of micro-power play out in the social world. His theory of modernity draws on a mixture of phenomenology and elements of Marxism, bringing together both cultural and economic space, where embodiment occupies a central location (Adkins, 2004:4). Bourdieu's analysis of class moves beyond rudimentary attempts at categorisation through occupational grouping, understanding class as not just about economics or social status. Although the conception that 'men make history, but not in conditions of their choosing', still underpins Bourdieu's approach, he broadens Marx's conceptions of class beyond the relations of production to give culture a larger role. For Bourdieu class is made through spatial and temporal relations, as 'the space of objective differences (with regard to economic and cultural capital) finds an expression in a symbolic space of visible distinctions' (Bourdieu, 1987:11). This wider conception of class is critical for researching an institution claiming to transform urban culture. Bourdieu's model of class is predicated on the movement of 'capital' through social space that is structured by capital's distribution. This is crucial for understanding how capital circulates within Mossbourne and shapes its social space. Michel De Certeau's work on strategies and tactics is also a helpful lens, showing how subjects are not simply passively determined, but employ tactics to 'make do' in everyday life. Institutions like Mossbourne strategically create a bounded space demarcated from Hackney enabling panoptic practices. Like Bourdieu and Foucault, de Certeau does not revert to a notion of individuality, nor position this navigation as an intrinsically conscious process.

Bourdieu views class as a struggle, and frequently his work examines the education system as a site of this struggle where dominant culture's values are transmitted

(1977a:493). This is evidenced in chapter five through Mossbourne's preference for public school-styled uniforms that attempt to craft Hackney students into 'neutral' professionals. Bourdieu describes the sociology of education as interrogating the relationship between social and cultural reproduction, examining how educational structures reproduce power relations and the distribution of cultural capital (1977a:487). Mossbourne transmits its 'structure liberates' ethos as an obvious solution to underachievement, obscuring how privilege and power are reproduced through it. His work interrogates how the pedagogic power of educational institutions seems to 'demand the insignificant' as it 'extorts the essential' through inciting 'respect for forms or forms of respect which are the most visible and most "natural" manifestations of respect for the established order' (1992:96). This ties to mixed-race sixth former Olivia's description of how she has 'become more white' at Mossbourne in chapter seven, as learning to respect the establishment requires adjustments and movement of the self.

While Mossbourne's aspirational mantra claims everyone can achieve if they try hard enough, Bourdieu disrupts an 'imaginary universe of perfect competition or perfect equality of opportunity, a world without inertia, without accumulation, within heredity...so that at each moment anyone can become anything' (1986:241). He describes how this point of departure requires us to relinquish the common-sense view that academic success or failure corresponds to 'natural aptitudes' (1986:243). Bourdieu's forms of capital account for history's accumulated effects on the social world. He outlines three types: economic, social and cultural capital. Economic capital is directly related to financial assets or income, while social capital relates to networks of human connections that can be converted into economic capital. Cultural capital can exist in three forms: as embodied, objectified or institutionalised. The embodied state is 'in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the body and mind', while the objectified state refers to cultural goods and the institutionalised state includes things like educational qualifications (1986:243). Crucially, all forms of capital must be perceived as legitimate before being converted into symbolic capital; only legitimated capital accrues value and holds power. This is important for my research, as forms of social and cultural capital held by students and parents are often devalued within the educational landscape, highlighting how capital is context specific. As Tameka describes in chapter six, just because her friends greet each other by 'spudding',[10] it does not mean they are selling drugs, yet these modes of interrelating carry the

[10] Touching fists

'wrong' capital and associate Tameka with a pathological culture.

Bourdieu' concepts of symbolic power and symbolic violence are also integral to my analysis, as processes of legitimation exclude some and include others. Symbolic power is

> ...the power to constitute the given by stating it, to create appearances and belief, to confirm and transform the vision of the world and thereby action in the world, and therefore the world itself, this quasi-magical power which makes it possible to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained by force (physical and economic)...(1977b:117).

Yet symbolic power only works to produces these effects when both the speaker and their words are recognised as legitimate. Sir Michael possesses symbolic power, speaking from a legitimated position of authority, while the levels of legitimacy possessed by parents, teachers and students varied considerably. Charlie, a black British parent, describes in chapter eight how he foregrounds his professional status so teachers 'make the adjustment' and give him middle-class treatment. Several working-class parents lacked the capital to claim legitimacy, suffering symbolic violence through this denial which results in the domination of one class over another where those with symbolic power can arbitrarily impose instruments of knowledge and taxonomies perceived as legitimate (1977b:115). Bourdieu describes the historic designation of the working classes as tasteless, suffering 'the peremptory verdicts which, in the name of taste, condemn to ridicule, indignity, shame, silence...men and women who simply fall short, in the eyes of their judges, of the right way of being and doing...' (2010:512). This enactment of moral value judgements inflicts symbolic violence, distinguishing middle-class tastes as standard. Unsurprisingly, middle-class parents often recognise their favoured position, 'working' the education market with 'special pleading' outlined in chapter eight. Working-class parents are subordinated as teachers work as 'judges of normality', upholding 'the universal reign of the normative' (Foucault, 1991a: 304, 311). The reign of the middle-class as normative shows how the notion of a level playing field is a mere fantasy.

Selfhood and Value

Mossbourne's credo suggests individuals can transcend their situated positions,

acquire the right tastes and write their biographies in line with the reflexive modernisation thesis (see Beck et al, 2004). Yet as Mike Savage points out, 'What Giddens and Beck read as the decline of class cultures and the rise of individualization should better be understood as the shift from working-class to middle-class modes of individualisation' (2000:xi). Possessive selfhood designates the individual as able to stand outside of himself, severing the self from the body. Through this process, the possessive self can 'legitimate their own interests and establish their own authority, by defining themselves against the "mass"' (Skeggs, 2004:7). This possessive self is classed; the individual of value is a middle-class individual. Walkerdine similarly outlines this modern individual where 'the neo-liberal subject is the autonomous liberal subject made in the image of the middle class' (2003: 239). Subjecthood cannot be written in any script, but must assume the style of accepted middle-class norms.

Feminist researchers have long emphasised the cultural significance of class and addressed the affective dimensions of class struggle - namely the pain, shame and injury of lived class inequalities, developing Bourdieu's connection of objective structures and subjective experiences. Stephanie Lawler outlines how cultural and symbolic mechanisms make social class 'real', although class cannot be reduced to cultural mechanisms or located outside of politics (1999:5). Her research on women of working-class origin who now occupy middle-class positions shows how class is not achieved through economics alone, but through an array of cultural practices marking the subject. Lawler's participants felt they actualised their 'real selves' through becoming middle-class and adopting certain tastes. Like these women, through a coercive institutionalised programme of training, Mossbourne also seeks to 'liberate' students through 'structure' to discover their middle-class selves. However, as Lawler shows, this transformation to a middle-class self is never complete and often painful, even after the women had overcome their supposed lack of 'taste'. Hierarchies of 'taste', which are so easily depicted as simple preferences, connect to wider inequality. Beverley Skeggs describes how ignoring the relationship between the symbolic and material production of culture and who can participate in which cultures and how, presumes a universality of access where 'culture plays a role in mystifying the transaction between the sale of labour and its transformation into commodity' (2004:63). I will show how Mossbourne's ethos highlights the cleavage of the symbolic from the material, ignoring the economic inequalities shaping culture's material dimensions.

The frequent citation of poor parenting – or mothering – as a source of social dysfunction at Mossbourne is challenged by Val Gillies' (2007) research with working-class mothers who are frequently portrayed as immature, immoral and a general threat to society. These sentiments are embedded in Mossbourne's call for 'surrogate parents'. Yet Gillies points out that poor parenting is not the sustaining force behind poverty; adopting middle-class parenting modes does not alleviate social disadvantage. Her research highlights working-class mother's resourcefulness and commitment in the face of marginalisation, disrespect and instability. These mothers articulated a more relational sense of self where personal interest was secondary and family and friends formed an inter-dependent web. Yet this relational sense of self is not recognised as important, but as pathological within a neoliberal educational arena. Through interviews with working-class participants, Skeggs and Loveday explored how subjects symbolically positioned as lacking value and 'held morally responsible for all the structural inequalities they inherit and by which they are positioned' were able to accrue value for themselves (2012:487). They show how participants generated person value by investing and connecting with others, rather than investing in the self and distinction, suggesting a political ontology outside of Mossbourne's emphasis on acquisitive selfhood. Mossbourne's ethos assumes there is little value inherent within different modes of being and knowing; yet these feminist thinkers help us imagine alternatives to neoliberal subjecthood. Blaming the effects of poverty and inequality on the pathological home is not confined to the white working-class; a long legacy of the stigmatised black family is folded into this discourse (see Reynolds, 2005; Phoenix, 1991; Lawrence, 1982; Gilroy, 2002). Underlying Mossbourne's normative middle-class subject of value lurks an aura of whiteness.

Remembering the Good Old Days

Mossbourne's 'traditional values with a modern edge' offer a route back to a lost golden age of law and order, of the racially homogenous nuclear family and happy nationhood. My thesis does not just concern itself with classed inequality, but the reproduction of the fictitious, yet durable category of race and the complex interplay between racialization and classification within Mossbourne. It would be impossible to examine one without interrogating the other due to their historic mutual constitution, as race rests at the very heart of modernity's formation (Goldberg, 2001). Unlike class, Sir Michael does not overtly name 'race' as a 'problem', but it is inherent in the problematic mass of 'urban children', as ethnic minorities comprise over half of the

cohort. While some gains have been made, they exist alongside continuing entrenched disadvantage where racialised hierarchies have grown subtler, but inequality persists (see Alexander, 2010). Produced over thirty years ago, *The Empire Strikes Back* (CCCS, 1982) examined how British constructions of the authoritarian state were inextricably tied to popular racism during the 1970s. While there have been significant changes to how the state operates, focussing on how race is produced through authoritarian modes of governance remains a prescient concern as an un-democratic, centralised education policy accompanies this neoliberal moment.

The Clove Club, founded in 1884 to keep the 'old boys' of Hackney Downs Boys Grammar School connected, represents this past-tense golden age. Hackney Downs occupied Mossbourne's site before its closure in 1995 and their website showcases a nostalgic narrative of their alma mater's 'good old days', evidencing the complicated struggles over race and class, multiculturalism and assimilation that continue to affect Britain's social landscape (CC, 2013). The site showcases images of the school's heyday throughout the 1940s, 50s and 60s: boys in gleaming cricket whites play on the Downs; a bespectacled, smiling science teacher wearing a lab coat brandishes a pipe in one hand, a beaker in the other; the Hackney Cadet Corps marches with drums against the backdrop of the Pembury Estate. A 222-page virtual book of 'success stories' catalogues the lengthily list of notable graduates. The school motto 'God grant grace' is printed across the title page of the 1958 royal blue hymn book, its preface describing the school's 'special needs' due to hosting Christian and Jewish communities in a common assembly.

Fig. 0.1. Hackney Downs School

Fig. 0.2. Cadets practice against the backdrop of Pembury Estate in the 1950's

The site describes 'old boy' Geoffrey Alderman's new book, *Hackney Downs 1876-1995 The Life and Death of a School*. Now professor of politics and contemporary history at University of Buckingham, Alderman professes his text offers an honest account of what went wrong - namely bogus multiculturalism's infiltration of the school by the late 1980s. He decries how the decision to go comprehensive was railroaded by 'the stench of left-wing extremist politics', yet the downward spiral of disaster had already begun as Britain performed a 'sleep walk into unfettered, uncontrolled immigration'. Alderman blames multiculturalism for hampering migrant's speedy integration, positioning the earlier arriving Jewish immigrants as exemplary assimilationists who tried to fit into British social mores. An implicit contrast is made with later black and Asian immigrants, as Alderman marvels that governments considered it possible that 'inordinate numbers of one or more of the rest of the world's cultures' densely concentrated in areas like Hackney could have been absorbed into British culture. The demise of urban spaces like Hackney is attributed to an impossible onslaught of foreigners too different to be absorbed into Britain's social fabric and permitted via multi-culturalism to remain apart.

British culture is presented as a fixed, homogenous entity immigrants must be absorbed into, decontextualising and disembodying the relationship different migrants have to England and the different histories carried with them. Paul Gilroy describes how 'lazy commentators' like Alderman have conflated the arrival of migrants with a corrosion of homogeneity; instead of focusing on unassimiliable difference as the source of national decline, the real causality stems from the erosion of the welfare state and a turn to market liberalism (2004:135). This need to assimilate difference ties to the historic infantalisation of the colonised where they are positioned as requiring guidance from Western superiors (see Fanon, 2001; Nandy, 1988). Through the

academy programme's belief in meritocracy, Mossbourne presents a way back to those grammar school days bathed in a warm past-tense glow where alien others can be culturally transformed and assimilated.

Education is also promoted as a miracle salve enabling social mobility, although the UK has one of the poorest records on social mobility in the developed world (Causa and Johansson, 2010). Diane Reay describes this faulty notion:

> The prevailing fallacy for much of the past two decades has been that schools can make all the difference necessary...The focus was to be on teachers and within school and particularly within classroom processes. If we can only make teachers good enough, equip them with sufficient skills and competencies then the wider social context of schooling is seen as unimportant (2006:291).

Rather than critiquing a lack of practical equality, the emphasis rests on providing equal opportunities through school effectiveness. An evangelical belief in social mobility fuelled by a meritocracy promoting the enterprising, acquisitive self persists as the sole solution to inequality.

Mossbourne builds on these meritocratic dreams. The optimistic rhetoric of equal opportunities connects to Lauren Berlant's examination of our attachments to 'that moral-intimate-economic thing called "the good life"' (2011:2). She discusses how the optimistic ambition underpinning upward mobility's pursuit can result in a relationship of 'cruel optimism' where what you desire obstructs your development. Optimistic relations are not intrinsically cruel, but become cruel 'when the object that draws your attachment actively impedes the aim that brought you to it initially' (2011:1). She asks why people stay attached to 'conventional good-life fantasies' when there is so much evidence that they are unstable, fragile and come at a great cost? While fantasy may allow people to collect idealistic theories and imaginaries 'about how they and the world "add up to something"', Berlant asks what happens when fantasies start to unravel? (2011:2). The academy program responds to these unravellings by reinstating mobility dreams in newer, more heroic ways. Berlant provides a useful lens for examining harmful attachments, offering an affective window onto the struggles of Foucauldian subjects who are both making and being made in complex ways.

Education of/for Neoliberal Times

My research explores how difference is being remade in neoliberal times, lending this broad term some empirically-defined effects. Neoliberalism is not just a move away from the Keynesian welfare state and embrace of the Chicago school of economics, but a political rationality. Political theorist Wendy Brown explains how although neoliberal rationality foregrounds the market, it is not only focussed on the economy, but on the application of market values to all institutions and social action (2003:7). The academy program invites market values to extend into all aspects of education, as discussed in chapter two. Education has long been harnessed to economic imperatives, however measurement regimes instigated in the 1980s have accelerated managerial approaches, turning parents into consumers, placing schools in competition and pushing social justice off the agenda (Ball, 2008). David Gillborn and Deborah Youdell describe how teachers and students described being 'trapped within a system where the rules are made by others and where external forces, much bigger than any individual school, teacher or pupil, are setting the pace that all must follow' (2000:43). Stephen Ball (2003) has shown how the education market benefits middle-class parents, while Sharon Gewirtz (2002) has charted how the culture of schools has been altered by this shift towards consumer-oriented managerialism.

Although educational debates have shifted since Paul Willis' *Learning to Labour* (1977) and Máirtín Mac An Ghaill's *Young, Gifted and Black* (1988) were written, this does not diminish the significance of these ethnographies that altered the parameters of discussion and were useful points of comparison for my research. Willis' study moved away from equal opportunity debates to position school structures, not children, as the key issue. He departed from pathological representations of working-class boys' culture to show how boys enacted agency through counter-school culture. Yet the labour market has substantially altered since the mid-1970s; many of the jobs available for Willis' lads no longer exist. Qualifications are now a necessary prerequisite for employment, while little space is allowed for counter-school culture at Mossbourne. Mac An Ghaill rejected culturalist perspectives positioning Black and Asian communities as hindering students from assimilation and achievement.[11] Yet this

[11] This monolithic 'failure' narrative is effectively unsettled by Mirza (1992).

culturalist perspective endures in new incarnations, running throughout New Labour's academy rhetoric. Many teachers had low expectations of students in Mac An Ghaill's study, but Mossbourne teachers are bound by audit and surveillance mechanisms to maintain certain standards, while performance management enact other effects. Mossbourne students are prevented from enacting the rebellious agency students in both of these studies displayed; uncooperative pupils are isolated, while many use their agency to enact self-beneficial compliance.

There have been several qualitative and quantitative studies exploring academies through gauging attainment levels, concluding the programme was low on effectiveness but high on expense and unaccountable to local communities (Gorard, 2009, 2005; Beckett, 2007). Ball (2007) has interrogated academy's new 'architecture of regulation' and the webs of actors comprising public-private partnerships, while Melissa Benn (2011) has condemned the dismissal of the comprehensive model in favour of academies and free schools. While these studies rely primarily on documents to make their arguments, my research aims to extend current understandings of the social and cultural impact of marketised educational models through an intensive empirical engagement with an institution at the vanguard of these changes.

Looking Forward

This thesis does not seek to excoriate individual teachers, many of whom are extremely dedicated, but examine how people are placed in relations of production, signification and complex power relations (Foucault, 2002:327). *Chapter one* shows how Hackney became a testing ground for academies, revisiting Hackney Down's demise and narratives of failure circulated by the new right and media outlets in relation to the establishment of an education market. Mossbourne smoothes over difficult political struggles, focusing on aspirational success to provide non-democratic solutions to complex pasts. *Chapter two* examines how historical hegemonic framings continuously feed into the present, exploring how class, race and gender came into being in and through capitalism and empire. Mossbourne acts as part of a long trajectory of interventions aimed at individualising and transforming a volatile 'urban residuum', where schools act as political, contested social institutions. *Chapter three* shows how the methodology was continually shaped by Mossbourne's institutional parameters as I returned to my former workplace as a researcher. It argues for an ethics of engagement that moves beyond the 'consent form' to entail a continual process of

reflexive negotiation, while querying reflexivity's limits.

Mossbourne's ordering of space, time and the body through a dense web of disciplinary logics is explored in *chapter four*. The urban chaos discourse justifies boot camp tactics, as collective spaces are designed and managed out of Mossbourne to promote efficiency. Management is through dictation, not consensus, as Mossbourne crafts self-made individualities. *Chapter five* moves on to explore why Mossbourne's disciplinary structures are endured and welcomed, as belief in the self and the institution is evangelically cultivated through collective acts of worship. Sir Michael's inspirational morality tales create clear binaries, as Mossbourne's mission is aligned with overcoming structural barriers, denying their structuring power while reinstating them, as repetition and ambiguity lend power to his paradoxical message.

After establishing Mossbourne's envisioned institutional parameters, *chapter six* examines how marketization perpetuates and extends the privileging of the white middle-class student as ideal, constituting a 'buffer zone' against Hackney's 'urban children'. Other bodies can be temporarily incorporated into this space if they are willing to 'try on' its template. Drawing on the historic representations outlined in chapter two, it evidences the continuing porosity of categorisations. *Chapter seven* shows how students actively negotiate the demands of Mossbourne's conveyor belt against the backdrop of the 'buffer zone', where some students find it harder to stay on than others. Students prepare for an imagined future work place crafted in Mossbourne's image where compliance is mandatory. The chapter highlights the contradictory feelings found in student accounts which corresponds with teachers' accounts in chapter five. *Chapter eight* moves beyond Mossbourne's gates, examining how parents negotiate Mossbourne from disparate social locations. Middle-class parents assume the role of watcher and judge through urban chaos's reifying lens, frequently aware of their preferred 'customer' status, while other parents deploy various tactics to assert their value. Finally, I consider how white, middle-class hegemony is remade through academy policy. I will begin this journey by examining how the repetitive evocation of particular versions of the past does work in the present.

Chapter One
Building New Narratives: From 'God Grant Grace' to 'Structure Liberates'

Aspirational Spaces[12]

It was a late July morning in 2011 and my last day of fieldwork at Mossbourne. It was also the end of year assembly, one of two annual events where over 900 pupils from year seven to eleven are brought together in the sports hall for speeches and awards. Fitting all these bodies into one room was a meticulously executed operation and the school was abuzz with hushed, but expectant end of year excitement. Finally staff and students were attentively seated and the sounds of the school band filled the vast windowless room. The music gave way to complete silence as Sir Michael took the podium to give his final speech before taking up his post as the head of Ofsted. Firstly, he asked students to spend a couple of moments reflecting on their year, what they have achieved or have not. A gap of silence was filled by the heavy quiet of hundreds of bodies shifting in plastic chairs. Sir Michael emphasised that they should never take these years for granted, for this year that had just passed was a year they would never have again. He reiterated this with such sombre conviction that I started to reflect on the past year with a measure of inexplicable regret. Sir Michael then urged students not to take Mossbourne for granted, pointing out the numerous advantages that they had, how lucky they were and how good this school was compared to others. He repeated the oft-referenced Ofsted inspector's report rating Mossbourne as outstanding and 'within that category exceptional'. Besides the amazing extracurricular activities and lessons, he pointed out what a wonderful building it was to learn in. He had been to see a lot of other schools and many of their buildings were depressing places to spend the day, whereas Mossbourne was light, airy and open. Before working with the Richard Rogers Partnership on the building's design, he said had never given much thought to buildings, but now he was very aware of architecture.

Sir Michael then projected an image of the Lloyds Building, Canary Wharf, and the Gherkin onto the wall, saying he found these three towering buildings important as they evidenced man's power to effect change. Using these buildings as evidence, he grandly pronounced that the world does not impact upon us (this was qualified by quick under his breath aside that it sometimes did), but that instead we have the power to impact on the world and effect change through bold ambition. Subsequently, he wanted students to be ambitious, relating how an ancient cave painting evidenced how 'man' had chosen to impact on the world by doing

[12] I have italicised text when I am referencing long portions of my field notes.

something that showed human ingenuity. And Mossbourne's no-excuses culture meant it does not matter what background you are from - you can and will achieve.

Sir Michael then showed a slide of the crumbling, decrepit Hackney Downs School prior to demolition beside an image of Mossbourne's gleaming timber frame, juxtaposing the dark failure of the past with the success of the present. Finally, he announced that there were currently twelve million Somalians starving, which meant we should appreciate what we have and give money to worthy causes, because all we can do to help in these situations is to give money. After this depressingly curt conclusion to a world catastrophe, he asked students to close their eyes and bow their heads while thinking about people who are sick, dead, or in trouble. After a long, grave pause, Sir Michael left the podium and the mood gradually lightened as the band launched into a rendition of the feel-good 'Forget You' by Cee Lo Green.

Building New Mythologies

Mossbourne's 'structure liberates' ethos pronounces continuing inequalities as past-tense and irrelevant to present-day individual achievement. As anthropologist and historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot points out, power makes some historical narratives possible while silencing others, 'For what history is changes with time and place or, better said, history reveals itself only through the production of specific narratives' (1997:25). Particular silences are necessary to distance Mossbourne from a messy past. This sentiment and content of this assembly speech was similar to others preceding it: a masculinist ode to thrusting your oar into the world, in the shape of a City-orientated intervention. Similarly to the weekly assemblies that conclude with students bowing their heads in self-reflection, self-scrutiny is instigated through meditating on the self and its achievements. Sir Michael works hard to instigate belief in future success, reiterating the advantages of a new building, good teachers, national recognition and Mossbourne's superior market position. Four miles away, the Square Mile's monuments to capital represent a wonderland of infinite possibility as Sir Michael's 'man' stands outside of nature as tamer and builder of dominating wonders. Finally, Hackney Downs' crumbling remains represent abject failure, heightening Mossbourne's achievements and marking a clear rupture with the past.

This chapter shows how history works in conjunction with power to make present-day

strategies appear as common-sense solutions to social inequality. Trouillot describes how tracing power through various 'moments' helps 'emphasise the fundamentally processual character of historical production, to insist that what history is matters less than how history works; that power itself works together with history...' (1997:28). To better contextualise the grandiose rhetorical brushstrokes of Sir Michael's assembly speech where differences are aesthetic and ephemeral rather than material, we need to consider what pasts this rhetoric paves over. The chapter begins by examining how historical connotations of Hackney have shaped Mossbourne's approach. The implementation of the academy programme presented an apolitical, efficient solution, re-situating and validating Hackney as a local authority derided as a bastion of 'loony left' politics from the right, but also suffering from complex power struggles within. The chapter critically examines how the advent of a marketised educational system is re-shaping our practices and horizons.

Hackney as Multiple Spaces

There are multiple, complex and contradictory representations of Hackney. While I do not have room to describe them in detail, I will give a brief overview of some historic shifts which illuminate how representations of the borough have altered and been built upon. I am not seeking to identify more or less 'true' versions of Hackney, but will start from a position which acknowledges this urban space as both materially and ideologically produced (Keith, 2005:70). Hackney grew out of a collection of small villages that merged in the early nineteenth century to form a genteel Victorian suburb. The development of the railways and London's continued growth saw wealthier residents migrate north as Hackney became predominantly working class and overcrowded by the early 1900s. Widespread destruction during WWII led to the erection of social housing, while East London's centres of industry declined throughout the 1960s. Hackney's population shrunk from 1970-1980 as employment opportunities diminished; those who could afford to moved elsewhere as the borough became synonymous with inner city decay (see Harrison, 1983). As Fordism's full employment gave way to unemployment and job insecurity, the altered economic landscape affected state commitments to income redistribution, national economic management, and the provision of universal health, education and social benefits (Amin et al, 2002:5). Industrial decline was coupled with the influx of new citizens from Commonwealth countries and struggles for equality ensued as the borough became home to an increasingly economically impoverished population. However, moving into

the new millennium, Hackney's association with urban decline has been replaced by more celebratory accounts, as images of the inner city as a dynamic, innovative space have somewhat supplanted images of crime and disorder (see Bonnett, 2010).

Hackney's relatively young population stands at around 246,300 (LBH, 2013). Roughly 36% of the population is white British, followed by 16.2% Other White which is partially attributed to the arrival of Polish migrants. Nineteen per cent of residents classify themselves as Black British Caribbean or Black British African. Hackney is also home to the largest Charedi Orthodox Jewish community in Europe who comprise 7.4% of the population, and a large Turkish population. There are also numerous Indian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani residents, while over 100 languages are spoken (LBH, 2013). Crime rates are falling in the borough, but remain higher than the London average. Hackney's GCSE results have also risen to be in line with or above the national average since 2010. However the borough also has the highest proportion of the population on out of work benefits of any London borough (MacInnes et al, 2011). Despite this continued poverty, housing is disproportionately costly, with Hackney's house prices rising higher than the London average (GLA, 2012). Gentrification has long been underway due to Hackney's Victorian housing stock, while 24% of residents live in social housing, higher than the London average of 14% (LBH, 2013). Hackney has become a popular middle-class destination, reversing the outward migration seen in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Mossbourne is surrounded by a mixture of estates and increasingly expensive Victorian properties. The Pembury Estate, a large redbrick housing estate with a bad reputation, runs from the east and south of the school before running into the greenery of Clapton Square, a conservation area since 1969 bounded by impressive blocks of listed Georgian terraces. Lower Clapton Road continues east and has been infamously known as 'murder mile' due to gun and knife crime incidents, however the leafy streets branching off the main road heading east towards Chatworth Road are lined with now expensive Victorian housing. To the northwest on Amhurst Road lies the Downs Estate, also regarded as deprived, while continuing north is a blend of estates and Victorian housing leading to the long-gentrified area of Stoke Newington.

While diverse in myriad ways, the growing gap between rich and poor is brought into sharp relief in Hackney. Several brand new luxury fashion outlets stand adjacent to a block of council housing ten minutes' walk southeast. Five minutes further on is

Broadway Market, a street lined with cafes and speciality food stores where patrons tinker on i-Pads and eat £6 sandwiches, co-existing with other residents like the London Field Boys, a local gang. One café's sign announces that pavement seating is for customers only, while the one or two chicken and kebab shops left on the street and a small collection of public benches play host to a very different audience. These classed and racialised divisions in urban space are rendered highly visible due to their intense proximity, highlighting how a social mix does not infer mixing or subsequent social parity, as cleavages run across social and material space (see Byrne 2006; Butler and Robson 2003; Benson and Jackson 2012; Hollingworth and Manseray, 2012). Flattening out these disparities is a key feature of Mossbourne's aspirational narrative, yet what is gritty appeal for some is actual danger for others.

Next I will examine how representations about what Hackney is and has been - constructed by political actors, experts and media outlets - acts as integral building blocks in the formation of Mossbourne's institutional ethos. The representations carry the weight of power and consequently validity. Hackney Downs School is used to represent endemic educational 'failure' and forms the symbolic backdrop that present-day 'success' is measured against.

Narratives of Failure and 'Loony Left' Problems

Underneath the dominant narrative of Hackney Downs School as irredeemable site of failure, rehearsed by Sir Michael, exists a significantly more complex terrain. Racial and gender-based discrimination were being fought out against a backdrop of entrenched poverty coupled with shrinking central government investment, the implementation of school choice policies, council infighting and mismanagement. I would like to reflect briefly on *Hackney Downs: the school that dared to fight*, written in part by a teacher and the last acting head in an attempt to rectify what the authors assert was the unjust stigmatisation and closure of a school after years of financial and managerial neglect. I am not suggesting this text reveals the 'real story', but it does provide an alternative account. The authors describe how Hackney Downs blossomed as a mixed-ability comprehensive school during the 1970s, however by the mid-1980s exam results were falling, boys' schools' popularity was waning and the school became undersubscribed with spare places largely occupied by new immigrants and boys expelled from other schools. By the early 1980s about half of the students were Afro-Caribbean; by 1990 twenty-two languages were spoken. Although the authors do not

portray these newcomers as inherently problematic, they do claim that it required additional investment at a time when resources were declining.

The framework of identity politics placed teachers and students in competing realms of oppression, pitting anti-racist and anti-sexist struggles against one another and resulting in conflict from the mid-1980s until Hackney Downs' closure. The mixed-gender black staff and parents group (BSPG) thought teaching standards resembled a youth club and felt implicit racism and resultant low expectations were to blame for misbehaviour and black male underachievement (O'Connor et al, 1999:22-3). The authors negatively portray this group as reactionary, asserting that white boys were actually the underachievers. This dismissal veers dangerously towards positioning white working-class students as victims of immigration while ignoring how low teacher expectations and problematic assumptions could also be embedded in progressive educational approaches (see Gillborn, 2009).

In 1994 the school hit the headlines as 60 students protested outside against the dismissal of a BSPG member and teacher. The press labelled it a 'race war', but the authors claim this disjuncture was more complex, pointing to an 'ideological rift' positioning ethnic minority staff against the rest. Yet their denial that racism was an issue is problematic; racism powerfully united the BSPG in action – regardless of whether or not their tactics hindered institutional cohesion. Their account points to how bitter negotiations of racism and sexism within this ailing school were compounded and accelerated, not addressed, by the wider structural context as Thatcherite policies intensified educational competition and Hackney Down's leaky, crumbling buildings were starved of the capital grants necessary to make repairs. In 1995 the Conservative government overrode Hackney council's vote to keep Hackney Downs open. Four weeks later the first education association, or popularly entitled 'hit squad', was given 10 weeks to determine its fate.

Debates surrounding Hackney Downs' closure helped consolidate and embed the Conservatives' standards agenda where testing and inspection regimes equalled progress. Dramatic titles of media coverage ranged from 'the school that had to die' to 'the murder of Hackney Downs' (see TES, 1995), attesting to the frenzy surrounding and subsequent symbolism attached to this site. Michael Barber, 'hit squad' member and subsequent New Labour educational advisor, proclaimed that historians would look back on 1995 as the year there was a 'seismic shift' in educational 'culture' where

failure became an unacceptable part of state education (Barber, 1995). Barber attributes this shift to Thatcherite reforms described later in this chapter, positing that the 'few' who wanted to keep Hackney Downs open were 'stalwart in their defence of the status quo' and believed in 'an inalienable right to carry on failing'. Barber's invocation of an invisible 'silent majority' echoes the new right's appeals twenty-five years earlier (see chapter two), as left-leaning educationalists adopted the right's rhetoric and their policies. A failure-success binary becomes the bedrock of debates, without recognition of how the 1988 Education Reform Act structured this binary by plunging many urban schools into daily crises, leaving little time for strategic management and subsequently fostering low standards and poor teaching quality (Mirza, 2009:26). In many ways, Mossbourne was created as a response to this 'failure'.

These debates followed the widely publicised ridicule of Hackney council as a bastion of 'loony left' policies by new right Conservative politicians and the popular press. In 1986 the *Daily Star* reported a fictional tale which gained urban myth status regarding the banning of the nursery rhyme 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' in primary schools because of racist connotations. The new right used numerous fictional tales targeting white anxiety to attack anti-racism, presenting it as the cause of British cultural decline (Gordon, 1990:187). Concerns over local anti-racist movements were also crafted 'into popular "chains of meaning"', providing an 'ideological smokescreen and hence popular support for the Thatcherite onslaught on town hall democracy' (Butcher et al, 1990:116).

These ridiculous tales obfuscated lines of causality, with new right organisations springing up in opposition to anti-racist education, tying left-wing extremists and slumping educational standards to its development (Tomlinson, 1993:25-6). Consequently, many radical local authorities subsequently adopted less robust approaches to race equality toward the late 1980s due to negative publicity, while the Labour party avoided direct identification with radical urban left authorities to avoid controversy. The political climate of the late 1980s veered towards framing anti-racists, rather than racist attitudes, as the problematic elements (Ball and Solomos, 1990:12). 'Loony left' labels discounted racial discrimination and promoted division, while concealing legitimate struggles within local spaces where avowedly radical councils were not utopias of equality. Discriminatory practices were endemic to Hackney council itself, which was riven with conflict and mismanagement (see Solomos and Singh, 1990). Some ten years later, the academy programme presented a

means of securing over-due investment in the borough's education system via New Labour policy, while also representing an 'apolitical' means of remaking Hackney.

Non-Democratic Solutions

Hackney became a testing ground for public-private finance initiatives. In 2002, Hackney was the first borough to have its educational provision forcibly outsourced to the Learning Trust, a private non-profit company, however control was transferred back to Hackney Council at the end of July 2012. New Labour's brand of political commutarianism reacted to attacks on local government by shifting towards a narrative of community empowerment, participation and individual responsibility and away from a focus on economic and material issues. In light of past critiques, authorities like Hackney took up these narratives to evidence reform and legitimate their activities.

Although framed as an entrepreneurial project made possible by local businessman Clive Bourne's £3 million pound investment, the state stumped up the remaining £22 million pounds to build Mossbourne. The belief that community participation and individual responsibility are the essential ingredients of regeneration ignores the critical role state investment played. Manzi and Jacobs discuss how the local state has been eviscerated in favour of emphasising community involvment, which has 'left a vacuum at the heart of urban policy' (2009:287). Arguably a similar 'vacuum' exists in education policy, through academy's centralised control by the Secretary of State and lack of local involvement. What is left is not simply a vacuum, but a space to be filled by other entities. The state is not eviscerated, but altered to incorporate different actors from the private and third sector. As chapter two describes, spaces once filled by governors, teachers, parents and local officials can be filled by financial services executives, business magnates, charities or state officials. The market acts to legitimate the state through its active shaping and direct involvement in educational provision, tying education's ethos and ideals ever closer to market principles (Gane, 2012). In the absence of a coherent broad programme of opposition, coupled with the low expectations and discrimination many students faced in urban deprived areas, academies were often a welcome improvement.

Technocratic settlements have appeared as common sense solutions in the face of difficult negotiations within urban spaces. Formerly chaotic councils like Hackney

were amenable to the academy program and many parents welcomed new, well-resourced schools; several parents described how Hackney deserved Mossbourne (see chapter eight). Overhauling 'failure' creates an opening for radical agenda resetting, yet in many ways this settlement has subsumed and consolidated complex battles over inequality while curtailing civic participation. Although progress has been made to address discriminatory policy and practice in Hackney, 'there remains a legacy of awkwardness about how to talk about discrimination and difference...This leads to silences about these subjects and their histories, which can make negotiating this terrain both difficult and discomfiting' (Jones, 2011:117). Rather than talking about these issues, Mossbourne attempts to transcend this contentious terrain by erasing difference. Now I will briefly examine how the creation of an education market has precipitated our present predicament.

Making a Marketplace

i. Market Logic Meets Education

The often-unfortunate condition and negative perceptions of Hackney's school system from the late 1980s throughout the 1990s was directly related to market-led reforms. My brief survey of education policy will show the fundamental similarity of Conservative, New Labour and the Coalition government approaches since the late 1980s. Thatcher's 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) dismantled the post-war education settlement through pivotal changes shifting power towards central government while decreasing the power of Local Education Authorities (LEAs). The ERA introduced parental choice and open enrolment, monitored school performance through regular testing and results publication, established the national curriculum, devolved budgets to individual schools, instating routine inspections and formula funding. Open enrolment prevented LEAs from balancing intakes across schools, allowing some schools to become oversubscribed and others to wither. Linking intake to funding meant each child recruited added to school coffers, while losing students meant losing resources, accelerating spirals of decline. These alterations reconfigured parents as consumers and schools as small businesses competing for survival in the local market place, increasingly employing public relations consultants to craft appealing selling points. A focus on raising standards via competition left behind any ideals of equitable provision for all as 'market rights' replaced 'welfare rights', enforcing a 'privatisation of public values' (Ball, 1990:6,8). Education became a market where 'choice' acts as a disciplinary mechanism, not a promoter of equality. The

market 'rewards positioning rather than principles and encourages commercial rather than educational decision-making' (Gewirtz, 2002:71). In terms of promoting racial parity, the national curriculum was 'rooted in a prescriptive model of national culture, national history, and "the national interest", steeped in a neoconservative glow', while the Inner London Educational Authority, a pioneering authority in regards to issues of race, class and gender, was simultaneously abolished (Gill, Mayor and Blair, 1992:vii). Gillborn and Youdell describe how the GCSE pass rate, the dominant way of measuring success and failure, has 'created an *A-to-C economy* in schools where "the bottom line" is judged in relation to how many higher passes are achieved' (2000:43, author's italics). These market-led reforms have exacerbated rather than ameliorated race, class and gender inequality.

Both Conservatives and New Labour presented public-private finance partnerships as offering 'opportunity' for the disadvantaged. City Technology Colleges (CTCs), the prototype for New Labour's city academies programme, were also part of the ERA. CTCs were inspired by US magnet schools implemented in urban areas in the 1970s with the intention of promoting racially and socially mixed schools through parental choice and increased competition. Magnet schools were subsequently criticised for providing excellence, but promoting inequality, yet this did not stop British governments from emulating them. Their appeal resting on breaking the influence of leftist LEAs by attracting selected pupils into a new private sector, establishing a hierarchy of independent schools, while claiming to provide opportunities for inner city youth (Walford, 1991). CTCs were funded directly by central government and received additional private funding; eventually 15 were established.

ii. Embedding Markets

New Labour academies were a reincarnation of CTCs utilising public-private finance and launched in 2002. One of Labour's first moves in office was to establish 'the Standards and Effectiveness Unit' headed by Michael Barber, Hackney Downs 'hit squad' member and prominent writer on school effectiveness. This approach has been widely critiqued for formulaically identifying 'recipe-style' the ingredients of an effective school, while disengaging from and erasing issues of class, race and gender (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000:32). Academies were initially established in urban deprived areas with the goal of breaking cyclical underachievement. Blair's education advisor Lord Andrew Adonis (2008) professed academies had brought about the 'social and educational transformation' of Hackney, with Mossbourne leading the way. A

private sponsor would contribute two million pounds in exchange for shaping the school ethos and providing inspiring leadership, while the government would foot the remaining bill.[13] Like CTCs, funding came directly from central government as academies operated outside of local authority control, with staff pay and contracts determined by the institution.

Although funding was progressively shifted towards some disadvantaged areas of England and Wales, giving the programme an angle of redistributive, social justice, the discursive shift from welfarism to a new managerialism remained stubbornly intact (Gerwirtz, 2002:46). Although different groups may have gotten better access to money, jobs and status, marketization fundamentally altered the educational landscape. Stephen Ball describes the initial academies as 'a *condensate* of state competition policy with all its tensions and contradictions in microcosm' with its concern with flexibility, entrepreneurism and the participation of 'heroes of enterprise' (2007:160, author's italics). They signify *'a "break" from roles and structures and relationships of accountability of a state education system.* They replace the democratic processes of local authority control over schools with technical or market solutions' (2007:177, author's italics). This replacement of democracy with technocratic solutions can be seen as a reasonable response to the difficult negotiations taking place in local authorities like Hackney, however room for discussion and negotiation are excised from the landscape; 'there is no room for voice, only for choice' as parent-school relations become a commodified matter of exchange value (Ball, 1990:10). Meanwhile schools and teachers must reconceptualise themselves as businesses, where workers produce the product of test results via the student. As schools are individually contracted directly by the Secretary of State, accountability – either locally or to any elected body - disappears (see Clayton, 2012).

iii. Comprehensive Dislocation

The academy programme has rapidly expanded since the Coalition government came to power in 2010, leading to the intensification of privatisation. Education Secretary Michael Gove invited all secondary and primary schools to apply for academy status through the Academies Act 2010, shifting funding away from deprived areas. While 203 academies were set up under New Labour, as of 1 September 2013 there are 3,304 academies open under the Coalition government (DfE, 2013). Although schools deemed 'under performing' need a sponsor to convert 'to make a complete break with

[13] Several sponsors never actually paid the required amount, which had to be covered by the government. The upfront payment was abolished by New Labour in 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8238502.stm

cultures of low aspiration and achievement', this is no longer necessary for adequately performing schools (DfE, 2013b). The key selling points remain freedom from local authorities, the ability to set pay and employment conditions and budgetary autonomy. For many schools, conversion was more about the hope that their budget would increase rather than the pursuit of freedom (Abrams, 2012). In January 2011 all local authorities suffered a top slice off their allocated grant to help fund the programme, regardless of the number of academies in their area; the 2011-12 slice was £148 million, rising to £265 million in 2012-13 (Benn, 2011:29). Benn describes how 'the aim was to create a majority of privately managed institutions...leaving a rump of struggling schools within the ambit of the local authorities, themselves undermined by savage budget cuts' (2011:29).

Academies have been formally enshrined as the model of future provision through the Education Act of 2011's requirement that all new institutions open as academies or free schools. The Act also gave the Secretary of State the right to direct the closure of schools causing concern. Gove has wielded this power with great controversy, overriding parental opposition to close Downhills Primary School in Haringey and force it to reopen as an academy. While 94% of parents voted 'no' to conversion, it was taken over by the Harris Federation which runs 13 academies in London and is incidentally sponsored by Carpetright millionaire and Conservative peer Lord Harris (Aston, 2012; Sahorta, 2012). Gove dubiously justified Downhills' conversion by appealing to racial and social inequality. Twisting the lines of causality, he has referred to his opponents as 'ideologues who are happy with failure' who are really saying 'If you're poor, if you're Turkish, if you're Somali, then we don't expect you to succeed. You will always be second-class and it's no surprise your schools are second class' (Harrison, 2012). The invocation of 'inequality' to impose further inequality is an ingenious discursive conflation whereby resisting public service privatization becomes equated with promoting prejudice. Meanwhile parents at a Croydon primary school trying to block another Harris Academy-conversion have called the Department of Education's 'consultation' processes 'farcical' (Baynes, 2013).

The 2011 Education Act not only accelerates privatisation, it limits access to redress. Parents are no longer allowed to make complaints to a local commissioner, while in April 2012 further education colleges were re-classified as private sector institutions, paving the way for future for-profit institutions. Chief Executive of the Barnfield

Foundation Sir Peter Birkett[14] wants to utilise this new legislation to run a for-profit further education college, extending this to his chain of academy schools if further legislation allows (Vasagar, 2013). Meanwhile the right-wing think tank Policy Exchange[15] report recommends that public opposition might be tempered by adopting the more innocuous sounding 'social enterprise model' to describe for-profit provision (Laird and Wilson, 2012). In the neoliberal state, the market permeates every facet of social life.

This accelerated shift has hollowed out previous sites of struggle and spaces for negotiation instead of reforming and strengthening local democratic structures. Ball describes how a new 'architecture of regulation' is springing up which involves complex, intertwined relationships based both in and beyond the state, where the explosion of new sites is accompanied by a subsequent 'opacity' in policy which renders boundaries between the public and private ambiguously blurry (2007:131). Actors can occupy various roles simultaneously within business, the state, philanthropy, or NGOs as it becomes less obvious how, why and where decisions are made. Michael Barber's biography illuminates how alterations in the relationship between the state and the market are manifested within individual trajectories. Barber worked for the National Union of Teachers, chaired Hackney Council's education committee, worked at the Institute of Education and served as Blair's education advisor before becoming partner and head of global education practice at McKinsey, a global management consultancy firm, and chief education advisor to education multi-national Pearson in 2012. His school-effectiveness recipes are now administered on a global scale.

Finance capital's participation in the UK educational landscape has also grown. Take Arpad Busson, the founder of the Absolute Return for Kids (ARK) academies chain and global education corporation, who is also a senior partner and founder of EIM, a hedge fund management company.[16] Sir Michael served as ARK's education director while working at Mossbourne. These networks extend into new territory, but Ball points out how they exclude certain actors - particularly 'problematic' entities like trade unions. There are special criteria for network membership, namely being on the same page ideologically (2007:133). Changes to how education is administered and

[14] Birkett was recently knighted in the Queen's 2012 Birthday honours for his services to education and the academies programme – signalling his vision of for-profit provision is a fast approaching reality.

[15] Michael Gove was a founding member of the Policy Exchange.

[16] It is interesting to the note the fusion of celebrity with education at ARK's annual £5,000 per head fundraising gala attended by Sir Phillip Green (ironic given the amount he withholds from public coffers annually via tax havens), Elton John, Liz Hurley, Boris Johnson, Mariella Frostrup, and Busson's wife Uma Thurman among others. This also raises question of how much additional capital is being ploughed into these academies to ensure they are 'winners'.

governed are not just technical alterations in management, but part of what Ball calls a 'broader social dislocation':

> It changes who we are and our relation to what we do, entering into all aspects of our everyday practices and thinking – into the ways that we think about ourselves and our relations to others, even our most intimate social relations. It is changing the framework of possibilities within which we act. This is not just a process of reform; it is a process of social transformation (2007:186-7).

This social transformation highlights how 'the development of neoliberal discourses, policies and practices has been concertedly financed and engineered by those with a great deal to gain financially from the resulting labour practices and flows of capital' (Davies and Bansel, 2007:48; see Saul, 2009). As the neoliberal state increasingly hands power to global finance, it recasts people as strategic producers of their own life narratives; education functions as a key site where the possible field of human action can be re-made. These fields of action are being shaped in ways that will potentially maximize the benefit of the powerful, even if this re-structuring of action does not play out as intended (Davies and Bansel, 2007). Although Gove appeals to justice and parental empowerment, his academy agenda is rolled through despite the lack of parental consent, as evidenced by Downhills' conversion. While Busson's global capital morally legitimates itself through concern for public issues like education, the state legitimates itself through the market by allowing it to lead formerly locally-directed institutions.

Through this process the spaces of negotiation formerly provided by local authorities are being forced out of existence as power is transferred to central government and its various partners in business, finance and beyond. Although often highly flawed, local authorities did allow democratic participation and provide a site of recourse where residents were positioned as citizens and potential contributors, not just consumers. While recognition was not fairly and evenly distributed, this does not mean that structures of local governance should be dismantled and replaced by unassailable structures of capital and the centralised state. Impenetrable to the local citizen and removed from public scrutiny, these structures do not provide any mechanisms for citizens to intervene in or shape the direction of education. Instead parents, teachers and students become passive respondents to customer satisfaction surveys. The

faceless control of an unaccountable, external structure moving education on its own directed course without a public brake to temper its motion offers a dangerously limitless trajectory, signalling the necessity of robust local democratic structures.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced a selection of developments within Hackney as a borough and education policy more widely to show how history works alongside power to make present day discourses ring true. Mossbourne acts not as an isolated phenomenon, but is a neoliberal school borne out of these previous struggles. Andrew Adonis reflects on the movement from Hackney Downs to Mossbourne and, perhaps unsurprisingly, offers a very different interpretation of this shift in his new book:

> However foolhardy, I was determined that one of the first of the new academies should be in Hackney precisely because the borough – the second poorest in England – was so symbolic of past failure. If academies could succeed in Hackney, they could succeed anywhere. It was tempting fate to set one up on the actual site of Hackney Downs (2012:2).

Gracing the book's cover, Mossbourne had to succeed as a heavily symbolic political testing ground for academies and their future. Adonis proudly pronounces that his vision of success has been realised, recollecting how twelve years after Bourne's 'grim tour' of the crumbling Hackney Downs, Mossbourne has become 'a model for 21st-century education, pioneering opportunity, social mobility and the reinvention of the inner-city comprehensive' (2012:7). Yet as this chapter shows, academies do not re-birth the comprehensive model, but work from a very different premise. As Ball described, the rearrangements engendered are not just managerial technicalities, but part of a 'social dislocation' shifting the fundamental meaning and experience of education. Within this model, the move from citizen to consumer is complete as active participation is replaced by passive, managed consumption of an education programme dictated by structures of capital intertwined with the state. Part of this shift involves the cultural reorientation of ethnic minority and working-class Others. The next chapter explores how anxieties over urban Others in spaces like Hackney is hardly new, but imbricated in the formation of empire and industrial capitalism. It will examine these mutual-formed categories and education's function as tool of governance.

Chapter Two

Old Spectres Haunting and Shaping the Present

This chapter grounds the abstract, disembodied assertions of political documents, debates and discourses within a lineage of historical representations where bodies were classed, raced and gendered in relation to one another. These hegemonic frames have been continually struggled against. As Jane M. Jacobs argues, the cultural dimensions of colonialism forged through the designation of categories and marking out of difference are imagined and remade in our postcolonial present through signs, narratives and metaphors circulating officially and otherwise (1996:2). London's East End has been historically portrayed as a racialised site of cultural lack, as the middle-classes attempted to establish and preserve power through claiming cultural superiority and passing judgment via explorations at home and abroad. The individualisation of personal responsibility instigated the creation of an aspirational self, as being poor, not poverty's causes, were positioned as the problem. The chapter frames education as a contested development related to the reformist movements of settlement houses and social work, circulating information, but also governing bodies. Moving into the twentieth century, the chapter shows how a new version of the Victorian residuum was crafted through ideologically constructed moral panics over juvenile delinquents, immigrants, urban slums, and comprehensive educational methods, ushering in new authoritarian governance methods. The present has been shown as an incongruent palimpsest upon which older themes have been written, rewritten, erased, written again, adjusted and transformed, and, perhaps most dangerously, sometimes wiped clean and conveniently forgotten.

Present Pasts

Fig. 0.3. Hackney Downs School and Mossbourne Community Academy blazer badges

The Grocers Company School, a grand Gothically-styled Victorian building, opened in

1876. It was built on a triangular plot of land backing onto a railway junction across from the green fields of Hackney Downs. The school badge featured a golden camel wearing a shield of six cloves; the Clove Club, the old boys' alumni group, fondly recounts how 'Humphrey' the camel served as their mascot (CC, 2013). The origins of the Grocers Company date back to 1376 when the Ancient Guild of Pepperers, a fraternity responsible for ensuring the purity of spices and drugs, became the Company of Grocers of London. The badge represents the Company's historic role as a foreign produce dealer when the camel was the primary means of transport along the spice trail. Grocers began as a fee-paying school designed for the 12 to 15 year-old sons of middle-class gentlemen in Hackney. It initially adopted an unusually progressive approach for the time: a curriculum centred around English literature with Latin only as a supplementary subject, the nominal use of corporal punishment and minimal elements of Christian worship, however this new-fangled approach proved unpopular with middle-class professionals who wanted their sons to prepare for university. Reverend Charles Gull, a rigid disciplinarian and former founder and commander of the Dulwich College Rifle Corps, reinstated corporal punishments and Latin upon becoming headmaster in 1881.

In 1906 Grocers was transferred to the London county council and renamed Hackney Downs School. Although the middle classes were leaving Hackney for the suburbs, the school continued as a celebrated grammar school, with a large Jewish immigrant community, before becoming a comprehensive in 1969. This change coincided with the arrival of new migrants, this time from the New Commonwealth countries as Jewish families migrated northward. Different migrants continued to arrive in the borough throughout the following decades, including Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Turks, Kurds, Nigerians, Somalis, Cameroonians, Vietnamese, and Chinese.

The journey of the camel and clove badge from the bodies of white, middle-class sons of gentlemen to the bodies of predominantly working-class boys, many of whom were Jewish immigrants on scholarships, to the bodies of New Commonwealth country migrants as well as refugees maps the mosaic of changes moving through Hackney and the UK during the twentieth century. The journey of this badge not only charts changing educational structures, it attests to the arrival and departure of populations as Hackney slowly changed from bucolic suburb to inner London borough to become of the UK's most ethnically diverse places. The children and grandchildren of empire travelled to Britain in its aftermath, seeking new opportunities for themselves and

their children, yet the students who wore this badge were positioned very differently in relation to the British nation state and its educational institutions. The Grocer's company school, a philanthropic enterprise funded by the profits accrued from Britain's overseas trading and built to sustain British competitiveness by developing the skills of middle-class boys, comes to be inhabited by former colonial subjects and eventually designated an irredeemable failure. Where and on whom 'failure' comes to rest and, conversely, what and who is seen to generate and constitute success lies at the heart of hierarchical disparities that continue to mar Britain's social landscape.

In 2003 the derelict remains of Hackney Downs were razed, the rubble crushed and recycled to form Mossbourne's foundations. Its modern, sustainable timber-framed building replaced Victorian spires, while a segmented circular logo depicting modernity's industrial and technological innovations replaced Humphrey the camel and his cloven shield. Mossbourne's logo charts the key developments powering modernity: fire, a wheel, gears and electrons. These logos signal the shifting ways that national pride and values are constructed and promoted through education, and do nation-building in particular ways. These complex histories shape why certain bodies could comfortably and easily wear the Hackney Downs badge and assume a place in nostalgic narratives of a golden age, while other bodies were found to be awkward, deficient, and tied to decline and ultimate failure. This chapter foregrounds hauntings which complicate the present and 'conjure up social life' in a way that ties analysis to procedure, imagination, and effervescence, tracing the continuation and reformation of historical themes which ground representations and institutional formations within the East End, placing them in relation to one another (Gordon, 2008:22). Firstly I will focus on how civilising missions based in London's East End connected to imperial interventions.

The 'Empire Within': Civilising Missions and the Sociological Project

Mossbourne's neo-colonial stance of a virtuous missionary bringing structure to East London's children follows a long trajectory of interventions aimed at salvaging London's poor. The East End served as a fascinating site of exploration for late Victorians, representing both danger and appeal. London held a special place in the national imaginary as the capital of empire. In the mid-1800s it was the largest city in the world, yet also represented an immoral land of semi-criminals. Slums within its centre drew particular attention as intriguing and repellent spaces (see Engels, 2000).

Although other areas of Britain were equally poverty stricken, Anne McClintock discusses how the East End evocatively symbolized liminal space: 'Sprawling across the Thames as it flowed into the sea, the East End was the conduit to empire – a threshold space, lying exotic, yet within easy reach, on the cusp of industry and empire' (1995:120). Using literature, diaries, travel writing, journalism, research and popular images, McClintock shows how race, class and gender have been mutually constituted as categories in conjunction with one another through encounters at home and abroad where 'race, class and gender are not distinct realms of experience, existing in splendid isolation from each other...rather they come into existence in and through relation to each other - if in contradictory and conflictual ways' (1995:5). Urban slums came to signify epistemological problems as jungles without language or history and categorised by lack (1995:121).

Poor urban spaces generated considerable middle-class anxiety, leading to the classification of the poor and the concomitant assertion of middle-class respectability. Historian Gareth Stedman-Jones examines how the Victorian middle-classes were afraid that the 'residuum' of casual labourers deemed lazy, rough and irredeemable might radicalise the labouring working-class. The question of what to do about entrenched poverty and this potentially disruptive 'residuum' permeated political thought. In a curious twist of causality, pauperism, not poverty, was designated as the primary problem. The 1834 Poor Law assumed poverty was a condition requiring effort and correction, not relief. This logic continues in current policy where individuals are presented as rational actors 'choosing' their fate. Individual cases were diligently compiled, investigated and categorised to distinguish between the deserving and undeserving poor. This methodical assessment by a professionalised bourgeoisie embedded the individualisation of poverty, while heralding the virtues of rationality and graft (Stedman-Jones, 1971:270).

Urban Natives and their White Middle-Class Others

British urban sociology's beginnings are also linked to the rise of the middle-class subject as surveyor and judge, while social reformers' solutions to the moral failings of the urban 'residuum' were the harbinger to Mossbourne's teachers acting as compensatory surrogate parents. The accounts of nineteenth century social reformers and researchers spurned sociology's birth as a discipline, producing knowledges and objects of study. Henry Mayhew, a middle-class bohemian and journalist, used

ethnographic sensibilities to create rich narrative portraits of London costermongers, scavengers and vagrants. In *London Labour and the London Poor* Mayhew strikes the pose of intrepid explorer, comparing his intervention to that of the colonial explorer searching for distant tribes. Charles Booth's late nineteenth century study *Life and Labour of the People of London* generated extensive colour-coded poverty maps and narrative accounts that classified London's streets and inhabitants by income and occupation, with the lowest group judged to be 'occasional labourers, street sellers, loafers, criminals and semi-criminals' while hard working men of 'good character' occupied higher income brackets (1969:11). Much like Sir Michael, Booth enacted moral judgments, arguing that the adoption of appropriate culture would remedy poverty. East End settlement houses like Toynbee House placed university-educated men alongside the working classes with the aim of bringing education and civilisation to urban slums (see Gidley, 2000). Edward Denison, a wealthy elite who went to live in the East End in 1866 to experience poverty, concluded that the absence of a 'better class' of resident made it repellent and argued that the poor would benefit from the establishment of a 'resident gentry' (Stedman-Jones, 1971:258-9). Mossbourne's need to attract Hackney's middle classes shows how the bourgeoisie continue to act as twenty-first century resident gentry (see chapters six, eight).

While Mayhew wanted improved working class conditions, he retained a firm sense of middle-class belonging which he only 'wandered out of...to regard the other forms of life with the same eyes as a comparative anatomist loves to lay bare the organism and vital machinery of a zoophyte, or an ape in the hope of linking together the lower and higher forms of animal existence' (1864:118). Class and race were created together, with those outside of the bourgeoisie likened to apes. Inspired by anthropology's evolutionary assumptions, Mayhew racialises the working class, yet these categories are marked by flux. Through framing poor urban spaces as regressive, the objective sociologist as urban pioneer-researcher designated himself as the bearer of modernity, aiding the invention of social categories bearing the imprint of imperialism's system of Manichean binaries. Jacobs argues:

> …the vitality of such binary constructs is most likely a result of their being anxiously reinscribed in the face of their contested or uncontainable certainty. It is, in part, this anxious vitality that gives racialised categorisations elaborated under colonialism such a long life and allows them to remain cogent features even of those contemporary societies that

are formally "beyond" colonialism (1996:3).

Anthropologist and historian Ann Laura Stoler (1995, 2002) also highlights the porous instability of the boundaries enclosing bourgeoisie bodies as racialised discourses travelled between cities and colonies to craft and shore up bourgeois hegemony; raced and classed others were necessary to stabilise and make 'real' the imaginary grounds of cultural superiority rooted in material advantage. Discourses of race preceded nineteenth century social classifications, making race not a resultant function of bourgeois hierarchies, but constitutive of those very hierarchies (1995:95). Stoler argues that race and class have rarely occupied stable, discrete categories, instead their meaning has changed throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, moving from 'differences in ways of being and living, differences in psychological and moral essence – differences in human kind' to more rigid definitions (1995:127). The 'anxious vitality' of boundary making and remaking continues within Mossbourne's twenty-first century setting, something explored in chapter six.

Responsible Individuals

Notions of the individual as a bounded, self-actualising unit began to coalesce around these reformist interventions. Building on Foucault, Nikolas Rose describes how institutions like the workhouse rendered individuals legible through the observation and recording of human difference, making it obvious who would or would not 'learn the lessons of the institution' (1998:106). These differentiating mechanisms with individuating effects were employed in courtrooms, factories, schools, armies and other locales. Yet instead of being entirely repressive, individuality also holds appeal. 'Individuals...have been seduced by their own perceived powers of freedom and have, at the same time, let go of significant collective powers, through, for example, allowing the erosion of union power', yet there are heavy cost of individualised responsibility (Davies and Bansel, 2007:249). Freedom's positive connotations are mobilised through Mossbourne's institutional narratives to make a series of promises without acknowledging the sacrifices required or the ideological underpinnings of these promises.

The question of what Mossbourne's structure liberates students from and to is seldom considered, taking us back to Foucault's work on governmentality. He claims a

hallmark of liberal governments is 'the considerable extension of procedures of control, constraint, and coercion,' making disciplinary techniques 'exactly contemporaneous with the age of freedoms'. Structure and control function not simply as 'counterweights of different freedoms' but 'becomes its mainspring' in liberalism's 'culture of danger' borne out of fear (2004:67). Liberalism as a governmental practice is 'a consumer of freedom...it can only function insofar as a number of freedoms actually exist: freedom of the market, freedom to buy and sell, the free exercise of property rights...' (2004:68). Freedom must be produced and organised before it can be consumed. Resting at the heart of liberalism lies a productive/destructive relationship where freedom must be created yet simultaneously limited (2004:64). The 'structure liberates' ethos highlights the paradoxical contradictions of liberalism's reliance on accessing freedom through submission.

Neoliberal governmentalities accelerate interventions focused on the site of the individual. Nicholas Gane describes how neoliberalism emerged as a form of political economy in the 1920s in response to classical liberalism's decline. Drawing on Foucault, he outlines how the pursuit of a radically economic state means the state no longer ensures the market's legitimacy, instead the market legitimises the state, as referenced in chapter one. Gane argues that neoliberalism is not anti-statist or a simple devolution of state powers to the individual, as neoliberalism's 'constant push to define and regulate social life' through market principles requires continuous activity and intervention, not a laissez-faire approach (2012:613). Academies show how educational structures are permeated by the market principles.

Neoliberalism's relentless activity is evidenced through Mossbourne's labour-intensive practices described in chapter four, yet many teachers, parents, and students feel this is the only approach that would 'work'. Doreen Massey argues that a radical re-imagination of ideology and the economic is necessary to alter neoliberal notions of a natural, external economy. Massey describes how New Labour's resignation to Thatcherite ideals reduced politics to an administrative exercise that failed to stake out new political horizons. Yet this is not just about policies, but our orientations or 'the very scaffolding of our political imaginations' which have been financialised through these assumptions (2011:31). Social democracy must challenge a fictitiously naturalised economy and recognise it as an assortment of social relations to have real purchase.

Political theorist Jodi Dean also asserts that state privatisation does not dismantle state power, but leads to 'the radical redistribution of wealth to the very, very rich and the radical reconstruction of the state into the authoritarian tool for their protection' (2009:9). Like Massey, Dean describes how neoliberalism's presentation of its economic and political project as inevitable is '...one of the ways that the ideology instils in its subjects a belief in markets...' (2009:49). Imagining new horizons entails moving beyond neoliberalism's multiplicity of imagined identities which deter cohesive political action and remain inseparable from the demands of consumerism and capital's grip (2009:51). As Gordon (1997) suggests, a transformative space can be made by unpacking the various discursive and material strands underpinning institutional grand narratives, however messy and partial they may be, to widen our imaginations and create veritable alternatives. Now I will show how Mossbourne's efficient productivity comes to stand in opposition to the fallible variability of Hackney homes.

Policing Contamination Zones

Mossbourne's reference to domestic spaces as either sites of chaos or structure draws on a long legacy whereby women are responsible for cultivating good citizens by fostering appropriate domestic spheres both in England and abroad. Bourgeois women were seen as 'custodians of family welfare and respectability', both supportive of and subordinate to men; mothering was a class obligation and duty of empire (Stoler, 2002:61). Mossbourne's proposed role of 'surrogate parent' highlights the continuing public, political nature of the home, where mothers' capacity – particularly single-mothers - to raise children appropriately is scrutinised. Institutionalised surveillance of the working-class home is not a new phenomenon (see Blunt and Robyn, 2006). McClintock discusses how Engels' related the dissolution of homes caused by working-class women labouring externally to the working classes being a 'race apart'. Britain's working class became racialised through undomesticated homes that paralleled the uncivilised colonies. Ideal women were positioned as 'natural' producers of suitable citizens within the private sphere of the home, while men were aligned with 'culture' and the public sphere (see Evans, 2003). As described in chapter five, Sir Michael positions himself as domesticating this racialised metropolis, much like the researchers and settlement house pioneers preceding him. Mossbourne intervenes in the faulty, too natural space of the single-mother household to bring culture.

Contamination threats were associated with sex acts between the English and their

colonial other; this source of anxiety also came to rest on the working-class woman's body, often portrayed as promiscuous and prone to polluting English blood. Planter and colonial administer Edward Long described in his aptly named *Candid Reflections* how working-class women inhabited the dangerous borderlands of racial and sexual transgression:

> The lower class of women in England are remarkably fond of the blacks, for reasons too brutal to mention; they would connect themselves with horses and asses, if the laws permitted them. By these ladies they generally have a numerous brood. Thus in the course of a few generations more, the English blood will become so contaminated with this mixture and from the changes, the ups and downs of life, this alloy may spread so extensively to, as even to reach the middle, and then the higher order of the people, til the whole nation resembles the Portuguese and Moriscos in complexion of skin and baseness of mind (1772:48-9).

Through her licentious desire for black men, the white working-class woman becomes a conduit for racial pollution. Over time this contamination could reach the highest echelons of English society until not only their bodies, but their minds were corrupted. Similar anxieties encompassing blood and nationhood were echoed by MP Enoch Powell in his infamous 'rivers of blood' speech in 1968 - nearly 200 years later. These discourses blending desire, fear, and repulsion highlight the anxious vitality of boundary drawing and social reproduction, where a disciplinary gaze is directed onto bodies seen as threatening these boundaries.

Civilising Natives

Mossbourne's mission relates to the school's historical role as a regulating and potentially transformative institution, providing an opportunity to monitor children as 'centres of observation disseminated throughout society' where parenting practices could be supervised (Foucault, 1991a: 212). Schools could also turn natives into civilised Europeans; the French and Dutch authorities anxiously debated if mixed-race 'metis' and 'indos' in colonial Southeast Asia could be fundamentally transformed through education or would inevitably retain 'native' dispositions (Stoler, 2002:94-9). The colonial state's regulatory mechanisms were not only applied to the colonised, but on problematic internal enemies within European nation states. European colonial

forays were used 'as models, inspirations, and testing grounds for modes of social discipline which, imported back into Europe in the eighteenth century', were augmented and implemented 'to construct the bourgeois order' (Pratt, 1992:36; also see Cowen, 2004; Hall, 2002). Processes of standardisation, bureaucracy and normalisation went hand in hand with the systemisation of nature, the slave trade, plantation systems, colonial genocide and rebellion. The effects of these 'massive experiments in social engineering and discipline, serial production, the systemisation of human life, the standardising of persons' still haunt our present (Pratt, 1992:36).

My focus rests on how these techniques were adapted, reconstituted and redeployed in urban space via education when not only empire's tools had returned to England's shores, but former colonial subjects had arrived as citizens. While Hackney's problem is positioned as one of culture by Sir Michael and others, Joel Kahn questions the notions of progress underlying twentieth century movements in terminology replacing race with culture, pointing out the continual slippages between race-culture distinctions where nineteenth century biological categories were almost always cultured (2001:53). Heidi Mirza argues that we need to re-think the cultural discourse on race as a 'new post-biological discourse' on race where 'ideas about innate, genetic, scientifically provable difference are still at the heart of our thinking about race' (2009:258; see also Alexander, 2002).

Just as the nineteenth century mixed-raced Javanese could be reconfigured by education, so too might the twenty-first century working-class and ethnic minority urban residuum persisting in cosmopolitan hubs of capital like London (see Rattansi, 1992). In order to situate schooling within modern regulatory systems, I next examine the implementation of compulsory education in England where schooling is not regarded as a common-sense way to prepare children to take part in the world, but a very specific way of transferring particular knowledges.

Requisite Knowledge and the Obligatory Classroom

Instead of viewing compulsory education as a neutral social good, I would like to approach schools as a relatively recently established social institution. The development of a formalised, compulsory education system in England throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries regulated the population in new ways. However, its implementation and aims were not uniform or stable, but a patchy and continually

contested process. Although politicians frequently describe education as liberating, it can historically be viewed as a compensatory device accommodating the inequalities generated by capitalism whilst simultaneously promoting the myth of a liberal meritocracy, leaving these inequities untouched. For reasons of space, I cannot explore the trajectory of compulsory education in great detail, but I will examine key moments highlighting the changing assumptions, methods and desired outcomes underpinning it.

i. The Early Days

Universally provided education did not imply a universal distribution of knowledge, as who should learn what was predicated upon classed and gendered understandings. Gendered differences explained as obvious and natural were in fact crafted out of an idealised bourgeois division of the private and public spheres, described earlier in this chapter. Meanwhile education for the working class was seen as a means of cultivating good character in workers, giving them appropriate culture and providing a stable force to counteract morally deficient families (Carey, 1992). Rather than promoting liberation or enlightenment, compulsory education most often aimed to propagate docility. Thomas Malthus agreed, writing that knowledge of 'the simplest truths of political economy' would 'promote peace and quietness...and to prevent all unreasonable and ill-directed opposition to constituted authorities' (Malthus quoted in Green, 2004:249). Education was envisioned as a salve for the masses.

While the Anglican and establishment gentry did not want to educate the lower classes, middle-class radical reformists supported popular schooling, yet this education, unlike their own children's, was not intended to encourage enlightenment. Utilitarian middle-class proponents of education may have theoretically advocated a 'universal, rational, secular and scientific education for all', yet 'their desire to convince the working class that their interests lay in supporting the goals of the middle class' shows how their ideals were mired in a contradictory, conflictual and hierarchical logic (Green, 1990:250). Andy Green describes how middle-class hegemony could be secured through education, as 'it would encourage social conformity and loyalty to middle-class political ideals and it would produce a more productive and willing class of workers in their mills, factories and foundries' (1990:248-9).

ii. Opposition

There were varying amounts of working-class ambivalence, suspicion and refusal regarding if and how the state should be involved in education - with good reason given the subjectivities it sought to inculcate. Some Chartists steadfastly rejected state involvement, while others advocated a national, state-financed system of non-sectarian schools only if they were placed under the auspices of locally controlled and democratically elected committees – a feature now rapidly eroded through academy centralisation. This tradition is taken up in *Unpopular Education* (1981), a collectively written text from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies exploring the construction of the politics of education. In the early to mid-1800s when Chartism and popular radicalism dominated working-class politics, educational debates moved between a substitutional, DIY-approach and a more state-driven, widely egalitarian approach. Substitutional methods sought to rely on skills already present in the community. The historical alliance of alternative schooling formats with socialist pedagogies meant these methods might disrupt official forms of cultural reproduction. Statist strategies focussed on widening access to state provided facilities while incorporating the differences generated by educational institutions, like the demarcation of school from work or designating childhood as the time for learning or teacher professionalisation (CCCS, 1981). Radical working-class opposition to compulsory education's beginnings argued that learning occurs at various times, contexts and ages. Education cannot function as a 'free' gift because gifts arrive with conditions and knowledge only holds value when democratically controlled by those seeking it (CCCS, 1981:37). Contrary to the idea of a liberating gift, the emerging bourgeoisie 'recognised the value of education in its battle for ideological hegemony over other groups...and in many ways England offers the most explicit example of the use of schooling by a dominant class as a means of winning hegemony over subordinate groups' (Green, 1990:210). Unsurprisingly, many radicals felt education was an authoritarian gesture or preposterous irrelevance.

Statist methods have prevailed since the mid-1850's, with compulsory attendance for 5-10 year old children introduced in 1880, yet radical late nineteenth and early twentieth century mobilisations continued through supplementary socialist Sunday schools, some of which carried on until the inter-war years. With a similar impulse and purpose, black supplementary schooling was established in the 1960's and continues today as a form of counter-school grassroots activism which Reay and Mirza describe as more than an answer to exclusion, but a critique of the 'silent, pervasive, seemingly

invisible hegemonic project of whiteness implicit in mainstream schooling' (1997:497). Foregrounding these struggles disturb common-sense thinking that presents educating children en masse in institutions as a self-evident good. It is important to remind ourselves of these debates over fundamentals as they reawaken the possibility of different futures. Placing current forms within a trajectory of contest can create space for imagining Massey's alternatives to neoliberal approaches discussed earlier.

iii. Education as Investment

Fundamental issues regarding the content, control and context of education were subsumed by questions of equal access throughout the twentieth century. The debate narrowed further with the passage of the Conservative Government's 1944 Butler Act which created a tripartite system, shifting the focus onto school format. The psychological sciences justified this system providing a 'human sorting house' which assessed and organised individuals and tasks to minimize human problems and disruption. Psy generated practical ways to individuate and survey human subjectivity and its mutability, explaining and documenting it through the educational apparatus (Rose 1998: 107). Pivotally, public schools did not merge with the state-financed system despite widespread professional pressure (see Simon, 1991).

Meanwhile the Labour party moved away from explicitly supporting the working-class, re-centring around class-less, universal ideals of common 'nationhood', long before Blair took office in 1997. *Unpopular Education* describes how Labour was divided between middle-class Fabian factions advocating for engineering fairer forms of capitalism and more radically left elements that were critical of capitalism's social effects urging an ethical egalitarianism. The left's focus came to rest on the fair distribution of opportunity rather than the equality of outcomes. Economic obligations, human requirements and egalitarian aims were conflated as education was portrayed as an investment in manpower enabling economic growth and international competitiveness (Vaizey, 1971). Influential Labour advisor Lord Vaizey developed Edward Denison's suggestion nearly 100 years earlier that imposing middle-class culture could solve working-class problems, for '...to service this economy and society – a "middle-class" society – we need a different sort of education' (1971:34). Rather than examining the factors structuring and producing working-class 'failure', attention was trained on modifying their problematic inability to be middle-class subjects.

Pathology, Modernised

The Crowther Report (1959), commissioned by a Conservative minister, resurrects and develops many of the historical categorisations discussed earlier in this chapter, spinning an interdependent web of connections between poverty, a racialised white working-class, immigrants and cultural difference, estates and pathological contamination:

> ...at its worst in specific neighbourhoods which are marked by a high concentration of almost every social problem, and where the local climate of opinion is...often not only 'deviant but defiant'. Typical of such areas are the inner, declining rings of impoverished districts near the centre of the great cities, where resident populations, without the initiative to follow their abler and more industrious neighbours to the suburbs, are often intermixed with immigrants from other districts and other cultures. But they are not the only areas where the risk of contamination is especially high. A new housing estate, if left without appropriate provision for communal life and adequate social leadership, can be as deadly as any decaying slum (1959:38).

Crowther posits that teachers must act as social workers to students in these difficult spaces, similarly to Mossbourne's surrogate parent-teacher who is responsible for fostering 'appropriate' values (1959:39). Delinquency was tied to educational failure and slum areas where working-class natives lacking the 'initiative' to escape mingled with immigrants to create a contagious mass, and the nineteenth century 'urban residuum' is reborn and revamped in spaces like Hackney.

The Crowther Report positions the educational institution as a neutral good, overlooking the cultural values and histories these institutions promote – not to mention the equalising work schools are expected to perform. Teachers are endowed with the impossible task of teaching and eradicating social ills, yet as Basil Bernstein famously commented 11 years later, 'education cannot compensate for society' (1970:26). *Unpopular Education* argues that the post-war years were marked by the liberalisation of socialism, as socialism was recalibrated to fit with radical liberalism. Yet radical liberalism does not necessarily include socialism's critique of capitalism,

often viewing modern society as fundamentally progressive where 'problems are seen as inhibitions to progress rather than being intrinsic to the dynamic of "progress" itself' (CCCS, 1981:139). The working classes and their juvenile delinquent offspring come to constitute one of these 'problems', as well as new migrants arriving from former colonies. Some subjects became positioned as problematic, while others moved unimpeded through modernity's flow.

Stuart Hall discusses how social exclusions are inherent to the UK's state organisation, as there is an

> ...overwhelming tendency to abstract questions of 'race' from what one might call their *internal* social and political basis and contexts in British society...to deal with 'race' as if it has nothing intrinsically to do with the present 'condition of England'. It's viewed rather as an 'external' problem which has been foisted to some extent on English society from the outside…(1978:23-4, author's italics).

Hall argues that post-war racism flourished in the 1950s due the 'historical amnesia' of Britain's imperial past on the left and right, as the longstanding relationship between Britain, the Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent was repressed. The 1960s saw the end of the economic boom and assimilationist dream, while anxieties mounted over an unruly, permissive youth culture. More aggressive forms of racism developed. Race, although not the fundamental focus, became a signifier and metaphor for a moral crisis supposedly caused by a 'general liberal conspiracy' (1978:30-2). Although these ideological processes unfolded during an economic crisis, Hall asserts that they could not be reduced to it.

Progressive Crisis

The new right skilfully mobilised and manipulated populist narratives to generate moral panics about falling educational standards prompted by 'loony left' methods, indelibly altering the parameters of debate. Shortly after Crosland's Labour Government issued a circular requesting Local Education Authorities start converting all schools into comprehensives, an influential series of pamphlets called the Black Papers were released critiquing the comprehensive system. Written by various authors, these polemic diatribes offered 'common sense' home truths, claiming to speak

both for and to a 'silent majority' of 'ordinary' parents fearing for their children's future. Black Paper Two bears the subheading 'Comprehensive Disaster' and describes how comprehensives harm intelligent working-class children (Cox and Dyson, 1969). Progressivism is described as a 'pseudo-religion', as 'the possibility of 1984[17] comes perceptibly closer' (1969:13-4). Another contribution references eugenicist Francis Galton to conclude intelligence is hereditary, making class differences 'inevitable in any civilised society' (1969:20). Contradictory ideas are amalgamated and framed as unambiguously complementary, the abstract parent acted as a unifying concept where anxieties could be projected and differences glossed over. The right drew on justifiable insecurities in the face of an economic downturn and placed marginalised groups in competition while appealing to the individual's perceived powers to exercise choice. These moves show how collectivities are effectively broken down through the site of the subject; instead of finding common cause, individualisation appeals to a sense of self-empowerment. The Black Papers found a receptive media audience, and in 1970 Heath's Conservative government revoked Crosland's circular.

Mossbourne's focus on strict discipline, results and respect for authority descends from this new right focus developed throughout the 1970s and 80s. The now-familiar sounding solutions to alleged violence and anarchy in schools included stricter standards for students and teachers, as well as parental vouchers promoting school choice. While the right claimed to crusade against the unfair taxation and oppression of the state, it antithetically enabled the creation of a more authoritarian, less visible state; a predicament accelerated by academy schools (CCCS, 1981:250-1). Hall argues that calls for heightened classroom discipline and an 'assault' on progressive methods are authoritarian state practices imposed in the face of an ideologically constructed crisis (1978:34). Similar calls for discipline are currently being made in the wake of the banking crisis and the steady dismantling of the welfare state. In 1981 *Unpopular Education* concluded that Labour needed a more imaginative vision for education; they did not possess original ideals, interrogate its contents, or unsettle assumptions that it should cater to industry (1981:265). Over thirty years later, Labour's new vision has not arrived, as Conservative and Labour education policy are indistinguishable. Labour peer Lord Adonis (2012) recently defended the Conservatives' development of free schools[18] in a *New Statesman* article entitled 'Labour should support free schools — it invented them'. Differences have become a mere matter of packaging and terminology,

[17] Ironically, Sir Michael dismisses Mossbourne's surveillance techniques as instigating a '1984 culture' in chapter four.

[18] Free schools operate on a very similar basis to academies, but are meant to be initiated by groups of parents, teachers, charities, trusts, religious or voluntary groups.

not ideology.

Divided Struggles

Raced and classed struggles have become disarticulated from one another for myriad reasons during the post-war era, a division arguably aided by anti-racism's central concern of removing barriers to individual minority achievement and social mobility. This was a debate within anti-racist politics, and Bonnett (1990) has argued that anti-racism fitted within in the context of liberal-educationalism's unresolved ideological conflict between egalitarian impulses and capitalist orientations. This theoretical and political severing of race and class becomes a constrictive rupture dismissing the relationship between racism and imperialism (Sivanandan, 1985:11-2). Barry Troyna (2002) argues that policymakers' failure to cohere 'race', class and gender inequalities into a more broad, coherent programme - coupled with an inattention to more precisely identify education's role in generating and reproducing racism - was a major problem. The dissociation of racism from other forms of inequality and portioning into individualised forms becomes 'the coat of paint theory of racism' (Gilroy, 1992:52). Meanwhile, an emphasis on cultural styles shifted the focus away from 'the struggle against racism to the struggle for culture' (Sivanandan, 1985:6). Troyna describes how a '3S interpretation (Saris, Samosas and Steel Bands)' of multi-cultural education focused on the cultural styles of black students 'subordinated political realities to cultural artefacts' (2002:74). The historical production of raced, classed and gendered selves in relation to imperialist misadventures and the development of capitalism makes the tidy separation of these mutually-constituted categories a difficult, detrimental and obfuscating present-day problem. Race and class *are* reunited through Mossbourne's term 'urban children', yet this reunion does not involve a critique, but a renewed pathologisation of categories impossible to dismantle within a capitalist framework underpinning their logic.

A Glorious Reversion: Amnesia, Denial, Delusion

Marketised educational confections are frequently coated in a romanticised neo-conservative glaze, where a reversion to what Sir Michael calls 'a traditional approach' is key to restoring Great Britain's faded grandeur. A safe return to a bygone era becomes a remedy to the destabilising unravelling of the post-war settlement: neoliberal governance will prompt the return of 'true' British culture. Or, as Ball

(2011) comments: 'There are two political fantasies here. One is a fantasy market of perfect choice and perfect competition. The other is a fantasy curriculum based on Boy's Own comics and a vision of England rooted in the one-nation Toryism of Disraeli, Baldwin and Butler'. David Cameron says great results come from '...children who stand up when their teacher walks in the room. Real discipline. Rigorous standards. Hard subjects' (Mason, 2012). He offers Mossbourne as an example of a school based in a deprived area, yet 'working miracles' (Cameron, 2012). This condescendingly suggests getting 'urban children' to achieve is miraculous, while overlooking some of the resources aiding Mossbourne's revitalisation - namely the £25 million pounds spent on its building and the cohort's altered demographics. In 1995, 77% of Hackney Downs students received free school meals (FSM), compared with 41% of Mossbourne students in January 2010, signalling decreasing poverty within its intake (Benn, 2011; Ofsted, 2010).

Michael Gove describes how England has 'slipped' down the international league tables and, like the Black Papers 30 years previously, addresses this 'decline' through militaristic approaches. The Coalition's 2010 White Paper on education emphasised strong discipline, 'traditional' uniforms, and a 'troops to teachers' programme to attract 'natural leaders' from the Armed Forces - all in the pursuit of becoming 'an aspiration nation once more' (DfE, 2010). Hard structure is presented as what problematic raced and classed populations need to succeed (see Zirkel et al, 2011; Leonardo, 2009). Gove also enlisted right-wing empire-apologist Niall Ferguson to assist with re-writing the history curriculum which will discontinue the 'trashing' of Britain's illustrious imperial past; instead children take pride in Britain's inspiring 'island story' (Gove, 2010). A story of western domination led by a triumphant Britain will be restored to history's centre, yet this story suffers from a continuing, damaging amnesia reflected in Cameron's announcement in 2011 that multiculturalism had failed, linking the lack of a strong British identity with Muslim extremism (Cameron, 2011).

This reversion to authoritarian educational methods in the face of global competition, coupled with the denouncement of multiculturalism and a desired return to some happier, traditional culture via education carries all the symptoms of Gilroy's 'complex ailment' of post-colonial melancholia. Gilroy argues that the continuing power of World War Two images of Britain signals a neurotic search for the juncture when Britain's national culture felt more intelligible and liveable. He urges us to understand

how 'wholesome militarism has combined pleasurably with the unchallenging moral architecture of a Manichean world' to produce a 'warm glow' that is relied upon to do cultural work in the present (2004:95-6). It overlooks growing inequalities at home, while recalling a time when Britain faced indisputably diabolical enemies. This melancholia attempts to locate 'the place or moment before the country lost its moral and cultural bearings'. This desire for 're-orientation' cannot be severed from homogeneity's lure or aversion to newcomers, for wanting to turn back is a rejection of 'the perceived dangers of pluralism and from the irreversible fact of multiculture' (2004:97). While tacitly acknowledging that these citizen-migrants and their children are here to stay, New Labour's academy policy responded to these disorientations by attempting to re-orientate these 'others' through grafting on legitimate forms of cultural capital. This re-orientation applies not only to ethnic minorities, but the working class in spaces like Hackney who form the updated 'urban residuum'. Conservative education policy shows more aggressive, delusional attempts to impose celebratory imperial histories, as racism and class-based discrimination and the fundamental incompatibility of equality with capitalist modes of production continues to go unaddressed.

Conclusion

This chapter has built a historical continuum between the past and present in order to emphasise the reformulated continuation of themes, positioning the present not as a grand rupture, but a reconstitution of older themes without viewing history as a tidy, linear process. The chapter traced how representations of East London and the urban poor were generated in relation to empire, where the mutual formation of raced, classed and gendered classificatory systems rest alongside the development of capitalism at home and abroad. The urban working class functioned as racialised natives in the middle-class imagination through knowledges produced by early anthropological and sociological 'explorers'. The individual comes into being as an entity responsible for enacting its own destiny. The chapter unsettled dominant, common-sense notions positioning schooling as a naturally occurring institution, highlighting how education's present form and content are not inevitable, but part of a contested trajectory. Subsequently, the chapter explored the role educational institutions have played as sites of governance, up to the present day where neoliberal educational models are being tied to the revival of authoritarian practices and the return of 'true' British culture. I will now examine how I methodologically engaged

with the spatial and temporal constraints of Mossbourne upon returning to my former work place as a researcher.

Chapter Three
Adaptive Methods for a Constricted Field

This chapter centres on how I negotiated a range of methods shaped by an institutional environment stringently structured by space and time. My research plans, neatly mapped out from my desk at Goldsmiths, were frequently disrupted by the field and often spontaneously adapted to fit within the confines of Mossbourne's rigid timetable. As Veena Das reflects, the process of knowledge making is also a process of recognising or arriving at limits which I felt through the boundaries of structures, the limits of my ability to know and describe, the limits of being a situated person who incompletely understands my own actions and their potential effects (2010:143). For six years prior to the research, I had been involved with Mossbourne in a range of capacities. This long-term relationship with the school significantly impacted the research in regards to trust, access and my own perceptions. The evolution of my engagement with the institution has incited a barrage of ethical dilemmas, many of which are highly personal due to a member of my family working at the institution in a senior role. I will reflect on how my responsibility to do justice to the accounts of my participants rests in tension with the need to maintain a sound critique of institutional practices and how these relate to a wider context.

The research combined ethnography, semi-structured interviews, photo diaries, student-led tours and a focus group discussion.[19] After examining these methods, their assumptions and how they produce knowledge in the field, I address some of the issues faced during the research. A process of continual adjustment has been central to my ethnographic approach and forms the ethical backbone of my research. Throughout this chapter I will use encounters within the field to illustrate some of the challenges, as well as more fruitful moments of the process, attesting to the untidy, unruly nature of research (Law, 2004).

From Moving Boxes to Making a Thesis

My 'accidental' employment at Mossbourne fostered my development of a sociological imagination which inspired me to undertake this research (Mills, 2000). I had never intended to work in a school, an establishment I had few fond memories of, yet the

[19] Initially I planned to hold several group discussions, but due to Mossbourne's timetable it was impossible to bring groups of students together repeatedly.

contradictory complexities of this space brought together a number of my previous interests in unanticipated ways. In August 2004 I moved to London and rented a flat in a small street abutting a towering new building. My partner's mother had recently started working at a new academy called Mossbourne in Hackney and, quite coincidentally, this shiny building at the end of my street was it. While I was sorely in need of some part-time work to supplement irregular stints as a writer and performer, Mossbourne desperately needed extra hands to move boxes and furniture into classrooms in frantic preparation for its September opening. What initially started as a few days' heavy lifting became a long-term, part-time job, first teaching drama and later working as a learning mentor. Initially I felt confused by Mossbourne's dynamic, disciplinarian environment. While it was undeniably positive to watch pupils receive excellent grades and gain self-confidence from this, the continual shouting of teachers seemed frighteningly draconian. Yet in staff briefings it was repetitively reinforced that structures allowed success because teachers could teach and students could learn. This seemed true - it did appear to work, so I placed my reservations aside and tried to believe this mantra to perform my role with conviction. Many of my interviews with teachers a few years later mentioned similar feelings of anxiety and surveillance that I did not actively articulate at the time, but certainly felt.

As the months lapsed into years, Mossbourne was clearly garnering acclaim as a steady stream of politicians, journalists, and educationalists visited the academy. I kept shouting and lining the children up, however the more I spoke with students and teachers, the more perplexed I became by the contradictions underlying Mossbourne's celebratory story. The 'structure liberates' ethos 'worked' in terms of producing good grades, but what else did this ethos do and how did it do it? There was clearly more going on than the straightforward achievement of test scores as an economically deprived and ethnically diverse student population was allegedly culturally transformed. These 'goings on' within the school connected to points beyond its iron gates, both locally and globally. My personal troubles at carrying out the ethos began to relate to wider public issues and a sociological project came into being as I sought to apply my life experiences to my intellectual work (Mills, 2000:8-10). As Les Back describes, this research seeks to read against the grain by locating the bumps that litter the smooth terrain of success through seeking out alternative stories that are seldom the obvious feature of dominant narratives. Back sees his practice of scholarship as seeking to profanely illuminate the 'hidden life of objects and places' by seeking the life that is 'concealed' or 'bleached' by 'formalities of power or the

forgetfulness of conventional wisdom' to look for 'the outside story that is part of the inside story' (2007:9). Like Mills, Back brings the small stories that often disappear into the creases of dominant narratives out, connecting them to more orthodox narratives. In this way I hope to shed light on some of the less-dominant narratives weaving their way in, around and through the celebratory portraits of a smiling, multicultural student body unproblematically headed towards brighter futures.

An Ethics of Negotiation

Sarah Winters was on duty while I was sitting in the library writing up notes. Sarah has taught at the school since it opened; she is energetic and known for being a strict disciplinarian. Her brightly coloured wardrobe seems to match her animated personality. Sarah sat down and asked how the research was going. She did not seem to be asking for a polite one-word response, so I said it was going well so far, describing how I was spending time talking to students. She said Sir Michael must be really supportive; the research must support all of his aims. Her question preyed on many of my worries and I tried to be diplomatic yet honest, saying it did not necessarily support anything because I had not finished. She nodded. I added that I was unsure if Wilshaw understood what a sociological perspective entailed. She nodded understandingly. Tentatively I suggested there was infallibility about his attitude which meant Wilshaw seldom considered anyone would be anything but complimentary. Sarah seemed to understand this, asking what I was doing with the children. I told her a bit about the photo diaries and hearing about their out-of-school lives. She said this must be fascinating; she would be very interested in reading this and would definitely buy the book – if there was one! I said she'd probably be the only non-academic to purchase it and we laughed. I admitted that there were ethical dilemmas at hand because of issues of trust and expectation. Sarah nodded, matter-of-factly announcing that Sir Michael would definitely be angry if it was not positive. I agreed, pointing to the potential difficulties this could cause with my partner's family. We joked that I would have to have a child to make amends. Sarah shook her head as if to say 'better you than me'. Wishing me luck, she rose from her seat and announced to the children that it was time to make their way outside for line up.

Although I have handed out consent forms and explained the research to teachers, students and parents in line with the British Sociological Association's requirements, these forms and signatures cannot replace an ethics embedded in a continual awareness of your participants, your relationship to others throughout the process,

and how you choose to commit accounts to paper. Given my long-term relationship with the institution and many of the students and teachers within it, I feel a particular responsibility to exercise care. As Sarah mentioned, the expectation that my research findings would be complimentary or prove the effectiveness of academies, coupled with the impression that I gained institutional consent partly because of my status as an employee and relation of someone in power, has often given me an uncomfortable feeling. When I introduced the research to Sir Michael, he brusquely proclaimed that I did not need to spend all this time studying Mossbourne because he could tell me why it worked and it had nothing to do with being an academy. Another teacher asked how my research would be 'valid' without comparing it to other academies because Mossbourne was exceptional.

Upon receiving my ESRC studentship, Sir Michael congratulated me and suggested I would be promoting academies through my research, despite having sent him a detailed outline of the research questions and methods. I offered to meet with him prior to undertaking the fieldwork, but simply received an email from his personal assistant reading 'research proposal approved'. I also suggested that I give staff a presentation outlining the research, but the SMT decided this was unnecessary. It felt like my endeavour was not serious enough to merit cutting into staff briefing time. One teacher commented on the deluge of requests to conduct research, all refused because 'we already have a sociologist on site'. Opening this generally closed institution to me exhibited an enormous amount of trust, yet I continually question how this trust was gained – by assuming research outcomes due to family connections or prior employment? By misunderstanding what sociological research involves, or through a more general disregard for research? When I asked Sir Michael if I could name Mossbourne, he cavalierly replied, 'Sure, I don't mind if you name the school – no one is going to read it anyhow!'

Although I do name the school, borough and headteacher, the names of teachers, students, and parents are pseudonyms. I have omitted most of the biographical descriptors of teachers, including their age and years teaching. Occasionally I have altered their ethnicity or gender to ensure their protection. I realise this risks decontextualizing them, but I do not feel comfortable risking their identification given Mossbourne's atmosphere and notoriety. Bemused teachers continually asked me what I was doing wandering around the playground if I was not on break or lunch duty. This vague role of random adult was more difficult to shift to than I had imagined; I

continually felt like teachers expected me to discipline children. Most young people were inquisitive and eager to participate, often seeing participation as a means to air their grievances, set the record straight or share their expert knowledge. A few became social researchers themselves, querying what I was trying to find out, how I felt about working at the school or what I get paid each month.

There are limits to the creation of non-hierarchical relationships with students, some of whom I used to give detentions to and still insist on calling me 'miss'. In keeping with the ethos' ideal of formal respect for all adults, I cannot be anything but a 'miss' by virtue of being an adult. Some teachers suggested I give children detentions for not bringing back their disposable cameras on time and I have explained that this was not the research relationship I was trying to cultivate. The young people often expected to be reprimanded and seem to find it curious when I did not take this stance with them. They have occasionally tested my reactions by breaking the rules; one student wore one glove while speaking to me in the playground, another dragged the cap of their pen against the wall and several sheepishly swore. I would suggest that I featured as a general, random adult curiosity with students, as well as some teachers.

Power is always present in research relationships in unbalanced ways; these dynamics must be acknowledged and taken into account. While non-hierarchical relationships are desirable, they remained an unachievable ideal because I was always the adult 'in charge'. Yet we can still aspire towards more equitable relationships while remaining mindful that these relationships are a continual negotiation playing out across raced, classed and gendered lines. Several of the middle-class participants like Poppy and Daniel approached the process with great confidence, inquiring who their fellow participants were and requesting to use digital cameras instead of the disposable ones I handed out. Other participants, namely working-class girls including Mary and Clarice, expressed anxiety about getting things wrong. Several boys enacted gendered, heteronormative responses to me; Charlie chivalrously held open doors, while Osman's masculine posturing sometimes bordered on flirtation. However, there was some space created for a playfulness that should not be mistaken for honesty, but communication not completely inflected with the requirement of saying something 'appropriate'. There was room for conversations that teachers do not have the time or energy to have. As one teacher commented, the kids are probably a bit surprised that anyone wants them to respond or have an opinion.

Reflexive Knowledge Making

Throughout the research I remained sensitive to the variety of factors that could shape the data generated and results produced. I assumed 'a critical and open stance towards data' through questioning my own assumptions, my research process and my personal effect on it (Tonkiss, 1998: 380). A complementary relationship exists between the theoretical and methodological tools adopted throughout the research process. I wanted to explore how to conduct empirical research from a viewpoint that simultaneously tries to interrogate how knowledge is situated and produced while also providing vivid accounts of the social world. Thus how the institution constructs and produces subjects is examined in conjunction with how students and their parents construct themselves, which is then overlaid and negotiated by wider discourses of power and value. This approach hopes to deconstruct essentialised categories while also producing knowledge through my situated intervention into this particular social world. Donna Haraway sees the researcher's problem as located in 'how to have simultaneously an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognising our own "semiotic technologies" for making meanings, and a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a "real" world' (1991:187). We must recognise the partial, situated nature of all knowledge production, whilst also recognising our own position as mediators in knowledge production where power relations are unavoidable (Skeggs, 1994:73). When interacting with teachers, students and parents, I inhabit a perspective not only influenced by my social and cultural position, but by working at the school and living in Hackney. There is nothing to be gained by attempting to or claiming to adopt a decontextualised vantage point; the disembodied gaze is impossible, for all gazes are inherently embodied and embedded within a context (Haraway, 1991).

Yet our partial perspective should not dissuade us from participating in the social world through empirical research. Partiality does not devalue empirical research or the political projects that can be supported and enabled by feminist knowledge production. Although all knowledge is contingent on position, context and power dynamics, these constructed realities still effect people's daily lives and determine their life chances (Archer and Francis, 2007:27). Nikolas Rose outlines the limitations of both scientific realism and social constructivism. They each have difficulty connecting concepts and objects to fields of reality because they both think, although in very different ways, that a large epistemological chasm exists between 'the order of thought

and the order of reality' (1998:163). After acknowledging the constructed nature of reality, Rose goes on to assign these constructions value, saying 'The realities that are fabricated, out of words, text, devices, techniques, practices, subjects, objects and entities are no less real because they are constructed, for what else could they be? And they are no less potent because they will some day be called into question' (1998:168). Exploring constructions as they function as lived social realities is a valuable pursuit; dissecting and understanding how and why these constructions are produced is a critical step on the path towards their deconstruction and reformulation. This viewpoint dispels a relativist malaise that questions the point of empirical research and suggests that we can never say anything affirmatively. Sociology is a worthwhile listener's art, harnessed to the art of descriptions that 'theorise as they describe and describe as they theorise' (Back, 2007:21). This method seeks to blend theory with rich pictures of the social world, allowing description and analysis to work together to examine how people make themselves meaningful and attach value to themselves within their socio-historical context where wider structural forces are working in tandem with popular discourses to confer meaning onto situated lives.

Reflexivity via the author's self-conscious awareness of their position has been frequently advocated as a remedy to realism which also addresses pressing questions of representation and legitimacy raised by post-modernism and post-structural theory. The self-conscious production of texts has been seen to overcome relativism by acknowledging how experience is created within the researcher's writing, rather than captured and faithfully reproduced. A careful consideration of how my position or approach affects the production of texts is a necessary and useful observation to make apparent. My on-paper position is that of a white, middle-class woman from Boston in the United States, although I have lived in Britain for 13 years. A variety of biographical factors drew me to this research. As the only child of aspirational parents, I watched and participated in their precarious, often insecure struggle to escape their working-class roots and acquire the 'right' middle-class tastes (see Lawler, 1999). My frustrated dislike of school and underachievement, despite promising beginnings, ties to my interest in the success-failure binary created by education markets and which is subsequently manifest in individuals. I was continually puzzled by the racial and social segregation at my high school. My intelligent Hispanic friends were consistently consigned to lower sets than me despite similar grades, while I always felt intimidated by the more wealthy girls who sported brand name clothes. Being curious or capable did not result in educational success; I was never an 'honors

society' student. These structural positions certainly direct my interest and approach to the research, albeit in uncertain ways where 'being' A does not necessarily equate with thinking or feeling B.

While acknowledging these considerations, I have no interest in placing myself at the heart of the research by making it a narcissistically self-reflexive confessional device. Several thinkers have problematised the notion of researcher reflexivity. Les Back urges awareness of the rhetorical strategies used, but cites the dangers of excessive preoccupation with reflexivity that can 'degenerate into a solipsism and self-absorption, where social researchers are continually examining their own discrete and sometimes stale professional cultures' ending up with an analysis that is so abstracted in a 'tangle of obfuscating jargon, pathos and uncertainty' that it has lost all reference to the social world that sparked our initial interest (1998:403). Dick Pels discusses how the demand for reflexivity can become a policing-mechanism 'issued by a theoretical exhibitionist who has previously set all the cognitive and moral conditions for its emergence or repression: self exposure turns into a devious way of exposing the weaknesses of others' (2000:9). This moralistic, judgmental turn assumes that through the acquisition and conscious expression of self-knowledge we can acquire liberation. Although Pels asserts that it is both useful and important for epistemological health 'to talk about something and simultaneously talk (at least a little) about the talking itself', he advocates a 'one step up reflexivity' that adds 'one storey to the story' through acknowledging reflexivity's circular movement where a weaker criterion of truth is offered instead of the 'strong objectivist criterion of mirror-like representational adequacy' (2000:3,7).

Lisa Adkins (2002) excavates some of the suppositions inherent in the concept of reflexivity by asking who can occupy the position of reflexive researcher, suggesting this position is hardly neutral, but contains a hidden gender politics. She offers a reviewer's critique of her empirical research and that of another male researcher as an example. Whereas Adkins' sex and age is tied to her ability to conduct the research, the male researcher's sex and age goes unmentioned. Reflexive social research positions the researcher as capable of speaking 'correctly' via a particularly formulation of identity. Although the transcendental speaker of realism has been relegated, this reflexive speaking position depends 'on a vision of the knower having a mobile relation to identity in relation to the known', where this reflexively mobile speaking position is not open to all (2002:94). Reflexivity relies on the researcher and

knower's ability to overcome their identity, and women can be refused this identity on the premise of their immanent relation to gender identity and 'nature' (2002:99). Through reflexivity's promotion as a neutral, progressive concept, Adkins suggests new gender hierarchies embedded within it are concealed as this mobile relationship to identity is normalised as a speaking position. This dodges an important question raised by Elspeth Probyn regarding what must be held in place for the vision of a mobile reflexive self to appear. Adkins argues that these new forms of classification organise classed and gendered difference via positions of mobility or immanence 'where these processes are understood to be an important site for making contemporary axes of difference' (2002:100). This mobile-self is the ideal, privileged self of late modernity, throwing reflexivity's status as a critical practice into question.

Although reflexivity claims to destabilise and recalibrate the normalisation of privileged speaking positions, Adkins recalls Haraway's assertion that 'reflexivity, like reflection, only displaces the same elsewhere' (quoted in Adkins, 2000:102). It if is inevitable that we reflect back on the world and there is no way to be passively apolitical with our displaced reflections, a key question, in addition to who can reflect and how can they reflect, should be to recognise what we are trying to reflect. The reflection of reflexivity always calls on the knower to highlight what they are not; the self stands in binary opposition to others as a unitary self. This suggests reflection may not be the best way to think through the process of knowledge-making, as self-reflexivity functions as a form of capital employed through a reliance on access to class, raced and gendered resources (Skeggs et al, 2008). As chapter six describes, the possession of appropriate forms of capital made it easier for some students to become reflexive subjects than others. Next I will describe the stages of fieldwork, including work with teachers and later students and parents, before considering the methods used.

Talking to Teachers: Initial Fieldwork

While the researcher is busy studying their subject, the subject is also busy researching the researcher; where one's sympathy lies can often be gauged through what questions are posed (Portelli, 1991). Determining which 'side' I was on featured largely in teacher interviews and was a source of building rapport or inciting suspicion with teachers. Initial fieldwork began in September 2008 and ran until July 2009 as I conducted participant observation and 20 teacher interviews while still working at

Mossbourne. Interviewing members of the SMT was particularly awkward at times; presenting a question containing the words 'race' or 'class' was often met with varying amounts of alarm or chagrin - received almost as an accusation of discriminatory behaviour. I envisioned the interviews lasting long enough to sufficiently think around the topic, digress and elaborate, but establishing a climate for storytelling was difficult. Time constraints meant that interviews were often relegated to a half an hour and many interviews, especially with senior members of staff, were repeatedly interrupted and, in two cases, abruptly concluded. Although I did consider holding interviews in an alternative location, I felt this would limit participation as most teachers worked until six or seven pm. The one interview conducted in a local cafe lasted over an hour and allowed for a much looser structure, indicating that the setting probably had a significant impact on the format.

Many teachers expressed concern over issues of confidentiality, especially when criticising the school, indicative of the general atmosphere of surveillance. The teacher who requested adjourning to a cafe commented 'There is no way I'd do this in school', adding at the end of the interview, 'That's probably enough to get me fired!' Several teachers gasped and looked worried if they mentioned someone's name, despite having reviewed the consent form detailing confidentiality and anonymity before the interview. Before speaking about Mossbourne's classist tendencies, one teacher paused to reconfirm it was confidential, while another teacher said 'just don't mention it to Sir Michael if I say anything bad'. One teacher stopped me in the corridor the day after their interview to apologetically admit 'I had to give you the party line'. Usually a jovial character, this teacher was incredibly uncomfortable and defensive during the interview despite my explanations about the difference between sociological writing and journalism. Teachers were curious about how their colleagues had responded and there appeared to be a significant lack of awareness regarding what their co-workers thought about Mossbourne. Less senior teachers were keen to know if I had spoken to any members of the SMT.

Teachers approached the interview differently according to their position within the school hierarchy. Members of the SMT often acted as institutional spokespersons; I often felt that, rather than offering any personal insight, they gave me 'appropriate' professional answers. Their responses were both consistently similar and uncritical, adhering to the 'party line' as mentioned above. One member of the SMT offered lengthy, detailed answers, concentrating intently throughout the interview. When I

asked him what it was like to work at Mossbourne, he sighed, making an exasperated facial expression that seemed to ask 'Are you kidding me?!', before delivering a very diplomatic answer sidestepping any personal reflections. When I finally turned off the recorder, he took a deep breath and exclaimed 'Oh fucking hell! Thanks for that!' It had clearly been a stressful experience for him. Less senior teachers were generally more willing to informally voice their opinions, initially describing the school like the SMT before moving on to offer their own interpretations. One teacher commented that all the SMT probably delivered 'the party line', but he could not, comparing his resistance to the Mossbourne ethos with his resistance to being indoctrinated into the Christian faith by his family as a boy.

Several teachers mentioned what they felt most strongly about after recorder was turned off, signalling a more relaxed, less pressurised environment. As I stood up to leave, one teacher quickly pulled his contract out of a desk drawer, brandishing it to show how it mirrored private sector contracts. He passionately related how teachers could be fired more easily because academies worked outside of union regulations. Other teachers used the post-recorder space as a time to add in comments they had forgotten. One teacher exclaimed 'Oh I forgot to add compassionate fascism!' in regards to describing Mossbourne. I think some teachers agreed to participate because the interview presented a venue to air grievances or discuss topics they seldom would otherwise, while for others it seemed part of their duty as a teacher. As their long-term colleague, several teachers seemed happy to help me and were curious about my project.

Back to School as 'Random Adult'

A teacher brought several pupils to the library to make up a Spanish quiz. When the teacher was out of sight, the students crept around the corner of the library. I could see them through the frosted glass partition, scrabbling to exchange answers, pencils and erasers in action. I started to deliberate over what to do, if anything, because I'm not here to be a teacher. They came back to the library giggling and gathered their bags before I asked one boy to see his paper because they looked like a bunch of cheating rats. The boys protested, 'oh miss, please no', but when I said 'yo quiero mirar' he was scared I spoke Spanish and handed me his paper which was a mess of cross-outs and eraser dust. I told them they'd never get through a real exam cheating and they certainly would not learn anything when this boy piped up and said 'what are you doing here?' I said I did not work at the school, but I was doing my PhD research. They asked for what and I

said sociology. One boy exclaimed 'oh yes, isn't that about classifications of society?' while another boy surprisingly said 'yes, class' and I said 'yes, and ethnicity and patterns and society, stuff like that'. I gave the boy his paper and he gave me a high five because one day I'd be called 'doctor', however I added he would never be called 'doctor' if he kept cheating. He said if his sister could become a medical doctor, then he could too. I said I bet she did not become a doctor by cheating. He solemnly agreed, adding 'I did not make this world, I just live in it'. Very clever I said, and he cheekily added 'Yeah, I bet a sociologist just loves that sort of thing!'

The shape and pace of the research shifted considerably when I returned to Mossbourne from September 2010 to July 2011 as a non-employee. I could spend time wandering around and taking notes without worrying about being late for lunch duty, but this lack of a clear role or place in the institution sometimes confused teachers, students, and occasionally myself. The story above illustrates an attempt to manage the grey area of 'random adult' with students, treading a strange line between relating to them as fellow people whilst clearly being perceived as a knowing grown-up. This sort of negotiation is evident in my dealings with the library cheaters; I wanted to show them I did not approve, yet I also did not want to 'snitch' on them as this limits the possibility of building relationships. After this encounter, I regularly talked with the boy whose paper I inspected. This grey area has been different with teachers, many of whom are new due to the high turnover rate and do not know who I am or what I am doing. Several have been flustered when I asked to sit in their lessons, often because they assumed I was there to evaluate their lesson as I inadvertently was mistaken as part of Mossbourne's surveillance structure.

The second stage of research focused primarily on students, and secondarily, their parents. The core cohort of students from year nine and eleven, aged roughly 12 and 15 respectively, was recommended by asking teachers to provide the names of five students who get along very well at Mossbourne and were rarely a cause for concern or discipline, five who mostly got along well but sometimes were a concern, and five students who had a difficult time on a regular basis. Although these categories already make assumptions, they needed to be phrased in terms of intervention – a term that would resonate with teachers without passing enormous value-judgements. Nevertheless, one teacher rephrased these groups as good, bad or medium students, while all of the recommended year nine students having a 'difficult time' were black boys. My attempts to recruit 'difficult' students was difficult, for many were continually sequestered in the Learning Support Unit (LSU) or excluded entirely,

while two mothers refused consent. Unsurprisingly, recruiting young people with fewer issues was remarkably easier. I obtained permission from parents and students by meeting with the young people, sending home a letter and phoning parents. My participants included a core cohort of 17 students whom I met with frequently throughout the year. I spent between two to three days per week at Mossbourne between September 2010 and July 2011. I also interviewed six sixth form students, two additional teachers and 20 parents, mostly from the student cohort but also several from the Parent and Teacher Association (PTA), including 16 mothers and four fathers.[20] Throughout the fieldwork I compiled over 175,000 words of ethnographic notes.

Due to the highly structured school day running from 8:30 until 3:10 or 4:10, or 5:10 if you are lucky enough to be in mandatory study club, accessing the young people was tricky. Initially I tried to meet with them between 8:30 – 8:50, as this registration period was the only flexible non-curricular time I could use without cutting into their lunch or break-time. However this time proved less than ideal, as most of them were still half asleep at 8:30, so I began taking them out of their regular lessons. This was another grey area, as I was unsure if this was permissible, however the vast majority of teachers did not mind if it was only for brief periods. Regrettably, I was forced to cut excellent conversations short because I did not want to abuse teachers' generosity or adversely affect students' learning.

Instead of finding 'true' accounts, the data analysis focused on showing how participants constructed and negotiated Mossbourne through their discourses in juxtaposition with ethnographic observations. Subsequently I have tried to examine how 'conventions routinely drawn upon in discourse embody ideological assumptions which come to be taken as mere 'common sense' and which contribute to sustaining existing power relations' (Fairclough, 2003:64). Discourses are not closed systems, but draw on elements in other discourses so that traces of previous discourses become embedded in current discourses (Hall, 1992:292). Drawing on discourse analysis examined how subjects and meanings are created and how the social is organised through analysing power, 'particularly persuasive and rhetorical power, the power to formulate and be believed, is generated in the process' (Wetherell and Potter, 1992:86).

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[20] Please see appendices A and B for profiles. Because I spent the most time with the student cohort, Appendix A contains brief descriptions of each student's biography, reflecting the more prolonged nature of our encounter.

I tried to question why, for whom, for what purpose and through drawing on what resources have these stories or versions of truth been told (Reissman, 1993). I did not use qualitative software to code my data, as I felt it disembodied and de-situated narratives and observations. Instead I relied on old-fashioned markers and pens to highlight and group data together through a repetitive process of reading and listening.

Ethnographic Explorations

Ethnographic methods examined how action occurred within the spatial, physical parameters of Mossbourne, allowing me to observe classes, daily procedures, events and engage with students and teachers informally. Unlike the self-conscious and often conscientious pronouncements made in an interview situation, ethnography places subjects within a collective context rather than isolating the individual as a unit of measurement. It allows an observation of how groups inhabit spaces, how their actions are enabled or constrained by the built environment, and a survey of the organisation of space and time from disparate angles. Using ethnographic methods highlights how the bodies of students and teachers are disciplined and how uniformity is created through visibly regarding the landscape. From how the rules are applied by teachers in the playground, to which children are always sitting outside head of year offices awaiting punishment, to how student groups coalesce in the playground and in class could all be observed. Connecting young people's comments about their social spaces with my playground observations has drawn attention to social divides, some of which I had not previously noticed. By becoming accustomed to the texture, pace, smell and sound of a place, we can move sociological method beyond the confines of text and open it up to the senses (Back, 2007). Developing the place of the senses within the research allows the creation of a richer, more multi-dimensional picture of the 'daily grind'.

Through the research, I experienced how the built environment affects its inhabitants. I was continually constrained by the lack of space and privacy available; there was seldom anywhere to sit and talk that was not in direct earshot of others or in danger of disrupting lessons. The most conveniently accessible chairs and tables were located outside offices in hallways where open balconies allowed sound to travel across all three floors. Teachers often left their classroom doors open; talking outside of a classroom of 25 silently reading children restricts conversations and curtails

boisterous vocal expression. Children were often sent to these office areas as a punishment during lessons, occasionally I was asked to supervise these errant students while speaking to participants. Even in the outdoor playground area, it was hard to find privacy. While speaking with a student during break time, we were gradually circled by five curious looking members of the SMT, inhibiting our conversation.

Unlike relying solely on the interview, ethnography makes incongruities between what individuals say they do and what they actually do in the context of daily life readily apparent. Verbal self-presentation is often contradicted when the student or teacher enters a different context, revealing the gap often separating the interview table from the classroom or playground. These gaps demonstrate the complex multiplicity of positions we all shift between in the negotiation of multiple contexts, each with differing value systems and demands. Juxtaposing one-to-one work with ethnographic observation challenged the idea of a unitary, constant self, foregrounding how students and teachers were actively engaged in meaning-making practices across a variety of fields where their performances were continually augmented. Ethnography's focus on observation within a particular context assumes in-context action is a richer way of producing data and viewing the world than alternative methods. It makes key assertions about subjecthood by positioning individuals not as free-floating, decontextualised entities, but situated within the social, cultural, historical and economic conditions in which they live. The subject does not spring fully formed from nowhere; how subjects are situated informs what sort of knowledges they can hold or produce (Haraway, 1991).

Ethnographic research's emphasis on a sustained commitment to a single site and group of people lends itself to producing richly detailed, multi-dimensional data. As Skeggs writes:

> Ethnography is the only method that takes into account multifaceted ways in which subjects are produced through the historical categories and context in which they are placed and which they precariously inhabit (2007:433).

Processes of racialisation, classification and gendering can be visually observed and considered in conjunction with how the discursive practices of the institution are negotiated by students and parents and how students both position themselves and are

positioned. This focus on daily processes and positioning aims to examine and deconstruct essentialised categories by interrogating how they are produced instead of reproducing them.

Ethnography has traditionally emphasised the importance of experience. Within one context a range of disparate experiences can emerge, each shaped according to the conditions of their formation. What ethnographic experience is taken to mean must be carefully considered so we do not assume that ontology forms the bedrock of epistemology, or that what I am is positioned as determining what and how I know (Skeggs, 2007:432). Joan Scott warns against using experience as definitive evidence and the voice of unquestionable authority without examining how the creation of experience is a discursive process. Scott argues that experience itself can only function as evidence that difference exists, however it does not examine how these differences are created or how they function and what effect differences have on the construction of subjects. Experience functioning as truth reinforces ideological creations by affirming and normalising categories like man, woman, black, white; individuals serve as fixed, autonomous, reliable sources of knowledge who have access to the real via the vehicle of experience (Scott, 1992:28). These experiences must be filtered through a lens that perceives experience as something subjects are constituted through, rather than something individuals have.

Observations around how people act should not be unproblematically seen to correspond to some 'real' inner self. Making performances of the self uncritically connect to internal thoughts and feelings presents their performance as a definite representation of all the complexity of that person – excluding other possible versions besides the one on display within this context. This can make research participants into one-dimensional objects when ethnographic writing should aim to commit embodied subjects to paper. A stark reminder that research does not access some raw, truer story came one day after speaking to Shante, a sensitive, intelligent student who has a history of truanting and spent most of the previous year in the LSU. Shante had repeatedly professed her determination to get good grades and have 'a good life'. Although Shante looked tired, she expressed the same sentiments that morning, reiterating things were going well. Shortly thereafter I discovered that Shante had attempted suicide only a few weeks before; to hear of Shante's turmoil only minutes after seeing her smiling face had effectively convinced me all was well was a stark reminder of the complexity of embodied subjects and the performances they give to get

through their day.

Ethnography is an interpretive project that examines meaning and how it is made through 'an elaborate venture in thick description' (Geertz, 1993:5-6). Thick social descriptions are often avoided by researchers out of a fear of misrepresenting participants, remedied by the insertion of large quotations which stand as self-evident, however this has the effect of reducing our subject's lives to a series of dry, disembodied quotations (Back, 2007). Rather than shying away from descriptive writing, we should try to present our participants in multi-dimensional complexity. Rigorous empirical research works in conjunction with theory, avoiding the uncritical disclaimer of letting subjects 'speak' for themselves through 'theoretical theory' whose formalism Bourdieu denounces as 'closer to the logic of a magic ritual than to that of a rigorous science' (1988:774). Ethnography is a relationship of responsiveness that seeks to move beyond the replication of hegemonic collective representations to 'enlarge our field of vision' (Das, 2007:4). Attentively altering and enlarging the ethnographic gaze moves us away from urban sociology's historical origins and a disembodied stance of objectivity examined in chapter two.

While some researchers suggest ethnographic research yields more 'natural' data than the interview, I would question how 'naturally occurring' any data can be. Ethnography hinges on the observations of daily occurrences of life, these occurrences are performed within a particular context and are ultimately committed to paper by the sociologist who interprets them and has the final authority. Although human experience is constantly changing, it is the ethnographer's craft to hold this motion together momentarily while simultaneously recognising it is in flux in an attempt to trace 'the curve of a social discourse; fixing it into inspectable form' (Geertz, 1993:19).

Using Images and Spaces

It is difficult to pinpoint where ethnographic research ends and participatory method begins. A blurry line exists between informal playground conversations and 'doing' a specific task with the young people. Other students, usually the friends of those who I was working with, often came and joined in the discussion themselves, creating an inevitable overlap between the cohort who were officially participating in specific activities and the wider ethnography of the institution and its members. I have used

participatory activities like photo diaries and student-led tours of Mossbourne to move away from relying solely on text and talk, offered students a different means of articulation besides the interview's demand to 'speak the self' (Skeggs et al, 2008).

The young people created photo diaries about their lives outside of Mossbourne. I included work with visual material to give students a non-verbal means of producing knowledge, while instigating reflection around topics beyond Mossbourne. Reaching beyond the institution was critical, as the divide between school and home life is continually emphasised through Sir Michael's references to urban chaos. Suki Ali (2003) suggests the visual can enable the exploration of new themes by getting underneath the surface of language. Photo diaries generated discussion around non-school aspects of their lives, or at least around how they choose to represent these out-of-school lives to me. Although student photographs are not included in the thesis, the exploration of space and visuals was an important part of the research process because visual knowledge extends and relates to other 'sensory, material and discursive elements of the research' (Pink, 2001:5).

Working with images also initiated episodes of storytelling where students used the image's context to show how meaning is invested and how knowledge, self-identity, experiences and emotions are produced and represented through them. However Pink warns against 'photo-elicitation', saying it problematically suggests that photos can evoke responses from people and assumes facts are located within the pictures (2001:68). Instead of photo diaries being used to pull 'facts' from images, the emphasis was on the process of interaction between myself, the student, and the image, resulting in collaborative meaning-making. Some photo diaries highlighted the shifting nature of stories built up over time, seen through Afra's relationship to the piano. In November Afra and I were walking through the music department. She said she used to take piano lessons, but stopped because she 'could not be bothered with it'. Yet a few months later, one of her photos shows Afra perched on the stairs at home playing a small keyboard. Discussing her photos, Afra said she really enjoyed playing the piano and played often. I asked her why she'd stopped taking lessons then, and this time instead of her 'not being bothered' she said she stopped because her father wanted her to focus on her schoolwork. Afra said she had asked him about it, but he said not to push him on the matter, but wait and see how she did academically. It turned out that there was another story besides Afra's initial assertion that she voluntarily quit out of disinterest.

Asking students to take me on a tour of Mossbourne allowed us to leave the interview table's confines. Seeing the spaces students covet or dread, their favourite places to socialise in the playground, and the restrictions on their movement showed me the building from new perspectives. Students could comment on action as it happened. As Tameka gave her tour she complained how Mr Pierce always had 'something to say' to her. As we made our way back into the building, Mr Pierce came past and made a wry comment to Tameka. She rolled her eyes and shot me a glance that said 'I told you so'. The tour's movement also opened spaces for spontaneous conversations and after-school loitering. A few students brought along friends who happily joined in, however this format did not work with Clarice, a student who is widely regarded as problematic. She nervously pleaded to be excused from the exercise, adding that she probably would not be good at it.

I did not record conversations with students, aside from two at the end of the project. This felt too formal and surveillance-orientated within an already constricted environment. Instead I treated our interactions as semi-structured ethnographic encounters that attempted to foster relaxed exchanges. I worried about losing some of the richness of the language used without recording, yet the inhibiting effects of the device outweighed this concern. When I suggested to Osman that I record our last meeting he flatly refused, saying the recorder made him feel like he was at the police station; for some, this equipment symbolised interrogation by an institution with the power to pass judgements. Building relationships and accumulated trust does not guarantee comfortable interview subjects once the recorder is on (see Jackson, 2010). Instead I wrote notes on my laptop after speaking to students. This is why the majority of young people's comments are paraphrased, except for occasional quotations of particular sentences or phrases I could recall verbatim or quickly scribbled down during our meeting. However I did record the sixth formers, teachers and all but one of the parents, as these more lengthily one-off encounters made note-taking unreliable.

Initially, I introduced similar questions or topics with each student, but allowed them to go on tangents or move on to other topics if they preferred. After the initial meeting, we worked off previous discussions to create a fragmented, but continuous conversation. Some students were much more comfortable than others in the initial one-to-one meeting. Although Clarice said she was friends with the 'loud ones', she

was anything but when I met with her. Clarice did offer her opinions, but often looked uneasy and rarely made eye contact, hiding behind a shutter of strategically placed fringe. Meanwhile exemplary student Poppy offered protracted answers that sometimes made me feel I was conducting a job interview.

A sympathetic awareness of participant's needs and motivation for participation is emphasised in participatory action research, 'encouraging children's exploration, reflection and action upon their social and natural environment with the aim of strengthening their capacity for self-determination' (Nieuwenhuys, 2004:207). I agree that this approach opens a space for young people to influence and shape the research as a partnership, however I would question Nieuwenhuys' suggestion that it allows participants to 'construct their everyday experience into knowledge, gain self-confidence in their abilities and influence decision that are taken about their lives' (2004:207). I think it is difficult to assess the effect research interventions have on participants. We should be extremely cautious of developing a self-congratulatory stance as liberators; the research might bring up topics that make students feel uncomfortable rather than confident. While I wanted to create a space for exercising agency and critical thinking, Mossbourne complicates ideas of student 'empowerment'. As chapter seven examines, most students willingly comply with institutional demands to accrue future benefits. Instead of providing a space of freedom, replicating the 'structure liberates' ethos from a different angle, I would suggest - as a 'random adult' whose presence slightly baffled them – that I provided an avenue for them to talk about Mossbourne without being judged or punished for their opinions. Yet, as previously discussed, complete 'randomness' is not a possibility.

Raced, Classed Productions and Power

The participants are described within the text using the ethnic, and sometimes national descriptors they related to me. I did not want to deterministically position how people ethnically described themselves as forming the basis of their ontology. Nayak describes how social constructionism still perceives race as an ontological category, in contrast to how

> …post-race writing subverts this position by adopting an anti-foundational perspective which claims that race is a fiction only ever given substance to through the illusion of performance, action and utterance, where repetition

makes it appear as-if-real (2006:416).

Drawing on Derrida, Nayak describes how the power of repetition can make objects like race appear and become true; the power inherent in repetition and ambiguity runs throughout this thesis. Gunaratnam notes when discussing how to work with and against racial categories, 'despite theoretical understandings of "race" and ethnicity as relational and socially constructed, there is still a voracious appetite for approaches that freeze, objectify and tame "race"/ethnicity into unitary categories that can be easily understood and managed' (2003:33). This thesis hopes to show a detailed complexity unbounded by unitary categories, charting race's messy, fluid flexibility where not only the phenotypically white subject wears whiteness. However, I also do not want to ignore how differences do matter and lose an account of how power relations interact with these continuing differences, which come to matter in different ways in this neoliberal era (Ahmed, 1998).

Compared to ethnic or cultural orientations, discussing class was problematic. Middle-class students and parents readily named themselves as such, claiming this valued position, whereas other participants actively rejected classed categorisations or reiterated that they were just 'normal' or 'ordinary' people (see Savage et al, 2001). For the purposes of letting the research speak to inequitable relations of power, I have named participants who figure as more working class within the remit of institutional power relations and who did not readily adopt the 'middle-class' label as working class, however I realise this is problematic as several parents occupy grey areas. Sarah, the daughter of a coal miner who went on to get a degree and work as a teacher, did not comfortably claim middle-classness. Other parents like Esther had lost their social status through migration. A university educated woman from a wealthy middle-class Nigerian family, Esther now lived on a demonised estate. Meanwhile Danese acutely felt her devalued position, saying some teachers thought they were 'too classy'. This flux highlights how class-making is not a static, but a dynamic and continuous process (Savage 2000).

Interviews and the Limits of Listening

Tuesday 12 July 2011
Bringing disparate social positioning into sharp relief, this interview was excruciatingly uncomfortable and put a stop to my foolishly thinking that a bit of friendly charm can

overcome vast chasms of inequality. At 10:30am I found Fatima's flat on an estate in Homerton. She came to the door wearing a handkerchief around her head. I think she had been washing up when I arrived as it had taken her awhile to get to the door and her shirt was splattered with water. There was a 'For sale' sign in front of the house and I remarked, 'Oh, so you are selling the house then?' She said 'Yes'.

We went upstairs in the sitting room which was done up with enormous white leather sofas and a massive television. I said it was nice; she said thanks, asking me why I was here from Mossbourne. I said I was not 'from' Mossbourne, but had been doing my research there with lots of children, including her daughter Abisola. I had described this over the phone and on the consent form I distributed earlier that year, but Fatima seemed confused. She said that I had said I was from Mossbourne; I clarified again, reiterating that I used to work there, but now I was there doing research. She looked clearly perturbed and suspicious by my alien presence in her front room. I had mistakenly assumed that not being from Mossbourne would be positive, however now someone else from an unknown institution was sitting on her sofa wanting to interview her. Once again she asked who I was and I repeated my spiel as innocuously as possible. Fatima folded her arms and asked if this was about the children, why was I talking to her? She asserted that she did not understand the place, she did not go to school there - Abisola did! I said it was about how parents felt about Mossbourne too. Fatima looked distinctly unimpressed, but sighed 'fine'. Awkwardly, I got out the consent form. I went through it; she read and signed it, but waved the recorder back into my bag, asking me why I would want to record her. I said it was just to remember what she said accurately. She said no, I said that was fine; I could jot down some notes. On the mantel there were pictures of Abisola and her brother in various poses. On the wall there were some photographs of Fatima in Nigerian garments and one of Abisola dancing in the Notting Hill Carnival, something she enthusiastically updated me on each time we met.

After a few questions the phone rang. When Fatima hung up I asked what language she was speaking. She said Nigerian. I asked if she was from Nigeria originally; she said yes, but the children were born here in Homerton hospital. She also defensively asserted she was a British citizen now. I said 'Me too – I'm from the US', hoping this would shift the tone from me being a pseudo-official investigating her immigration status to being someone who also went through the onerous UK naturalisation process, albeit from a very different position. The phone rang again; my pathetic attempt at commonality was lost. This was getting painful. I nervously adjusted and re-adjusted my bare legs that were now nervously sticking to the leather sofa in the July heat. On Fatima's arm was a large tattoo of a heart surrounded by leaves and a sword

through it. On a banner draped across the heart read 'love' then 'Hamad' and 'Abisola'. I desperately tried to think of how I could have the same sort of easy, relaxed conversations that I had had so many times with Abisola; what stance could I take to overcome this discomfort?

Fatima hung up the phone and I asked her how long she had lived here. She shot back with, 'Why do you want to know?' I mumbled something about just wanting to see how long she'd lived in Hackney. She retorted that she'd been here for 17 years - a really long time - so I did not need to be asking her about how long she'd lived here. Fatima thought I was demanding her to establish her credibility via her residency, when my question was intended to lead into a discussion of Hackney. I said that the area had changed a lot; she said she did not know, she just cared about her children and that was it. At this point Fatima physically turned away from me and stared straight ahead, looking angrily out the window. I did not know what to do. Should I carry on? Would she tell me to leave if she wanted me to? I asked if she thought she'd ever leave Hackney; Fatima replied that this was none of my business and why was I asking? I uttered something about some of the other Mossbourne parents really wanted to move, others wanted to stay. Fatima said it was none of my business what she was going to do or where she might go and why should she talk about these personal feelings and things with a complete stranger? I replied that this was fair enough, she did not have to talk about it - she could answer or not answer whatever she wanted - it was up to her. The phone rang again; I squirmed on the sofa in deliberation. When she hung up I concluded the interview; this could not go on. I gingerly announced that was all and Fatima said 'Thank you,' although for what I was not sure.

While no method magically bridges social and economic inequalities and the shaping of subjectivities informing research encounters, the interview as method sometimes brought these unbridgeable gaps into sharp relief, highlighting my own naiveté about the potential for transcending embedded histories. This failed interview shows how my attempts to bridge the social distance between Fatima and I fell flat; retrospectively I chided myself for trying to compare our immigration experiences, or mentioning the 'for sale' sign, as Abisola later commented that they did not own the house. I could not escape my position, despite my intentions. Ahmed comments:

> How we feel about another – or a group of others – is not simply a matter of individual impressions, or impressions that are created anew in the present. Rather, feelings rehearse associations that are already in place, in the way in which they 'read' the proximity of others, at the same time as

> they establish the 'truth' of the reading. The impressions we have of others, and the impressions left by others are shaped by histories that stick, at the same time as they generate the surfaces and boundaries that allow bodies to appear in the present... (2004:39).

Fatima and I were both stuck with our different histories, as impressions and associations were re-rehearsed. I held the power as white, middle-class inquisitor, while Fatima deflected my queries without refusing my intrusion. The interview carries the baggage of history and I have regarded it as a social interaction where power dynamics are inevitably at play. The interview's classed history must be considered, as Carolyn Steedman (2000) describes how in the history of the English administrative state, the working-class poor were demanded to repetitively tell the self. Skeggs and her colleagues (2008) argue that class is made through methodologies, as middle-class participants generally found the interview a more comfortable process, positioned as fellow professionals and thus social equals to their interviewers, while working-class participants often found the interview a more laborious affair, offering curt responses. These orientations were apparent in my research, with one middle-class family interviewing me about my research before we started their interview.

Methodologies do not innocently discover pre-existent information or uncover a world beyond us, but create and provide different means through which participants can articulate themselves. A ubiquitous element of modern life, the interview is present in a vast range of places from radio to television to the job centre. Instead of following a prescribed procedure, the shape and analytical status given to the interview should reflect the researcher's theoretical position. Like Tim Rapley (2007), I do not entertain any positivist notions of objectifying and standardising the interview to avoid bias; instead I regarded it as a social encounter with a specific person in a particular context where active collaboration produces accounts of the social world. Approaching the interview as a social relationship steers us away from adhering to standardizing methodologies that 'imitate the external signs of the rigor of the most established scientific disciplines' and instead urges us to focus on developing an 'active and methodical listening' (Bourdieu, 1999:607-609). Yet as my encounter with Fatima shows, active listening cannot always alleviate or compensate for the historical baggage our bodies carry.

Conclusion

This chapter has charted the ethical dimensions of the research via my shifting relationship with the school, explored the politics surrounding knowledge making, and outlined the fieldwork and methods employed. I think it is important to close by reiterating how profoundly the rhythm and pace of Mossbourne has dictated the shape of the research. It has temporally and spatially sculpted the fieldwork through its active elimination of spontaneity that leaves few actions to chance, but there are crevices and cracks in this routine. There are small spaces for the unexpected to happen and the fieldwork has demanded that I become more creative with methods. It has demanded that I find these small spaces and make the most out of the cramped conditions, that I even try to use them for something different. However, both the research and researcher share some common ground with the participants, as we were all regulated by this space. Now I will explore how Mossbourne's parameters are collectively constituted through numerous individuating disciplinary practices.

Chapter Four

How to Build an 'Oasis in the Desert', or 'Urban Chaos' Hits the Conveyor Belt

> 'The end product is such that the school is so well disciplined in so many different areas of its operation, including things like the behaviour of the children, that it means that the machine - if that's what the academy is - works. It's a well-oiled machine, it's well serviced, it's kept up to good operational standards and it's regularly fixed if it goes wrong. So it's able to deliver if you like, it's passengers. It can deliver what it's aim, I mean the train has got an aim to deliver something from a to b, that's what the school's doing. The school's taking the children from one position and getting them to the other. And if a wheel falls off, that can hinder, so what we need to be sure of is that in every single aspect of this school, the academy works. Every aspect of the school works.'
> *Ms Davis, SMT*

This chapter describes how Mossbourne responds to narratives of failure, the demands of the education market place, and anxieties over national decline explored in chapters one and two. What does Adonis' model of twenty-first century education look like on a daily basis? Hackney Downs' rubble was not the only thing recycled, as Mossbourne combines 'hard discipline' reminiscent of Reverend Gull's approach with more modern techniques. Mossbourne is disciplined through a variety of practices to ensure the 'well-oiled machine' routinely fashions its raw materials in accordance with global capital's needs. This chapter examines what 'operational standards' run throughout the institution to ensure every aspect consistently 'works', exploring how this machine or 'train' literally 'moves' its cargo through the daily imposition of structure and how bodies are disciplined through the journey. Mossbourne showcases New Labour's communitarian agenda where visions of a British urban renaissance met and combined with a criminal justice agenda (Atkinson and Helms, 2007:2). Teachers' language reflects how this criminal justice agenda has permeated education, with phrases like 'zero tolerance' and 'a culture of no excuses' used by several teachers. Academisation becomes a way of escaping Hackney's pathologised 'place-image', transforming narratives of failure (Shields, 1991:6-7). Ironically, these stigmas are overwritten through the reiteration of pathology as the 'urban chaos' discourse is drawn upon to justify using 'boot camp' tactics to deal with 'urban children'.

This chapter maps the contours of the physical environment that students and teachers are funnelled through, describing how space, time and the body are (re)ordered through repetitive routines and surveillance which mesh various modes of discipline, ranging from panoptic surveillance to verbal chastisement to audit systems' measurement to create the neoliberal citizen. It draws on de Certeau concept of strategies to describe how Mossbourne as a subject with 'will and power' isolates itself, establishing a 'break between a place appropriated as one's own and its other' (1988:36). This is as a useful way to think through Mossbourne's demarcation of itself as a space apart from Hackney, from where it can manage exterior threats (1988:36). While I will examine in the following chapters how different bodies receive different interventions and negotiate the landscape in disparate ways, this chapter focuses on how the institutional landscape is ideally and reflexively envisioned and the types of subjectivities it seeks to cultivate.

Regimentation, Transparency and Predictability: 'Keep Things Tight and Remain Vigilant'

Panoptic techniques of surveillance where people feel they are being continuously observed is a key disciplinary element employed at Mossbourne. In 1787 Bentham proposed his panopticon as a 'new principle of construction', applicable to establishments including prisons, factories, mad-houses, or schools. This 'inspection house' was comprised of a circular building with occupants based around its circumference in separate partitioned cells surveyed by an unseen inspector located in the centre. This configuration promoted a 'new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind' through inspection's perpetual gaze (1995:31). While Bentham realises this perpetual gaze is 'impossible', the next best solution is to have occupants 'conceive' themselves to be under surveillance (1995:33-4). Although the panopticon was never realised, Foucault warns against seeing it simply as a 'dream building', asserting it is 'the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form...it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use' (1991a:205). The panopticon draws up and differentiates a crowd of integrated individualities by mapping, assessing, distinguishing, comparing, and classifying to produce 'a collection of separated individualities' (1991a:201-3). Bentham's creation also represents a wider historical shift from negative, arresting 'discipline-blockades' to more productive, subtly coercive and lighter 'discipline-mechanisms' which enhance

the exercise of power (1991a:209). Foucault's reading of Bentham's panopticon as symbolising the art of liberal government broadens *Discipline and Punishment*'s arguments beyond the mechanics of particular institutions (Gane, 2012:618). Given the subsequent shift towards a neoliberal state, Gane questions how the political economy of surveillance has also changed: '... if the Panopticon is a model of governmentality within which the state is said to watch over and thereby discipline the market, what of a post-panoptic or neoliberal arrangement whereby the market increasingly structures the form and activities of the state?' (2012:612). Instead of acting alone, the panopticon comprises one aspect of Mossbourne's disciplinary repertoire, suggesting neoliberal governmentality assumes a multifaceted approach. Now I will describe the panoptic qualities built into Mossbourne's daily routines and physical structure.

Discipline begins early at Mossbourne. Many senior teachers arrive at 7am for meetings or to catch up on work. At 8:00am the gate is unlocked and teachers monitor the stream of arriving students. By 8:20 the gate is pulled shut and two teachers are left at the entrance to stamp lunchtime detentions into latecomers' planners, while any late sixth formers are required to arrive twice as early the next day. Teachers on playground duty end the basketball games and conversations, rounding students up and herding them towards the centre of the triangular playground before line up is signalled by the 8:25 whistle. A startling wave of movement occurs as students hurriedly weave in and out of one another in order to arrive at their designated space. In less than a minute, hundreds of children are assembled into straight, silent alphabetised lines according to their year and form group. Each head of year teacher stands on a bench in front of their respective year group; students stand with their bags off their shoulders at attention. Students must also remove their hats, scarves and coats, regardless of temperature, as no outerwear can be worn in the building. This scene of uniform squares of students assembled before each head could easily be mistaken for four military regiments awaiting inspection by their commanding officer. All teachers must assist with line up and are repeatedly reminded during briefings not to hang towards the rear of lines or talk, but to actively participate. An all-staff email stipulates teachers should report to the playground not *during* or *after* the whistle, but *promptly before* it sounds at 8:25, 11:07, 12:05 and 13:06. Any students slow to get in line, not facing the front, or daring to talk are reprimanded by teachers walking up and down the lines inspecting uniforms and behaviour. Poorly behaved students are called to the front by their head of year (HOY) who will verbally chastise them or occasionally make them face the wall. After relevant announcements, the

HOY calls the staff teaching for the next period. The respective teachers raise their hands and wait as students create another straight line. The HOY shouts not to cut across lines, but to walk straight to the back and around.

After ensuring lines are silent and orderly, each class moves towards the respective learning area where another teacher stands on duty at each doorway to ensure students enter silently in single file. Additional teachers are stationed along the hallway and on each stairwell landing; between each lesson these duties are repeated so no spaces are unattended. SMT member Mr Vine, nicknamed 'Robocop' by students, vigorously patrols the playground referencing his i-Pad outlining the duty rota to check teachers are in position. If any teachers are not in their allocated spaces, an all-staff email is sent asking them to report to duty immediately. Students perform line-up three times per day: before school, after break time and lunchtime. It is one of the key procedures used to collectively discipline the student body. Teacher Mr Turner describes its precision as 'phenomenal', attributing its success to 'abnormal' strictness 'on everything...from the uniform to the way that they stand to the not making any noise whatsoever if they are in a line'. He videoed it to show his old colleagues at a private school who were astonished this order was possible in Hackney.

Fig. 0.4. Mossbourne from Hackney Downs Park

Fig. 0.5. View of the playground from the centre of the 'V'

The V shaped building was designed by the renowned Richard Rogers partnership and is one of the largest timber structures in the UK. It sits back from the road and along the front runs a 12-foot high-corrugated metal fence with 'Mossbourne' painted in bright yellow letters across it. The 'V' creates two wings with all classrooms facing out to the playground, while the back abuts the railway lines and is composed of solid concrete painted bright blue. The front of the 'V' is largely glass, placing all classrooms and teacher office areas on display. All activity is conducted within the bounds of the V, making movements visible through the glass frontage. The only facilities behind the 'V' are parking spaces, rubbish facilities, PE changing rooms, a smoker's hut, and a complex of porta-cabins housing the LSU where excluded students work in silent isolation. There is no staff room; instead teachers share departmental offices located along the ground floor. Teacher Mr Arkanel describes how 'every department has got their own little box', while Mr Mitchell suggests the glass fronted offices '...encourage staff to be high profile and vigilant at all times. The whole building is designed to be very open and so it's visibility, very good visibility at all times in the school. You can see what the students are doing'. More senior members of staff have glass-fronted offices on the first or second floors. Mossbourne's built-in visibility and business-style office arrangements were an intentional design decision. Lord Rogers' website professes that Mossbourne's design reflects Sir Michael's educational approach and aspired to express 'accessibility, openness and a sense of inclusion whilst providing a sense of place, security and belonging' (RSHP, 2013).

Fig. 0.6. The Learning Support Unit (LSU)

While there is scant reference to accessibility or openness, surveillance, safety and security feature throughout teacher, student and parent narratives. Ms Davis describes how Mossbourne's design fosters accountability:

> Well, it's purely by eyes and ears. It's about observation of all the senior management. It's about expectations of the head and the headteacher being around the school, measuring and quality, assuring what he knows should be happening. So by having visible presence in every part of this school the quality assurance procedures are that much more efficient and far reaching. Because there is nowhere in this school where anyone can hide. It's an open school. The school is open because there is literally, literally transparency in the building. You know, the rooms are transparent...You can see what is happening in people's offices and children know that they are being observed which is the same for staff, they know they are being observed, even if it's just a passing glance. Even if it's just an informal visit, as well as all the formal things. There is nothing that the management team, nothing that the head doesn't get to see or know about. So it's constant inspection.

Transparency induces a state of 'constant inspection'. One lunchtime Mr Turner announced the prison-style architecture was bothering him, joking he wanted a place to pick his nose in peace. Ms Taylor who had recently started at Mossbourne said when she pulled up on her first day the cab driver asked her if Mossbourne was a prison or a school – and she wasn't sure! She described it to her former colleagues as 'like being in a science experiment' because of all the glass. Ms Burke laughed in agreement, adding it was like a factory. This laboratory-machine functions as an ideal

setting for experiments correcting individuals (Foucault, 1991a:203). Visual transparency enables the SMT to enact perpetual surveillance through frequent observations and 'passing glances'. Ms Hatcher said that she often felt like one of the students and her department joked about surveillance: '...we used to call it SMTV *(laughs)* - have you been on SMTV in the last couple of weeks? They are just constantly observing everything that you do. But I suppose, in some ways, it could be construed as a supportive thing to make sure that you are okay, but it certainly didn't feel like that'. Visibility makes teachers' arrivals and departures evident; several discussed the dangers of being seen leaving too early after school finished. Glass offices make bodies out of place immediately obvious.

The playground area also functions as stage where teachers must perform their dedication to the ethos and students must readily submit to discipline. Ms Hatcher describes these demonstrations: 'You have to be seen to be singing from the same hymn sheet..you do have to make it very clear that you are very much behind the whole thing and yeah, that you are willing to shout and you're not willing to stand for walking past a kid with a top button undone...' Several newer teachers were advised on how to perform by more experienced colleagues. Ms Hatcher was told to 'make sure in the first couple of months you are seen shouting at a kid in the playground cause that will look really good with SMT'. Ms Austin was warned that 'people are watching you', so make sure students walk in quietly from the playground.

Pupil movements and whole-school events are carefully choreographed. Sir Michael congratulated PE staff on a meticulously organised sports day which showed Mossbourne was 'a professional organisation with attention to the details'. Staff briefings routinely contain reminders to 'keep things tight and remain vigilant' on behaviour. The emphasis is placed on execution, not content, yet detailed planning prevents undesirable content from surfacing. At a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meeting, parents were eager to have a karaoke stall at the winter fair. A couple of mothers had already selected videos, while others enthusiastically offered suggestions, however karaoke was promptly vetoed. Teacher Ms Stuart said karaoke must be 'vetted' because these were student performances and should be previewed because of the behaviour issues that could arise if they were inappropriate. The PTA chair looked deflated and the women reluctantly stuffed their videos back in their bags. There is no room for unpredictable performances; self-expression must be pre-approved, lest it engenders subversive behaviour. The elimination of spontaneity and continual

visibility relates to what de Certeau describes as some of strategies' key effects through the establishment of autonomous space – a model first military and now scientific (1988:38). A division of space enables panoptic practices, providing 'a mastery of places through sight' where 'the eye can transform foreign forces into objects that can be observed and measured, and thus control and "include" them within its scope of vision' (1988:36). The ability to see across a vast distance makes prediction possible through being able 'to run ahead of time by reading a space' (1988:36). This pre-emptive, managerial stance is also applied to teachers through the eradication of the communal staff room.

Dividing Spaces and Bodies

A staple in most schools, the omission of a staff room was another design decision described by members of the SMT as a positive move to prevent factionalism and increase productivity levels. Mr Vine describes staff rooms as 'where staff go and hide out and try to avoid students', functioning as 'a breeding ground for negativity...where people get together and talk about others or moan'. Ms Davis thinks the lack of staff room fits 'the business-like nature of the school'. Ms Fields, an administrator, feels the City and Mossbourne share similar work ethics: 'There is no doubt that people at the school work very hard...it's not a question of well, you come here and you can relax for the first hour and have a cup of tea and have a long lunch break which I think is probably still the case in some local authorities...' Eradicating the staff room symbolically severs Mossbourne from past perceptions of local authorities as unproductive in comparison to the private sector, responding to the narratives in chapter one. Staff taking a break or talking to one another is framed as a troublesome activity eliminated by preventing congregation.

The majority of teaching staff connected the missing staff room to poor communication and cohesion. Many teachers did not know all their colleagues' names and attributed this to the absence of communal space and the non-stop pace. Several teachers felt manipulated by the lack of staff room, regarding it as a clever management decision. Mr Arkanel describes it as intentionally divisive:

> Well, looking at the design of the school I think it's been planned very well to split, control...because if you look at the school, every department has got their own little box where teachers are stuck in those offices and they

> can't come out and talk to another person. For example I've been there this year and I have not had a word with one of the English teachers because they are on the other side of the building and I am on the other side and we don't see each other. And I can't ask them, you know, basic things, like 'how is this student doing in your class?' I can email them, but I can't talk to them.

He suggests these divisions stop teachers from communicating about their labour conditions: 'if everyone knew that people weren't happy with staying in school until six, maybe people could have said something or they could have pressured the senior management'. Ms Watson thinks it is 'very clever that we don't have a staff room cause it means that people work harder then and they can moan, but they moan less because there are not so many people gathered together, moaning together'. While reflexively acknowledged as a decision to increase productivity, management also presents it as beneficial to students who can continually access teachers.

This dividing and distribution is more rigidly replicated with students. As Sir Michael announced during a briefing: 'We have a rule about groups of children that we should go over for any new members of staff…We do not have groups of more than six or seven congregating together. If you see large groups of children, you need to break them up so they do not cause silliness and mayhem'. In a briefing several months later, SMT member Ms Butler emphasised the need for teachers to weave in and out of large groups of boys during playground duties. Teachers should use their 'gut instincts' and intervene if people looked suspicious; hugging or any sort of physical contact is off limits. These dividing practices stop the formation of troublesome collective dispositions and the 'dangerous coagulation' of bodies (Foucault, 1991a:143). Focussing on the prevention of transgressive acts through policing the 'suspicious' looking bodies of young people mirrors New Labour's regime of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and Disorder Acts. Curfews and dispersal orders specifically designed for youth aimed to shape the use of public space, with groups of two or more dispersed and minors removed to their homes between certain hours (see Squires and Stephen, 2005). Students are also divided through rigorous subject setting, a hierarchical sorting mechanism with real spatial consequences through its distancing or collecting of bodies. The playground is also spatially divided by year groupings, preventing different ages from intermingling. In addition to employing spatialised techniques, Mossbourne also utilises more time-honoured coercive methods.

The Verbal Cane

One afternoon a male teacher was loudly shouting at a 12-year-old boy in his office, attracting the attention of students passing to lessons.

'You do not argue with me. Ever'.
The teacher repeated this a few times.
'You don't answer me back and give attitude'.
The volume increased as the teacher bent his face closer to the boy's, whose back was against the wall.
'Come on - you want to get angry? You want to get aggressive with me? Come on. I dare you. I dare you'.

One passing student abruptly stopped, recognising it was his little brother. I asked him to carry on. He went a few paces, but as the bellowing increased he stopped, looking torn over what action he could take until Mr Greaves hurried him along. The shouting sent goose bumps down my spine as I walked down the stairs. The sound filtered through the atrium to the ground floor where students whispered, looked scared or giggling. One teaching assistant with a perplexed grimace whispered to me that all students were affected by this noise.

Shouting features frequently around the corridors, instilling what Mr Turner calls 'the fear factor'. Several teachers are known for their lung capacity, their booming shouts periodically cascading through the building. Sir Michael announced in one briefing that the shadow secretary for education would be visiting the school, so no screaming and shouting should occur between 8:30 and 10am. If teachers wanted to shout at a pupil after 10am, that was up to them. Emails reminding teachers to keep shouting down in learning areas were periodically sent prior to VIP visitors arriving. This concealment puzzled two long-term staff members: if what Mossbourne did was shout at children to get results, they suggested this should not be stopped when Ofsted or other guests arrived. They concluded Mossbourne should either have confidence in what they do and how they do it - or do something else. Curtailing shouting when Mossbourne assumes its role as display case highlights a sense of guilt, or at least recognition, that verbal aggression is widely frowned upon.

Several teachers also took issue with this practice. Ms Adewumi described how she

wanted students to respect her and learn not because they were forced to, but because of her guidance. She felt there were other ways to discipline children; students should not have to be humiliated or treated like animals to learn. This was a central factor in her decision to leave Mossbourne. Ms Hatcher also felt the application of discipline could be inappropriate: 'I remember seeing...very tall members of male staff screaming in the faces of year seven girls or boys and I found that very hard to digest. And even today - it is still around the building today - and I still think it is unnecessary'.

Mr Ba felt discipline was necessary, but doubted Mossbourne's methods:

> *Mr Ba*: So the ethos seems to be working at the moment, but I'm not sure - is it right? Is it wrong? Are the kids being mistreated?
>
> *CK*: Do you think it's right?
>
> *Mr Ba:* I think the shouting, the bellowing...I don't think that's right. I don't think you need to scream as if you want to almost harm a child to some extent. I don't think that's necessary. I think the structure that they have that the teachers can fall back on is enough. I think if we depended more on that structure instead of impinging on the health of the teachers - because it's not healthy is it? I think the kids would learn better ways because maybe they are getting that at home you see so...
>
> *CK:* Ah, yes.
>
> *Mr Ba:* Well you know, it's a form of verbal aggression isn't it? Do you know what I mean? Is it going to work to their advantage or are they going to learn and think that this is what you have to do to get people to do things? When they have children they might try the same thing but then they might escalate a little bit. There are a lot of issues, social issues so...

Mr Ba feels surveillance and routine provide enough structure without the addition of verbal aggression and its potentially negative effects on teachers and students. Verbal chastisement acts as a stand-in for physical punishment, violating without unlawfully touching the body. Panoptic surveillance is reinforced by more old-fashioned punitive

techniques, creating docile, pliable bodies open to the inscription of capital. Students must both learn to self-regulate through perpetual surveillance while being punitively coerced.

Enclosure / Dislocation: 'You Could Be Anywhere Really'

Changing urban culture means physically demarcating Mossbourne as a space and culture apart from Hackney, severing students from 'urban chaos'. Mossbourne's gates remain shut, except when students go for PE classes on the Downs, until the first group of students depart at 3:10pm. Sixth formers can leave for lunch, but must remain on site throughout the day whether or not they have lessons. Teachers stand inside and outside of the gate after school, ensuring students do not loiter but go directly home, while students from surrounding schools lingering near the entrance in an attempt to collect their friends are moved on. Staff 'sign in' via biometric fingerprint at security guard huts stationed next to two entrances. Mr Vine describes how the gates act as a sieve excluding malignant cultures: 'it's not allowing the bad elements of the community to come into the school gates. So once they [students] come into the school gates, anything that's not wanted is left outside. It's another set of rules once they enter...and all of that must be left behind'. The site remains closed to surroundings that are seen as potentially threatening to Mossbourne's structures. Ms Carrier explains, 'when you've got structures as rigorous as this, you don't want anything to dilute them'.

Teachers also noted this separation, often in less positive terms than SMT members. Ms Hatcher compared it to her old school in Cumbria where she knew teachers at surrounding schools and met with them to share practices. Regrettably, this interaction did not happen at Mossbourne, which was 'kind of like a little bubble that we live in here'.[21] She felt community involvement was regarded as unimportant. Ms Austin also described Mossbourne as 'a little bit closed off from things...it's all a bit kind of prison – keep it in...' Although they had helped the elderly with food hampers, she did not think Mossbourne did much within Hackney:

> You could be anywhere really. You know we are in Hackney because of the kids and they come in and they talk about it, but I never see them in their

[21] Despite Mossbourne mentoring other schools at a managerial level, there is no sharing practice at teaching level.

> environment unless I see them in the street, but I never, as a teacher, kind of see them work with the community and you know, they don't go and do many things.

She relates this enclosure to security:

> I think it's this big fear of this area, it's like a denial of - get in here and kind of sort yourself out and be really good and get home as quickly as you can. Although they [the SMT] are kind of like 'we can do this anywhere, this is amazing, it's in Hackney' there's none of that kind of 'yeah, well we're outside as well and we will branch out'.

Parent Alexander feels that although Mossbourne attracts very good staff, he doubts how much they know about the community, citing the school's only B-grade in its Ofsted report was in reference to community relations. However he adds, 'I do not think it bothers them too much because they know what the real goals are and that's what they are going to go for'. These 'real goals' are what we had discussed earlier in his interview – exam results.

Teachers were consistently frustrated that permission was seldom granted to take students on school trips. Mr Dean felt excursions were limited by a prevalent 'sense of anxiety – it's all results, results, results':

> It's contact time in the classroom. If you're not in the classroom and you're away, particularly during term time, it would be unheard of to go off gallivanting into Europe. For the last few years [in his previous school] I've done a trip to Madrid as a part of my course. If you ask any of the pupils was it beneficial to them in terms of the course? Yes, absolutely. And did it detract from them passing their exams? Well, I'd say no...Whereas at the moment, I do not think we are at the point where we can do things like that because we are so results-driven. Which is understandable, again, it's not a criticism. I think anyone else would be in the same position. There is a lot of pressure on this academy to perform.

As Sir Michael announced in a governor's meeting, 'We will live or die by those [GCSE] results – it's the first thing that people look at, even before key stage 3 or

even A levels'. Parent Veronica also describes Mossbourne's contradictory position: '...the school are in between a rock and a hard place - part of their remit is to reach out to the community and involve them, however then there are these rules in place - dare I say almost to keep them out or filter whoever comes in. It's the gate keeping thing, I can understand why that happens'. Alexander highlights how this closed-gate stance contradicts a market model: 'It could be brimstone and lighting - parents will be made to wait and stand outside in snow, rain, or lightning. No one will say come inside, come in out of the cold, you are parents and our product are your kids so effectively you guys are the customers - but we are not seen as that'. Alexander assumes the position of consumer, but this relationship does not practically exist. Both parents understand the need for security, but point out its downsides. Veronica says: 'It's security - security before all. Security and safety. It's a bit of, well fear, there's a bit of fear kind of, you know that culture of fear. Which is part of my mixed feelings towards it, even though it works for my daughter. It's fantastic whatever, but there is this doubt, there's this thing - this negative feeling which perhaps has more significance with other groups'. Veronica, a white middle-class mother, reflexively acknowledges this 'culture of fear' may affect other less white or middle-class parents more. Alexander, black British and middle-class, suggests 'heavy' security was intended to prevent challenging parents from entering the site, but feels this is 'a bit rough because people are improving a lot in Hackney'. These visions of Hackney as home to a deficit culture brimming with danger draw on historic framings explored in chapter two.

Despite Mossbourne's enclosure, Rogers intended to build an inclusive environment, describing Mossbourne as 'a new sort of school for a new century', serving as a 'powerful engine of regeneration' (RRP, 2010). His initial design depicts the V-shaped playground area as open to the community and merging seamlessly across to Hackney Downs. Yet this playground has become an enclosed space, bounded by a gate and security points. The conversion of Roger's idealistic vision into a securitised fortress both symbolises and embodies the tensions of New Labour's approach to urban regeneration where the promotion of social justice and inclusion uncomfortably sit beside the pathologisation and exclusion of communities (Atkinson and Helms, 2007) (see also Young, 1999; Keith and Rogers, 1991). Ruth Levitas explores the inherent contradictions of New Labour's third way politics that deny 'structural conflicts of interest', exemplified by Blair's 1996 conference speech where he announced, "Forget the past. No more bosses versus workers. You are on the same side..." ' (1998:114).

This inversion exemplifies the flexibility of these conflictual idealisations - what takes precedence in practice is security. Schools are not measured and ranked through community accessibility, thus the 'real' aims of producing results dictates the agenda and structures the physical landscape. Surveillance is extended to external spaces, where Mossbourne becomes not part of the community, but places its tentacles into it.

Unstable Thresholds and the Policing of Liminal Space

Mossbourne's use of rituals and routines seeks to transform students, instigate a particular culture, and return them changed to Hackney. Sir Michael continually reiterates the importance of these techniques:

> You need lots of rituals and routines in urban education, more than you do in more prosperous areas..You reflect on what works, so again my philosophy is more structure and not less. That's why children stand up when teachers walk into a room, that's why they say a mantra, that's why there is a uniform, that's why they are expected to say sir and miss.

Rituals are central to transformation, as old ways are discarded while new ways are embedded. Anthropologist Victor Turner's research regarding how rites of passage, symbolism and liminality work within the Ndembu tribe in Zambia is relevant to Mossbourne's transformative experiences. Turner describes how rituals separate people from everyday life, placing them in a limbo from which they returned altered in some way (1988:25). These rituals correspond with de Certeau's strategies which create bounded places where external threats can be managed, however rituals provide a more performative lens, highlighting the delicate process of transformation and movement between spaces. Turner's reflections on the anthropology of performance draw on folklorist Arnold van Gennep's work outlining three phases of a rite of passage – separation, transition and incorporation. Separation 'clearly demarcates sacred space and time from profane or secular space and time' (Turner, 1982:24). Separation not only spatially secludes, but involves additional rites altering the quality of time and inducing symbolic behaviour, which 'represents the detachment of the rituals subjects...from their previous social statuses', (1982:24). This separation and detachment 'implies collectively moving from all that is socially and culturally involved...from a previous socio-cultural state or condition, to a new state or condition...' (1982:24). Only by removal from the profane space of Hackney and its

associated symbols can students access the sacred world of economic productivity via employment; passengers are delivered from 'point A to point B' through this process.

Liminality is the second, ambiguous transition phase. Turner describes this as a betwixt-and-between threshold space where things are not as they have been or will be, and is particularly relevant to Mossbourne's policing of public space. Unlike Turner's cultural performances, Mossbourne cannot enact a state of permanent separation from Hackney: teachers and students go home at the end of each day and during the holidays.[22] Ms Fletcher laments this limited influence:

> ...we constantly go on to these kids about what is right and what is wrong and I know that they have lots of different agencies provided for them to sort of try and things like that [a former student's arrest] make me realise that there is only so much we can do. What was it that Ms Carrier said? We only see them for 195 days a year and then the rest of the time they are out there in the world with their friends or their parents.

Patrolling liminal spaces after school is an integral part of controlling how students behave in a less contained environment.

Senior staff members are despatched in pairs to walk the streets, ensuring students wear the uniform correctly and do not enter shops or loiter on their journey home. Teachers can visibly monitor whether or not the institutional structures have permeated the body or if they have been discarded once past the gate. Mr Richards describes how 'having the senior management team out on the streets of an evening, making sure the pupils are well behaved and there is good discipline - having that structure out and about also helps as a public relations exercise'. Not only are students monitored, but structure is displayed to the public, getting 'out and about' to become a structure with legs. Ms Butler describes how all 'our systems' work together to create an order which extends beyond the gates. Ms Carrier feels after-school staff surveillance creates a good image of Mossbourne: 'I think when our children go out into the local community they are seen very positively because they are not allowed to collect in large groups. Because they look smart...they have that level of politeness, like

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[22] Although the school does run a Saturday school throughout the year and holds mandatory GCSE revision sessions for designated borderline-C students held during school holidays.

I quite often watch our kids get on the bus and they will let members of the public on first for example'. The continual circulation of after-school patrols ensures that bodies correctly bear the symbols and behaviour demanded of the uniform, while continually separating Mossbourne students from less desirable youngsters. In addition to duties on foot, a more speedy patrol is also conducted. Mr Clark and Mr Dupont, two heavy-set men who work as security guards and administrative staff jokingly call this the 'chicken shop patrol', a duty which involves driving around to ensure students are not visiting chicken shops further afield. The following passage of field notes details my afternoon 'on patrol'.

On Chicken Shop Patrol

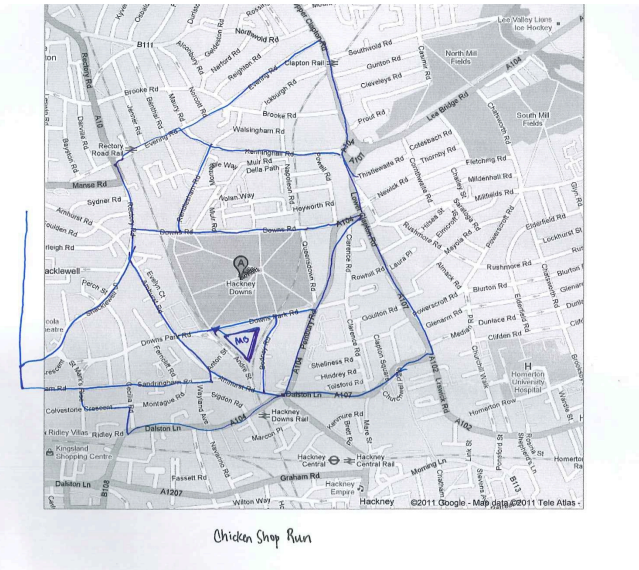

Fig. 0.7. Map of the chicken shop run from my field notes

It was a cold Friday afternoon in February. We grabbed our coats and walked to the back of the building with Mr Clark instructing children to tuck in their shirts on the way. He said he was taking off his mentoring face and putting on his mean face for the job. We met Mr Dupont in the car park; he chuckled to see I was actually coming, making sure to drive the black Mercedes so I could fit in the back. They joked about making me get students out of the chicken shops as we piled in and passed through the security gate; I said I would just make disapproving faces from the back. As the sedan coasted towards the junction with Amhurst Road, I got a fleeting glimpse of how it must feel to be a cop looking out of the windows of your patrol car. Students on the pavement glared back with intrepidation or relief that they had not been caught, clearly recognising the black Mercedes. Mr Dupont hung a right and headed up Amhurst Road as Mr Clark scanned the pavement for mis-worn uniforms, potential fights or eating. They discussed

the array of repeat chicken-shop offenders who could not help but indulge on their way home. Mr Clark laughed, recounting how one kid had spotted him just as he tucked into his chicken and threw it to the ground in panic. Mr Clark told him that he'd wasted perfectly good chicken, but the boy protested it was not his - he did not know anything about it, but a large piece of chicken was stuck to the side of his mouth. When Mr Clark asked how he'd gotten chicken glued to his cheek, the boy screwed up his face in exasperation: he'd been caught red-handed and no amount of fast-talking could hide his chicken-smeared face. Although we laughed at this unfortunate student, Mr Clark added that he never took students' food or phones away from them. Mr Richards sometimes did and occasionally even ate their chicken because he was 'a rule unto himself'.

We went past Downs Estate and a dingy string of corner shops on Rectory Road. 'Nope, no one in there, no one in there, not any of ours', Mr Clark commentated as Mr Dupont slowed at the entrance to each shop so he could peer inside. The pavements were lined with students from the nearby Petchey academy. Many of their ties were undone; some carried the coveted orange boxes of chicken. I asked what Petchey was like. Mr Clark said it was bad - they had no discipline and ran wild. The car continued up Evering Road, leaving these students behind. Mr Dupont suggested we hit Sam's Chicken, an offending hot spot. As we approached Sam's on Lower Clapton Road, sure enough, a congregation of Mossbourne students stood outside, possibly contemplating their next purchase. Mr Dupont pulled into a side street. The turning heads and sudden movements indicated the sedan had been spotted. Two girls trotted down the pavement as Mr Clark jumped out and crossed the busy road. Mr Dupont said it was always these lot. They would not take their planners today because it was Friday and Mr Richards was overloaded, but Mr Clark would chase them off. Mr Dupont explained how they used to make them return to Mossbourne immediately, but now took their planners and gave them to their HOY. That way students received their detention when retrieving their planner the next morning. It was usually a two hour 6pm detention for being in a shop; for other things it might be the LSU or worse. I asked if any parents had complained. He said not so far because it's good to get them off the street after school. Mr Clark came back to the car as several boys reluctantly skulked away from Sam's.

We continued down Lower Clapton. Mr Clark said most of the middle-class kids cut through the alleyway and went into the corner shop near the Round Chapel; apparently they were not chicken shop goers. Mr Dupont said one of the independent shopkeepers had asked why they did not patrol Tesco because he'd seen loads of students go in and no one stopped them, whereas they were banned from his shop. This reminded me of Ms Carrier saying Mossbourne had put 2

nearby chicken shops out of business. Without inspecting the middle-class corner shop, we turned onto Pembury Road to find 15 or 20 Mossbourne students standing on the pavement. Mr Dupont pulled over; Mr Clark jumped out again. Mr Dupont said they needed dispersing because if they were gathered like this they were probably up to no good. Mr Dupont related how one afternoon he had gone back to Mossbourne and told Mr Richards they had caught 20 kids wearing hoods (which students are prohibited from wearing unless it is raining.) Mr Richards got upset for 20 hoods meant arranging 20 detentions. It took him 10 minutes to realise it was raining. Mr Dupont found this hilarious, revelling in Mr Richard's despair at illicit hoods. Mr Clark returned, reporting that two boys were just saying things to each other as everyone watched, but he'd sent them home.

As we went up Dalston Lane to check the new Tesco Metro, Mr Dupont and Mr Clark went down memory lane. Mr Dupont, who is black British and was in the army before working as a security guard, recounted growing up around here and the expensive Italian shoe store that was out of sync with the area's general poverty. Mr Clark, who is white British and lives in a nearby suburb, commented on how he used to drive down Sandringham Road in three seconds flat when he worked nearby. Initially I attributed this to his love for speed, but he explained how this street was ground zero back then - full of drug dealers with Benzes parked out front, plus he was the wrong colour to be driving through. They chuckled as we rounded the corner past Tesco. Their disparate stories mixing a bit of nostalgia for the old days with fear and racial polarisation now collided on an achingly trendy, yet continually impoverished street. Although their routes had been littered with different experiences and positions, the present had rather absurdly landed these men together on this changed street, cruising in Mr Dupont's Benz - not drug dealers, but co-pilots on a private policing mission hunting down chicken-eating children.[23]

This patrol of liminal space around the academy highlights how some children, particularly those fond of fried chicken, are not allowed to go where they like and do what they please after school. They cannot roam freely as consumers, buying chicken and chips at 4pm. While wearing their Mossbourne uniform, students continue to represent what Mossbourne stands for – and clearly this is not a child who eats chicken or wears a hood. Why is the chicken shop presented as a particularly perilous destination? Why is wearing a hood perceived as illicit unless it functions as a rain protection device? I would argue that these consumptive and stylistic choices readily

[23] This patrol can also occur in reverse, as students were also collected and brought to school if they were absent from mandatory GCSE revision sessions. All this shifting and moving of bodies is performed in the service of attaining results.

tie to pathological representations of Hackney as a poor, racialised area, where black and white working-class criminality underlie the specific prohibition of the chicken shop. To go there is a 'poor choice' Mossbourne must prohibit to change urban culture. Public disorder and criminality is linked to these spaces, meanwhile middle-class students visiting a corner shop seem to draw much less interest. The corner shop, with its fresh fruits and vegetables stacked outside, does not represent a place of danger. It is also worth noting who gets sent on this patrol: two solidly built men - one white, one black, both grew up nearby. These men do not work as teachers, but in more peripheral positions and represent brawny symbols of masculine force. They become the muscle behind the Mossbourne ethos, the arm of the law extending into the community demanding compliance. This vignette also signals the changing dynamics of Hackney as an urban space, as chain shops and trendy bars move in, and there are new uses for a Mercedes-Benz.

Measuring and Making

Discipline is not only enacted through brawn, but through numbers and the worlds they create. Sitting in his office, SMT-member Mr Vine waves a thick bounded booklet in his hand; it is the pack produced for governors detailing Mossbourne's GCSE performance. He flips through its numerous pages detailing student grades and departmental targets to ensure Mossbourne falls in the top 1%. It tells governors what teachers predicted students would get overall and what they actually got. The pack outlines how accurate teacher's predictions were individually and at a departmental level, offering a class-by-class breakdown. It shows how students performed in individual subjects relative to other subjects, broken down by department and class by class, followed by the progression rates for English, maths and other subjects from when students arrive until they leave. Any other factors used by the government to rank schools are also included, and Mr Vine neatly concludes before plopping it down on his desk, 'that is the GCSE pack'.

The continual measurement, ranking and quantification of staff and students through testing and performance management regimes are a key component of Mossbourne's landscape, adding another disciplinary layer to guarantee the well-oiled machine delivers. Ms Davis puts Mossbourne's success down to 'more accountability, more monitoring, more quality assurance, higher expectations, and higher levels of organisation'. She defensively describes how, as a 'self evaluating school', Mossbourne

must analyse data in detailed ways to allow for a 'quality check' of what is being delivered. Calculating residuals are a key part of this check, a process Mr Vine explains. First grades are converted into numbers, where A* is 8, A is 7, B is 6 and so forth. Each student is given an average grade across all subjects and then for each subject they work out how far above or below it is from the average grade. This calculation gives each student a number for each subject: if their average grade is a B and they got an A in a subject that would be plus 1, whereas a C would be minus 1. All of these are averaged up to give the residual for that subject.

Once I get my head around this, Mr Vine continues:

> ...what it does is it tells you, if for example somebody says, 'Well my A* to Cs are low because I've got a weak group, I've got a set four'. What I can then say, 'Well actually, you're right actually because in your class they did really well compared to how they did in all of their other classes'. Or, 'actually in your class they did worse than they did everywhere else across the curriculum'. And for one student that might be the case, ie. someone who is better in maths than they are in English, but when you start looking across groups of 20 or 30 students, it bears out. And it comes very, very clearly out.

I then asked Mr Vine how these residuals are used:

> So if I am not happy with something I will meet with the teacher and I will pick out individual students and I will say 'Why has this student done worse in your class? Please explain. Why have you not picked this up? Why did you say they were going to get one grade and they got something completely different? Please explain this to me'.

Mr Vine thinks this direct approach is an effective way to manage teachers, after engaging them with the process. 'Once they realise that that's how they are being measured, people tend to engage with it on a higher level and then the accuracy and the information going into the system is more accurate. And therefore the information coming out and the decisions being made based on the information becomes more accurate. It's only as good as what you put into the system'.

'Teacher tracking' is presented as a reliable tool for monitoring teacher performance, however Ms Davis admits this is often contentious:

> The tendency for teachers is to worry about that and say, 'Well that system is being used to pick us out and punish us or discipline us for under performance', but in fact it's fairer to say that that department, if it is a department that is underachieving in some way, could be supported easier or more professionally if that is known about.

Mr Vine also talks about assisting under-performing teachers:

> ...we may start off with something as simple as a basic intervention, so somebody observing them or helping them and supporting them in their practice. That may be stepped up to more regular things like that going on very regularly, that in turn might be stepped up to them being watched by a senior team. It maybe stepped by the person in charge of teaching and learning may get involved. So making somebody outside of the department, making it the responsibility of the SLT (senior leadership team) to deal with and they then develop a program of watching lessons, being observed, being supported, book marking, checking...'

Regular observation is seen as the best way to support teachers, yet Mr Vine's repeated use of 'stepped up' alludes to the increasing levels pressure and surveillance. The 'support' of performance management merges into a stressful, changeable experience generating insecurity.

'Teacher tracking' was introduced in a staff briefing during 2008-9 and several teachers like Ms Hatcher repudiated its purported helpfulness:

> ...they [SMT] sold it as a way of saying 'well you know if one person in a department is performing better, then they can help you to perform better'. And you know that's bullshit. You know it's basically, like this is going to be you know, a list of who is performing the best and who's not having enough progress with their kids and I just thought that is outrageous! That's the sort of thing you do in sales, like 'who has had the most sales in one week'? And one thing you have got to remember is we are working

> with children *(emphasis)*, we're not working with um - there are just so many variables, it's not somebody's money - it's not sales, it's human beings.

This ordering and ranking of teachers mitigates trust and damages solidarities between teachers, signalling the further 'displacement of systems based on autonomy and trust to one based on visibility and coercive accountability' (Shore and Wright, 2000:77).

When I asked Mr Vine how he responded to teacher resistance, he adamantly asserted that teachers cannot be allowed to 'sit in the middle' and produce so-so outcomes which failed children: '...teaching only takes place if they learn something on the other side. So if they did not learn it and if they cannot reproduce it in an exam, then you didn't teach. So you didn't do your job'. Teaching is equated with enabling information reproduction for exams, while Mr Vine inverts Ms Hatcher's rejection of the school-as-business: '...we're not in a sort of a business where if you kind of just make a little bit of profit that's okay because you aren't costing the company any money, but you are costing children their lives. Especially somewhere like this, like Hackney'. An ambitious teacher who earnestly describes how he wants to help Hackney's urban children, Mr Vine describes himself as born 'lower working-class'. The school becomes a sacred business responsible for producing life or death outcomes which either allow students to escape urban chaos, or condemn them to be forever mired in what Mr Vine calls 'the council estate cycle'. Teacher auditing is given a redemptive purpose by drawing on the urban chaos discourse, ignoring how measurement functions as a political technology of the self. Although it may be described as supportive and thus democratically orchestrated and participatory, this obscures how audit practices like performance management are premised on hierarchical relationships and coercion where 'challenging the terms of reference is not an option' (Shore and Wright, 2000: 62). To resist is not only to sacrifice children's lives, but one's job.

In addition to the production of results, Mr Vine details the other key work numbers do:

> These are a bunch of numbers, but the reality is each one of those numbers is a child who is in this school, that's here to learn. And we sell ourselves, and we do, sell ourselves as a school that lets no child slip through the

> cracks or fall behind or fail. So we've got to be, to have a way of ensuring that that is actually true. Parents send their children to this school and children come to this school believing that. So if I don't question when that doesn't happen, it would just happen more and more. So yes, we're a tough school, but we give something else and the answer is that they don't have to worry about behaviour, they don't have to worry about discipline, all these other factors - like a nice environment, a lovely building, is all taken care of. So they are answerable for kind of one thing…And if the student results aren't what they should be, then what have they been doing in the last year?'

Numbers make Mossbourne's promises come true. This exemplifies the demands of forcing schools to 'sell' themselves through the education market, narrowing learning's remit to successful examination. After promoting Mossbourne's aspirational dream with its good grade guarantee, management must employ whatever techniques will make these promises ring true. It must produce the advertised product. Teachers are responsible for generating these numbers, as well as collectively producing the disciplined bodies that Mr Vine asserts are simply provided.

Mr Arkanel queries the actual value of these numbers, asserting that Mossbourne is successful because it teaches to the exam and its 'excellent' assessment system 'allows' students to progress:

> ...the assessment system says that each student must progress two sub-levels every year and if that's the case then all the students will succeed, even if they come in with a very low grade they will come out with a C. Even if they come in with a level 1, when they finish in five years, they will be out with a C. And when the teachers are not putting those grades into the system and it pops out red then someone will go to them and say 'Why is that student not achieving?' And the teachers have to do something to make sure that the students are achieving and it's a green light on the assessment system, so that shows the government and the school that they are progressing, but from you know, experience as well, sometimes you put a grade in that satisfies the system instead of it satisfying the student's knowledge and needs.

This assessment conveyor belt pushes the student along, but Mr Arkanel questions what this pushing means, lamenting how his 'real job' as a teacher is not to teach students to understand how software really works, but to get students to produce a set product quickly and accurately so he can enter this into the system. Teachers and students produce what needs to be measured, as results-driven quantification directs learning.

The workings of power are obfuscated as these practices are presented as obvious, neutral and efficient management strategies, yet based on highly normative positions (Shore and Wright, 2000:61). While Mr Vine says the data only reveals things he already knew from frequent observations, quantification practices remake the landscape by imposing new meanings and discarding old ones, rather than innocently describing the already present (Porter, 1995). These performance management practices shape and dictate institutions; what counts determines what is cared about. This is a political technology for exercising power and imposing a 'culture of compliance' where conformity is mandatory (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982). This intensification of measurement, ranking and classification and the accompanying vocabulary of audit facilitate the emergence of a new ethics and politics of governance, signalling the narrowing of neoliberal governmentalities (Foucault, 1991b). Teachers must submit themselves to these laborious regimes to gain a sense of empowerment, yet '...far from controlling the contours and boundaries of this regime, the regime is set by the terms of the neoliberal policy discourse, articulated by government and policed by the market mechanisms that the discourse emphasises and empowers' (Wright 2012: 291).

Similarly academic labour is not immune from audit, as academic institutions have been remade as financial bodies. Burrows (2012) queries how responses to metrics are distributed along raced, classed and gendered lines - a central concern of this thesis explored through chapters six, seven and eight. Expanding on audit culture's move from trust to accountability, Burrows explores how forms of 'quantified control' evidenced through myriad metrics are now autonomously creating markets. These technologies have unanticipated applications; citation indexes were initially developed to trace the history of ideas, but now rank academic journals. Burrows points out how 'it is not the conceptualisation, reliability, validity or any other set of methodological concerns that really matter' as metric indices assume a life of their own, becoming rhetorical devices enacting value in the neoliberal academy, and, as academics, 'we are

fully implicated in their enactment' (2012:361,368). At Mossbourne these metric indices work to rearrange social hierarchies in new, removed ways that do not need to reference the social and cultural dynamics sustaining them.

Conclusion: What is the Machine Making?

I was waiting for a student to finish an exam when Ms Davis came out of her office. We'd always gotten along well and started chatting. She asked what the thesis was about; it had been two years since her tense interview. I described it and she said it was interesting but sighed, adding 'Oh dear, is this going to be all over the TES?' Ms Davis mentioned the Education Bill and the latest educational news – a drive to fire all headteachers with an under 50% GCSE pass rate. She asked if this 50% constituted a 'failing' school if it was based in a deprived urban area? Would 50% actually be an achievement in some areas where 35% was more standard? She said this sort of pressure demanded an entirely new sort of automaton - they could not just keep examining and examining them. Common sense counted for nothing, she facetiously exclaimed, what counted was being able to write stuff onto paper - that was real learning! And if they examined badly, they could be examined again. Meanwhile, other forms of knowledge were not taken into account – what about being able to form human relationships, or draw, or play sports? Every child had at least one talent and not all of them could be academic. What constituted a failure?

Questioning what counts as knowledge reminded me of Ms Davis's interview where she had described her own educational experience:

> ...whatever they [students] come to the school with, whether it be class, resources, money, wealth, position, working, unemployed or not, there is obviously going to be a fit between what the child has and what the school expects in terms of its own values. So there are always going to be mismatches and that's where the friction comes. I mean, for myself at school I was, you know, my parents were typically working class. We didn't have books at home. Going to school for me was a nightmare because I was being asked to sit behind a desk all day and write things which was, you know, it was not a culture I could access or understand. It was alien to me. Whereas if they said to me, and they often did, 'Right Barbara, you can go and do music or you can go and do art or you can go and do textiles'. I was very happy in those areas.

Aware of the continuing 'disparity of esteem' between forms of knowledge, as well as the relationship institutional values have to students' class location, Ms Davis was clearly agitated by recent developments. She illustrates the precarious and uncomfortable position of making an institution and being made by it, which is symptomatic of Mossbourne's individuating, yet totalising space.

Mossbourne's supposed return to more 'traditional' disciplinarian methods includes the deployment of surveillance, coercion, division, and audit to guarantee the consistent production of quantifiable outcomes. This complex of systems does not revert back to the grammar school glory days of Hackney Downs; as Foucault reminds us, '...one should totally and absolutely suspect anything that claims to be a return. One reason is a logical one: there is, in fact, no such thing as a return. History, and the meticulous interest applied to history, is certainly one of the best defences against this theme of the return' (2002:359). At Mossbourne, multiple logics of power are at work on the body, creating a narrow, dense web of disciplines, where both sovereign and disciplinary power dispose its subjects.

Mossbourne's panoptic architecture does not work on its own, but requires a matrix of interventions to work. The panopticon's classical liberalism has been augmented and built upon by disciplinary forms. These structures work to both hold the body in place while also moving and structuring the body via classed, raced and gendered neo-liberal norms; this enabling tourniquet simultaneously produces and reduces. This empirically supports Gane's theoretical suggestion that neoliberal governmentalities could be explored using 'a fourfold typology of surveillance' where surveillance is conceived as discipline, control, interactivity, and a way of promoting competition (2012:614). While the academy programme claims to promote creativity and innovation through enhanced freedom, these qualities are negated through the result imperative. Success is read through the register of exams; there is no 'freedom' from this continually tightening constriction which demands an 'entirely new automaton'.

Pitting of the transgressive space of Hackney against the reformative space of Mossbourne shows how culture and value are marked out through physical space where Hackney's external culture is positioned as valueless. Rendering Hackney's culture and knowledge as incompatible and contrary to education has classed and raced implications explored later in the thesis and hinted at by Ms Davis. Richard

Roger's aspirational, open landscape was refashioned into a heavily securitised fortress. Mossbourne's easy conversion to panoptic space illustrates the inevitable exclusion inclusion implies. This enclosure also relates to the overwhelming pressure to produce results. Results are the yardstick measuring and valuing the space; community accessibility ultimately does not 'count'. A concern with 'community' issues only detracts labour and attention away from pressing priorities. Despite the many demands of Mossbourne's well-oiled machine, it remains a sought-after school. The next chapter explores how Mossbourne cultivates an evangelical belief in both the institution and the self which makes its requirements bearable and often desirable.

Chapter Five

Manufacturing Belief: Saint Michael and His Surrogate Parents

> 'Throughout this lesson I aspire to maintain an inquiring mind, a calm disposition and an attentive ear so that in this class, and all classes, I can fulfil my true potential'. *Mossbourne's academy reflection*

> 'The golden opportunity you are seeking is in yourself. It is not in your environment, it is not in luck or chance, or the help of others; it is in yourself alone'.
> *Poster on a classroom wall*

At the start of each class students must put their planners on their desks alongside all the necessary materials for that lesson, place their bags on the floor and stand straight behind their desks before reciting the reflection. This dutiful standing and recitation in unison reminded me of pledging allegiance to the flag as a student growing up in the United States; each morning we stood with our right hands on our hearts and declared our loyalty to the republic. As we progressed from children to teenagers, our initial enthusiasm steadily waned, the 'one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all' dissipating into a mumbled murmur, our hands reluctantly resting on stomachs or dangling by our sides. Mossbourne students' recitation of the reflection also loses its wholehearted vigour as students pass from being generally eager eleven-year-olds to wearily lethargic fifteen-year-olds. Yet unlike my US high school, Mossbourne students must recite the reflection six times per day and are often punished if it is not pronounced with 'the appropriate respect'. Most notably, Mossbourne's reflection is not a vow of loyalty to a nation state or a collectivity of any description; instead it is a pledge of allegiance to the self and its aspirational fulfilment. This appeal to the self with unlimited potential is a powerful trope continually employed at Mossbourne to cultivate belief and compliance.

This chapter explores how the techniques of discipline described in chapter four are made palatable and even welcomed through promoting a belief in the institution, its methods and its benefits to individual futures. Belief is cultivated through the use of repetition and morality tales that smooth over the various contradictions and ambiguities inherent in Mossbourne's approach. Sir Michael's position as principal and archetypal masculine figurehead is paramount due to his dictatorial management style

explored in chapter four and his embodiment of the ethos. He assumes the combined role of saviour, hero, military commander and business executive in this rigidly hierarchical operation, leading a redemptive troupe of teachers-as-surrogate parents who assiduously labour to redeem a twenty-first century 'urban residuum'. Sir Michael symbolises Mossbourne's mission, embodying its mantra as a self-made, mixed-race man of modest working-class origins who has made it to the top. Crafting 'appropriate' aesthetic appearances and reiterating Mossbourne's superior position in the education market are also facets of this indoctrination process, offering powerful proof of institutional validity and providing a sweetener allowing the often unpleasant, tiring medicine of discipline to go down smoothly.

Mossbourne staff continuously recite the universally high expectations for students. Ms Davis describes how a teacher at a nearby school nearly fell off their chair when she told him Mossbourne's predicted GCSE 80% pass rate, adding that many urban schools would never dream this was possible, blaming factors like the children being from Hackney. As the black parents and teachers group at Hackney Downs posited in chapter two, many ethnic minority (and working-class) children have frequently faced discriminatory assumptions, making an appeal to high expectations welcome. Yet this chapter examines how Mossbourne's 'high expectations' are steeped in raced and classed norms where heterogeneity is extirpated. Sir Michael's polysemous positioning acts as a powerful stance, obscuring the particularity of Mossbourne's universals, as education functions as a coercive tool inducing parents, students and teachers into the dominant symbolic in return for a chance to live out good life fantasies.

A Sermon in the Church of the Self: 'May Good Triumph Over Evil'

The entire school was assembled in the sports hall for the end of term Christmas assembly. The SMT took their seats on stage, the band came to the last bar of a carol and Sir Michael assumed his customary place behind the podium. He touched on three themes currently in the news: the terrible economic recession that would probably carry on into the new year; the horrible treatment and abuse of children by their families; and most importantly, the election of Barack Obama as the first black president of the United States. Sir Michael showed a clip of Obama's acceptance speech in Chicago; students looked on, the vast majority captivated and inspired. Sir Michael asked who would have thought that after so many years of prejudice and civil rights struggles the US would elect a black president? This triumph confounded conventions and expectations. He offered three reasons for Obama's victory: first, he had wanted to succeed and

was determined. He worked hard to beat the odds and had the will to overcome prejudice. Secondly, Obama was educated. Sir Michael again rhetorically asked if Obama would be where he was now if he were not an educated man? No way, he answered, adding that anybody who thought education and qualifications did not matter was bonkers – they were the key to success. Thirdly, Obama had excellent communications skills capable of conjuring up a feeling in just a few words, referencing his 'yes we can' speeches. Directing this to the year 11 students sitting in front of him brimming with potential, Sir Michael added: We can give you a great building, good equipment, fantastic teachers, but you have to meet us halfway. The other half is you – you have to want it.

Baby Jesus now filled the screen. Sir Michael described how Christians reflected on Jesus' birth and the love his earthly family gave him at this time of year. Referring to the now infamous murder of Baby Peter[24] *in nearby Haringey, he said some families were not giving love. Family was key; when you become the head of a family you have to give your family care. This was more important than how much money you had or going on nice holidays. Family values were important for the Obamas; they had good morals and a clear idea of right and wrong. Finally Sir Michael tied these themes to Clive Bourne, Mossbourne's late sponsor who came from a poor background but became a very wealthy, successful businessman. Even when Bourne had faced economic problems and struggles, he still got out of bed happy because he liked facing a new challenge and seeing what new solutions he could find. At this point, Sir Michael asked everyone to bow his or her heads, leaving a pregnant pause.*

The cavernous hall was completely silent, save the occasional cough or sneeze.

After a few moments Sir Michael asked students to remember Mr Spencer, a teacher who had recently died, commending his determination to come to work each day despite his terminal illness.

Another pause.

Sir Michael finally broke the silence, sombrely pronouncing: 'May good triumph over evil'. Slowly everyone opened their eyes and raised their heads as the band struck up a rousing rendition of Curtis Mayfield's 'Move on Up' – the perfect Motown soundtrack to accompany a rags-to-riches escape from the urban ghetto via a magical combination of will-power and

[24] Baby Peter, age of 17 months, died after abuse from his mother, her boyfriend and his brother, resulting in highly publicized inquiry of Haringey Council's child protection policies.

education.

This neoliberal church of the self and its morality tales promotes several key ideas. We are given a cast of masculine heroes who have triumphed over evil: Barack Obama, Clive Bourne, Mr Spencer, Jesus, and Sir Michael himself as the mixed-raced son of a postman. These masculine heroes conquer all manners of hardship - from racial prejudice to poverty to physical infirmity - to reign victorious over their lives and forge their own destinies. Mossbourne's mission is aligned with Obama, a much-respected figure among students, suggesting the school provides the necessary tools to fashion themselves into future Obamas. It portrays itself as a revolutionary project breaking with convention, rather than a conservative force trying to reinstate a nostalgic version of traditional British values infused with a hefty dose of the American dream. Sir Michael uses the Baby Peter case to exemplify what a lack of family values can produce. By employing this extreme, heart-breaking example as a worst-case scenario of moral lapse *and* by contrasting it to the Obamas' wholesome portrayal of family values, a sensational tale with clear binaries of right versus wrong, good versus evil are created. This drama removes its characters from a social context, placing them in a heroes and villains scenario to make persuasive rhetorical points. Tales and legends 'are deployed, like games, in a space outside of and isolated from daily competition, that of the past, the marvellous, the original' (de Certeau, 1988:23). The morality of Jesus is tied to the nation state led by the nuclear, heterosexual family, which is wedded to the success and wealth of Mossbourne's sponsor, Clive Bourne. Meanwhile poor parenting techniques, largely propagated by single mothers, are instigators of moral dissolution. These tales:

> ...frequently reverse the relationships of power and, like the stories of miracles, ensure the victory of the unfortunate in a fabulous, utopian space. This space protects the weapons of the weak against the reality of the established order. It also hides them from the social categories which 'make history' because they dominate it (1988:23).

Mossbourne aligns its mission with the pursuit of equality, while simultaneously refuting the structuring importance of race and class on positioning. Individuals can overcome prejudice through individualised determination to emerge victorious. These magniloquent speeches serve as cogent, emotive vehicles admonishing students and staff to feel part of a progressive project.

The Lone Ranger: Empire-Builder and Bringer of Happiness

This mission not only promises access to the good life, it also fuses happiness with cultural transformation. As described in the introduction, Sir Michael claims 'urban children' from 'unstructured backgrounds...and often very unhappy ones' need more structure. The term 'urban children' or 'Hackney children' is used by several teachers to describe a largely ethnic minority and working-class student body; unstructured unhappiness is tied to the working-class, ethnic minority 'urban child'. Sara Ahmed's re-description of empire's civilizing mission as a happiness mission, where 'human happiness is increased through the courts (law/justice), knowledge (reason), and manners (culture, habits)' where 'Empire becomes a gift that cannot be refused, a forced gift' illuminates Sir Michael's assumptions linking urban children to unhappiness (2010:124-25). Ahmed outlines how the unhappy Other provides the premise of action, where 'colonial knowledges constitute the other as...being unhappy, as lacking the qualities or attributes required for a happier state of existence' (2010:125). Moving towards this more middle-class position requires 'acquiring good habits' and an 'affective disposition' where 'you learn to be affected in the right way by the right things' (2010:129). Hackney natives old and new can be structured into dominant value systems while broader structural issues are ignored, yet simultaneously drawn upon to make value judgements. Mossbourne's mission functions as a gift to urban children, forcing them become less ethnic and more middle-class so they can move toward happy futures.

Sir Michael thinks people with a clear vision run good schools, ideas he claims he developed not by reading a book, but through 'trial and error' in urban schools. Mossbourne's approach is something he vows to disseminate: 'We'll spread the message of Mossbourne to other schools. Mossbourne will become an empire…Not an evil empire. A good empire'. He asserted that the ethos should not be tied to one person, but be part of a wider culture that teachers 'lower down the pyramid buy into' and then carry out by becoming leaders themselves: 'We want to train, develop, nurture, encourage deputy heads, assistant heads, heads of department, people lower to say "hey I believe in this". You know? "This is a credo I can repeat in other institutions"'. The ethos takes on religious dimensions as a doctrine teachers can invest in and export to other deprived areas as truth, combining the language of church and market. At the close of the interview when I asked if he had any other comments, Sir

Michael laughed, saying 'No, that's the gospel according to Saint Michael!' Mossbourne's gospel has been subsequently spread through Sir Michael's increasing influence on education policy.

Sir Michael's 'good empire' rhetoric has taken on increasingly strident, masculinised tones since our interview. At a headteacher conference in 2011 he courted controversy by suggesting heads should be powerful empire builders crafted in the guise of gun-slinging action hero Clint Eastwood:

> Take that scene in Pale Rider when the baddies are shooting up the town, the mists dissipate and Clint is there. Being a headteacher is all about being the lone warrior, fighting for righteousness, fighting the good fight, as powerful as any chief executive. I'm not that bothered about distributed leadership; I would never use it; I don't think Clint would either. We need headteachers with ego. You see heads who don't use 'I' and use 'we' instead, but they should. We need heads who enjoy power and enjoy exercising that power (Barker, 2011).

This lone ranger motif develops his assembly rhetoric where the righteous masculine hero saves urban children. A subsequent *Times Educational Supplement* article questioned if Sir Michael's approach was too reminiscent of the 'well-meaning white missionaries of old who headed out to Africa to convert the poor misguided natives to Christianity, whether they liked it or not' (Frederick, 2011). Yet as previously mentioned, Sir Michael is not white, but half Indian/Irish-German and British. Nor is Sir Michael leading a Christian organisation, however he effectively synthesises the Wild West hero with religious and militaristic overtones to create a powerful message. His position highlights the elasticity of race and class, advantageously employed to claim authenticity within certain contexts without implying a progressive political position, despite numerous references to equality. By embodying the heroic individualism he promotes, Sir Michael testifies to the veracity of his statements.

Sir Michael was nicknamed 'the sergeant major' by the press upon his appointment as Ofsted's chief inspector of schools in 2012. His 'tough love' image was bolstered by a spread in *The Sun*, noting Bob Marley's *Redemption Song* was playing when they visited Mossboure and showing a smiling Sir Michael standing with folded hands in between two smiling black students under the caption 'We tell kids we believe in them and give

them love... but it's tough love' (Hendry, 2011). This media spectacle turns the panopticon explored into the last chapter outwards, converting it momentarily into a display case where the public can behold bodies redeemed through Mossbourne's training. This posturing is more than a media guise, but a management style that filters throughout the practices and norms of the institution, working its way into the language employed. During a briefing preceding half term break, one SMT member announced that although staff were tired, we needed to 'stick to our guns and remain vigilant'. Police-style language is frequently used, with announcements and emails describing how a student is being held in someone's office 'pending an investigation', while staff are continually reminded to log student incidents onto the school information management system (SIMS) – particularly regarding 'repeat offenders'.[25]

Father Teresa's Universal Attraction

Despite Sir Michael's headline-grabbing rhetoric, Mossbourne does not just serve Hackney's supposed 'urban children', but middle-class children dislocated from the leafy suburbs. Ms Carrier relates how students from a variety of backgrounds attend Mossbourne, adding '…I think it's a school that is attractive to absolutely everyone in the borough. It's got universal attraction'. Ms Carrier describes parents' differing reactions to discipline:

> The biggest contentious issue I think is the behavioural policy. And there's a mixture I think there's some parents who um, really like it, who can see that it's done a lot of good for their child...and there are some parents, tend to be the middle-class parents actually, who tolerate the behaviour system and the discipline because they know that on a whole school level it's good. They may not necessarily think that their child needs it, but they can see that it allows their child to go to a comprehensive urban school.

Mossbourne's stringent policing of potentially unruly urban others 'allow' middle-class children to safely attend a 'comprehensive urban school'; this creation of a middle-class space is examined in chapter eight. Yet Florence, an 18 year-old black British sixth former, points out how Sir Michael's comments about unhappy, urban children benefit his image at the expense of students like herself:

[25] This compiled dossier of information is used to justify exclusions.

> ...it's kind of his way - I know this sounds really bad - but his way of making this place [Mossbourne] seem better than it actually is because a lot of us are from okay backgrounds. We are not living in the slums or anything. I think it is his way of trying to become like Mother Teresa, but I just think he is not necessarily doing it in the right way, if that makes sense. And I don't know, it's a bit mean saying that because Hackney itself has a stigma already, so just to say poor deprived background blah, blah, blah.

Invoking historical stigmas becomes an easy, convincing route to sainthood. Reiterating images of pathological urban chaos creates a more impressive media story where Mossbourne boldly stands out as 'an oasis in the desert'. This hyperbole is also propelled by the marketisation of education where schools frequently employ public relations agencies to cultivate a successful image and avoid being 'ordinary' (Maguire et al, 2011).

For most parents, Mossbourne was anything but ordinary. Many proudly cited its media fame and positive impact on Hackney's reputation, describing how Mossbourne had filled an educational vacuum after years of poor provision. Both Julia and Eve felt Hackney 'deserved Mossbourne'. Eve simply wanted a non-faith mixed-gender local school to send her children to, while Julia thought Hackney '...had waited for a long time for a glimmer of hope educationally'. Phil admits 'I don't know what we would have done if they had not built Mossbourne, so we were pretty grateful', while Miriam thinks Mossbourne has '...done an incredible job, considering being in the heart of Hackney on the site of that school that failed so badly'. Celeste says '...everyone is just buzzing about Mossbourne'. Superlatives pepper the start of parental interviews; Veronica calls it 'a miracle', Nazia feels 'It's perfect' and Esther asserts 'Mossbourne has been a dream come true for most parents...' While I will examine parents' differing and complex relationships to Mossbourne in chapter eight, I have included these decontextualised sentiments to emphasise the widespread embrace of the institution and reiterate how Mossbourne works to undo the pathology narratives explored in chapters one and two. Despite Sir Michael's public ruminations on urban chaos, even parents with critical viewpoints attached the word 'good' to Mossbourne in some regard. Mossbourne's 'universal attraction' offers parents a school they can feel good about, and, like teachers, gives them something to invest in after a prolonged lack of

investment in the borough.[26]

'Tough Love': Boys Will Be Boys

Crucially, 'tough love' tactics target a student population where boys form the majority; between 2008-10 the ratio of boys to girls hovered between 60-40 and 58-42. Teachers consistently portray boys as more disruptive than girls who are less overtly riotous, if not conniving. Sir Michael felt disciplinary tactics had to differ according to gender as the majority of underachievers were boys 'because boys will be boys will be boys I suppose. Boys tend to be a bit slobbish between the ages of 10 and 16 and maybe a bit beyond that as well. Girls tend to be much more aspirational and self motivated'. Sir Michael thinks innate differences cannot be addressed by perceiving boys and girls as the same; there needs to a 'philosophy and a strategy' to deal with underachieving boys. Most teachers reiterate this 'natural' difference. Ms Davis feels the 'naughty boy syndrome' means lessons need to be 'boy friendly' and 'practical' by giving them 'a bit of a challenge, a competition' that girls might also enjoy. Mr Dean admits gender changes his disciplinary-style: 'I would probably yell at boys…more so than I would yell at girls, in terms of screaming and shouting. Rightly or wrongly...I don't tend to be as um, aggressive with girls'. Boys are positioned as slovenly, naughty and in need of competitive challenges.

Despite his reservations described in chapter four, Mr Ba still suggests an aggressive approach is necessary in urban areas: 'But I presume because the kids have come from a hard background, they feel they need the discipline in school which I am inclined to agree...' Hard backgrounds require hard treatment. The need to regulate and reform potentially dangerous masculinities ties to the presence of gangs. Mr Vine comments: '...if you live on an estate - and especially if you are a black man - the chances of not being involved in a gang is pretty much non-existent. You are involved in a gang just because of where you live'. The bodies specified as most susceptible to deviance are black boys on estates, positioning black, male working-class criminality as almost inevitable.

Mr Wainwright describes how Mossbourne's structures save these boys from

[26] Notably, Mossbourne, as well as other academies, has probably helped stymy white migration out of borough for secondary education; in 2006, 15% of white students and 10% of black students attended secondary schools outside of Hackney (LBH, 2006:46-7). This data is not included in the 2010 or 2013 borough profile, while recently claims have been made that 82% of Hackney students are staying in the borough (Muir, 2012).

criminality through discipline, where even the 'most recalcitrant and the most bolshy' year 11 students wanted to attend sixth form, admitting they had been 'a pain in the neck' and now understood why they had been punished. He adds:

> ...it's really interesting how the really difficult ones who have had the most time spent on them actually really want to stay and are desperate to stay because they know if it wasn't for the structures of Mossbourne they would probably be like in Feltham or something by now.

Eventually difficult students realise Mossbourne has salvaged them. The masculine hero, played by men and women alike, takes over from single mothers and the lumbering bureaucracy of local councils to produce civilised, happy children. Pathology is located in the (working-class) black body as an unassimilable, underachieving cultural issue to be policed and contained, which '...constitutes black children as an alien group that present "problems" that are external to "normal" schooling' (Carby, 1982:205). Over 30 years later, this culturalist perspective is echoed in many Mossbourne teacher narratives. While education is portrayed as a 'liberating force' enabling social mobility '...it is in fact one of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social pattern, as it both provides an apparent justification for social inequalities and gives recognition to the cultural heritage, that is, to a *social* gift treated as a *natural* one' (Bourdieu, 1974:32, author's italics).

Risk-taking, innovative approaches are seen to be imperative when facing urban deprivation. Sir Michael thinks heads in poor areas must be 'quite radical…they need to think outside the box and take risks'. Misdemeanours face immediate consequences: 'There's none of this 24 hour notice, but I'm sure if I looked up - now, I've never done this - the detail of statute I'm probably forbidden by law to do that. But I don't. So it's a risky threat to make, that they stay there...' Pioneering strategies are rationalised and legitimated through Hackney's negative 'place-image'. Despite the potentially illegality of his actions, transcending the law is seen as necessary, while Mossbourne's 'short, sharp, immediate, effective' punishments are part of a behavioural policy which parents and students must sign. Ironically, acting lawlessly is positioned as a means of preserving the law, acting as an antidote to the civil disorder caused by unruly youth. Usurping the law is only acceptable in the pursuit of goals legitimated by power.

After the August 2011 English Riots, Sir Michael claimed no Mossbourne students

were involved because of the school's ethos: "Respect for adults is a given. Outside the school, I have been appalled at the way in which police officers are treated with contempt and disdain; that just should not be happening. We have got to get back to a situation where young people start respecting authority again' (Middleton, 2011).[27] *The Telegraph* heralded Mossbourne as 'the school that beat the rioters', while an article in the *Daily Mail* juxtaposed Sir Michael's anti-liberal return to basic, conservative rules as a salve to Hackney rioting, asserted the riots were caused by a discipline deficit, whereby 'If formal education, and simple self-awareness and improvement, are the key to moving forward from this crisis in our inner cities, then it is precisely schools like Mossbourne and men like Sir Michael that should lead' (Samuel, 2011). Sir Michael added that his students did not participate because 'They are being given a stake in society at Mossbourne so why would they want to throw that away?' (Hendry, 2011). Mossbourne crafts students into law-abiding, future-orientated selves, neutralising the threat of the gendered, classed and raced body of the potential gangster, while other educational approaches are aligned with public disorder. Sir Michael's rhetoric draws on a diverse range of discourses, blending sociology with a common-sense amalgamation of Conservative and New Labour doctrine to craft persuasive arguments. While dismissing research as irrelevant to his pragmatic approach, Sir Michael reflexively references and inverts research through his assertions. The nineteenth century 'urban residuum' is recast as a multi-coloured cultural problem, and urban cowboy Sir Michael stymies its contaminating effects by restoring respect for authority. Moral panics and anxiety coalescing around race, crime, youth and British society's disintegration are reminiscent of the issues tackled in *Policing the Crisis* (1978), prompting us to question how much debates and framings have shifted in three intervening decades.

Making the Neutral Professional

Potentially dangerous bodies are converted into respectable ones through the cultivation of 'appropriate' aesthetic representations. As the staff handbook comments, the uniform is 'one of the outward signs by which the local community recognises and makes judgments about the pupils', and should show students are proud to belong to a well-disciplined school, promote equality and simplify pupil management. The uniform acts as a shaper of judgment, overwriting and repackaging the student body. The

[27] Wilshaw does not mention how a black person is more than six times more likely to be stopped and searched by the police than a white person, while Asians are twice as likely to be stopped (EHRC 2010).

school's grey blazer with its red piping, grey trousers or skirt, tie, grey jumper and plain red blouse or white shirt references a public school aesthetic. Its requirements are detailed and numerous: shoes must be plain black polishable leather, not suede or patent leather and without red or white stitching; hair bands must be black or red; girls' hair can be worn in one neat ponytail; boys' hair cannot be shaved nor touch the collar; no logos, labels or markings are allowed on coats which must be plain black, navy or grey; white ankle socks or opaque black tights for girls; dark, plain scarves and gloves and the Mossbourne woollen hat may be worn in colder months; no jewellery is allowed except gold or silver stud earrings and a watch; no makeup or hair dye is allowed. The PE kit has a similar litany of requirements, from red polo and rugby shirts to white socks to black shorts. Top buttons must be fastened and ties worn with seven stripes showing. Styles seen as affiliated with a gangster aesthetic - like wearing one glove, baggy trousers or wearing a hood when it is not raining, as chapter four described, are vigilantly prohibited.

SMT member Ms Heart relates how Mossbourne's order needed to be made visible and readable by being worn on the body:

> This orderliness that I talked about, we felt that you need to have almost outward symbols of it. You need to be able to see it. And you can see it when you see the children come to school, the way they dress for school. That's almost the first vision you have of the children in school and so when we put out the uniform we had...and again it wasn't just tensions with the community. There were discussions, some quite heated, with the sponsor and various people because they had a different notion. Again, everybody, when you start something new people want to be new. They want to be different. There is a temptation. And I've got to say ah, I totally agreed with the head's idea that we didn't go down the route of trying to be too, too different, too trendy. And so there were some suggestions of the children wearing parkas and stuff like that to school and, ah, hooded tops, and after a discussion though, we did agree on a traditional uniform. We came out with the grey uniform with the blazer and edging around the blazer to finish it off and we didn't, I mean, we weren't totally inflexible...To be honest, as long as it was reasonably traditional and didn't make people stick out because when you make people stick out, people want to look at them and want to point at them and say 'Oh look at them, aren't they different?' We believed

> actually that, that working mode and being dressed for work and being like the rest of the population going off to work was quite important.

Mossbourne chose a traditional uniform aligning the student body with 'smart' middle-class professional bodies, signifying normality and announcing Mossbourne students are just like any other London professional going to work. Ironically, in the context of Hackney, these uniforms did make student 'stick out' and get noticed for being posh, something students discuss in chapter seven.

Ms Heart emphasises how difficult it was to achieve universal compliance initially. She jokes that it could have been a clown suit for all she cared, but once decisions were in place, they had to be enforced. On opening day five children – 'good children from good families' – were wearing suede shoes. Ms Heart describes how this minor infraction had to be stopped to prevent future problems:

> Now, again that's a small thing but if you don't stop suede shoes on the first day, when are you going to stop them? When half the year group are wearing suede shoes? Because it ended up being a problem? So you do have to stop those things as they happen and so we started with a great deal of rigour and hopefully we have continued with that and it develops.

Although it is difficult to imagine how problematic suede shoes could become, rigidly enforcing rules is not just about aesthetic representation, but about demanding minutely detailed compliance. A 'broken-window theory' of the uniform develops: first the finish of a shoe is disregarded, a flouting of the rules that progresses to larger misdemeanours until disorder reigns. Ms Austin describes the uniform's containing effect: 'I think things like uniform and stuff like that just puts them in this box that they can't move out of, and that makes them feel like if they do something silly with their shoes or they do something silly with their hair then they are being really rebellious'. Regulating minuscule detail narrows the range of possible actions so that undoing a top button becomes subversive.

Ms Heart describes how boys' hair can neither be shaved past a number two nor hang below collar length 'because that's an extreme style'. Hair with 'too many

things sticking out of it' is banned because it is extreme: 'Anything that draws attention. Anything where other children will go "Oh! Look at his hair!" We don't want that. We want professional dress. Would it be a hairstyle that any professional would have'. Professionals are neutral, proper, moderate; they represent the desired status quo. Mr Vine similarly outlines how uniform rules are designed to be 'non-fashionable' so they do not distract from learning. Crafting 'very plain, very neutral' bodies is supposed to make bodies fit in rather than stick out:

> ...nothing that could be the centre of attention or allow a child to stand out in that way. Like 'I am such and such'...but it also means that hopefully we get as close as possible to uniformity between the social economic classes, so everybody can - everybody has the same uniform, everybody has pretty much the same shoes, everybody pretty much has the same hair-do...so it's that sort of almost anonymity and conformity which allows them all to fit in, regardless of where they come from.

The uniform seeks to socially equalise the student population by providing anonymity through conformity. Yet conformity is distinctly classed, with its neutral position being that of the commuting professional. The removal of individuality does not create a neutral body, but attempts to graft cultural capital onto the body through imposing a regime of ideological symbols. Bourdieu describes how the imposition of these symbolic systems act as instruments of domination. He describes how, unlike myths which are collectively produced and consumed, '...ideologies serve sectional interests which they tend to present as universal interests common to the group as a whole' (1977b:114). The sectional interests of the middle-class are positioned as universal modes of appearance, where certain individualities are more out of place than others. The fixity of these symbols ensures order; symbols out of place must be corrected or removed from view. One student had shaved patterns into his eyebrows over a half-term break. They had not grown back by the start of term and he could either spend each day in the LSU until they grew back or report to his head of year's office each morning to have them drawn on with an eyebrow pencil. He chose the second option; evidently having makeup applied by his teacher each morning was not as bad as isolation. With the appearance of appropriate eyebrows literally drawn on, he was allowed to circulate among his peers.

Exhibits of Difference and the Social Injustice of Sameness

On a summer day in 2009 I ran into Ms Frost in the playground after interviewing her the previous week. The recorder seemed to have made her nervous; she asked me to pause it three times during the interview as she broke into peels of laughter. Although Ms Frost had mentioned how hair rules were not fairly applied to students and left some working-class pupils feeling that middle-class children were allowed more liberties, she did not elaborate. Now at break time Ms Frost took me firmly by the arm and said she would show me what she was talking about. First she steered me towards a white boy with messy curly hair that fell past his collar and onto his face. Ms Frost said he was a good example of someone who would never be reprimanded about his hair. In practice, the staff handbook's 'appropriate style' means one neat bunch for girls, or as Ms Heart announced in briefing, 'no adventure playgrounds', an implicit reference to black girls' hairstyles. For boys, hair must be off the collar and no shorter than a number two.

Ms Frost discretely gestured to a black girl with a fringe who had been reprimanded and made to put it back; she then turned and pointed to a bunch of white girls sitting around a circular bench with fringes hanging across their faces. Evidently these girls would never be told off either. Near the basketball courts, Ms Frost pointed to another boy who had been told his mid-length Afro was too messy. I commented that it was just his hair; vexed, she replied 'yes, I know'. As she signalled to another boy who had to tie his Afro back, a group of three white boys with long, loose hair sauntered past. Ms Frost gauged my reaction; the contrast was obvious. She turned to me, describing how she felt uncomfortable enforcing rules that she could not explain, telling students she did not make them. She understood why they felt it was unfair. I said that it seemed like the line was drawn by race. Although she silently nodded in agreement and signalled race via which children she pointed to, Ms Frost never used the word 'race', but repeatedly referenced class. A short white boy with long, unkempt hair walked past. I said his hair was messy; Ms Frost sarcastically replied 'Of course it was, but this was messy middle-class hair!' She described how one boy was put in the LSU for patterned cornrows deemed 'too creative'. We shook our heads, sighed and laughed as the bell rang and children hurried to line up.

Ms Frost was not alone in her agitation. Despite assertions of neutral universality, Mossbourne's practices are based on specific, particular forms. As de Certeau (1984:48) describes, 'panoptical procedures' have historically been used as 'a

weapon...in combatting and controlling heterogeneous practices', while Mohanty (2003:18) asserts ' ...colonisation almost invariably implies a relation of structural domination and a suppression – often violent – of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question'. In order to create readable, docile bodies, differences in appearance and practice must be quashed. Yet Mossbourne's wholesale imposition of 'appropriate' forms evidences how it works off a white, middle-class model, as raced and classed connotations belie the rules' supposed neutrality.

Ms Watson felt hair rules ignored how black hair could be styled, sympathising with student complaints: '...I will see middle-class white students with their hair all over the place which is against the rules that we have here. It is picked up on occasions, but not as much as it should be. And I think in that way there are discrepancies - big, big discrepancies!' Mr Dean also describes the difficulties:

> Hair is a difficult issue because to me a good, solid – okay here, I'm going to talk race – for a black boy having an all over cut, without designs, just having it short, say to a number one can be very neat, very tidy, very presentable. Whereas on a white person that can be deemed to culturally be having a skinhead, which has different connotations. So there is that reason for getting away from it. Therefore do you have a uniform rule that nobody has a number one? I understand that kind of thinking. I don't like the rule in regards to longer hair because I do feel that all pupils that have Caucasian hair - whether it be Indian, Chinese, white - Caucasian hair can become very messy which in this school that is deemed allowed and appropriate, whereas someone who has had their hair slightly too short, a black person with their hair slightly too short is not allowed. But when this has come up in pastoral meetings, which it has, who's got a solution? And the difficulty is, that there is no absolute solution which is why lots of teachers try – which again creates problems - to use discretion.

Unlike Ms Frost, both Ms Watson and Mr Dean explicitly mention race; notably, the teachers highlighting these inconsistencies are black teachers. Significantly Mr Dean pauses before announcing he is going to 'talk race', almost asking me to brace myself before launching into a potentially contentious territory. Mr Dean points out the different aesthetic connotations of a white skinhead; while Mossbourne associates short hair on a white boy with far right leanings, this not only ignores how short

black hair is deemed smart, but the other connotations behind a white skinhead.[28] As Ms Frost showed me, black students were continually surveyed and reprimanded more than white students. Rather than addressing this problematic imposition of uniformity divorced from social context, Mossbourne adopts (mostly) white and middle-class styles as normative.

Essed and Goldberg's work on cultural cloning illuminates how Mossbourne's attempts to create sameness are inherently problematic, where 'the systematic reproduction of sameness' is a deeply engrained feature in the very organisation of contemporary culture and structures of race, gender and class (2002:1067). While biological cloning remains mostly a fiction, 'cultural cloning of preferred types...is everyday practice', as the desire for social sameness underpins biological cloning's material realisation of this desire. Attending to the 'socio-cultural fabric enabling cloning cultures' helps shift our focus from identity and difference to how social injustice and inequality is silently contained within sameness' reproduction (2002:1068-9). Cloning culture:

> ...presupposes a society where productivity and efficiency occupy a prized position on the list of values (little time and energy wasted on the tensions and trials of difference and distinction), where one can expect a consumptive demand for certain types of children...(2002:1072).

This vision of cultural cloning fits against Mossbourne's approach where the difficulty of dealing with difference is alleviated by a meritocratic gloss focusing teachers and students on the most pivotal task at hand – the production of results and docile students who can easily be consumed by the labour market. Although the banning of white racism via the skinhead is a well-meaning gesture, a permissive attitude to white, middle-class hair continues, evidencing the difficulty of discussing problematic blanket approaches in a supposedly post-racial era. Mossbourne's universal body fashioned in the guise of a whitish middle-class one makes the creation of a uniform student body have uneven practical applications and realisations explored in the following chapters.

[28] Including, less commonly, anti-racist activism.

Business Bodies

Bodies must be contained and repackaged not only to limit subversion from emerging, but to make students employable. As Ms Davis describes, the uniform is part of a 'first class' experience:

> You've really got to ask yourself if what we are doing here is providing for children a first class teaching and learning environment, a first class education, then they are going to get qualified for that eventual place in work or in college and one of the things that is very apparent with 16, 17 and 18 year olds is that they don't know how to present themselves to the world when it comes to work. And the discipline of the uniform, as much of a pain as it is to maintain and keep right, the discipline of a uniform code will give them an advantage not a disadvantage. I don't think anyone gained an advantage by going to a job interview scruffy. And I don't think anyone gained advantage by say going to meet a college or going to meet someone who could make a difference in their life having messy hair and dirty shoes, so we have to look outside and ask ourselves how can we prepare Mossbourne children for that world of work? And in the world of work, presentation is so important when you are talking to clients. You know, your manners, the respect you have, your telephone manner, the way you are punctual, you attend school, you don't try to dodge out of responsibilities, you present yourself well, you can mix with other people. All of that we can do here because we immerse them in this high class culture. It rubs off on them.

'High class culture' via clothing is extended into the sixth form where students must abide by a 'business dress code' that hopefully 'rubs off on them'. Boys must wear a 'smart' dark coloured business suit with a business shirt with a button down or stiff collar, tie, and smart shoes. One earring is permissible, but all other piercings or facial hair is banned. For girls, a dark tailored jacket, skirt, dress or trousers is required with skirts and dresses falling on or below the knee. Only fitted blouses can be worn untucked, jumpers must be formal and tights must be either fine or opaque in navy, black or flesh colour - no fishnets or patterns are allowed. Jewellery must be 'minimal and discreet' with one piercing in each ear. Hair can be dyed in natural colours only. An array of pictures depicting appropriate and inappropriate clothing choices hung

outside a sixth form office to guide students; notably, there were considerably more advice for women (see fig. 0.8.). Beside these photos hung a poster advertising a Canary Wharf competition for the best dresser, showing a gaggle of suited young people in an office setting. This packaging attempts to fix and contain the body, as aesthetic appearances and moral values become intertwined. There is an assumed correspondence between the body's container or wrapper and its interior intentions and values; the body should do what its package says it will. The uniform becomes part of Ms Davis's machine referenced in chapter four, aiding the movement of the body from point A to point B.

Fig. 0.8. Sixth form business dress advice

A professional dress code also applies to staff, but is less specifically outlined; unlike sixth formers, teachers are expected to understand the professional world's demands. And if they do not, they are reminded. Mr Turner recalls being reprimanded for wearing grey trousers that did not match his black suit jacket. Mr Wilson thought Mossbourne would accept his laid-back chinos and open necked shirts, however he was promptly taken aside and instructed to buy a suit. Now Mr Wilson wondered how much longer he could get away with having shoulder length hair. He was happy to use a hairband around school, but added that the SMT probably thought this made him look like a girl, highlighting the gender-essential underpinnings of this dress code

where men and women are meant to not only act, but look different. Mossbourne's inflexible aesthetic requirements become an officious parody of the corporate world, more dogmatic than most professional workplaces and bounded by extremely fixed, gendered ideals of how professionals look. Mossbourne's private school aesthetic references an imagined, conservative past. Over forty years ago, Major Money Barnes (1950) offered a celebratory account of the history of British Army uniforms, tying national pride and the glory of Empire to the uniform's disciplined efficiency. This tradition continues into the twenty-first century as Brian McVeigh's (2000) examination of school uniforms in Japan details how ideology comes to be worn on the body, attesting to the work uniforms continue to do.

A sixth former 'board meeting' where students discussed strategies for selling advertising space to sponsor their young enterprise project highlights their awareness of the relationship between appearances and respect. One young man refused to wear his suit when selling advertising, but the group insisted, explaining no one would take him seriously. When he continued to resist, they jested his jeans were from Primark. He claimed they were from Hugo Boss. The argument lead to a discussion of Sir Michael's finances. Allegedly he was 'stacking it' with a house worth at least £600,000 and only wore clothes from Ralph Lauren and 'big stores' like Selfridges. Sir Michael embodies Mossbourne's ethos through his consumption habits, serving as a mascot for progression from enterprising sixth former to wealthy professional.

Labouring on the Range

As Sir Michael described in the introduction, he wants staff that 'go the extra mile' and commit to taking on the role of surrogate parent. In order for the ethos to work, 'we can't have a staff here who just see it as an ordinary job where they are worrying about their total number of hours and the minutiae of their contract'. Working at Mossbourne is no routine job, but a calling where teachers act as modern day missionaries redeeming urban students. Mr Mitchell describes this endeavour:

> …there is still a kind of sense of mission um, that you have here. It is very intense. As I said earlier, you are effectively on duty from the moment the children arrive until the last one leaves the building. That can at times be stressful. It's necessary…and I feel most staff understand that it is necessary.

Sir Michael was previously the head of St Bonaventure's Catholic boys school in Newham.[29] Several staff relate Catholicism to the Mossbourne ethos. Mr Dean calls it a 'very Catholic school sort of ethos which is underpinned by a sense of discipline and structure as the school mantra kind of shows'. Hackney is portrayed as a fragmented borough in constant flux, where Mossbourne creates stability. Mr Richards explains: 'it's all about maintaining the status quo, maintaining things that aren't going to change and making sure that we don't change our views and rules'. This perceived instability surrounding Mossbourne justifies non-negotiable authoritarian management strategies.

The rigid inflexibility of the ethos' rules stands in direct contrast to the flexibility of labour where teachers must go the 'extra mile'; staff cannot worry about the 'minutiae' of their contract, but must worry about the minutiae of everything else. Administrator Ms Fields describes how the management loves phrases like 'energetic and willing to go the extra mile', but she disliked them due their completely unquantifiable, vague nature which she denounced as 'just stupid really':

> 'Must be a self starter who goes the extra mile' - well how do you test that? I think it's just actually very old fashioned um, but they love it...and what they mean is that you work from dawn to dusk without a break and I think *(laughing)* but I think from an administrative point of view that is very unprofessional because going the extra mile will mean something very different to you than to me. And it is very difficult to quantify and if you were disciplined because you did not go the extra mile, well that would not hold up in a tribunal would it? Because we never set down what it means...they always look for teachers who will - who they think will work hard, but of course you don't know that until they start.

Although no hours are specified on teachers' contracts, all employment contracts are governed by the European working time agreement which limits employees' to a 48 hour week, unless an opt out agreement is signed stating they are willing to work more. Ms Fields describes how most teachers at Mossbourne exceed this limit, however no one has signed this opt out agreement. While Ms Fields professes teachers

[29] When the school first opened in 2004, the majority of staff members were brought over with Sir Michael from his previous school, or had worked for him before.

ought to sign this as it makes Mossbourne 'vulnerable', she knows management will say this is unnecessary. While results are rigidly monitored and quantified, teacher labour is unregulated.

Ms Fields was working to establish 'proper approaches' through standardising policies and procedures. Previously Mossbourne was often doing 'whatever it liked', with Sir Michael acting as an educational entrepreneur, however variations in staff treatment and the lack of concrete rules could land Mossbourne in an employment tribunal. Mossbourne is registered as a private company and generally keeps to the high end of national salary ranges, however Ms Fields adds that it can be more 'draconian' and gets 'good value' from staff. With an average age of 33, Mossbourne has a youthful staff. Recruitment is described as a 'pretty ad hoc' search for the 'best teacher' with no effort made to recruit from the local area or within particular social or ethnic groups. Teacher turnover is higher than normal, something Ms Fields puts down to Mossbourne's distinct culture and pressure regarding results which means teachers usually either like or hate it. Mossbourne can dismiss teachers after six to nine months. If a teacher is headed towards dismissal, Ms Fields notes it is preferable for them to voluntarily leave before the 'drawbridge is pulled up' and their record tarnished. She relates how some teachers felt 'in other schools they would be a good teacher, but I am being hounded out because I don't fit the Mossbourne way of doing things'. Ms Fields describes how one teacher who left was instructed by his line manager to be creative with lessons, but as the lessons had to follow strict norms, there was no allowance for creativity. She adds, 'And I can see that in Mossbourne – you have to get the syllabus done, you can't be a bit sort of left field on things'. Despite the creative innovation promised by academies' 'freedom' from local authorities, this freedom is one-sided, as leaders like Sir Michael can demand unregulated, flexible labour, while teachers cannot deviate from strict norms.

Dictating Culture

Sir Michael remains resolutely unapologetic if teachers feel continually monitored because that is what it takes. Engaging with staff quibbles distracts from the fundamentals:

> We are inspected to death. There's a testing regime now in schools. Examination results are published; everyone knows how a school is

> performing. I am accountable for the success of this school. If things go wrong here and I get or this school gets a poor inspection or children don't do well, I am accountable for that and I am likely to get the sack. I believe in passing that accountability down the line. People need to be aware that they are accountable for their performance and I am quite open about that. And there is nothing secret and I'm not going to say that they're not. They are! And the only way that they can be accountable is by opening up their classroom. Now, this is not a big brother institution. This is not about us looking…trying to create a 1984 culture.

Yet numerous teachers were frustrated by Mossbourne's management style, commenting on the lack of transparency and communication. Ms Adewunmi did not agree with the SMT's covert decision making. She felt Mossbourne did not trust teachers and found it difficult to stay energetic under circumstances where trust and transparency were lacking. Ms Hatcher described how teachers felt management distrusted them with

> ...decisions being made without proper consultations, decisions that are affecting you and your subjects...I think quite often the manner in which teachers get spoken to is like children by some of the senior management team....it's very much a culture of pointing the finger and um, it's very much a stick rather than a carrot culture I think.

This lack of consultation relates to the lack of union presence; if representation reached 40% Mossbourne would be required to consult unions on particular matters. Ms Fields reflected on the benefits and drawbacks of consultation. Decisions could be made and implemented faster because Mossbourne did not have to build a robust case for action justifiable to a union representative. Conversely, Mossbourne could not demonstrate a consultation process and decisions would not be challenged like they might be at other schools; this could feel like a 'dictatorship'. Several teachers commented on an underlying hostility to unions. Although Ms Frost likes working at Mossbourne, she thought many academies 'did not want to dirty their hands with unions so they did not have them and if you don't like it then tough – leave'. Mr Vine said Mossbourne self-regulates through administering staff surveys, adding 'The unions are there normally to pick up trouble and at the moment there is no need for it, so why create it? *(laughs)* That's what I say'. This attitude links back to chapter two's concerns regarding the

undemocratic nature of these structures where surveys replace participation.

Covert management breeds an uneasy atmosphere, despite the collective tasks at hand. Ms Singer thought a backstabbing, paranoid culture was one of Mossbourne's biggest weaknesses, where there is often a feeling of suspicion and staff were not working together. She found this unfortunate given their common goal. Mr Dean explained how Mossbourne's strict hierarchy meant he had little contact with Sir Michael and everything went through his line manager. Mr Dean envisioned being more approachable and talking to his staff if he was headteacher. Ms Hatcher also described how Mossbourne was not the sort of environment where she would casually greet Sir Michael. The SMT filters orders down through a hierarchy of teachers, as Ms Austin relates:

> There is not much choice in anything that we do...so although there's people in power and they are telling you what to do, it's not necessarily them who have actually made any kind of decision or agree with it, they're just - they have to tell you to do it and people lower down might want to do something or might want to change something or might have other ideas about how to do things, but they can't do things because it's not - that's just kind of tough.

Ms Watson portrays this rigidity more positively, describing how everything is tightly run through 'directives...very clearly passed down to the rest of the staff' so 'everyone knows what they are supposed to do'. Although Mr Mitchell agrees with Mossbourne's approach, he still jokingly refers to it as 'compassionate fascism'.

While teachers are accountable for their performance as accountability is passed down the line, consensual decision-making is not similarly distributed. Sir Michael paints teachers as a generally idealistic bunch of good people who tend to be unmotivated by financial gain, however they also tend to be complainers. These 'whiners' need to 'stop moaning, get on with it', adding that he was once a whiner himself. If teachers do not agree with his 'philosophy', there are plenty of other schools to go teach in: 'If they don't want to sign up to it, that's fine by me. But don't work here'. Management through dictation, not consensus building is portrayed as more pragmatic, efficient and effective strategy than taking the opinion of teachers, parents or students into account. Listening to others is presented as a time-consuming distraction. Mossbourne clearly has the right formula in place to produce results; interventions could disrupt the

progress of chapter four's 'well-oiled machine'. Although the built space is visually transparent, the decisions of the SMT remain covert. Aesthetic transparency does not give way to procedural transparency as mechanisms for negotiation like unions are phased out. The Chartists' fears regarding non-democratic educational provision described in chapter two have been realised, while labour's terms become non-negotiable.

Concerns over extensive amounts of teacher labour are dismissed by Sir Michael as trivial complaints, remedied by self-help measures like counselling which position the individual as failing to meet institutional demands, rather than the institution making unreasonable demands. As Mr Vine mentioned, surveys replace unions as a mechanism for measuring satisfaction. Ms Hatcher describes: 'We get these emails the other day "What do you think that Mossbourne is doing for the well-being of the staff?" and you're like, well...uh... I know there is that woman [counsellor] who like sits there and if you want to go talk to her about stuff you can do that, but I just think there could be a lot more thought about how, just, little things'. Although these structural issues cannot be resolved within the self, many teachers persevere and feel it is worthwhile to work at Mossbourne despite mixed feelings.

Making a Contract

> *CK*: Compared to other schools, what do you feel the atmosphere is among your colleagues?
>
> *Mr. Ba:* I think they're um, highly under pressure but they are always seeking to please. You know, they always want to do things right.
>
> *CK:* Who are they pleasing?
>
> *Mr. Ba:* I think they are pleasing themselves because they obviously want to do things right for the school, they want to do things right for the kids, so they put the time in. And then obviously Sir Michael, because Sir Michael is quite an influential man, you know what I mean? And having that kind of influence will influence other people's behaviour. So I think it's a combination of things between the children and Sir Michael.

One route of gaining consent from teachers, students and parents is via Mossbourne's superior market position, established through widespread media publicity referenced earlier in this chapter. These badges of popular and political approval make teachers and students proud to be part of something officially recognised as outstanding. Since its grand opening by Prime Minister Tony Blair and Secretary of State Ruth Kelly in 2004, the school has been visited by an array of politicians, including US Secretary of State for Education Arne Duncan who Sir Michael described as 'Obama's friend'. Meanwhile Oxbridge-bound sixth form students have lined the pages of the broadsheets, with a *Guardian* spread showing these high achievers sitting in the school library.[30]

In early October 2011 I arrived at Mossbourne in the wake of a media frenzy: teachers excitedly passed around press clippings, boasting an ITV and BBC camera crew had just left. Mossbourne-related media is conscientiously circulated to staff via email, keeping them abreast of the school's public profile, however staff are also explicitly instructed not to communicate with the press on any school-related matters. Celebratory pep talks during staff briefings emphasise Mossbourne's moral mission while encouraging teachers to keep up the hard work. Sir Michael described how Mossbourne was 'breaking the mould' in Hackney - something achievable only if everyone did their part. In another briefing he mentioned meeting with Michael Gove and how Mossbourne was taking over other schools to become an educational revolution that they were all part of it.[31] This revolutionary undertaking justifies going 'the extra mile', excuses the discomfort regarding disciplinarian methods, and makes teachers part of a radical, acclaimed project. Now I will explore how teachers negotiate their dedication to the ethos against the demands it places on their lives.

i. 'It Took Me a Long Time to be Indoctrinated...'

Several teachers described adjusting to Mossbourne's demands. As I turned off the recorder at the end of our interview, one teacher said I should have asked about her initial thoughts of Mosssbourne, recalling her first day: 'I went home in tears. I was crying and saying "Oh my God they have got them all in lines and they shout at the children and it's horrible". I could not believe what I'd gotten myself into, but then the next day I taught a lesson and I understood why it was like that'. The orderly

[30] Although their offers were still conditional at the time, something one teacher suggested was unethical.

[31] This pep talk occurred during a special early Friday morning briefing prior to the day of industrial strike action the following Monday which one teacher suggested was a special briefing called to indirectly persuade teachers against striking.

classroom allowed her to deliver her lesson, assuaged her qualms about shouting, and prompted her conversion. At the end of her contract, this teacher 'begged to stay' because she loved working in 'such an inspirational environment'. Ms Hatcher relates a more ambiguous conversion story:

> I think you really have to buy into the ethos to be able to stay here and you see it when people start working here, it does take - I mean I know it took me a good three or four months of just thinking 'Gosh, I'm not sure if I can do this' I thought it was terrible, I thought it was really bad. It took me a long time to be indoctrinated into the ethos, but now obviously I am now just as much a part of it as everybody else.

Although Ms Hatcher has been 'indoctrinated', she still has doubts, but finds it hard to contest Mossbourne's methods because of its results:

> But nowadays, but the thing is it's very difficult when you can see the fruits of what Mossbourne has produced and how much it works. It makes you think, well you know, it makes you think well is that [aggressive discipline] justified then? So but yeah, it was those things that I found really difficult to begin with and I still do I suppose sometimes *(nervous laugh).*

While Ms Hatcher conforms to the ethos and realises she actively produces it, a level of ambivalence is maintained. Mr Wainwright asserts that it might seem too 'blanket disciplinarian if you are just looking at it from the outside', but once you know about the students' chaotic home lives it becomes clear that 'for some of the students it's the only place where they feel like anybody does actually care and give them strict boundaries to adhere to'. Not only do teachers provide education, they see themselves as providing safety and care. This theme runs throughout teacher interviews. Many teachers, while expressing regret, resigned themselves to the fact that Mossbourne would not work if it were run differently. Ms Fletcher describes her ambivalent feelings: 'I find being so sort of aggressive and shouty and strict, I find that quite difficult because I am slowly turning into a really mean person who shouts at children for no reason. So I find it difficult, there's lots of things that I don't agree with, but I think it does work and I think the kids love coming here'. The fact that 'it works' and that she thinks the

children love it makes it bearable. Most teachers negotiated their tentative feelings about Mossbourne against its production of results and the urban chaos discourse to assuage any lingering reservations.

ii. Benefits

Ms Carrier felt teachers are proud to work in an outstanding school where they can witness progress, presenting the long hours as a 'choice': 'I think people choose to work harder here than they would in other schools because they see what can be achieved if they do work harder'. Mr Vine echoes this sentiment, bragging that he happily works 12-hour days because 'you can see that what you are doing has an impact'. Making a 'difference' motivates him to work 'longer hours and harder hours'; he does not want to be the one to 'let the side down' by not 'maintaining this culture'. Ms Watson calls Mossbourne 'constantly full on', describing working without a break and eating lunch standing up on duty, yet she feels her labour is meaningful:

> I think that you have to have a passion for what you do for it to sort of mean, to sort of, you know, be meaningful just because it's so full on. But I love being here, bizarrely enough. I quite like the hard work...and I think the reason I like it so much is that you see immediately the fruits of your labour.

Her labour is justified through a passion for the job and its obvious outcomes. Ms Hatcher however felt teachers deserved more recognition for their toil, describing how 'we are willing to do the work, obviously, because we know the rewards but it's - I don't think it's understood how hard everybody works in this place'. Producing good student outcomes is rewarding, but this does not compensate for recognition or the toll it takes on teachers' lives.

The persuasive power of quantifiable results cannot be underestimated. Nearly every teacher attested to how initially problematic parents were gradually won over through the generation of excellent results. It works, therefore it is worth it. Ms Heart describes how discipline becomes positive:

> ...because the head's belief, alongside of this orderliness, is that if you've got good lessons and lots of enrichment of the children's experience, then they will - then the orderliness will come, um, will be received as something that

> is good because it comes as part of a package of good lessons and an enriched experience.

Wrapping Mossbourne's authoritarian regime within an appealing package of high quality provision makes it more digestible; the productivity of results means discipline is received as a necessary medicine.

Meanwhile teachers benefit from the silent classrooms discipline creates. Ms Carrier feels staff are 'generally very happy', if not tired by the long days, yet unlike other schools where teacher absenteeism rises as teachers have their lessons 'thrown back at them', this does not happen at Mossbourne.[32] Teachers do not have 'that relentless battle at the beginning of every lesson' to get children sitting down and listening; students are ready to receive information, making teachers' jobs easier. Ms Fletcher describes how the discipline 'enables the teachers to sort of teach anything because the students are very clear with boundaries'. Mr Wainwright admits there are extra demand in terms of duties and longer hours, 'but the upshot of that is that you can teach. You're not actually being harassed, sworn at, potentially in physical danger all the time'. For teachers this trade-off is presented as the only way urban education works. Ms Austin explains how silent classrooms demand innovative lessons, 'if you've got them quiet you better be teaching them something good'. Mr Ba says he actually has the opportunity to teach at Mossbourne, whereas most of his time was spent dealing with poor behaviour elsewhere. Ms Heart thinks orderliness 'frees everybody up to learn and the teachers to teach', yet it is important to note the freedom afforded by docile, silent bodies is achieved through relentless teacher labour.

Maintaining the institution is a highly collective enterprise; many teachers feel it only 'works' because everyone is actively involved. Mr Turner says this makes Mossbourne a hard place to work:

> Every moment of every day is taken up with some sort of duty. You are constantly reminded of this all the time - we are permanently on duty. If you've not in a lesson we are expected to patrol...You couldn't let a kid go past with his tie down or his shirt untucked without saying something because if you get seen doing that, then maybe you'd be in trouble for letting it go past. And that goes all the way up to everything; every

[32] Absenteeism is also less likely due to the fact that teachers must cover absent colleagues' lessons, cutting out the need to employee teaching agencies, but also adding to already high workloads.

moment of your day is a duty.

This routine collective action contrasts with Sir Michael's lone ranger motif. Rather than reiterating his individualistic, superhero fiction, teacher narratives emphasise the necessity of continuous collective action, even if this action is dictated and obscured. Despite Sir Michael's binary tales and individualistic proclamations, daily routines show how Mossbourne's operation is not this straightforward. Teachers are under pressure to individually reproduce the institutional structures to create this collectivity, yet the demands placed on staff often make their positions unsustainable.

iii. Burn Out

Many teachers expressed concern over Mossbourne's detrimental effect on their personal lives. Ms Singer feels that although most teachers appreciated working at Mossbourne, staff got fed up with the daily pressure. While she thinks Mossbourne must be run this way, reminding me that 'these are Hackney kids and probably put them in another school and I think some of them would change completely', she also feels working at Mossbourne is not a permanent option:

> I don't think it's sustainable long term. I don't think you could stay here for...well ten, fifteen years, have all of this pressure and work piled on you. Um I think there will come a time when people say, 'Right, well I've done my four or five years here, I am going to move on now'. Which some members of staff are doing you know...I mean some staff don't like the fact that there is no staff room so they can't mix or socialise...it takes a lot of time in the evenings, your free time, personal time, personal life, marking, working. And they probably think 'Well, this isn't for me and I am going to move on now because I have done this for enough years'.

Mr Dean also questions how healthy Mossbourne is for teachers with its 'ridiculously high' workload where management 'certainly want their pound of flesh'. Several teachers thought younger staff were intentionally recruited, as newly qualified teachers had no yardstick of comparison, were more compliant and willing to work longer hours. Mr Dean describes how this long-hours culture is not parent friendly, as teachers with children were less able to stay until 6pm like young, single employees:

> I know a couple of examples where it's caused staff to leave this academy,

> which I think is not fair. But it's the nature of the school. I think, yeah, it's... something that you almost become tainted with you know. I always said 'I'm not going to finish at those kind of hours' and sort of everyone does it and you get caught up in it, but I actually do not think it is healthy. I don't. Because I then go home and work.

Mr Dean admits becoming caught up in the requirements of this culture, staying late in his glass office to avoid a 'conversation with the powers that be'. Instead of pressuring for reform, many teachers like Mr Dean sympathised with Mossbourne's pressurised position. Mr Dean tried to understand Mossbourne's reasons for being overly conservative and blinkered, balancing these sentiments with his belief that Mossbourne is a place students can achieve. While he thinks Mossbourne aims towards a multicultural society and breaks down stereotypes, Mr Dean also hopes it will strike a better balance in the future and develop a 'soul' beyond its results.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how Sir Michael builds on selected past stories outlined in chapters one and two to (re)produce Mossbourne's present framing of urban chaos. De Certeau describes how we live in a 'recited society' defined by stories and fables which are cited and then endlessly recited to establish the 'real' (1988:186). Sir Michael's fables become common knowledge, cited and recited in Hackney and beyond via media interventions and self-publicity.

Sir Michael and Mossbourne assume a slippery position, posing as both anti-establishment yet establishment; giving love, yet laying down the law; old fashioned, yet brand new all at the same time. Ambiguity's power has been highlighted by queer, feminist and postcolonial theorists alike. Homi Bhabha describes ambiguity's power in making and remaking race through colonial mimicry's desire for:

> ...a reformed, recognisable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.* Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference...mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is, thus, the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of

> reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualises power (1994:86, author's italics).

Bhabha references Macaulay's 'Minute' and its colonialist musings which imagines creating this 'mimic man' through English schooling, resulting in 'a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, opinions, in morals and in intellect' (Macaulay, 1835 cited in Bhabha, 1994:87). This grey area of almost-not-quite means contrasts cannot be pinned down; power is diffuse and '...it is precisely ambivalence, always amenable to change and adaptability, which guarantees the survival of anything of a dispersed, repetitive and ambivalent nature' (Skeggs, 2004:25). Repetition and ambiguity hold power, giving Sir Michael's position weight while concealing inherent paradoxes.

Mossbourne's 'universal attraction' contrasts with its quashing of heterogeneity where only certain forms are accorded value despite appeals to neutrality. Mossbourne's culture blends disparate ingredients to concoct a potent confection. It combines middle-class norms, as outlined by New Labour's education policy aimed at 'cloning the Blairs' or re-socializing working-class parents (Gewirtz, 2001), while applying 'old-fashioned' notions of dress, manners, morality and rote learning which are not 'high class' as Ms Davis attests, but probably more lower-middle. These structures work to sever 'urban children' from imagined pathological cultures, police boundaries and contain inherently problematic bodies. As Ms Carrier's comments reflect, Mossbourne would probably be more permissive and child-centred if it was solely catering to middle-class parents, however the school does protect the middle-class child from their urban Other by providing a safe space. Even though Mossbourne still symbolically positions urban children and their parents as having the wrong culture, the provision of a shiny new publicly successful school gains many parents' approval despite Sir Michael's urban chaos rhetoric. Education becomes a key site and tool through which people sign up to and can be assimilated into the dominant symbolic as rewards are promised for compliance. Critically, Mossbourne effectively fills a vacuum left by previous educational neglect in the borough.

Chapter Six

Urban Children and 'The Buffer Zone': Mapping the Contours of the Conveyor Belt

> 'The formal equality which governs pedagogical practice is in fact a cloak for and a justification of indifference to the real inequalities with regard to the body of knowledge taught or rather demanded'.
> *Bourdieu (1974:37-8)*

Some students fit on Mossbourne's conveyor belt with greater ease from the outset. This chapter will explore who functions as the ideal student and comes to represent the 'status quo' Mr Richards mentions in chapter five, examining who can move along the production line relatively unimpeded while others require modification and transformation to advance. While chapter five showed how Sir Michael's heroic tales establish Mossbourne's ambiguous position as a universalising force for good, this chapter details the particularities of this vision in practice. It displays how Mossbourne practices forms of structural bias while simultaneously ignoring their structuring capacity. Bourdieu describes how treating pupils 'as equal in rights and duties' in a highly inequitable society sanctions and reproduces inequalities (1974: 37). These cultural inequalities encompass not only a classed, but racialised vision (see Cole, 2004; Crozier, 2005; Gillborn, 1997, 2005; Mirza, 2009, 1992; Rollock et al, 2011). Through the reflections of teachers and students, the chapter outlines how the specificity of Mossbourne's disciplinary interventions examined in chapter four are neither neutral nor universal.

The structuring of groups in the playground ties to these institutional structures, with groups of students reproducing, but also subverting dominant social structures. How students embody mobility and the altercations or eliminations necessary to achieve it produce and bring raced and classed positions into focus, highlighting who needs to 'adjust' themselves to accrue value. While market mechanisms privilege and perpetuate the white middle-class pupil as ideal individual, openings are also provided for other students to be incorporated into this valued space if they fit the template. Meanwhile many participants found naming and discussing persistent inequalities difficult within this supposedly post-racial, meritocratic environment. These institutional practices connect to the world beyond Mossbourne's gates, reworking and generating new hierarchies from the long tradition of policing and reform of the dangerous, volatile

twenty-first century 'urban residuum' explored in chapters one and two.

Erecting 'The Buffer Zone': Nice, Leafy (Mostly White) Middle-Class Children

Imagined as resident in Britain's greener areas, middle-class children are presented in binary opposition to their urban counterparts. As Sir Michael described in the introduction, while urban children need structure, 'you can be a lot more relaxed and free and easy in a nice, leafy middle-class area where the ground rules are clear before they come in, where children go home to lots of books and stuff like that'. Structure is less necessary when dealing with middle-class children from disciplined homes with 'lots of books'. The middle-class child's normative status is inscribed within Mossbourne's ethos, signalling how the middle-class 'has become the "particular-universal" class' whereby a whole range of practices associated with it are '...regarded as universally "normal", "good" and "appropriate"' (Savage 2003:536). Middle-class children living in Hackney are not urban 'natives', but retain their association with these 'nice, leafy areas' despite living in Hackney, transcending pathological 'place-images'. This transcendence has real effects on institutional perceptions and treatment, as Mr Wainwright details:

> *Mr Wainwright:* We are potentially more classist, if you like, than racist, to be honest.
>
> *CK:* Hmm. How so?
>
> *Mr Wainwright:* I think that sometimes when I look at the white middle-class children I wonder if they are getting away with things that other children wouldn't. And I don't think that's because of the staff, I think that's because their parents will get on the phone. And complain.
>
> *CK:* So it's more parental pressure maybe?
>
> *Mr Wainwright:* Yes, because the middle class parents know how to work the system…I've quite often found myself saying 'But if this was another child, a different child, you wouldn't have made this allowance because their parent won't get on the phone' and I've quite often put my neck on the line for that because I think in a way it's more classist there potentially.

> Because at the end of the day, the school needs the middle class. We need those people who read *The Guardian* and want to send their children to a comprehensive school, but equally well would fork out fifteen grand if they had to. We need them to keep sending their kids to this school. And I find that quite a difficult battle sometimes.
>
> *CK:* Why do you need them?
>
> *Mr Wainwright:* Because, um, otherwise it's not a comprehensive school, it's a sink school, I suppose. Fundamentally. We need them because they tend to be high achievers, their parents will push them to get good grades, their parents will - when they are supportive of the school - will be amazingly supportive of the school and within the local community the school needs that reputation. Otherwise it's too much. If every single child in a 1,000 cohort is somebody who is really hard to keep safe with, who is defiant, who is involved in gangs then that's too much. You almost need to have a buffer zone of, I don't know, three hundred kids who actually are not going to be any problem for the most part - apart for having a whiny parent, I suppose. And it terms of its standing in the local community, you know, whether or not I personally agree with it from a moral point, I know that as a teacher in London schools, you've got to have those kids and those parents on board. You've got to.

Mossbourne's survival in the education market is predicated on the steady generation of exam results, and, as Mr Wainwright describes, the middle-class child - consistently envisioned as white - is a valuable commodity. This reflects Reay and her colleagues' assertion that in a target-driven culture, (white) middle-class children are perceived as valuably helping schools meet their targets (2011:148). Although their favoured status may not promote equality, they are necessary components for institutional survival. Mr Wainwright attributes this to their tendency for high achievement, parental support, promotion of a favourable image to the local community (read: other middle-class parents), and a lack of defiance that makes processing them unproblematic – spare the odd 'whiny parent'. Without them, Mossbourne becomes a 'sink school'. Rather than blaming individuals, Mr Wainwright points out wider structural issues – namely how middle-class parents' ability to 'work the system' converges with Mossbourne's need for these children – a dilemma placing them in an automatically

advantageous position. Mr Wainwright tries to defend pupils without these privileges and admits moral uncertainty, adding that maintaining fairness in the face of this dilemma is 'quite a difficult battle sometimes'.

Scrutinising who is included (and excluded) from 'urban children' and who functions as the 'surrogate parent' demonstrates that 'interpretations of what children are and need patently reflect a white, middle-class cultural hegemony' (Gillies, 2007:145). Although class is named as the 'biggest problem', with two-thirds of students coming from ethnic minority backgrounds, there is an implicit overlap between working-class children whose families are deemed inadequate and children from ethnic-minority backgrounds. Race becomes classed as an embedded, yet unspoken element underpinning 'urban children'. The unspoken fusion of race and class is apparent through the comments of teachers like Mr Wainwright where the idealized middle-class child implies whiteness. Ethnic minority children fall into the problematic working-class category, folded into the term 'urban children' and tied to pathologised urban space. Gilroy discusses the historical relationship between race and urban space. Drawing on Langer (1984) he asserts how post-war visions of the urban have shaped ideas of race, where black settlement was aligned with conceptions of an unruly, violent jungle, creating a context 'in which "race" and racism come to connote the urban crisis as a whole' and this crisis comes 'to embody racial problems even where they are not overtly acknowledged or defined' (2002: 312). Although Hackney's rapid gentrification, mentioned in chapter one, means once demonised spaces are once again considered desirable, this does not mean racialised rhetoric and readings have ceased. Instead the racialised urban is frequently conceptualised and spoken of through the register of class.

Unstable Boundaries

The porous instability of race and class is evident through the shifting meanings attributed to these words and how they are employed. This was particularly evident in the case of Lorna, a white English and Afro Caribbean middle-class thirteen year-old. After Lorna related how her white friends told her she was 'really white' while her black friends felt she was 'really black', I asked her if her father was keen to give her a sense of his heritage from St Kitts. She replied no, adding her father was 'actually quite middle-class too'. Lorna distances her father from blackness through his middle-classness, as do her white friends. Meanwhile her mother Eve describes how Lorna

has more white middle-class friends since attending Mossbourne, adding '...even the black children that she hangs out with I would categorise as white middle-class'. Race and class are used to both do and undo each other, showing a flexible inter-changeability that references their historic mutual formation.

Class is more acceptably named and discussed as problematic which is unsurprising given the widely acceptable excoriation of the working class through the use of derogatory terms like 'chav'. This heightened maliciousness cuts across political divides. Lawler interrogates what is 'respectably sayable within a given cultural formation' to show how the working-classes are represented and othered by the middle-class in the process of constructing middle-class normativity (2005:431). Imogen Tyler describes how abject class disgust performed through media outlets creates a borderline whiteness 'contaminated' by poverty-ridden estates and racialized via sexual relations with ethnic minorities; the respectable middle-classes claim moral superiority through the working class's 'filthy whiteness' (2008:25-6). The contamination threats explored in chapter two persist in the form of cultural degradation. Deficit representations of the working class underpin Mossbourne's rhetoric and practice, as the loud, illiterate 'chav mum' with her gaggle of multi-coloured illegitimate children is replaced by the respectable middle-class (mostly white) 'surrogate parent'.

Meanwhile the white working-class are represented as an obstacle to what Chris Haylett (2001) terms 'multicultural modernisation', as their valueless culture obstructs the realisation of neoliberal modernity. This relates to multiculturalism's alignment with modernity, while the white working-class are aligned with racist regression. Dominant discourses of multiculturalism are fused with those of modernisation, working to 'discriminate between non-problematic "selves" and problematic "others" who become ciphers (or a dumping ground) for the heavy contradictions of a multicultural welfare society articulated within a neoliberal and middle-class imaginary' (2001:357). These contradictions descend from the conflictual aims of Utilitarian, universal education reform and Labour's paradoxical attempt to merge socialism with liberalism, both explored in chapter two. Haylett quotes Times journalist Janet Daley describing how the 'indigenous working classes' were 'far less assimilable into morally constructive social life than any immigrant group', blocking the progress of ethnic minorities with 'cultural integrity', adding 'that long after Britain has become a successful multi-racial society it will be plagued by this

diminishing (but increasingly alienated) detritus of the Industrial Revolution' (2001:359). The urban residuum, an immovable dirty white mass leftover from the last century, is not only a blockage to global capitalism, but also the (highly conditional) progress of culturally appropriate ethnic minorities. Instead of the historical attempts to incorporate the white working-class into a homogeneous whiteness, marking out social superiority through opposition to blackness, this racial homogeneity has been fragmented to designate the white working-class as a 'hazard to modernity' (Skeggs, 2004:91). This shows how categorisation can temporally shift and do different work.

These subtle shifts are present in Sir Michael's rhetoric, where racialised judgments continue to underpin his class problem. Class becomes an acceptable, indirect way to 'talk' race while sidestepping the need to address racism; while direct racism is denied, racism via class' raced implications is silently present. Mossbourne makes 'a commitment to "colour-blindness" rather than equality' as anti-racism is seen as out-dated in a supposedly post-racial era (Lentin, 2008:313). Gilroy's (2000:40) call for 'liberation from white supremacy' and 'from all racialising and raciological thought, from racialised seeing, thinking and thinking about thinking' goes unrealised, as class does the work of race. The historical splintering of these differing forms of discrimination and exploitation from one another, despite their continual entanglement, precludes avenues for a cohesive political defence, touched upon in chapter two. This chapter signals how this disarticulation provides openings for blackness of the 'right kind', as class functions as the primary problematic and organisational tool, yet is continually focussed through a racialised lens.

Privileges for the Privileged

Variations in colour, gender and class fuse with ability levels to create differences in the desirability of bodies, their institutional monitoring, and responses to their behaviour. I asked Ms Fletcher if she could keep an eye on the children in the enclosure until my lunch duty replacement arrived. Ms Fletcher looked over at the group of mostly white, middle-class students, commenting 'Oh yes, from the children in there I expect a lot of bad behaviour!' Several months later during her interview Ms Fletcher described how 'We've got a long haired, lovely middle-class crew...sort of well-educated parents, um professionals and you've got those sort of students'. These students occupied the circular playground bench area: '...the long haired lovelies all sit

around there [pointing] at break time and they are all kind of involved in music lessons you know, they all do drama productions…they've got floppy fringes and nice bags'. Ms Fletcher says you can pick these 'lovely' middle-class students out of each year group.

The privileged status of the 'buffer zone' means discipline sticks to some bodies more easily than others. When a group of white middle-class girls were discovered to have bullied several boys for money over the course of a year, several teachers questioned how this was handled. One teacher confided to another teacher and myself that he thought these students were not being punished severely enough, particularly compared to Ted, a black working-class student who was promptly placed in the LSU after stealing money once. The teacher suggested that because these girls were middle class the punishment was light: all their parents were professionals, some with influential media positions. Numerous jokes were made about how the girls had probably been stealing to save up for their next skiing holiday, yet this teacher resolved to mention this to his line manager. Mr Dean also commented about middle-class students' special status:

> ...I think as a school some of the middle class pupils can have preferential treatment, certainly if they've got more influential parents which has been the case in this school. If mummy and daddy have a direct line to the top, that can play a role. Which will, um, some poorer, more working class pupils who have no say and have no status - parents have no status - that would not necessarily happen.

Despite this tendency, Mr Dean thinks overall Mossbourne is 'pretty fair' due to 'blanket rules' which make exceptions 'isolated examples'. Yet only a few minutes earlier, Mr Dean had critiqued the 'discretionary' nature of hair rules, as chapter five explored. Arguably these girls committed a much more serious, pre-meditated series of acts sustained over a period of months compared to Ted's one-off theft, yet their actions do not carry the same weight. Anticipated pathology means the transgressions of ethnic minority, working-class students is often read as more serious signs of future degeneracy, whereas similar actions are perceived as childish pranks when performed by the more benign white, middle-class girl. Another teacher decried the incredible rudeness displayed by a white middle-class boy who had recently lost his parent, adding that on-going leniency in response to his defiant attitude would never be

tolerated from boys like Ted, Shaun or Tevin - three black boys in lower sets. When asked where he thought this permissiveness stemmed from, the teacher pointed out how the surviving parent was receptive, plus the boy came from a stable nuclear family.

Ms Hatcher also related her frustration over the permissive treatment of one disruptive student, linking class and race to results:

> I had an incident with a very white, middle-class - several incidents with a very white middle-class pupil who is extremely clever and I remember saying to a friend at the time, 'I swear if that kid was black, he would have been out of here'. Not out of here, but you know, it would have been taken a lot more seriously. I think not necessarily race all the time, but sometimes like ability-wise and stuff you know if that said kid had come in with a knife for example, I know for a fact he would not have been expelled because of his ability. Then again, that's all the results-driven thing that everyone believes in here. In terms of the pupils, I don't think it has any effect in the classroom.

Ms Hatcher describes the complex range of factors at play in the passing of judgments. Although she feels a black boy doing the same thing would be taken much more seriously, she adds that differential treatment is not always racially motivated. Ms Hatcher attaches this permissiveness to a results-driven culture that 'everyone believes in here'. Nayak and Kehily describe how raced and gendered categories generated through the materiality of institutions and neighbourhoods become a way of embedding globally circulating racialised myths about masculinities within local sites of meaning-making and the bodies contained in those sites (2008:107). A wealth of literature exploring the criminalisation of Afro-Caribbean young men where they are represented as lacking a stable culture, disadvantaged through a supposedly matriarchal family life, and subsequently positioned negatively by educational institutions underlies Mossbourne's approach (see Lawrence 1982; Carby 1982; Mac an Ghaill 1988, 1994; Arnett Ferguson 2001; Sewell 1997; Wright et al 1998). These legacies underpin the privileging of middle-class students, as several teachers grappled with how they perceived and treated students.

Being Ideal

Ms Hatcher concludes these variations in treatment do not impact upon students in the classroom, but students were aware of Mossbourne's hierarchies of value. Privilege coalesces on the bodies of some ideal students like thirteen year-old Poppy who attested to her ability to remain largely under the institutional radar. Poppy is a white British student who lives with her two professional parents in a large Victorian house and designates herself as middle class. Although Poppy was born and raised in Hackney, she describes her social group as 'not typical Hackney kids', differentiating her and her friends from 'typical' Hackney children much as Sir Michael does. Poppy said she had noticed how the school picked on certain students, admitting that she could do many of the things boys got punished for without being yelled at, exclaiming 'Oh yes, they always say that this school is fair, but it's not true!' Yet Poppy did not overtly link unfairness to race or class, attributing it instead to 'reputation', describing how Mossbourne tended to focus its attention on the behaviour of young boys in lower sets. Poppy described how once these boys had done something wrong once or twice, teachers would then pick on them 'incessantly' and they would always be in trouble. While she understood this was to beat the teenage rebellion out of them, Poppy asked, 'What teenager is not silly and rebellious? That is the entire point of being a teenager!' She felt that some students may not even mean to be naughty, but simply did not 'socially fit' into Mossbourne's environment. Sometimes Poppy thought the people who got into trouble were cool, or not 'cool' exactly, but she respected them for 'kicking back' and daring to rebel.

Poppy offered two reasons why she escaped punishment: because she was a girl and she was in set one. Throughout the year I repeatedly observed Poppy talking in lessons without being reprimanded, but I did not realise she was aware of the special treatment she was afforded. Poppy's narrative highlights how some students automatically fit into the institutional landscape better than others. It also highlights the lack of efficacy the female body is seen to carry; while boys are marked out as potentially threatening and disruptive, middle-class girls like Poppy are positioned as aspirational, ideal students. Middle-class women not only reproduce class society as wives and mothers, but 'as standard-bearers for middle-class family values, for certain norms of citizenship and also for safeguarding the valuable cultural capital accruing to them and their families through access to education, refinement and other privileges' (McRobbie, 2009:133). Poppy senses her social fit with the landscape as

standard-bearer, whereas some of her fellow students innately cannot access this position.

Bangladeshi British thirteen-year-old set one student Afra also described the importance of first impressions. Afra wore a hijab and was reserved, yet occasionally cheeky. Like Poppy, I frequently observed her chatting in lessons without censure. Her advice to new students was to follow the rules and do what teachers say for the first year at least to establish you are a good student. She described messing about in a lesson with a few other girls; while the teacher took their planners, they did not take hers because they knew she was 'usually good'. Once teachers think you are well-behaved, you can get away with more. Although Afra cannot draw on white middle-class privilege to establish her value, she arguably plays on discourses of compliant Muslim femininity to stay under the radar and function as a 'model minority' student. Hardly submissive, Afra frequently asserted herself to rearrange our sessions because she was too busy – something no other year nine students attempted.

Deceptive Bodies: Looking the Part

Mary, a diminutive 16 year-old white British student who was in set three and four lessons, described how ideal students frequently engaged in practices she deemed wrong. Before joining us in their front room, Mary's mother Sarah described how Mary's social group had altered since primary school:

> She went with a group from primary school who were actually pretty nasty girls. And I know that the school don't actually think they are nasty girls, but they have been very nasty to Mary in the past and she got really left out at that point when they all moved. And they were all set one kids that had come with her from Easton Primary, so she felt intimidated by that...

When Mary joined us, she described how this exclusive, set one group did not like her: 'All the posh people, like hang out together. I don't like them at all. They are all snobby'. Mary describes how she does not care anymore about being excluded, describing how they 'try to be like the people in Skins...All they do is take drugs and have sex'. Yet this social grouping was highly regarded.

> *CK:* So this group of 'nasty girls' is seen by the school as good?

Mary: Yeah, they are always seen as being the good ones.

Sarah: Well, one is a prefect.

Mary: Yeah, all of the prefects are actually the bad people. It's true!

Sarah: That's not on though, is it? They should have given that black blazer to you, except you never went enough. *(laughs)* You should have been head girl Mary, imagine! Yeah, cause basically, I mean, they're bright and they go to school and so yes, from the school's perspective they are good.

Mary: They don't know what they are really like.

Sarah: But they were very bitchy as well. And quite nasty and said nasty things which I don't think there is really any need for...

Both Sarah and Mary admit this group was predominantly comprised of white middle-class students, while neither Mary nor Sarah claim this label. Notably they both designate Mary's older sister Charlotte as being a 'snob' - perhaps via her set one positioning. Mary, however, proudly asserts that her social group is much more socially and ethnically mixed.

Phil, a white middle-class parent, also remarked: 'I certainly know that there is quite widespread use of spliff[33] at Mossbourne, not at the school, but out of school. I think they sell it at the school and from what I am told - and this is hearsay - it is the white middle-class kids who are selling it. So the more wealthy the kid, the more likely they are meant to be selling it'. While I am not concerned with the veracity of Phil's story or want to suggest that all white middle-class kids are drug-taking snobs compared to less middle-class students, it is worth regarding the potential crevasse between institutionally perceived modes of looking 'good' and actual practices. Because idealised white middle-class students comprise the 'buffer zone' their potential transgressions lack gravity; they become 'normal' teenage hijinks legitimated through their social position, while other students' misdemeanours are more stringently policed.

[33] Marijuana

Troublesome (Black) Boys

After initially denying race or ethnicity was an issue, several Mossbourne teachers went on to express concern that some groups of students were disciplined more frequently and severely than others. Mr Turner initially says he has never noticed any racism, depicting Mossbourne's multicultural atmosphere as an ideal mixing pot. Yet moments later, Mr Turner adds he has 'certainly seen teachers who will be quicker to temper with black boys than they will be with anyone else'. He describes these disciplinary variations:

> Well, start off with boys, they'll be disciplined so much more quickly. So straight away, say a boy and a girl have both done the same thing, the boy will definitely get that discipline, the girl might not....I don't know, I haven't got any solid facts that I could give you about whether people really do, but when you look around in the evenings and there's people sitting outside classrooms or sitting outside head of year offices, it's always young black boys. Very rarely anybody else around. Um, very rarely any girls, but maybe that is because young black boys are more likely to misbehave? I don't know, I don't know. I try to be absolutely as fair as I can, in fact I probably go a little bit too far the other way in trying to get them on side a little bit because I find if I can get them onside, I don't have the issues to deal with. So sometimes I might overlook something deliberately, knowing that it's going to pay dividends later on. Whereas if I was caught doing that you know, I would be in trouble for that. I would have to write up a report explaining it and I have been in trouble for that. I have had to go see senior management and take a grilling for choosing not to punish somebody because I've felt it would be in their best interests and my interests and everybody's best interests if I didn't at that stage. I was told that was not my decision to make. So I didn't like that.

Mr Turner describes punishment as a matter of gender and colour, questioning why the overwhelming majority of students sitting outside of teacher offices are black boys – a phenomenon readily visible in my routine passage along the corridors. He ponders if this is due to black boys' more routine misbehaviour; in the absence of an answer, Mr Turner tries to be 'absolutely fair' and even makes a concerted effort to 'get them on

side', although he was frustrated by the limited jurisdiction he has over his classroom. Ms Austin grappled with a similar point:

> ...there seems to be, this is well known as well and they are obviously trying to combat this, is the behaviour of young black boys. And it always does seem to be a lot of them who are in trouble and is that because they are known troublemakers and they have got themselves in trouble, but then after that they kind, we've been on them and teachers are on them all the time and focussing on them? Or I mean, it's boys in general? I don't know...But you know, you could say that about the Turkish boys you know, when you see them together and think 'Oh god they are a nightmare!' But you know, um - but I don't know...is it because they are more troublesome or is it that we notice them more because we are concerned about their achievement and we are worried that they are not, you know, that they are potential troublemakers and they are a bit silly so we notice when they do something because we are looking for them to you know, bring a knife in or we're looking for them to, you know? Are there other kids that are getting up to things just like that but we aren't focussing on them because they don't look like troublemakers and they don't necessarily show themselves in the same way and kind of get the attention from teachers? I'm not sure really. I definitely think you can start to fall into a stereotype of..you can start to think of it like, in that way, but you've got to really try not to. I think, you know?

Ms Austin's nervous comments highlight how deviance is anticipated from black boys who are frequently essentialised as potentially dangerous, however she is wary of falling into stereotypes. Meanwhile students who do not necessarily look deviant could be involved in similar things but go unnoticed, tying back to Poppy's recognition of her lightly surveyed position and Mary's assertions that prefects were 'the bad ones'. These different perceptions are also discussed by Mr Mitchell: while misbehaviour from a group of Kurdish children makes them an intimidating 'gang', the same behaviour coming from white middle-class children evokes a less serious response because they are seen as 'less threatening, more familiar and the rules are not enforced in the same way'. Similarly, Claire Alexander (2000) shows how young Bengali men in inner London were frequently racialised and seen as a 'gang' despite having practices in line with other young men, effecting how they were perceived and treated within

educational establishments.

Both Ms Austin and Mr Turner struggled with how to approach inequality, frequently repeating 'I don't know'. Ms Fletcher also describes how middle-class children have external 'advantages' and she tries to be fair by overcompensating: '...generally because I can consider myself to be middle class and white, I am mean to the kids that are middle class and white and not necessarily as mean to the other kids that aren't middle class and white'. Some teachers try to penalise the privileged while favouring the underprivileged through their own reflexive practice, yet taking off the 'cloak' of formal equality, which Bourdieu describes and Mossbourne wears, by acknowledging pre-existing inequality has resulted in reprimands for teachers like Mr Turner.

Within Mossbourne some ethnic minority bodies – mostly those of black male students, but not always - have a heightened visibility that relies on wider discourses of ethnic minority criminality. Despite claiming to be 'an oasis in the desert', Mossbourne does not operate in a vacuum; its practices connect to the outside world and reflect the surveillance of bodies on Hackney streets. Nirmal Puwar explores how a 'racialised optics' is applied which amplifies the ethnic minority body - not because these bodies are curious or unknown, but because they are 'known' in ways that threaten and intimidate (2004:51). Black bodies are marked by race and under surveillance, yet contradictorily 'the saliency of race is denied and repressed by the pervasive liberal ideology of colour-blindness and the necessity of professional collegiality' (2004:139). However, unlike in Puwar's research where adult ethnic minority, professional bodies had already been vetted and provisionally approved, the child's body is still awaiting approval and must be carefully monitored for signs of potential deviance. The students' body must take on or at least convincingly perform Mossbourne's values or risk facing continual monitoring and punishment.

Sticky Reputations: 'I Am Bad in This School'

Now I will move from examining the raced, classed and gendered parameters of Mossbourne's institutional structures to focus on how students and their social groupings are structured by these parameters. Thirteen-year-old Gazi occupies the position Poppy outlined. As a young man in lower set groupings, he frequently discussed trying to shift his 'bad reputation' whilst under continual surveillance. Gazi

is an energetic, outgoing student who is Turkish Cypriot and Irish. He lives on a nearby estate with his mother, stepfather and two younger siblings and spends most evenings at cadets, the youth club or boxing. At the beginning of the year he proudly showed me his planner: despite being crammed with detentions for talking in class or 'immaturity' during the past four weeks, the last three days were clear and his form tutor's comments cited improvement.

A couple of months later the scrawls of red, blue and green ink in his planner showed Gazi's detention situation had not changed. He sighed wearily, professing he did not know what was happening - 'things are out of control!' When I asked Gazi what advice he would give to a new pupil coming to Mossbourne. He blurted out 'don't come - go to another school!' He felt there were too many rules and he was constantly in trouble - sometimes for things he had not actually done, but once you have a reputation, you get in trouble more. Yet Gazi added that at least he could say it was a good education because some teachers were very good and expected a lot. Gazi described how he decided not to be a bad boy and focus on his education after deciding you could do both, adding that 'real bad boys' were not in school, but in court or a jail cell somewhere. Gazi described how he was trying to change his reputation, something he felt required not answering teachers back, looking interested and using the right body language, however these alterations took time. When I asked about discipline being meted out fairly, Gazi asserted that there were some racist teachers in the school and he hated this. Shaking his head and sighing, he describing how some teachers ignored the poor behaviour of white people and picked on black people, pointing out that he fit in the latter category due to his olive complexion. This made him want to leave because even when he tried to be better, teachers still singled him out. Gazi's classmate Charlie, a 13-year-old white British boy, had also described how their English teacher would frequently shout at the black boys in the class, even if they were not the ones talking. He said the whole class noticed this, admitting that he and the Asian girls in the class often talked, but seldom got in trouble.[34]

A few months later, Gazi reiterated that turning over a new leaf was difficult, adding 'I am just bad in this school'. Even though he had stopped getting numerous detentions and was trying to be good, he could not shake his bad reputation. I asked

[34] I have not had the space to address how accusations of 'racism' can be used and played with by students - sometimes opportunistically - whereby 'racism' becomes shorthand for something they perceive to be unfair and takes on a variation of meanings.

him how long he thought this would take for this to wear off and he laughed, speculating approximately five years. Adopting a resolute tone, Gazi pledged that he was going to try hard to show teachers he was a good student.

Tameka also describes how once you get a bad reputation, teachers always look for you to misbehave; they always think of you like that and it becomes really hard to get them to think anything else. Tameka is an outspoken and friendly sixteen year-old young woman, describing herself as 'a normal Hackney girl' whose parents are from the Congo. She lives on a nearby estate with her parents, older sister and younger brother and is in set four for most subjects. While there were some teachers she liked, Tameka described how some just thought that because of your background and what you are like that you will never get anywhere or become anything. In a tone of passionate defiance, Tameka asserted that when she got her five good GCSEs she would push them in these teachers' faces to show them they were wrong about her.

'Accidental' Divisions?

One Mossbourne rule dictates that groups of more than six children in the playground must be separated. Tameka and several others discussed how ethnic minority student groups were continuously broken up while groups of white students were often overlooked. As we strolled around the perimeter of the playground one afternoon, I asked Tameka if some people got into trouble more than others. Exasperated, she exclaimed, 'Yeah my group does!' She said they were always breaking them up in the playground, but there was another group that teachers left alone. Tameka thought this was due to racism and this discrimination had been going on for ages, but there was no point in mentioning it because if you told them they never did anything about it. When I asked her how she dealt with it, she sighed, saying it never changed so they just tried to ignore it, keep their heads down and get on with it. They only had five months left and Tameka was in no mood to get excluded, besides there was nothing they could do. They just thought some kids were bad.

Joshua also discussed the different treatment of groups in the playground, describing how the white group congregating primarily around the circular bench was left alone. Unlike Tameka, Joshua did not attribute this to racism, instead suggesting the different comportment of bodies by colour could justify discipline:

> ...it could be more or less the people in that group - like Tameka and Sharon - they actually love hype. They enjoy the whole making it bigger, creating drama. They form big circles and crowds and get really loud and there is no need for it. In that whole frenzy problems can occur. Whereas white people just sit there and talk casually, you can't really blame them. No, they are actually quite interesting. They are just compact, controlled and concise. The three c's.

Larger gestures and louder sounds issuing from some black students like Tameka is seen to attract discipline, whereas stationary, quiet white students engaged in casual conversation are audibly and visually non-threatening. Regardless of whether or not students are doing anything subversive, different aesthetic forms are assigned differential values. Yet performing the three c's is not limited to the white body. Joshua, who describes himself as Nigerian, said he avoided loud groups and his ethnically-mixed group routinely displayed the three c's. Nayak asserts, 'It transpires that whiteness or blackness is not attached to respective white and black bodies but rather that race signs are encoded into everyday practice' (2006:418-19), however achieving academic success is still associated with 'acting white', or, as Fordham (1996) describes, by maintaining the exist hegemonic systems of power and domination. Joshua displays these ideal, aspirational behaviours and is accepted into the Mossbourne community as a set one student, prefect, and participant in the Oxbridge potential preparatory extension.[35] Joshua lives with his parents and five siblings on a nearby estate, while his parents are both middle-class professionals who arrived from Nigeria thirteen years ago.

Joshua connected heavier in-school policing of ethnic minority groups to heavier out-of-school policing, describing how a group of black people were always seen as more frightening than a group of white people, suggesting this was due to being loud and a minority in Britain. Joshua described how when police saw black people, they thought, 'Hey, let's investigate them to see what they are up to'. This happened on the estate where he lived; groups of black people being loud would be stopped by the police, whereas a group of white people would be regarded as a friendly gathering. Joshua said that if you looked around the school black students tended to be naughtier than other students and the percentage of them who got into trouble was greater, suggesting this could be why teachers broke them up. Instead of positioning heavier

[35] When I ask what this entailed, he sums it up as eating cake and discussing poetry.

surveillance as unjust, Joshua thought it was ultimately positive. I asked if this surveillance was problematic for him, and he replied no: he stayed out of trouble and tended not to hang out with loud people anymore because loud noises hurt his ears and annoyed him, joking that he was getting old. Through distancing and differentiating himself from the 'loud' - and often more working-class black students like Tameka and her friends - Joshua mitigates the possibility of featuring as a suspect.

Despite his previous explanations, Joshua resurrected the issue of playground divisions in our last discussion: while 'mixed crowds' were continuously divided, around the circular bench 'they gather in 12 and are there for the entirety of lunchtime, untouched and unmoved. And I wonder why'. Although unsatisfied by his prior conclusions, Joshua still rejected racism, exclaiming that '...personally I don't want to think that racism happens at this school because I like this school, and if they were racist I would have a whole campaign against the school with flyers and poles and stuff'. Although Joshua felt racism probably still existed, he thought it was very unlikely to occur in a multi-ethnic school like Mossbourne, for surely teachers would teach elsewhere if they were racists? Still, he was stumped: 'I mean, I'm just guessing they have a logical explanation for why they treat the two groups differently. There must be some logical explanation, apart from skin colour'. Puwar describes how the physical presence of ethnic minority bodies is seen to create racial equality, where 'race' resides in these bodies and multiculturalism infers that more bodies of colour must imply equality (2004:32). Joshua assumes that a critical mass of black and brown bodies creates racial parity at Mossbourne.

Samuel thought teachers were not 'up front racists, but they just...I just think they have certain perceptions of certain people and then they just think..."Oh this person, they might do something, they are a troublemaker...and they just like, as a group, they just look mischievous'". Samuel is also a set one student, black British and a prefect who lives on an estate with his mother, a medical professional, and his younger sister. Samuel recalls being deemed 'mischievous' by teachers in year nine when he and his friends starting rapping during break time. Their clever, funny word play drew a small crowd until a teacher told them to stop because they were attracting too much attention. Samuel felt this was unfair, as they were only passing time and not trying to attract an audience. Recalling the ban on spontaneous karaoke performances at the winter fair discussed in chapter four, stopping Samuel and his friends from rapping banned both the 'street' culture excised from Mossbourne's landscape as well as any

impromptu performances contravening the three c's.

While Joshua's hypothesising belies some uncertain perplexity, Tameka clearly states racism as the problem. Samuel is more cautious than Tameka in his assessment, yet shares her exasperation. The different interpretations regarding why groups may or may not be broken up not only hinges on raced and classed norms of composure, but these interpretation are shaped by the students' differential class backgrounds and their status within the achievement hierarchy. Although Joshua and Samuel live on a demonised estate, their parents are both educated professionals; it transpires that Mr Vine's prognosis that most black boys on estates end up in gangs is not an accurate assumption. Meanwhile Tameka's family has a more precarious financial situation and little experience of higher education, allowing them less legitimate cultural capital to draw upon and employ within the educational landscape.

The Consequences of Staying Still

Institutional structures shape social groupings in accordance with dominant value systems. Although Ms Fletcher says students are not 'necessarily aware of the fact that it's class that they separate themselves out into...', students are acutely alive to social divisions, even if they do not always name 'class' as such. Gazi and Poppy each stay with their respective social groups in the playground and rarely attempt to circulate, yet become fixed in very different social positions. Poppy and her group are conscious of being 'very middle-class', noting that she does not mean this in a 'snobby way'. However Poppy once referred to the students outside of the 'skinny jean crowd' as 'street kids', describing how her friends were 'very fashion-conscious' about their 'look' and could be called 'hipsters'. Poppy felt class no longer referenced money, but was about interests, how one spoke and if they shopped at Urban Outfitters – something denoting middle-class membership. She describes spending a lot of time in Hoxton, often referring to her and her friends as 'special' or 'weird', drawing boundaries between herself and the rest of the cohort. Reay's research on white middle-class families who send their children to comprehensives highlights how commitments to multi-ethnic spaces exist in tension with the defence of middle-class privilege and a 'belief in the "specialness" of white middle-class children' (Reay et al, 2007:1043). The 'specialness' conferred on middle-class students resides in their claims to posses a unique individuality that relates to the cultural symbols their material position affords.

Poppy says there are divisions in the playground and people she never speaks to; while some people can move between groups, she is not one of them. When she first came to Mossbourne, Poppy describes how she had enormous glasses and spoke very properly, but quickly toned down her accent, realising 'it was a bit much'. Like many students, she thinks group divisions correspond to speaking style. She recounts trying to speak slang once, amusingly contorting her mouth in an uncomfortable shape before announcing 'it didn't suit me' and 'just sounded wrong'. However Poppy does comment that her friend Lorna is 'pretty good at doing both accents' although she did not literally move between groups. When I ask her to describe the other social group, her initially diplomatic response of 'I don't like to put labels on things', moves to a guilty admission of calling them chavs. Although Poppy acknowledges it is 'bad to say chavs', she adds 'it is just so true'. She reflected on a recent textiles project where they presented a designer's work. Some students presented Ed Hardy or Baby Phat, which Poppy derided as 'not real brands', but showed how potentially nice things could be 'over-branded until they were skanky'. Poppy's report was about Vivienne Westwood, 'not famous people who decided to pretend to be designers'. As Bourdieu outlines in *Distinction* (1984), 'skanky' fashion preferences are tied to purported lack of taste and appropriate knowledge of what is good. Poppy expressed regret for her admissions, but described how some people criticised how she spoke and referred to her as a nerd. In a posh accent Poppy joked, 'Sorry darling, but I am speaking English'. While her group's middle-classness is clearly asserted, any reference to ethnicity playing a role in social formations is emphatically rejected. The majority of Poppy's group are white, but a few friends like Lorna and Daniel are not. It is not a tidy picture of social distance determined by either/or dichotomies.

Meanwhile Gazi sits at the opposite end of the social spectrum. While walking around the playground, Gazi pointed to the circular bench, designating it the 'blond nerd area'. This ubiquitous circular bench is referenced by Joshua, Samuel and Tameka in year eleven; it is also where Poppy and her friends in year nine congregate. Although many of them are not blond, this area has the largest concentration of blond-ish and white bodies in the playground. Gazi recalls being introduced to them when he was new; they did not understand what he was saying and stared at him blankly. He says they speak English, but I point out he speaks English too. He says no, it was different - they speak posh English, they are posh people who he does not 'get' and who aren't 'normal people'. Gazi thinks these nerds are boring goody-goodies who never have fun

and always follow the rules. After the disclaimer 'not to be rude or nothing', Gazi goes on to describe how they have 'no style' because they work constantly, listen to horrible rock music and cut themselves. He suggests nerds hang out in parks, eat roast dinners and play in rock bands, while he likes to go to the cinema, listen to rap and eat chicken and chips. He accurately speculates that the nerds call him a chav, but Gazi refutes this label. After his passionate diatribe, Gazi pauses and admits he is prejudiced against them because he does not actually know what they are really like.

Despite this segregation, there were limited attempts at mixing. Gazi had one friend from the nerd group, Fred with 'that long floppy hair'. Even though Fred was a 'semi-emo', Gazi described him as 'cool' because he understood what Gazi liked and didn't play rock music around him. Several months later, Gazi told me that he had made three new 'nerd' friends during PE. Adopting their style of slang, Gazi said 'hey dude' and they thought he was one of them! During this mixed-ability lesson, space was created for mixing. Gazi connected mixing to trying to lose his bad boy reputation and take school more seriously. Poppy also expressed wanting to be closer friends with a black classmate who had a great sense of humour, but found it difficult to make this social leap.

Poppy and Gazi's largely stationary stances may appear evenly sided, however their immobility has very different consequences. Their respective practices and 'styles' actively make class and carry unequal currency. Bourdieu distinguishes between those who only have to be what they are as opposed to those who are what they do, and who therefore have to constantly prove that they are capable of carrying the signs and capital of national belonging (quoted in Skeggs 2004, p. 19). Poppy does not need to learn how to speak slang to acquire value - she is already positioned as the ideal student. Conversely Gazi is continually being pushed to reform his behaviour and self-presentation. His limited ability to modulate his speech and self-presentation means he lacks the right affective disposition; he is not carrying the necessary signs and capital. Gazi needs to speak properly, as his social forms are under-valued and deemed incompatible with success. He is the one who needs to 'move up', not Poppy, for she has already arrived. While social mixing may be optional for some students, I will now consider a few students who describe mixing as necessary for acquiring social mobility and value.

'Not One of Those People Who Just Sticks with One Group'

Institutional and social structures are also manipulated or contested by students in pursuit of their own needs, yet these structures are navigated in relation to their position within it. Several students felt circulating between groupings was a positive practice. Joshua says he moves from the Afro-Caribbean to the Asian to the 'Caucasian' group, 'having a laugh with each'. He describes how mixing 'opens you up' and prevents narrow-mindedness; you have to interact with and understand a range of people to discover the 'true beauty of life'. The capacity to move between ethnic groups was part of becoming a 'diverse' and 'dynamic person' because 'being British had changed'. Language features heavily once again, as Joshua describes Britain as a diverse country where you need to know how to converse with different people. He describes how some of his black friends don't feel comfortable with his white friends because there were expressions the white kids did not understand. Yet Joshua says he has 'achieved' an ethnically varied social group and can go anywhere with relative ease. Samuel also describes how he 'is not one of those people who just stuck to one group', explaining how he moves between groups to avoid pigeonholing himself.

Isaac, a black British, middle-class sixteen year-old, relates social mobility to his interest in other people and how they 'get on'. Like Joshua, he feels one should embrace different groups rather than 'try to separate yourself off from others and be afraid of people who are different from you'. He thinks mixing around makes things better and it is what you need to do to get along in life. Mobility has personal benefits, for Isaac adds he is 'lucky' to circulate, 'zipping in and out' with ease. By the end of year eleven, Isaac had decided to attend Mossbourne's sixth form, proclaiming that his days of 'messing about' were over because he had realized this was a competition and he was going to turn it on 'full-blast next year...to be on top'. One strategy Isaac described for getting on top involved shifting his friendship group to hang out with high achievers and thus gain entrance to sixth form head Ms Harding's 'private sly little club' that 'herd around her' and visited Oxbridge. He speculated that you needed a minimum of five A stars to go on these trips. Isaac felt being seen to be friends with the set one group would get him in her 'good graces', as the Oxbridge candidates were 'more serious students' who Ms Harding was particularly friendly with. Isaac described how this partnership was advantageous because it was not simply you trying to get yourself to Oxbridge, but you *and* Ms Harding 'working with each other' to get

you there. This shift involves Isaac deliberately moving from a more ethnically mixed social group to a whiter, middle-class group to accrue benefits; future social relations become welded to the acquisition of educational advantages and this shift of self can be visually displayed through physical placement.

These boys' narratives highlight a combination of altruistic and self-serving motivations for social mixing. While pointing to the importance of understanding others, circulating also aids the development of a dynamic self free to move across social space. Mixing is related to social mobility, both spatially and culturally. A key element of this mobility is the capacity to modulate speech styles. Mixing becomes a way of resourcing the self; mobility becomes an achievement, unfixing students from ethnicity or class so they can accrue value. Ethnicity becomes a positive asset, provided they can effectively perform white middle-class norms as promoted by Mossbourne's training. Reay and her colleagues (2007) highlight how white middle-class parents depicted their children's proximity to students like Joshua, Samuel and Isaac as desirable as they accrued 'multicultural capital'. Aspirational ethnic-minority children also functioned as symbolic barriers demarcating the white-middle classes from their undesirable white working-class 'other'. These students arguably function as what Ahmed calls 'conversion points' (2010:44). Their positive social integration promises happiness as social mixing turns bad feelings into good. These young black men, two of whom have been institutionally honoured as prefects, are actively converting themselves and acquiring capital that can be deployed in the future through taking up the idea of integration and happy multiculturalism. They have converted the threat of the pathological black body found in Mossbourne's urban chaos discourse into an exemplary black body.

'Just Because it's Ghetto Doesn't Mean it's Bad': What Needs to Go to Get Mobile

Although Tameka says she can talk to anyone, her account of social mixing is more complicated and exemplifies what practices need to be discarded to embody mobility. As mentioned in the introduction, Tameka explains that 'just because her friends "spud" does not mean they are selling drugs or being violent', it was how they talked, adding 'just because it's ghetto does not mean that it is bad'. While giving me a tour, we pass Brandon, a tall, black young man wearing a puffy black parka. Tameka points out that someone like Brandon is seen as a troublemaker because of how he looks, even

though he is well-behaved. We walked down a corridor and Tameka pointed to Bridget, a white girl in her year, and said she was naughty too. Bridget found this funny and started pulling faces before a teacher told us off. Despite her blond whiteness, Bridget was clearly not part of the 'blond nerd' group. The reading of bodies as 'bad' is formed through complex mutually produced amalgamations of raced and classed hierarchies that persist in hyper-diverse spaces. Tameka thinks Mossbourne has stereotypical ideas of Hackney as a ghetto where 'all the women are walking around pregnant with prams' and 'every young man has been in prison'. These bodies become the origin of bad feeling and serve as representations of deviance, regardless of actual action or intent.

Unsurprisingly Tameka does not identify with any class grouping as this would only align her with a devalued position (Skeggs, 1997). Instead Tameka proudly says she is 'ghetto' because she speaks 'bare slang', but also emphasises that she is just a 'normal teenager' who has everything she needs - a family, an i-Pod, trainers, brand-name clothes. Caring about status was something that 'posh people' did because 'they always want to be better than everyone else'. Tameka has a few posh friends who live in big houses and speak with Essex accents. Despite their wealth, she thinks 'they acts like us as well like, they try to act like us, so we can all fit in, so it's cool...sometimes I bring them down [to her estate] and like I'll show them how we do it like. And they'll be like, "but that's like, it's the same as how we do it like as well"'. Referring to the large group of mostly white kids who always hang out together, Tameka says 'They are exactly like one of us, most of them can be like us, I swear. Yeah. We are all the same, let's put it that way. Just that we've got different backgrounds, different skin colours, different ways...We're all the same'. Tameka draws value from being a 'Hackney girl' by taking negative raced and classed notions of Hackney and fashioning them into an authentic coolness that posh students might to emulate or even be intimidated by. Manthia Diawara discusses how John Travolta in the film Pulp Fiction can 'wear' blackness and achieve transcendence, whereas Samuel Jackson's coolness is innate; he's not acting and he cannot take it off - it's just who he is (1998:51). While posh students may be able to try on this 'black esthetique du cool' and deploy blackness as cultural capital, Tameka's body is confined to an immanent coolness. Although she receives approval from peers, this is not the institutional authorisation that has purchase in the wider 'legitimate' world. Yet Joshua, Samuel and Isaac have achieved partial transcendence, within Mossbourne at least, signalling this mobile subject position is not universally available, but a privileged identity position which creates

new forms of power and may be more readily accessible to men (Adkins 2002).

Tameka occupies a complex and contradictory position. She actively points out racialized judgements while simultaneously conceding to Mossbourne's demands. When talking about the formal sixth form dress code, Tameka said she probably needs to be 'less street' and wearing heels and skirts would be 'good practice', making her more 'lady-like'. Tameka was unsure that she could handle the formality and needs to save money for a whole new wardrobe. While Tameka sees a need to change herself, she also resists the idea that her practices are innately wrong and attempts to accrue some value through being a 'Hackney girl'. Like Ahmed's 'melancholy migrant' whose 'fixation with injury is read as an obstacle' to their own happiness and where the 'moral task is thus 'to get over it', Tameka refuses to accept her pathologisation or an easy vision of happy multiculturalism (2010:143-4). Her position is precarious; while she does not fully dispense with her ways of being, she is willing to 'practice' alterations perceived as beneficial to her future.

Unspeakable Structures

While Tameka referenced class and race through the language of place and style, many students and parents struggled to discuss difference. Social class is rarely discussed by young people, but deeply engrained and threaded through their lives where the affective politics of class is a felt practice (Nayak, 2006b). A series of interactions illustrates the difficulty of talking about these topics when national and institutional narratives uncritically celebrate diversity and position racism as past-tense. Eve described the complex position her mixed-race daughter Lorna occupied: 'I mean Lorna's classified as white middle-class, but we are a one parent family, working class, but I suppose it's classified on the lifestyle you live...' Eve did not see herself as middle-class, but understood why Lorna did due to a lifestyle that 'whitened' her. Eve adds, 'It's just such an awful saying, you hear it everyday now, "white middle-class parents, white middle-class parents". Um, I don't see the need for it to be honest with you - hard working parents. It doesn't need to be put in classes at all. Especially why do you have to be white to be middle-class? I don't understand it'. While Eve picks up on the inconsistency and fluidity of race and class, there is no critical vocabulary to draw upon to articulate her frustration, ending in a refutation that ignores power dynamics.

Several participants were worried about what they could say. Before describing the

group that had excluded her daughter, Sarah said 'See, I feel really nervous about saying anything like this' before adding 'But it is the white middle-class kids'. Turkish sixth former Alara also paused when describing social groupings, saying '...the white people - am I allowed to say that? I don't know how PC we are going here!' As Joshua described social divisions in the playground he said paused, asking me if he could say 'black'. I found it extremely peculiar that a black student would ask a white person for permission on how he could define himself and other black students. I mentioned this and Joshua paused quizzically before continuing. Lorna also debated whether or not to tell me that her group of friends were not reprimanded after the police were called by a security guard because they were sitting on the Hackney Empire roof. She described how the police did not stop because not enough of them looked like her; they drove past because the group was mostly white. Lorna worried that pointing this out may have made her sound like racist. In the face of our supposed colour-blind happiness, calling attention to the presence of racism becomes synonymous with resurrecting and reinstating it; the exposure of violence is therefore equated with its origin (Ahmed, 2012b).

But it is important to also note that participants' wariness of invoking race or class is not simply a negative, regressive impulse. As Back (1996:66) describes through the concept of 'neighbourhood nationalism', the idea that talking about people's colour is 'out of order' is 'not an empty gesture but the product of a long struggle over the inclusion of black people within this parochial identity'. This neighbourhood nationalism produced out of lived struggles over belonging is arguably present in Hackney, yet it is particular amenable to being co-opted and obfuscated by the colour-blind gestures of Gove and Wilshaw's policy rhetoric. This aspirational rhetoric draws on this neighbourhood feeling, inverting it to cover over and forget these struggles while precluding current struggles from being named or discussed. Despite the willingness of many young people to cross borders, institutional structures and practices work to make equality and mixing more and more difficult to achieve. There are sound reasons for students' attempts to move away from race talk; there are good intentions in these moves, yet this goodwill is subverted by institutional structures that work hand-in-hand with narratives of meritocracy and neoliberal fantasy.

Unsurprisingly, only middle-class students and parents confidently placed themselves into a class grouping, as this was a valued identification. Contrastingly, parents who did not fit into this group emphasised their ordinariness and frequently rejected class

as something they did not believe in. Gazi's mum Laila says, 'I'm just Cockney, Eastender. I'm a human being, a normal person. I would not even put myself into a class...I work my backside off yeah, and whatever I eat or drink, I pay for it very hard. But I'm just an average person'. While parent Marie says, 'I would just say I am working-class, I've always been working-class I'd say. Or should I be middle-class by now? (*laughs)* But I don't really believe in class. I don't believe in class at all, because I believe in humanity. I believe we are all the same, no matter what job you've got'. Marie references the idea that there should be some sort of progression to middle-classness, yet goes on to evoke a universal humanity, drawing on Rastafarianism to do this. Bernadette, Charlie's mother, abruptly responds to class: 'I don't have nothing to do with that, I will go and talk to whomever I want to', yet later adds she is 'definitely not posh'. The difficulty of discussing difference was a reoccurring phenomenon, attesting to the successful silencing of these issues after over thirty years of meritocratic aspirational narratives. There is little language left to speak of race and class-based inequity that is continually positioned as past tense, highlighting how power cannot be described.

A Search for Causality

Finally, I would like to reflect on a group discussion with seven year nine students that shows how young people grapple with the murky hierarchies running through Mossbourne's institutional structure. The participants included Daniel, Lorna and Poppy who were all in set one and also friends outside of school; Afra who is also in set one, but did not socialise with anyone else in the group and only spoke once during the session; Abisola who is in set three; and Gazi and Charlie who are in sets three and four.

I asked them to imagine Michael Gove asked them what they thought schools should be like - what would they say? Abisola piped up, saying 'I know, I know!' She felt Mossbourne 'should be more fair because certain kids get more opportunities when they are doing things; like right now if they were to choose four people to go on a trip, it would be one, two, three, four'. She points to Daniel, Afra, Poppy and Lorna. There is an awkward silence. Lorna's jaw drops until Gazi finally cuts in, asserting 'this is because they are smart and get good grades'. Abisola quickly retorts that 'it doesn't have to be the smartest lot, that's the thing, they should have like different kinds of people for...' Poppy finishes Abisola's thought with 'opportunities for everyone'.

Charlie adds 'exactly, exactly'. I ask Daniel, Poppy, Lorna and Afra if they think that Abisola's statement is fair - would they be the ones chosen for the trip? They unanimously agree before Lorna attempts to explain their exclusion:

> *Lorna*: Yeah, but I think it is just because we're...wait...how to put this? *(She pauses)*
>
> *Abisola*: Smarter?
>
> *Lorna*: No.
>
> *Abisola*: Better? More experienced? Politer?
>
> *Lorna:* No *(tentatively)* Better behaved?
>
> *Daniel*: Not really!
>
> *Poppy:* No.
>
> *Abisola:* Not all of us are actually –
>
> *Lorna (cutting her off)*: Wait, how many merits do you have?

When Lorna's suggestion of better behaviour is rejected by both Daniel and Poppy, Lorna turns the discussion to merits, asking Charlie, Gazi and Abisola how many merits they have. Gazi and Charlie have 12 and 18 respectively. Abisola sharply retorts, 'I don't get merits, I get notes in my planner', adding that even when she got 183 merits two years ago she did not get anything. Lorna then asks Poppy, probably one of the highest achievers in year nine. Gazi bets she has 'like 100' merits. With an air of blasé lethargy signalling her disinterest in merits, Poppy announces she has none. Gazi asks 'seriously?!' No one believes her. We all wait while Poppy irreverently flips through her planner, finally getting to the back where merits are affixed. Every page is completely blank. We gasp in unison. Gazi laughs loudly in disbelief, slapping his hand on the table, while Charlie exclaims 'Jeeesus!' Clearly preferential treatment is not determined by merits.

Momentarily defeated, Lorna returns to her original idea that they are chosen for trips because of good behaviour, not cleverness. Slumped in his chair, Daniel sarcastically mutters, 'yeah, sure'. Gazi points out they are also placed in sets according to their behaviour, not simply their intelligence - something he has experienced first-hand after being moved down from set 3 to 4 in his science lessons

for poor behaviour, not poor achievement. Setting practices have been shown to disproportionately disadvantage ethnic-minority and working-class pupils, creating institutional landscapes which reinforce social hierarchies, even in mixed settings[36] (Troyna, 1993;1991). Meanwhile Daniel and Abisola talk inaudibly at the end of the table until I ask them to feed into the discussion:

Abisola: He knows I'm right.

Daniel: Yeah, Abisola is right.

Abisola: Thank you!

Daniel: If you are in set one, you get treated better. You can get away with a lot more when you are in set one.

Poppy: Yeah you can.

Charlie, Gazi: Thank you.

Abisola: Because they believe that you are more responsible.

Charlie: I'm responsible!

Daniel: Cause they don't want to like give you a detention and then you throw a fit and then fail your GCSEs.

Lorna: It's because they work us hard, they have to pay us back....

Daniel: They don't want to like upset us because we have to like do well or they don't look good.

This debate over why certain students get treated better than others highlights the ambiguous criteria constituting hierarchies of student value. If, like Abisola asks, superior treatment is not down to being smarter or better behaved or politer, then what determines it? What lies in this grey area of subtle yet repetitive and compounding judgements and classifications that steadily create and sustain hierarchies? While Lorna earnestly attempts to defend Mossbourne from a variety of angles, Poppy and Daniel more cynically attribute their preferential treatment to their set position. As set one students they are a valuable asset producing good results for the institution with minimal teacher labour; they literally carry and produce value for

[36] Several students also described the role of setting in the formation or separation of friendship groupings.

Mossbourne. Yet, as Gazi points out, set position is not solely determined by intelligence, but by displaying 'appropriate' behaviours, or as Ms Austin mentioned, how they 'show themselves'. The heightened surveillance and negative expectations of ethnic minority and working-class students and the promotion of speech and comportment more readily embodied by white middle-class students all works together mark 'other' students as pathological from the outset. But, at the same time, ethnic minority students like Daniel, Lorna, and Afra, as well as Joshua, Samuel, and Issac form part of the 'buffer zone', gaining access to a highly favoured status because they visually enact the correct bodily dispositions and generate results. They also gain value, at least within Mossbourne's parameters, through projecting an image of racial equality and progressive cosmopolitanism.

Conclusion

This chapter began to unpick the inherent normality and 'innocence' of the middle class embedded within Mossbourne's institutional perspective (Savage, 2003:537). It examined how this preferred normality interplays with race, is compounded by the education marketplace's demand for results and how these parameters shape teacher and student negotiations. While multiculturalism once served as a happy object, it now frequently features as a source of anxiety that can be made happy once again by reformulating it around integration (Ahmed, 2008). Mossbourne does this, promoting integration through the forced uptake of norms. As Essed and Goldberg point out, 'Cultural cloning is predicated on the taken-for-granted desirability of certain types, the often-unconscious tendency to comply with normative standards, the easiness with the familiar and the subsequent rejection of those who are perceived as deviant' (2002:1070). Students' social groupings are structured by these institutional norms which they navigate and circumvent from various positions within the hierarchy. Possessing mobility means possessing value, but mixing for mobility is only a necessary strategy for those who do not inhabit the classed, raced position of ideal student. Supposedly more expressive black bodies like Tameka's are consistently more heavily policed in the playground, while Joshua and others can and do consciously perform 'whiter' forms of comportment - a tactic that reduces their surveillance, allowing them to move with greater ease, and also highlighting the ontological impossibility and elasticity of race. These adjustments problematize the notion of mobility; rather than being depicted as an upward liberation, mobility has deeply defensive aspects, gendered boundaries and requires sacrifice (Walkerdine, 2003).

The academy structures the ideal subject through creating distinctions that attribute judgements and values through bodily and social orientations. These orientations form the basis of a moral economy, as Mossbourne's moral distinctions of worth become social distinctions of value which are negotiated out in the playground (Skeggs, 2004). Sir Michael demands a 'no excuses culture', claiming that mentioning social factors only 'entrenches mediocrity'. Yet this 'no excuses' mantra divorces students from their social positioning, trivializing continued hardship, institutionalized racism and moral value judgements. Mossbourne's 'structures' seek to 'liberate' children from pathological raced, classed identities, but in ignoring the power of inequitable structures they simultaneously reify them. The sanctioned inequality Bourdieu described is heightened through these practices; not only are disadvantaged students further disadvantaged through formalised equality, the heavy policing of non-normative bodies compounds this disadvantage.

Chapter Seven

Re-imagining the Real World: Raw Materials Negotiate the Conveyor Belt

> People born into unwelcoming worlds and unreliable environments have a different response to the new precarities than do people who presumed they would be protected.
> *Berlant (2011:20)*

While the previous chapter established the normative position of the middle class and resultant variations in how students were policed and valued, this chapter will examine how young people negotiate the landscape from a variety of positions, where the social world is not a fair game of chance offering equal opportunities (Bourdieu, 2000:214-15). Teachers discussed balancing the benefits and drawbacks of working at Mossbourne in chapter five; similarly students also make a contract with the institution that is continually negotiated. This contract is easier or more difficult to make and maintain depending on their relationship to the unevenly structured terrain explored in chapter six. This chapter explores how students navigate Mossbourne's conveyor belt while learning how to imagine themselves and their future in particular ways. The numerous paradoxes and contradictions found in their accounts reflect the inherent ambiguities of the belief-generating tales offered by Sir Michael in chapter five. Despite students' concerns over a disciplinarian environment where their opinions are largely irrelevant, Mossbourne's production of good results ultimately quells most misgivings to move them along the conveyor belt. Yet some young people cannot submit to Mossbourne's logic and are pushed to its periphery, spending large amounts of time in the LSU.

'The Child-Catcher'

The shifting reflections of Isaac, a fifteen year-old black British student, exemplify the continual project of becoming both subject and subjectified. While both of his parents were born in the UK, Isaac's grandparents are from Jamaica and of mixed Jamaican, Portuguese and German Jewish heritage. In September Isaac declared there was 'no way' he was attending the Mossbourne sixth form, but added he was 'keeping his options open'. He felt it was not a 'real' sixth form, but a continuation of lower school with a different outfit and slightly more responsibility. Like most year eleven students,

he was nervous about the impending workload culminating in GCSE results. I asked if he had seen the BBC Two programme hosted by John Humphrys[37] where Mossbourne students said they had been given different ambitions compared to other Hackney students. Although he had not seen it, Isaac smiled wryly and said 'I bet none of the students said anything negative', adding that differences between him and old primary school friends were not necessarily due to Mossbourne.

Walking around the deserted playground after school in October, Isaac glanced sentimentally across the tarmac. Admittedly, he already felt nostalgic, but maintained that he could not handle another two years - it was 'too much', he wanted to go somewhere new. Isaac described how he frequently misbehaved in lessons, transgressing rules in a crafty way. Instead of open defiance, Isaac showed me a hilarious array of lethargic faces and decrepit poses he enacted, moving in slow motion so a simple task took ages to complete. When threatened with a detention, Isaac would speed up and finish the task to avoid punishment. This deviance 'really wound teachers up' because it was difficult to manage. While chapter four showed how Mossbourne employs strategies which '...pin their hopes on the resistance that the *establishment of a place* offers to the erosion of time', de Certeau describes how tactics as 'an art of the weak' rely 'on a clever *utilization of time*, of the opportunities it presents and also of the play that it introduces into the foundations of power' (1988:38-9, author's italics). This playing with time through slowing it down is one tactic frequently employed by students to subvert authority.

Isaac's friend Patricia joined us and they reminisced about their primary school years, agreeing 'it was the best time ever'. Unlike secondary school, learning was fun and stress-free. Patricia thought the year seven students who were eagerly joining every club and sporting group would soon lose their enthusiasm; unlike Isaac, Patricia would not miss Mossbourne. They both recalled their initial shock upon arrival. Watching Ms Morrison shout at another teacher in front of the students in the playground was an eye-opener for Isaac who suddenly realised, 'Oh, so this is what the real world is all about!' Observing how teachers, like students, were openly excoriated had shaped his idea of the future workplace.

Two months later Isaac discussed his ambitious future plans. Initially he had wanted

[37] http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00txmtm aired November 6, 2010

to study medicine like his mother, but now he wanted to pursue theology. Most importantly, he wanted to be rich. Isaac felt Mossbourne fit well with Hackney, calling it a metaphorical Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang child catching machine – but, he quickly exclaimed, while chuckling, 'in a good way!' For those unfamiliar with the film, Roald Dahl's Child Catcher is a sinister villain employed by the story's central antagonists to capture children by driving a brightly coloured carriage into village squares, ringing a bell and singing to children that he has free cakes, ice cream and lollipops. After the children are lured into his carriage, the cheerful trappings disappear to reveal they are locked in a steel cage. I laughed at this metaphor as Isaac reiterated the positive aspects of taming and training some kids from the area who were 'quite wild and a bit rough'. He felt this wildness was often no fault of their own, but due to extenuating circumstances, and Mossbourne trained them to get along. Isaac thought this training was about making people equal where it was not about where you came from or what you are like, but each student's physical capacity for intelligence so not only the middle-class kids succeeded. Despite teachers saying he was lazy, Isaac thought he was still doing much better than he would have done elsewhere because he needed pushing. Isaac felt some students were naturally self-motivated with an inner drive to work, yet he lacked these qualities.

Isaac was firmly 'caught' by the Child Catcher come May, announcing that he had stopped 'messing about' and decided to stay for sixth form in order to get better grades. He described leaving Mossbourne as a phase he had passed through. With vigour, Isaac produced a paper outlining his predicted GCSE grades, all As and Bs, which he thought could be substantially higher because he was working harder. He talked with animation about his 'life plan' which he had 'all mapped out', musing about attending Oxbridge, the route to becoming a theologian, and his changing friendship group touched on in chapter six. Walking him back to class, I mentioned that I had included his metaphorical Child-Catching machine in a presentation. He chuckled and merrily replied, 'But it's a good child catching machine - you don't want to be caught, but once you are it's not that bad!' Isaac's deliberations introduce some of the key themes discussed by other students, although many could not access Isaac's store of middle-class cultural capital. While being 'caught' by the machine was initially undesirable, Isaac comes to see it as ultimately beneficial to his future. At the point of catching, the logic of the machine and the benefits it generates start to make sense.

Learning to Live Within Imagined Futures

Isaac's colourful metaphor of Mossbourne-as-Child Catcher seducing Hackney parents and students into a shiny new building with promises of a brighter future lingered in my mind. Yet the institution's position and the contract students make was more complex and mutually beneficial than an evil cartoon villain trapping children without the promise of future compensation. Rather than being tricked, many Hackney parents are desperate to get their children into Mossbourne and most children are keen to stay once there. Mossbourne is vastly oversubscribed with over 1,500 applications for just 200 places. *The Guardian* feature of Cambridge-bound Mossbourne students provided solid 'proof' of Mossbourne's potential rewards, persuading students like Isaac to continue and, crucially, attracting high-achieving external candidates. Isaac's father Franklin felt Isaac had '...seen for himself the school's attitude to certain students and I think now he wants to be part of that inner circle to the top flight students in the school', for Mossbourne would 'naturally start grooming the next batch if you like to get them applying to Cambridge and Oxford and the Russell group universities'. Samuel was also in awe of Mossbourne's association with prestigious universities, predicting Mossbourne would become renown, mimicking someone saying 'oh you got into Mossbourne, that's great'. Eight of the ten year eleven students wanted to attend the sixth form, although most had initially considered leaving. Isaac's realisation that this was the beginning of the onerous 'real world' pushes him to conclude that Mossbourne offers him the best chance of success in this competitive landscape.

Mossbourne's employment conditions come to represent all future workplaces. Several teachers referenced the similar position of teachers and students when meting out punishments. The following exchange occurred outside a classroom:

> *Teacher:* So do you understand why if you do not follow instructions you get in trouble?
>
> *Student:* Yes sir.
>
> *Teacher:* What do you think happens when you're an adult and you have a job and you don't follow instructions? What if I turned up for work late each day?
>
> *Student:* You'd *(inaudible, very quiet whisper)*

Teacher: I'd get in trouble. And what if I turned up late a lot?

Student: (inaudible)

Teacher: I'd get fired. And if I get fired what happens?

Student: (inaudible)

Teacher: I don't have a job. And if I don't have a job I don't have any what?

Student: Money?

Teacher: Any money. And if I don't have any money I can't buy food, pay for a house. Do you understand this?

(She nods)

Right. Go.

Another teacher employed a similar comparison during a meeting with a student and his mother:

Teacher: It's not all about you. Everyone is treated the same, everyone gets told off. Sometimes Sir Michael tells me off – do you think I go *(makes a sound of kissing her teeth and sulky body language)* 'It's not fair you're picking on me!' Do I do that?

Student: No.

Teacher: Why not?

Student: Cause you'll get sacked.

Teacher: Cause I'll get sacked.

As this teacher added in a later meeting with the same boy, the school trains you to get used to a job, where jobs require following instructions without contestation; to under perform or complain is to risk destitution. The unforgivingly narrow requirements of employment portrayed by teachers and projected onto students reflects the dilemmas of teachers' own working lives explored in chapter five where they must either conform and perform - or leave. Many students like Isaac embraced this approach. He describes how he could think of several teachers who just were not around anymore

without any explanation given. His brother Steven, a sixth former, joined one of our discussions, adding that there was 'loads of conspiracy theories' circulating regarding missing teachers. Steven described how in other schools it 'took ages to get rid of a teacher', but they 'just disappeared' at Mossbourne. They surmised that either teachers could not take it and left, or were forced out because they disagreed with the ethos – common student speculations. Isaac pitied infantilised teachers, yet adopted Mossbourne's orientation to labour, adding 'if they are under-performing, they are out the door and there will be another teacher to replace them – tough!'

However Daniel, a black British year nine student, more critically assessed how Mossbourne's authoritarian training could prove detrimental in adulthood. Although he usually understood why he was being reprimanded, Daniel questioned the harsh methods teachers sometimes employed, suggesting that while this might be appropriate for students with high self-esteem, shouting at students with low to medium self-esteem was 'not very nice' and 'can make you feel bad'. Daniel referred to a diagram frequently shown on the flat screen monitors around the school depicting Mossbourne as a series of concentric circles, with staff, the PTA and students represented as equals. He contested this representation, tracing an oblong shape on the table with his finger that placed teachers and PTA at the top and students at the bottom. Daniel felt like he was 'at the bottom of the food chain'; students had to respect and obey everyone, but no one had to respect them. Clearly aware of staff hierarchies, Daniel outlined Mossbourne's management structure running from heads of year to heads of learning areas, down to heads of department and class teachers who could not contest their line managers. He thought this feeling of being at the bottom could have adverse effects on students when they entered the work place; they might become downtrodden employees. While Isaac does not challenge the institutional structure, but attempts to join and excel within it, Daniel is more apprehensive about his position.

Like Daniel, black British sixth former Florence felt the discipline sometimes took advantage of her cooperative disposition. Although her feelings vacillated, she justifies discipline through an imagined future workplace:

> During my first year, I was just like 'this is really ridiculous' sort of thing...I understand the idea of discipline, but I just think that they took it a bit far. And then some years it would not be that bad...I'd just think 'oh

> you are just overreacting' and then I'd think 'oh it's a good thing' when you see people in your class who are just playing up and stuff like that and you are like 'oh they need the discipline', but when you are someone who doesn't need that much discipline, you kind of feel they are taking advantage...Like you are a good person, why are they kind of being so set and orderly? We used to call here the prison because it actually did seem like that sometimes. But...they are a lot more lenient with us because we are in the older year.

Despite objecting to 'really strange and strict' rules like banning hugging, Florence answers her own theoretical question of 'would I send my child here?' with a 'yes'. Discipline is beneficial, '...because I think some people take advantage and then when they get to the workplace they will not understand the whole order... And we have had that order so we are growing up with it, so it's good'. Students grow up and into an order presented as inevitable and positive.

Reservations and Promises

This disciplinarian order is reflexively recognised by several students and parents as potentially negative. Shazia, a sixteen year-old Bangladeshi student, described how many of the rules were ultimately irrelevant to education and more about Mossbourne having control over the student's physical body. Shazia thought Mossbourne rationalised these rules by connecting good behaviour to better learning outcomes. Although Shazia now attested to using longer words, she felt intrinsically unaltered by Mossbourne and would continue into sixth form to ensure she achieved good A levels. Poppy tied Mossbourne's authority over students to controlling their minds, comparing Sir Michael's rhetoric to a graphic novel she recently read featuring a character who was fighting against the government's attempts to brainwash everyone. Poppy described how this government said 'give them rules in order to free them'. This phrase triggered a flashback in her mind to an assembly where Sir Michael said rules freed students to learn – a connection she felt was 'really creepy'.

Alexander, a black middle-class parent, comments on how Mossbourne's physical regulation affects his son Daniel's comportment:

Alexander: But I look at my son and if he is being talked to, he sits like that *(demonstrates sitting bolt upright)* - he sits rigid. Kids are walking through - 'Straighten your tie!' - and they are rigid and I'm thinking, oh - I wasn't like that at school. And I went to school in south Hackney...But I enjoyed school. When teachers spoke to me, I was not scared. I was relaxed.

CK: And you think here they are scared here?

Alexander: I just look at their mannerisms and, they are just like that *(effecting rigid timidity).*

Several students attested to feeling afraid upon arriving at Mossbourne. Derek, Emily and Florence used the word 'scary' to describe their initial days, while Lawrence, a black Caribbean working-class sixth former, describes how his compliance was gained:

...to be honest first coming, because I was a bit nervous and scared, like I kinda had no choice but to follow [the rules]. Not that I would go against it now, but the situation as I become older – the way I am basically, obviously I didn't get in trouble that much and it's a situation where I just say if you just behave yourself and do what you're supposed to do, then you won't have to worry about getting into trouble or anything...it just doesn't really bother me now basically because I know that certain things don't apply to me because I'm not getting into trouble and stuff like that.

Although Lawrence was too scared to do anything but follow the rules, he recognises that this following ensured he avoided trouble, acquiring a good reputation so rules applied to him less.

Veronica, a white middle-class parent, also mentions an atmosphere of fear. While I described Veronica's concerns over Mossbourne's fortress-like connection to a 'culture of fear' in chapter four, she struggles with these inconsistent feelings later in our interview: '...the whole rubric surrounding the school - the unit [the LSU], and the detentions and the guard-like kind of mentality *(sighs)* I find it - I don't want to embrace it, but it seems to work'. Pragmatically Mossbourne 'works', although she adds that she has a 'residual feeling about how will this very structured environment actually affect her

[daughter]?' A few minutes later, Veronica expresses relief at Mossbourne's involvement in her daughter's upbringing before laughing and adding, '...I suppose I'm totally contradicting myself now! Isn't it just the way with these interview participants? Contractions left, right and centre'. Veronica sums up this ambiguity with the following comments: 'Yes, just live with the contradictions. Live with the paradox of being pleased that she has all these structures and unhappy in an intellectual sense, but pleased in the personal sense and oh God! What can you do?' These comments mirror the ambiguous feelings expressed by many teachers in chapter five, where most doubts are subsumed by the delivery of results.

Alexander was one of the few parents to actively critique how an exam-driven focus could negatively shape Mossbourne students:

> Well I think this, I think we are not producing kids – even though I want my kids to do really well in terms of exams - what we are really doing is we are producing children to go into the world and take their part. It's not just a matter of getting eleven GCSEs and all of them are A star. It's about being able to cope with society when you get in there, it's about being able to mix in the work place when you get there. We want to produce rounded people, people who can see both sides of the argument, you know what I mean? And understand things properly. I am not sure if we are going to get that if there is not a bit of warmth or flair coming out of the kids. Now it gets better as they go through, don't get me wrong.

Alexander is not convinced that understanding or taking part in a diverse society can be achieved through testing regimes and discipline. He describes how his younger daughter Molly was 'petrified' of getting a detention in year seven. Alexander tried to assuage her fears by presenting detention as good life experience, yet obedient Molly rejected this idea. Alexander feels his family is already disciplined, so his daughter needed encouragement and warmth. Yet despite his reservations, it is important to note that Alexander does not consider sending his children elsewhere.

Ambivalent feelings rest at the heart of Mossbourne's project as future fantasies promising happiness and enjoyment are allied to the present day

endurance of heightened control, discipline and securitisation. Mossbourne blends numerous techniques to mould impressionable youngsters into self-structuring individuals invested in obtaining value through market participation. This training encourages the production of subjects willing to fit within increasingly casualised, unstable and often exploitative positions whilst simultaneously knowing themselves as individuals allegedly authoring their own biographies. As the youth unemployment rate stood at 21 percent in September 2013, students are understandably anxious to secure employment (Parliament, 2013). Jodi Dean discusses how neoliberalism as an ideological formation must offer something to people whose lives it shapes in order to maintain its dominant position: 'It has to structure their expectations and desires so that it *feels right, like the way things just are*' (2009:50, author's italics). The desire to 'fulfil my true potential' bears an irrefutable rightness for many students, most of whom adapt to institutional demands which become normalised. Readiness to be consumed by the market becomes the central concern for many students who learn that compliance is what employment requires. By shaping expectations and desires from a young age, Mossbourne's structures become the way things are; as thirteen-year-old Lorna reminded me, she had nothing to compare Mossbourne to - 'it is all I know'.

'Structure liberates' promises future enjoyment and happiness, as explored in chapter five. Drawing on Zizek's reworking of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Dean discusses how ideological formations draw together a host of often antagonistic, contrary promises of enjoyment and accounts for why enjoyment has not occurred, where 'Ideological formations, then, work as economies of enjoyment to forbid, permit, direct and command enjoyment' (2009:50). She argues that the addition of enjoyment to the theory of ideology makes ideology about more than sets of meanings, images or accumulated effects, but highlights the role of fantasy, where fantasies 'bind subjects to certain sets of relations, structuring and confining their thinking and acting so as to attach them to seemingly inescapable patterns of domination, patterns they may well recognise as domination but keep following, nevertheless' (2009:50). While Foucault illuminates how Mossbourne's ethos incorporates liberalism's paradoxical contractions where freedom is accessed through submission, he does not touch on the more affective dimensions of why subjects stay attached to ostensibly damaging positions - including how fantasies of future enjoyment and

fulfilment can act as a powerful adhesive bonding subjects to neoliberal ideological formations. The structuring of teachers and pupils is a creative process where Mossbourne proffers both the problem and the solution; it is not surprising that parents continue to send their children to Mossbourne and students willingly attend. Sir Michael's inspirational tales described in chapter five frames the orientations of many students and teachers. Yet rather than preparing students for some 'real world' awaiting them, Mossbourne's practices help create the parameters of this world to come by imagining and rehearsing an order with children so they grow up and into it.

Becoming 'Little Robots'

As chapter six outlined through students' approaches to mixing, growing into these structures often requires work and adjustment. For many students, learning to accept authority was a prerequisite for self-advancement and framed as an important realisation of their school career. Nearly every student commented on Mossbourne's high expectations which produced good results and provided a valuable incentive to tolerate discipline. Lawrence describes adjusting to Mossbourne after primary school:

> It was a big step, but after awhile I did get used to it and like, now, I don't really mind that much like going through what I did go through with all the rules and stuff. I know it's for a reason and obviously it's like helped to shape me and form me into something great, innit.

Lawrence adjusts to the rules because there is a rationale behind them and he feels they ultimately benefit his future. Even when he did not agree with certain things, he realised open contestation was not only futile, but might 'make me seem much like a bad person basically'. Like Florence's dismay over such rigidity despite being a 'good person', Lawrence describes cooperating to avoid being labelled as 'bad'. He conscientiously avoids acquiring the bad reputation now following students like Gazi and Tameka. Lawrence feels that 'overall it is a really great school', and although he has 'a sceptical view' towards some rules, he feels he is in no position to criticise them due to Mossbourne's enormous success. Instead 'I follow the rules and I do what I am supposed to do basically'.

Unlike Lawrence, Derek did not tow the line from the outset and was saddled with

detentions until year ten. Derek, a black British working-class sixth former, advises new students to 'just follow the rules to the best of your ability' and related the most unequivocally positive transformation story I heard during the research, describing how Mossbourne had 'changed' him:

> All the detentions and everything, you just sort of realise it is pointless after a while. You get to a point where you just realise that you have got to grow up. Otherwise you won't get the work done. It sort of moulds you into, preparing you for when you leave school and the way you are supposed to act in the outside world.

Derek described how he was not as loud as he used to be. Instead of talking back immediately, he could now 'hold it in'; he has adopted the quiet restraint that Joshua termed the three c's in chapter six. Although sometimes Derek wants to talk back, he realises this would only worsen his situation. The school 'makes you think about things before you actually do it, that what I've learned - to just think before I actually speak or do an action', attesting to an enhanced ability to delay gratification. Derek describes how Mossbourne's parameters have become habitual:

> ...because the principles have been - I have been here for seven years now. *(laughs)* That's a long time, so yeah, it is sort of installed in me. But I think it does help me outside school in certain situations where you just learn to keep your cool and go along with other people and being able to accept authority really.

Derek can 'accept authority' and feels friends at other schools 'are now completely different to the way me and other people that went here are'. Yet he attributes these old friends' different behaviour to teachers allowing them to misbehave – not urban chaos or unstructured families. He suspects that if he had attended another school he would still be loud, talking back to everyone and not caring about school. Derek feels 'there is something about this school that just makes you different to everyone else really'. While his old friends think 'they turn us into little robots', Derek laughed, adding 'but it's a good thing really'. While his friends may laugh at the fact he has to wear a suit everyday, Derek describes how 'there is a sense of pride really when you are walking out in a suit. It's not that bad really. You start to feel good about it'.

Mossbourne has marked Derek out as different from his friends. Instead of 'not really caring', he has invested in a future-orientated version of the self with enhanced capital due to his adoption of 'appropriate' behaviours and dispositions, professional dress, and qualifications – all of which carry value in the eyes of legitimate society. It is unknown if Derek's acquired capital will by symbolically recognised beyond Mossbourne and this grafting on of capital is not wholly liberatory. Derek is normalised through Foucauldian institutional discipline, and Bourdieu urges us to recognise the continuous and often unnoticed pressure of oppression through normalisation as 'the conditioning imposed by the material conditions of existence' fit Derek into the dominant symbolic (2000:141). These transformations also require submission and loss.

The high expectations or 'care' of Mossbourne teachers makes 'caring' worthwhile for students; investing in narratives of future success and an 'ideal student' identity becomes worthwhile. Yet the differences Derek describes between him and his friends are not explicated in terms of exam results, but through different orientations towards the future, ways of speaking, being and interacting with others. Louise Archer and her colleagues concluded, '"Being good" and the achievement of a "good" pupil identity was as much bound up with compliance to educational and social gendered and classes norms and expectations, as it was to the achievement of academic results and grades' (2007:565). While Lawrence, Derek and Florence connect being regarded as a 'bad person' with controverting the rules, students who occupy an ideal status like Poppy did not worry that misbehaviour would lead to her being labelled as 'bad'. Her value is less perilously in question than Lawrence who realises he could easily be designated as immanently 'bad'.

Accepting authority is viewed as an essential component of maximizing individual future potential. Sixth former Alara describes herself as 'a bit cheeky' and rebellious during years seven and eight. Her parents were called in for meetings each week, but after two years and much to her mother's relief, she was 'a lot more tamed'. Alara, the daughter of two Turkish immigrants who describes herself as working-class, traces her epiphany:

> ...I remember doing SATS in year nine, and I remember thinking well - it was just all then that I just realised that uh, I want to do something with my life. And I might want to go into law. And I have to get really high

> grades for this. And it just kind of dawned on me, being like what, fourteen? *(laughs)* yeah I just remember thinking that I cannot not carry on like this if I actually want to go somewhere and get really good grades. So I stopped - or I tried to stop. And then yeah, I got really good GCSE grades, now I'm hopefully going to study law.

Although Alara critiques several aspects of the school, she thinks Mossbourne is essentially good, professing '...I think it worked out really well for me, personally'. She describes how the strictness meant less time was wasted in lessons, while teachers were constantly available to help you. Alara attributes her transformation from rebel to compliant student both to maturity and repetition:

> But I think you just kind of get used to it. And it's kind of maturing as well – and you come to the realisation that you need to kind of go along with the system if you want to make sure you get the best outcome for yourself.

A particular, submissive maturity is cultivated through repetition. Like in chapter six where Isaac decides to stop misbehaving to 'get on top', Alara feels conceding to 'the system' is necessary to achieve the best personal position.

La perruque, or 'the wig,' is described by de Certeau as a popular diversionary tactic where workers disguised their own work as work for their employers. While the worker remained present and nothing was stolen, time was diverted 'from the factory for work that is free, creative, and precisely not directed toward profit' (1988:25). Within Mossbourne's setting, this free, creative and profit-less activity can be found in Isaac's lethargic slowing down of time or in Tameka's 'spudding' or in Gazi's spontaneous back flips off the bins at break time. It rests in the 'swagger' perfected by many young men or the 'winding' of young women like Abisola in the playground. De Certeau asserts that these practices entail cunningly taking pleasure in self-directed making while forging solidarity with fellow workers, arguing that these practices continue in the 'most ordered spheres of modern life' (1988:26). Although these creative diversionary practices continue within Mossbourne's borders, there is limited space and time for la perruque. 'Putting one over' comes to be seen by many students as not hurting 'the system', but hurting one's self which must be realised through Mossbourne's parameters. This connects to Lauren Berlant's inverted reading of de Certeau: 'Instead of the vision of the everyday *organised* by capitalism that we find in

Lefebvre and de Certeau, among others, I am interested in the overwhelming ordinary that is *disorganised* by it, and by many other forces besides. This is a matter of a different emphasis, not of a theoretical negation...' (2011:8, author's italics). Here seemingly timeless, ordinary school hi-jinks are disrupted as many students like Derek or Isaac curtail misbehaviour and rebellion in exchange for the promise of future rewards. The orientation between ruler and ruled is disorganised, whereby there is not an attitude of complete rebellion, but muted assent to access individualised success.

Performing Compliance

Several students discussed how they coped with Mossbourne's disciplinary structures by feigning compliance. Like Lawrence, Florence gauged early on that 'letting the teacher be right' was the easiest option, but more reflexively explains her acquiescence:

> If the teacher is shouting at you, just accept it. Don't retaliate because that's not the way in life or in this school either. I know it sounds really bad, but just let the teachers have their way. You won't be here forever, make the best out of the situation...just get on with your work and don't be disruptive.

As fighting the rules gets you nowhere, Florence recommends displaying obedience. Although she acknowledges that advising students to accept all punishments without question sounds 'bad', students should accept the confines of the institution. Florence recalls her annoyance at students not taking this approach:

> ...sometimes when people argue back it's like, 'Just like shut up, just let the teacher be right. The teacher wants to be right, the teacher's not going to go 'Okay, I'm wrong now'. Because I had a few troubles with one of my maths teachers and I found that just by being submissive that she just got over whatever issues she had. You just need to make the teachers feel like they have the authority. So it's the best way to go.

Through performing submission, Florence reassures the teacher of her authority and she can get on with her work - even if her compliance is feigned. Although

Florence resigns herself to this performance, there is an underlying cynicism to her assent which ultimately questions the legitimacy of her teacher's authority. Tameka also relates how she used to 'get hyped up', but is now 'cool' with teachers, responding with the cooperative attitude of 'okay great stuff' when corrected and carries on with her work. She feels this submission 'pisses them off' more than anything because they want her to retaliate; with satisfaction, Tameka describes how she can see it 'hurting them inside'.

Daniel also told teachers what they wanted to hear as a means of escaping the LSU. Daniel described the LSU as a place created 'to bore students out of their heads' so eventually they admitted they did not intend to do whatever they were in trouble for; it was 'pretty much hell on earth'. Daniel explained being sent there for retaliating against a group of boys in the playground who had attacked him. He used his fingers to put quotation marks around 'retaliated', rhetorically asking 'What else was I supposed to do? Let myself get beaten up? That would have been worse'. Daniel describes how he dutifully conceded to the teacher that the next time he was attacked by a group of boys, he would just stand there and do nothing. Related with much sarcasm, Daniel's performance of compliance was necessary for his release.

For Florence, Tameka, Daniel and other students performing compliance is one possible line of action, yet not a particularly rebellious one. De Certeau describes how '...*power relationships* define the networks in which they are inscribed and delimit the circumstances from which they can profit...We are concerned with battles or games between the strong and the weak, and with the "actions" which remain possible for the latter' (1988:34, author's italics). The idea of a pitched battle between weak and strong is disordered and rearranged through students' concern for their futures and the necessity of conceding to the institution to flourish, narrowing the range of games deemed possible or desirable to play as they are symbiotically bound to the institution through benefits accrued.

Discarded Attributes

Although accepting authority and performing compliance are key tactics for survival at Mossbourne, some students openly expressed their discontent. Students like Abisola, a Nigerian-British-American working-class thirteen year-

old, were on occasion fundamentally unwilling to acquiesce when they felt unfairly treated. During one of our meetings, Abisola described an incident that had upset her. The class had been asked to shuffle to one side. Abisola moved, but when Ms Jenson asked her to move closer to the girl in front of her Abisola told Ms Jenson she could not because she was really close already. Abisola said Ms Jenson announced that some people were acting immature and not following instructions whilst staring at her. Abisola then related how Ms Jensen told her she was acting stupid and should be really ashamed of herself for disobeying. Abisola said she tried to explain, but after saying three words, Ms Jenson and her line manager Ms Barnes interrupted and the incident ended with them both shouting in her face. Abisola did not answer their questions to avoid answering back, yet when she did not answer she was also in trouble. Daniel related a similar catch-22 moment when a teacher asked if he had been talking, yet when he replied 'no' he was accused of being rude for talking back. Daniel did not know what he could have done – if he had not answered he would have been branded insolent, but responding had earned him a 6pm detention.

Abisola described how she had to sit in a corner afterwards. Ms Barnes told her she must apologise or face punishment. Although Abisola said she knew it would be easier to apologise to Ms Jenson, she did not understand what she had done wrong therefore her apology would lack sincerity. Abisola felt Ms Jensen just wanted her to say 'Yes miss, I am such an embarrassment and I am sorry and you are right. Full stop', but she refused to say this because she did not mean it. By the end of the lesson, Abisola had not apologised and was given an hour detention. Upset and frustrated, Abisola went to see her learning mentor afterwards who advised her to speak to Ms Barnes. Abisola related how she went to Ms Barnes' office and who curtly said 'go on then', adding 'she'd heard it all before, but she could tell her again'. Abisola was disappointed because she thought they would sit down and have a calm, reasonable discussion; instead Ms Barnes clearly did not want to listen to her. Discouraged, Abisola related a truncated version of her story before Ms Barnes said 'okay' and walked away. Abisola was reluctant to 'just let the teacher be right' and attend the detention, although she was aware that her punishment would only increase if she did not attend.

Later that day when I spoke to Abisola's mentor, she asked what sort of values Mossbourne was teaching children if acting honourably, truthfully and not simply pretending to be sorry was discouraged? What did it teach students if

maturely initiating conversations with adults did not actually work? We discussed the temporal constraints on teachers who must quickly process hundreds of students each day. Dialogue and debate were time consuming, whereas dictation was fast and efficient. 'Students never say no to a teacher', a Mossbourne mantra, meant students must comply with dialogue or debate. Abisola eventually decided to attend the detention, maintaining that overall Mossbourne was fair, but teachers like Ms Jensen were not. While the complete compliance Mossbourne's approach provides is highly efficient and productive, its inflexibility and underlying values raise significant ethical and moral questions. Sennett reflects on how in these neoliberal managerial times, often 'the qualities of good work are not the qualities of good character' (1999:21). The 'good work' of producing compliant bodies and great grades is achieved, yet other important attributes of 'good character' like honesty and integrity are deemed irrelevant.

Despite conflict with teachers and awareness of her subordinate position in the school hierarchy highlighted by the focus group discussion in chapter six, Abisola was proud to attend Mossbourne. She was acutely aware of its position in the local education market, describing an on-going argument with her best friend from Hackney Free over the respective merits of their schools. Abisola asserted that Mossbourne was in the top 3% of schools in the country, while her friend retorted that Hackney Free was better at sport. Abisola dismissively replied, 'Big deal, so you are good at sport, but we are smart. Our school is the academic school!' Unlike her friend, Abisola does not need to reframe Mossbourne to transform its stigmatised marginalisation; she knows she is the clear 'winner' in this educational game despite her friend's defensive strategies (Reay, 2007b:1198). Mossbourne's winning position of superiority is a powerful incentive to endure the other obstacles in her path.

'Becoming More White'

Loss and gain becomes a raced and classed process, where students must move away from essentialised representations of blackness and working-classness to better fit into the Mossbourne landscape. Sixth former Olivia describes how Mossbourne has 'widened the possibilities' of she could become. During primary school Olivia had 'morphed' herself into the 'perfect Hackney princess' to fit in. Most of her friends were

'Hackney kids', which Olivia describes as portraying oneself as laid back, walking a bit too slow with a swagger, not conceding to authority, and not appearing to try too hard – all actions that arguably seek to disrupt the conveyor belt's relentless speed. Olivia describes how wearing Kicker shoes or having a Nike bag is the accompanying aesthetic - styles Olivia asserts are most commonly worn by black students. Olivia, half white and half black African, speculates that if she had attended Clapton Girls, she probably would have red weave in her hair right now, yet upon arrival at Mossbourne Olivia felt there was nothing to be gained from dropping her T's; getting good grades was acceptable. Olivia asserts, 'I have ended up becoming more white', laughing and acknowledging this was clearly ridiculous because she was obviously still half black! She reminisces about growing up on an estate before moving to a Victorian house, adding that her mother is an English teacher so she was always 'well-spoken'. Yet this 'becoming' entailed difficult compromises which Olivia says required her to ignore or lose certain parts of herself and allegiances along the way. These losses and gains link to how Olivia has orientated herself away from a more black and working-class position towards a more white, middle-class one as she became an 'ideal' pupil.

Olivia describes being mixed-race as difficult to negotiate because people always wanted to force you to choose between being black or white. She also felt she was 'in the middle' when it came to class, referencing her father as a 'contradictory character'. Although he worked as a basketball coach and had a 'definite street vibe' going on, he had attended private school in Zimbabwe – something he 'kept quiet about'. She described trying to 'tread a fine line and strike a balance' between these various positions. Olivia's position drew out the messiness inherent in essentialised categories and how these categories are made 'real' through reiteration. Drawing on Fanon, Nayak describes how race's fictitious status is given substance 'through the illusion of performance, action and utterance, where repetition makes it appear as-if-real' (2006:419,416).

These complex negotiations of personhood relate to perceptions of who does or does not achieve in educational institutions. Olivia describes how being white is aligned with doing well in school, while being black is still not granted this association. Whereas smart white kids are just called nerds, smart black kids are called 'bounties', which infers being black and working hard means you are becoming white. The conflict between being a 'Hackney kid' and being an ideal student is premised on the idea that there is an integral compatibility between learning or knowledge and respect

for authority. This false confluence is normalised, highlighting how Mossbourne's job is not simply to provide children with access to knowledge, but to govern a population and create compliant bodies with respect for the status quo. Knowledge acquisition becomes entangled with submission to authority; you cannot succeed, or at least will have great difficulty succeeding, as an aspirational subject without conceding to the other, seemingly superfluous, but essential institutional demands. Learning and governance merge together into one package where students must sign up to both.

Despite the compromises, Olivia liked Mossbourne from the start. She acknowledges the rigidity was 'to try and stamp out any tendencies people have towards not being a model Mossbourne student. And I think individuality is stamped out with that too, but that's just the price you pay for being within a disciplinarian environment'. Olivia thinks Mossbourne has loosened up as they grew older: '...it's like as you grow, the school sort of opens up for you'. Yet Olivia admits that the school does not open up for everyone:

> ...what you give, you sort of get back. So you develop a bit of trust with some teachers and they're willing to...give you more freedom. And people who were less willing to cooperate are the ones that get stuffed in the LSU all the time. I'm not sure that did them any good. It probably just leads to loads of resentment and even more sort of hate for the system.

Olivia willingly consigned her 'Hackney princess' primary school ways to the past, as assuming the position of high achieving pupil connected to her becoming 'whiter'. Although this movement required loss and compromise, Olivia was not required to adopt completely alien ways, but could resurrect already familiar ways of being, like her 'well-spoken' accent temporarily discarded during primary school.

As a working-class black girl, Tameka's journey discussed in chapter six differs substantially from Olivia's. Unlike Olivia, she does not have a 'well-spoken accent' to recall, but must try and apply unfamiliar ways of being. Working-class female educational subjects must reflexively produce themselves through self-surveillance and the internal incorporation of discourses of authority that highlight gendered and classed inequalities and how schools can be 'alien spaces for 'other' femininities' (Archer et al, 2007:552-3,558). These othered femininities are associated with historic representations the working-class female's embodied excess described in chapter two,

while the possession of a middle-class femininity is tied to modesty, restraint, repression, reasonableness, and denial (Skeggs, 2004:99). Mossbourne makes the adoption of raced, classed and gendered ideals of success mandatory for continuation. As Olivia relates, there is 'a price to pay', and the cost is higher for some students than others.

Problematic Bodies: 'Stuffed in the LSU'

Bourdieu discusses how institutional rites 'guarantee a durable social status in exchange for the durable commitment', where this commitment is symbolised by rituals of incorporation in a variety of senses that require assuming 'in a worthy fashion the explicit and often implicit obligations of that status' (2000:236). While those possessing the appropriate habitus from the outset have the best guarantee of attaining social status, others can potentially – although often only partially – occupy this space. As we saw in chapter six, many students like Joshua, Samuel and Isaac make this contract and symbolically show their commitment and incorporation through displaying dispositions marking their habitus as appropriate. Yet Shante, Osman and Clarice who were located outside of the 'buffer zone' found it remarkably more difficult or even patently undesirable to acquire and display the dispositions required and, as Olivia mentions, were frequently 'stuffed in the LSU'.

i. Opting Out

Multi-ethnic year eleven student Shante started truanting in year nine after being a straight-A student in years seven and eight. Shante lives on a nearby estate with her mother, two sisters and brother and describes how during year ten she barely attended school at all, resulting in her mother being fined. Shante attempted to move to a school where they would not continually push her, describing how Mossbourne teachers constantly demanded students learn. Most students referenced this continual pushing. Olivia comments, 'I am not like a naturally dedicated person...I'm kind of the worst student...I have ability, but I just don't exploit it. And I think here it's been kind of dragged out of me, whereas other places I would have sort of slipped away unnoticed'. Although Shante wants to 'slip away unnoticed', this is not possible. Unlike Olivia, Shante finds it difficult to cope with having her ability continually 'dragged' out of her. Unable to leave, Shante approached her final year with hopeful optimism, repeatedly emphasising how GCSEs were important, explaining how teachers 'have really

tried to impress upon me how important it is to get good grades now because it will determine what sort of job I can get'. Repeatedly Shante said she wanted to do well, 'have a good life', and 'make something' of herself. Although she put her previous truancy down to 'laziness', Shante later admitted the pressure was too much. As the year proceeded, it became evident that Shante was unwell. Tragically she attempted suicide mid-way through the year, yet continued to talk about needing to 'do well'.

Numerous pressures were bearing down on Shante: she described being bullied by a group of girls in her year group, guiltily needing to repay her beloved mother Beatrice for the trouble she had caused her, and being extremely worried about her younger brother who was truanting with a group of older boys on their estate. Shante related how 'every single day I worry about my brother Peter and what is going to happen to him – is he going to get stabbed or arrested?' There had been violence on their estate and Shante was always afraid she would go home to find he had been stabbed or killed. Her eldest brother was already incarcerated and Shante described how her mother was guilt-ridden and desperate to prevent Peter from a similar fate. Shante had a very close relationship with Beatrice; although her father still lived locally, her parents' marriage had broken up shortly after moving to the UK from Nigeria, leaving Beatrice to raise four children while struggling to find part-time work without any qualifications.

Shante half-jokingly said she had spent more time in the LSU than anyone else during year ten, describing it as an 'endless cycle' where she forced herself to come in, but was continually placed in the LSU because of her previous truanting. Hating the LSU, she often went home, only to be put back in the LSU when she eventually returned. Shante said the LSU was 'really boring'; with only one teacher supervising she could sometimes get away with falling asleep into her book. One teacher questioned the appropriateness of Mossbourne's treatment of Shante, commenting that Mr Pierce's shouting approach had contributed to Shante spending a lot of time in the LSU - a situation that had not helped, but only made things considerably worse. Brandishing Shante's progress report that indicated that she had completed all her work when present, this teacher described how Shante's teachers had confirmed that she could have achieved As in most subjects, but now would be lucky to get Cs.

Although many of the challenges facing Shante were external to Mossbourne, the structure liberates ethos did not liberate her from the very real stresses of poverty and life on an often dangerous estate to 'fulfil her true potential'. Instead Mossbourne's hard-line approach appears to have further exacerbated her anxieties and estranged her from education; the effectiveness of isolating and shouting at an already vulnerable student merits serious question. Shante is clearly aware of the necessity of achieving and realises the stakes are high, but instead of rising to the intense pressure to perform, Shante crumbles beneath it. Whereas middle-class students approach this 'project of autonomy' where they are called to become both subject and subjectified from a less perilous position, working class students like Shante are approaching it from a position of having all the wrong cultural and symbolic capital (Lawler, 2000:24,46). Her mother Beatrice possessed neither the status nor confidence to contest Mossbourne's approach. As Mr Dean pointed out in chapter six, only some influential middle-class parents have 'a line to the top', while working-class students like Shante occupy a lower status position within the institution with less recourse.

ii. Lost in the Machine

White English and Afro-Caribbean, working-class year eleven student Clarice was a top set student who wanted to be a graphic artist; her art teacher confirmed that she was the most talented drawer at Mossbourne. Clarice lived with her maternal grandmother on a nearby estate, as her mother Danese experienced frequent bouts of mental illness and at one point during the research was hopitalised. Her parents were separated and her father seemed to be sporadically involved in her life. Clarice started off the year professing she wanted to get her head down, do the work, get good grades, and stay out of trouble. Clarice professed that she did not enjoy being in trouble and often ended up in trouble even when she did not mean to be. Like Abisola, Clarice did not mind coming to Mossbourne because it was a lot better than other Hackney schools. She wanted to attend the sixth form and go to university, describing how Mossbourne was 'a different world' from the rest of Hackney. She thought this was positive because it showed the world that young people from Hackney could succeed, echoing Sir Michael's assembly rhetoric.

Yet by May Clarice had changed her mind, saying 'I have had a lot of problems

at this school'. She wanted a fresh start somewhere she did not have so many issues with her peers and teachers, describing how her mother had initially liked Mossbourne, but had 'had enough of the school too at this point'. Clarice seemed genuinely confused about where 'my problems come from'. Like Shante, she took sole responsibility for her difficulties and talks about being 'bad' as if she is a young child. She looked generally bewildered by the experience and clearly lacked confidence. While she thought some teachers were 'okay', she described how others 'just shouted at you and do not listen to your side of the story...they do not try to understand, but twisted around what you had said'. Others would stop, listen, then explain 'what I have done wrong when I have been bad and help me to correct it, instead of just shouting at me'. Clarice described how shouting only really 'worked' in years seven and eight when children were still scared of teachers. Despite these issues, she felt Mossbourne was fair and enduring the past five years had been worth it for the grades, plus the structure had benefited her, as without it 'I would be a completely different person'.

Although Clarice's mother Danese had dropped out of school without GCSEs, she wanted Clarice to go to university and passionately attempted to advocate for her daughter who was consistently in the LSU. Danese said, 'Not once have they done anything to support my child...They labelled the girl from the day she come here'. She goes on to admit that 'I lost it in this room [the board room]', describing a meeting where Mr Richards stood intimidatingly in the corner while three other teachers sat around the table, one positioned between her and Clarice, who were not allowed to sit together.

> *Danese:* Ms Butler was sitting there saying 'Are you scared Clarice? What, are they gonna beat you up Clarice? Are you scared Clarice, what are they going to do to you?'
>
> *CK:* Taunting her?
>
> *Danese:* Yeah. I tell you, I lost it. I jumped up and went, 'Who the fucking hell?' – [*aside to me*] I'm not being funny or nothing, I'm gonna tell you how it was - 'do you think you are?'

While Danese found some teachers empathetic, Ms Butler

> ...makes it obvious that she doesn't like my child. She forgets herself in front of her, like I said how can you be sitting there as a parent? What would you do?...I was like what? What do you think you are doing? What sort of conduct is that?

Danese felt helpless, saying 'they are putting me in situations where they are provoking me and my child and sitting there talking and we are not allowed to say anything. And then you've got no one to go to. There's no one you can go to'. Instead of sitting quietly, Danese argues back, but forcefully asserting herself gets her labelled as aggressive. Val Gillies' (2007) work highlights 'the empty nature of entitlement claims without social recognition,' where mothers without the 'sanctioned middle-class cultural capital struggle to exert power or influence in such institutional arenas'. Working-class single mothers like Danese who try to assert themselves are often set 'on a collision course with an education system designed to promote and value middle-class attributes' (2007:92-3). Although Danese repeatedly asserts her legitimacy – she was 'brought up not dragged up' – her resources are limited and her capital devalued. Instead she describes how Clarice and her take tissues out during meetings to signal to each other that teachers are talking nonsense and they are not listening; this tissue game of passive resistance becomes her only recourse.

iii. Criminal Types

Turkish working-class year eleven student Osman more openly contested rules and subsequently found himself in continuous trouble. Osman referred to the LSU as 'my second home', but started the year intent 'to get on with it and get through the year' without last year's problems. Osman was in sets two and three, wanted to be an architect and was described by his teachers as bright. He lived on a nearby estate with his mother who spoke limited English, while his father had died a few years before. Although he did not call himself 'working class', he actively differentiated himself from the white, middle-class group, asserting that it was mostly boys and black people in the LSU. Osman said he had never seen 'English people' like Elisabeth and her friends in there and never spoke to them - this was the same group Mary described as posh and exclusive in chapter six. Osman was aware he had a short temper, but described how most teachers knew this and tried to help him manage it. Instead of trying to fight the rules, he wanted to do everything right and 'behave' how he was

'supposed to' to get good GCSEs. As for attending the sixth form, Osman pronounced, 'I can't take another two year jail sentence'; he would rather work in a kebab shop.

After a few months, Osman was in trouble again. It became common knowledge around Mossbourne that he was in a gang, despite Osman's claims that his friendship group was not a gang but 'family'. One teacher described how Osman was struggling, upset that he could not leave the gang without suffering retribution. His attitude towards Mossbourne had hardened. Osman described how he 'loved the grades', but hated the rest of it. It made him angry and he had not changed at all because of it, adding 'I still go out and do what I do'. When I asked him what he thought about Sir Michael's 'structure liberates' ethos, Osman reconfirmed that our conversation was confidential before saying structure did not work for him and 'Sir Michael should shut his mouth because he talks a lot of shit'. Instead Osman thought coming to Mossbourne had been a 'massive problem' for him and 'has not helped my life at all, but only made it worse'. Osman described how Mossbourne 'did not understand the background that we are from in Hackney...we're not from a posh area where we're all the same,' adding that Mossbourne 'did not get the area'. Osman's initial desire to concede was not working; instead he was becoming increasingly rebellious and estranged from a school that he felt did not understand the very real pressures he was facing beyond its gates.

By springtime Osman was being searched upon arrival. He professed that he had no idea why he had been searched 'every day for weeks and weeks' after being told it was for a day or so. The teacher wielding the metal detector described how Osman had apologised to him for looking cross; he realised he was only doing his job. Osman described how his mother had asked why he was being searched, but Ms Butler 'could not give her a straight answer, saying, "Oh, I am not sure, I will have to check on that"'. Osman said he and his mother had reached the point of not arguing because 'there was no point', and he did not want to miss the exams. Meanwhile Mr Pierce felt there was 'more than enough reason to search Osman' due to the information he had shared with a staff member, asserting 'yes, he's a criminal'. Yet he conceded there was uncertainty over the truth of Osman's stories. Police officers had not been able to corroborate any of the events described. Although Mr Pierce thought Osman was likeable

and did really well when he was given a lot of attention, he 'just reverts to type' when placed in a group.

One June morning I discovered no one could talk to Osman because he had been permanently excluded for bringing a screwdriver to Mossbourne. After arranging a special meeting, Osman explained how he had brought the screwdriver in by mistake because he was repairing bikes at his friend's house the day before and left it in his bag. He felt this was 'the biggest excuse ever to exclude me permanently' and Mossbourne 'should use their brains, use their psychology' because if he wanted to bring in a weapon, he would have brought a knife. Plus, he was aware of being searched each day. Exasperated, Osman said he had tried to explain, but 'they were not having it'. Although Osman admits Mossbourne put him off education 'one hundred per cent', he continued to value academic achievement, adding 'I am smart enough to realise that you cannot class all education as the same and other places will be different', asserting 'I am clever and deserve a chance in life'. Yet most teachers appeared to feel Osman was unsalvageable and best ridded from the landscape.

One teacher cautioned me to 'take anything that he says about anything with a pinch of salt', and when I said we were going to discuss future plans they laughed, adding those looked 'bleak'. While waiting for him to finish his exam, Ms Butler carefully instructed me that Osman 'needed to get out of the school as soon as possible'; I needed to walk him off the site so he could not roam around. Leaning over, she whispered 'Just write evil and twisted, evil and twisted!' laughing as she carried on down the corridor. Although certainly angry and overcommitted to a volatile peer group, Osman was also a distressed and confused sixteen year-old. Treating him as a confirmed 'criminal' arguably led him to further embrace his gang or 'family' as a haven of acceptance. Against the increasingly antagonistic landscape of Mossbourne where Osman lacked value, his external identity becomes a more amenable, plausible source of value – albeit officially illegitimate. As Bourdieu writes, '...there is no worse dispossession, no worse privation, perhaps, than that of the losers in the symbolic struggle for recognition, for access to a socially recognised social being, in a word, to humanity' (2000:241). Despite real dangers, it offers him recognition, while this assertion of 'macho' masculinity was not an alternative system of value, but an extension of already present structures (Alexander, 1996). Osman's masculine

bravado does not operate apart from Mossbourne's value system, but operates within the same parameters as Sir Michael's lawless urban cowboy rubric - albeit in an illegitimate form.

Yet for Mr Pierce, Ms Butler and others, Osman had become the irredeemably criminal 'type' that had always already lingered within, waiting to emerge. Young men like Osman are not seen as children to be helped, but criminals to be purged as the 'geography of childhood' is 'constructed differently across time and place where a children felt to be in need of protection in one area becomes a "youth problem" in another' (Nayak, 2003:311-12). The inevitability of this pronunciation shows how the carceral systems within the school tie to the external prison complex. While prisons punish delinquency, they also produce it in and by incarceration, as 'The prison is merely the natural consequence, no more than a higher degree, of that hierarchy laid down step by step' (Foucault, 1991a:301). Time in the LSU functions as both dress rehearsal and guarantee of the 'real thing' for boys like Osman, as internally excluded students become externally excluded criminals, shifted from one cell to another.

This procedural discipline based school model does not help Shante, Osman, Clarice and many other students like them who cannot claim or access 'buffer zone' status. These students failed to become the right kind of subjects, highlighting how cultural games are played out and how these matches are seldom fair. Although the difficult circumstances these students must navigate may be more extreme than some of their peers, Mossbourne does not fulfil its promise. Its structure does not liberate them from their positions, but only compounds their issues, ensuring that those born into the 'less welcoming worlds' Berlant (2011) describes remain unwelcome in other worlds like Mossbourne. Rather than 'catching' them, the child catcher drives onward in search of less laborious bodies more amenable to being caught.

The Damage of Dislocation

Tameka's frustration over the severing of Mossbourne from wider Hackney corresponds with Osman's more extreme feelings on this separation. As explored in chapter six, Tameka felt teachers judging her to have a dismal future was unfair because her and her friends were trying, but she asserts

Mossbourne 'cannot expect it to happen overnight'. She feels black students were showing they could achieve, but needed time to move up. While 'it was all well and good making a school like this', Tameka stressed that they needed to realise they have placed it in Hackney. Instead of Hackney as pathological place, Tameka passionately insists there are positive aspects that should not be dismissed. Tameka said a lot of students could be both 'street' and intelligent, reiterating that they were trying to 'raise themselves' because everyone knew education and money were important to focus on because jobs were scarce. Tameka emphatically exclaimed that they were 'trying to get the grades and all', but 'they have to realise they have built this school in Hackney!'

Conversely, Tameka describes how some teachers like Mr Hudson or Mr Adams knew about Hackney. They really understood them and knew what they were talking about. These teachers could 'have a laugh and get on with it', but then other teachers simply did not understand. She said if teachers were nice people, if they were funny and just understood, or if they were 'blessed' in talking to them, then they would be 'blessed' back. But if teachers just shouted and screamed the whole time 'there was going to be trouble'. Tameka and her friends sought respect and understanding which she felt she received from some teachers. Incidentally, the two teachers she names live near or in the borough. As Clarice mentioned, shouting is an ineffective means of coercion or communication with older students.

Florence develops some of the issues Tameka raises regarding Mossbourne's estrangement from the surrounding area. She felt it was unfair that there were so few teachers of her own colour to look up to, recounting how at one time there was only one black teacher, while now there are about five compared to dozens of white teachers. Florence's comments highlight the noticeable absence of ethnic minority bodies that becomes symbolic of a wider rejection and exclusion of the external environment. She felt the school would fit better with Hackney if it were more diverse and included more black, Muslim, Indian and other ethnic minority teachers. Florence feels 'naïve young boys' might retaliate less if being corrected by a black teacher and less apt to put this correction down to racism, adding 'it's supposed to be a community academy, but it does not reflect this'.

Isolating Opinions

Compulsory compliance leads to a silencing of student voices like that experienced by teachers in chapter four, albeit of a more absolute nature due to students' subordinate position within the institutional hierarchy. Although prefect Samuel seldom critiqued Mossbourne at the start of year eleven, by July he described how he had seen himself change:

> I think actually, as I've grown older, I've become more and more rebellious because in my opinion I do think that the education at Mossbourne is just great, but I do think that the rules are just ridiculous to be honest...I think there are certain teachers that just stretch it, they really do, they just want to take control. Maybe that's their personality and now they're being like a senior teacher so they can impose their authority and just make children's life difficult. And if a child reacts, then I think they will just enjoy that and then they know they can punish them even more.

Sometimes Samuel doubted teachers' moral authority, particularly when they visibly relished over-exerting their power, however his rebelliousness remained a largely internal, reflective phenomenon.

Samuel tied his inner rebellion to an incident that occurred on the day of the student tuition fees protest in November 2010. One student had planned via Facebook for students to gather in the playground and walk out, or, more realistically given the security, for everyone to sit down when the bell rang. Samuel described how everyone had gathered in front of the gate, but teachers were aware of the plan and break time was cut short. Samuel was headed towards his lesson when Ms Butler pulled his bag. He recalled politely saying, 'Miss, you don't have to pull my bag'. She looked at him and said something about the protest; Samuel remained expressionless and continued, but Ms Butler pulled his bag again and he repeated, 'Miss, you don't have to pull my bag'. Samuel described standing in the corridor where three successive teachers shouted at him about setting a poor example. Then he was sent to Ms Butler's office where she too shouted at him, spending the rest of the day in isolation with a six o'clock detention for allegedly trying to get out of the gate. After inspecting Samuel's planner, Ms Butler said he would have to miss his play rehearsal.

Samuel was particularly upset about missing rehearsal and related this incident to his mother Celeste who asked him to honestly relate his story. His mother decided it did not sound right and phoned Mossbourne. Ms Butler argued with Celeste and Samuel described how this irritated his usually calm mother. Celeste then met with Ms Butler in person who professed to be unaware of Samuel's play rehearsal, claiming if she had known, things would have been different. Samuel thought this was not right, as Ms Butler had clearly seen it in his planner. He also remained confused as to why he was being punished in first place as he had carefully maintained a polite tone and neutral facial expression. Yet Samuel did not argue back 'because if I made a point, I know she would have made it even worse, like "you were answering back" and stuff. I'm not trying to be disrespectful or anything, but if I know something is not right, I will say it in the politest way possible. I'm not trying to be rude, but if I don't think this is right I will say it'.

Although Samuel very sensibly points out the difficulties that might have arisen if the entire school had marched, he also felt dissent would never be allowed in an environment like Mossbourne: 'I knew in my head it was not going to happen - not at the school that does not allow students to stand in groups of more than six'. Lorna also felt nothing subversive would occur at Mossbourne, instead running to take advantage of the shorter pizza queue. Yet one of her photo diary pictures depicts a dense congregation of students in front of the gates, something Lorna felt was a remarkable scene. Lorna's mother Eve described how she would have been delighted if they had all sat down, relating an exchange with her daughter:

> And I said to Lorna, 'Why didn't it happen?' and she said 'Mum, all it would have taken is for one person to sit down and the whole school would have followed'. Everyone was waiting for that one to do it, and not one was quite brave enough to sit on the floor. And they'd have all and I don't know what would have happened then.

Eve marvelled at what would have occurred, adding that it is quite annoying that it did not happen. She remarks that sixth form students even requested permission to protest, laughing at the cowed ridiculousness of this gesture, however Eve points out

Mossbourne's controlled environment:

> They have security there though, the gates were locked, there was no way for the kids to get out. And because of the discipline, they know no child is going to get violent, no child is going to push. The kids - the kids are scared. They are.

The student who orchestrated the sit-down on Facebook was excluded for one week, but later made a painting of a student in a Mossbourne uniform with their mouth taped shut, dangling by chains from the ominously creepy hands a faceless puppeteer (see figure 0.6.). Eve sympathised with the students' position, adding that she thought all the teachers realised it was restrictive, yet 'they also know unfortunately that it works, so I feel that they are torn a bit too'. Student's limited expectations and scope for agency and the institution's punitive reaction highlights the narrow, constricted nature of Mossbourne's supposedly liberatory structures. As Bondi and Laurie (2005) discuss, neoliberalism actively works to deplete and constrain activism; Mossbourne's systems teach students the pointlessness of attempting to make their voices heard from the outset. Unsurprisingly, students are more amenable to compliance.

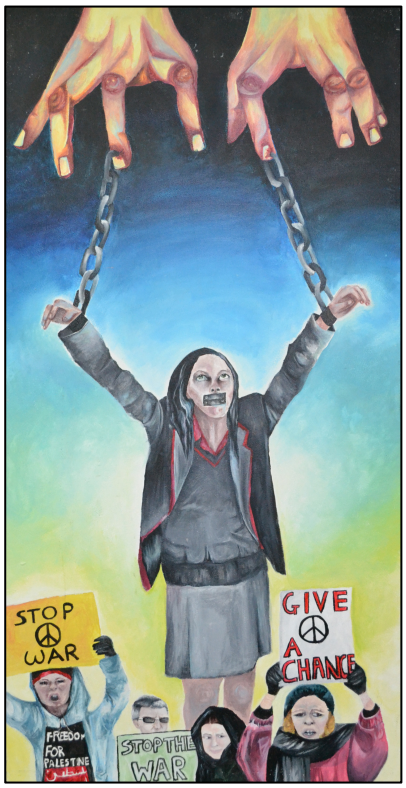

Fig. 0.9. One student's response to the quashed fees protest

Accordingly, the majority of students complained that Mossbourne did not listen to them or take their opinions into account. Abisola said the one thing she would change about Mossbourne would be to give the students more of a chance to have a voice in things – to be able to say how they felt, to be listened to, to not have to go it alone and to have someone to talk to. Samuel described how only advice on trivial matters like where benches should go in the playground was listened to:

> You can voice your opinion, but I think the school won't listen or will just put you in isolation or something like that. I don't think...the school is very autocratic, it does not like to listen to suggestions and ideas, it just thinks about what is right for them. Even if you wanted to get your ideas heard, it would only be for minimal things.

Joshua described how the student council was like the 'lord of the flies'. Although he was initially enthusiastic to alter the hair rules discussed in chapter four by joining the council, it ends up being a performance of hearing without listening. Although Mossbourne provides a formal mechanism for pupil voices to be heard, it does not actually listen to what students are saying.

Not only are students ignored, but some parents are as well. Florence's family sometimes felt the school was too strict, particularly when she felt sick and was not allowed to go to the toilet during a lesson, resulting in her vomiting on the floor. With a sense of smug vindication, she described how a portion of the floor had to be re-carpeted. Her working-class black British father came in to speak to a teacher when Florence was forbidden to attend a medical appointment, however it was made abundantly clear that his opinion was irrelevant. Florence reflects:

> Teachers like to have the whole authority over the student and the parents as well. They don't really listen to what parents say here I don't think. Cause they got a PTA, but I don't think they really listen to the PTA or the PTA that they had was just the selected ones who they liked with the good opinions about the school...And I think the PTA even complained about something...and I don't think the school done anything about it. And we even had the school council for this school obviously – a school council for the students and we were saying how we felt about stuff...but the school

> just ignored it...I just don't think the school listens.

Not only are student voices irrelevant, most parents are ignored unless they are on the PTA, which Florence designates as a repository for parents with 'good opinions'.

Conclusion

> I remember saying to a teacher, and I won't mention his name...I said to him, 'What is important is the ability of kids to think'. He said, 'Well if you wanted them to think, you sent them to the wrong school'. So in other words, we can teach them here's Pythagoras, put the numbers in, there's your answer. But don't ask them to derive the equation. They are not thinkers. But we want thinkers, not just to deal with existing problems, but to address new problems.
> *Alexander, Daniel's father*

Whereas many working-class and ethnic minority students often disinvest in education and 'know their limits' after repeated experiences of academic failure, Mossbourne presents a limitless landscape where investment is mandatory (Archer and Yamashita, 2003). Unlike other research which has shown how masculinities are often built on displays of resistance towards school work or an apparent lack of effort (see Sewell, 1997; Frosh et al, 2002; Francis, 1999), where education is framed as an effeminate space (Willis, 1997), Mossbourne makes trying not only acceptable for both boys and girls, but mandatory. Even Charlie or Gazi who aligned themselves with 'tough' masculinities participated in schoolwork and were only, as Charlie described 'fake bad boys'. Although this limitless horizon is a mirage, the continual pushing of students means that most experience progress in their levels; this degree of success makes trying and moving towards an 'ideal' pupil status appear possible for many pupils – even if it reiterates that they are pathological. These manoeuvres are riddled with contradictory ambiguity. As teachers write efficiency, compliance and skill upon the student body, students take up these inscriptions and learn to write themselves. Yet this self must be written in a certain script; only certain selves are acceptable as Mossbourne attempts to shift the student from a working-class to a more middle-class culture. This 'liberation' may bring the benefits of good grades and future success, yet these benefits come with a cost.

Throughout this process students are urged to regard themselves as commodities made better and more valuable through their training. Boltanski and Chiapello reflect on capitalism's expanding and deepening reach post-1968 in comparison to the traditional Taylorisation of work that treated people like machines, arguing that the new spirit of capitalism penetrates 'more profoundly into people's interior being' as they must give themselves over to their work (2007:465-6). They describe how this new capitalism places 'the most specific qualities of human beings – their emotions, their moral sense, their honour, and so on – directly in the service of the pursuit of profit', allowing human qualities to be instrumentalised and commodified. Market logic penetrates these young people's lives and their social relationships at an intensely personal level. Mossbourne students and teachers must 'give themselves' to the institution, they must be 'caught', and to be caught is to be, or at least act, uncritical and be a good 'little robot'. There is little space for critical thinking, innovation or creativity in the neoliberal school; instead there is obedient reproduction where students, parents and teachers learn to accept Mossbourne's approach is the only option.

Chapter Eight

Urban Chaos and the Imagined Other: Remaking Middle-Class Hegemony

While chapter six and seven explored how students navigated and negotiated Mossbourne's conveyor belt where middle-class and mostly white students were positioned as a buffer zone against urban chaos, this chapter more closely examines parental orientations to the institution. Responses to the urban chaos discourse show how parents and students conceptualise their positions within this imagined Hackney landscape. Discourses of pathology shape the relationships developed between parents and teachers, impacting upon how students and parents are perceived and treated by the school. The urban chaos discourse powerfully reiterates the inequitable positions of the watcher and the watched, the judger and the judged. While the white middle-class parent occupies an invisible, normative space, working-class and ethnic minority parents feel the potential weight of discipline's reformative hand. These white middle-class parents' habitus is in sync with Mossbourne, 'And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a "fish in water": it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:127). White middle-class parents position themselves as buoyant, automatically appropriate subjects, as other parents labour to gain institutional recognition and protect their children from being marked by discipline. Ultimately rather than students being measured as data like Mossbourne claims, the continued use of types, categories and subjective judgements becomes evident as students are weeded off the conveyor belt as it progresses from GCSE to sixth form college.

Whose Oasis?

Many middle-class parents recognised their innate 'worth' on the education market, and their ability to manipulate this market. Middle-class students' favoured status, as explored in chapters six and seven, connects to their parents' position of value to form a circuitous route of privilege. As Ball (2003) points out, this preferred position must be struggled for; efforts must be made to ensure their child's position on the conveyor belt is secure. Veronica described how a group of middle-class parents at her daughter's primary school actively strategised to gain admission:

Veronica: Then I gradually found out that the De Beauvoir parents, who

were in a desert of secondary school provision, were actually trying to entice Sir Michael over into their camp to invite him around for drinks...In order to try to, well basically, to allow their children in. So in whatever way he could.

CK: Because they are out of the catchment area aren't they?

Veronica: Oh yes, they are certainly out of the catchment area. Yeah, totally, it's N1 down there.

When I later asked if their drinks party had succeeded, Veronica replied, 'Ah well, incriminating as it might sound, yes it did. I don't know if it was that that did it...but I think their plea was heard'. Several other parents described how Mossbourne's much publicised success had attracted middle-class parents from beyond the catchment area. Poppy's father Stuart, a middle-class white American, asserts:

...I mean I know for a fact that there are kids who go there who only go there because their parents had the wherewithal and the energy to kind of work the system enough to get them in there...Cause there are ways of doing it, if you are persistent.

Franklin, Isaac's middle-class black British father, describes how

...when schools are successful, or the perception of them is successful, well what do you think it does? It creates a magnet for - let's face it - the chattering classes. All the sudden their children want to go and they might not even live in the area, but they will have strategies to get their children in...

Given the pressure to attract and establish a middle-class cohort to prevent Mossbourne from becoming what Mr Wainwright referred to as 'a sink school', these strategies often work.

Parents did not necessarily position 'working the system' as problematic. Phil, a middle-class white British parent and PTA member, portrays it as beneficial:

> ...you've got all middle-class parents desperate to get their kids into Mossbourne and doing whatever they can and being as pushy as they can and fiddling the rules...and of course the end result is that you do have a mix. And a mix works.

Phil concludes that pushy middle-class parents edging other parents out of this mix makes a more balanced environment, adding that if Mossbourne's intake were only poor kids, it would fail. In these terms, the long-term policy push to fashion parents into consumers has been productive. Reay (2008:642), referencing Chitty (2007) says '...Blair's greatest achievement was in ensuring that the marketisation of the public services is now built into the DNA of public service provision'. Not only is marketisation built into the DNA of services, it is part of middle-class parents' DNA as consumers.

The transition to secondary school marks a potential crisis in reproduction for middle-class families, all of whom described undertaking extensive research to ensure their children attended a good school in Hackney or elsewhere. Emily, a white British middle-class mother, remarks: 'Yeah we did a lot of research because it's very scary secondary schools'. Stephen Ball describes how individualist modes of social reproduction entailed by the modern market are riddled with fear, insecurity and potential failure; smooth reproduction is not guaranteed and class boundaries must be continually reproduced and maintained (2003:149). There were several local schools these parents automatically dismissed as inadequate choices. Julia, a middle-class white British mother and PTA member, describes how her and her partner

> ...fought tooth and nail to get our son in there originally. He was one of those unfortunate kids who was not really offered any kind of viable alternative. He was offered a place at what was the then-failing Homerton boys' school. And we wouldn't, we couldn't have sent him there. It was just horrible.

Yet Bernadette, a working-class white British mother, describes how one of her sons did not get into Mossbourne '...so he went to another school in Hackney which was absolutely crap, rubbish'. Unlike these middle-class parents, Bernadette did not have the right capital and an arsenal of strategies to ensure her son could access Mossbourne.

As Mr Wainwright described in chapter six, although middle-class parents can be 'whiny', they are also supportive through institutions like the PTA. Veronica who organised the fairs at her daughter's former primary school describes a conversation with another parent when her daughter was in year three:

> ...she was saying 'Oh, have you thought about what schools?' I said, 'Oh, I don't really know'. And she was saying, 'Well, you know Mossbourne they do want you, you know, they do want you'. She said '*you*' i.e., middle-class parents, *they want you*. And I said, 'Oh, what do you mean?' And she said, 'Well, they wouldn't have this, would they?' In other words, the summer fair and that link with the community kind of thing, or something that represents a link with the community anyway.

While Veronica realises her 'wanted' status, both Phil and Julia relate a story about a boy from another academy telling them during Mossbourne's winter fair that they did not have fairs at his school because there were no middle-class children. Phil describes the PTA as '...the same old suspects – it's the white middle-class parents you know who are doing that. And there is an issue here – and it's not all, there are certainly non-white middle-class parents on the PTA, but very few of them'. Phil suggests white middle-class parents are doing their duty while others are not. He describes how Mossbourne responded to Ofsted's instruction to engage with the community by encouraging the PTA, although Veronica recognises this as a symbolic, unrepresentative act because the PTA is composed of mostly white, middle-class parents. Alexander comments, 'If the PTA puts on a function...it's associated with top sets. And I know my kids are in there, but I have not seen much where people have cooked Caribbean food and things like that'. Phil emphasises how important it is for parents to support their children through being 'integrated and involved in the school because I think it makes the child have a very different attitude towards the school', suggesting that working-class and ethnic minority parents are not supporting their children properly through a failure to integrate. Yet, as Alexander points out, the PTA and Mossbourne, as highlighted by Ofsted, are the entities estranged from the majority of the community.

Bernadette, almost anticipating Phil's critique, emphasises that she attends all the fairs and drama productions, regardless of whether or not her children are involved, but she

is not a PTA member because 'They're not my cup of tea I'm afraid'. She describes how '...a lot kids in this school do come from out a little bit...yeah, there is these posher children that stick to their little groups'. She thinks the behaviour of these 'posher children' mirrors their parents:

> Sometimes - this is probably going to sound wrong - but like the way they talk and things like that, you know. They're not, they would not be my first choice of a group of friends, like I probably would not be theirs. Cause they seem to have - when you come to the fun days or the fetes and that, they sort of, they all like *(demonstrates distance)*, they're like their children, they all stick together. I mean I don't have problems with them, but.

Bernadette is not unsupportive of Mossbourne, but feels alienated by this exclusive group of 'posher' parents and children who she portrays as coming from outside of Hackney. Despite the narrow cross-section it represents, the middle-class 'buffer zone' comes to signify Mossbourne's community via the PTA.

Mossbourne's 'oasis in the desert' assumes a dual meaning and purpose. Besides its widely publicised task of saving 'urban children', Mossbourne more covertly invites middle-class parents to colonise this space as they actively seek admission. This suggests the effect of the academy programme within boroughs like Hackney is much different than that purported by policy rhetoric. Veronica hints at these less-publicised effects when discussing school choice, reflecting that even if she could afford private schooling she would 'opt for state somehow', but qualifies this: 'I suppose the question is, would I have left like all the other middle-class parents seemed to do prior to the academy roll out? Uh, I don't know is the answer to that'. Although 'the academy roll out' was continually positioned by New Labour policy and Sir Michael as breaking a culture of cyclical underachievement, Veronica points out how this 'roll out' has kept middle-class parents in Hackney while attracting others. The De Beauvoir parents outside the catchment area, stranded in 'a desert of secondary school provision' can mobilise their cultural capital to enter this oasis, while parents like Bernadette lacking the legitimate capital yet living adjacent to Mossbourne are excluded. This highlights how education markets do not promote equality, calling into question whose children these new academies are actually benefitting.

Efficient Business Professionals

Many middle-class parents readily compared schools to businesses, positioning the market model as obviously applicable to education and frequently drawing on their own experience as private sector professionals to praise Sir Michael's leadership. With her human resources background, Julia marvelled at Sir Michael's management skills that she felt made all staff members feel motivated and rewarded accordingly. Julia joked that she should undertake a PhD in effective management using Mossbourne as a template. Emily, a marketing consultant, recalls meeting Sir Michael several times:

> I liked him because it's all about leadership, so I think he is a very good head and I think people respect him, so it's like any business if you are running - the person at the top has to be respected and doing a good job...I think he makes the right decisions.

Miriam, a media professional, also draws this parallel:

> It's like business. It depends who your senior management team is, you know the business might not change, what you do, the rules, but it can make a huge difference to the whole culture of the company depending on the individuals who are running it...

The complete lack of resistance to marketised education shows how deeply engrained neoliberal market logic is in the minds of middle-class parents. Despite Hackney's longstanding history of leftist politics, there was little resistance or critique of these models from Mossbourne parents; if anything they were embraced.

Emily was amazed at how Sir Michael has consistently kept Mossbourne running 'like clockwork' for years, relating this story:

> This made me laugh. My son was saying Sir Michael did a tour of the classes yesterday and he said one of the teachers ran over to the other teachers and said 'Sir Michael is coming down the corridor'. *(laughs)* And he said to me, 'Everyone is scared of him. Why?' And I'm like, 'Well they're scared'. I thought that was hysterical. Can you imagine? So they are looking out for each other, the teachers. I thought that was quite sweet

actually. Just saying, 'He's coming, he's coming'.

Emily muses at how Sir Michael retains this control saying, 'It's not shouting, it's just the look, he just gives the look', adding he is 'quite gentle'. Instead of scared teachers as a negative phenomenon, Emily feels this fear '... keeps them on their toes and makes sure they deliver. And a lot of them are quite young aren't they, so it's great for their CV...I'm just so lucky, you know for a state school, I'm just like, "thank the Lord!"' Not only is this portrayed as a CV-building experience for teachers, her son receives a good, free education. Emily and Julia's wonderment at Mossbourne's management structures jars with many teacher accounts explored in chapter four where staff describe labouring for long hours in an atmosphere of distrust, surveillance and fear.

Only Miriam suggests the potentially huge demands made on staff:

> …there is a very high turnover of staff which I have been very surprised of and which has been quite challenging to Poppy, that she will have had her favourite science teacher, English teacher and you know, when we go to that parent's evening there are many goodbyes. And I don't know why that is. I don't know if it's because it's fine for the kids, but all a bit damn tough on the teachers and they've had enough by the end of the first year or two?

While Poppy benefits, Miriam wonders if teachers cannot withstand the demands. Her partner Stuart speculates teachers might be headhunted, while Miriam adds this high turnover stands in stark contrast to her older son's experience at secondary school where he had the same teachers throughout.

Yet the teacher revamped as dynamic business professional is an image popular with parents. Recounting a visit to Mossbourne, *The Guardian* noted that all the teachers 'seem mysteriously young and good-looking here' (Bedell, 2008). Phil echoes this sentiment, describing the general teacher profile as 'highly committed, highly energetic', a profile reinforced by aesthetic presentations:

> And again it's good marketing - because they just look, they look like young business people and you just think 'I can't believe they're teachers, surely they're not teachers?' You know, they just don't look like teachers because they are all in smart suits and you know, pretty sexy. Sexy guys,

> sexy women, and you go, 'Hang on a minute they can't be teachers!' but of course they are.

As Thatcherite, Blairite and Coalition governments have portrayed education as an engine for economic growth, who better to deliver this service than teachers styled as business professionals? This image of energetic youthfulness sells the Mossbourne brand to professional parents who recognise themselves in its image, yet it is important to highlight that this middle-class grouping is not homogenous, but riven with subtle cleavages (see Ball and Vincent, 2006). Veronica describes teachers as 'terribly committed', adding 'I mean I don't know where they find them from? What's the blueprint? I just don't know where they – apart from they are very young, aren't they?...There doesn't seem to be any dead wood'. Veronica congratulates whoever is responsible for recruitment, musing there must be some 'who can't hack it and just leave', yet she adds that they do not hear or know about these cases '...so all we are presented with is a bunch of highly enthusiastic, competent, up for it, energetic teachers...' Several other parents commented on how wonderful it was for teachers to give up their time to patrol the streets after school, assuming this was a voluntary rather than an institutionally required action. Parent's delight as consumers getting a good service is combined with Mossbourne's closed-door secrecy to obscure the labour issues underlining the production of young, dedicated, yet ultimately disposable, teachers.

Disciplinary Facades

The privileged status accorded to middle-class parents shapes their relationship to discipline, with several parents suggesting that although Mossbourne seems heavily disciplined, this is more an impression created than a daily reality. Julia describes being 'hugely' irritated by some rules, however she is comforted by teachers' caring and appreciates what Mossbourne has done for the community:

> I can't bear the no-touching rule, any kind of touching. At the transition day when our youngest was there with his friends, one of them high-fived somebody else and got shouted at for no touching. And I think that is over the top, I think it's completely unnecessary...I don't see the need to terrorise would-be year sevens, you know. The comparison with the military and breaking your spirit come too easily to the forefront. And I

> don't like that. But what I know, and what comforts me, and what I was able to say to the children, is that might be the impression they create, but in fact once you are there, very good relationships are formed with teachers and they are very caring.

This idea of discipline as more impression than reality was developed by Phil. When I asked him how he felt about Mossbourne's ethos, he tied impression making to impression management and marketing:

> I mean, I think a lot of it is smoke and mirrors. I think you know above all - whether a school is strict or not strict - you want the pupils and above all the parents to think that it is strict. And I think that they have done a good job. I mean the one thing that Mossbourne and Sir Michael are good at is marketing. And I think that you have to market a school and one of the means with which he markets it is to say that it is a strict school. Now there will be some people and I know of them who will say *(imitating a very posh accent)* 'Oh, well it's just awful, disgraceful. The school is so strict!' Well, you know, so don't send them there then. You know. It does what it says on the tin. It says it's a strict school. In fact, I do not think it is that strict...

Phil thinks Sir Michael cultivates an aura of strictness as a marketing device to garner the support of parents, but sees this rigidity as largely illusory, for '...as long as you keep your nose clean and keep a low profile, you'll be alright...' Phil describes how his son Frank dreaded attending and received numerous detentions when he arrived at Mossbourne, but now he loved it because he had learned the rules and acquired more freedom. Phil felt the 'trick' or 'key' to Mossbourne's success was it maintained 'a facade and a belief structure that it is strict', but 'once you know what those rules are and you abide by them, you can go beyond that and have the freedom to develop and mature'. In a similar vein, Emily describes how her son Oscar found the discipline difficult at first, but she felt Oscar could be creative:

> ...I think once you get used to the rules, you know, as long as you follow the rules, you can always do whatever – express yourself...the school is quite good because it does encourage and if you are creative or musical it does encourage that.

Yet what is deemed creative occupies a narrow range of forms and times for expression; while the raps produced by Samuel and his friends were prohibited, creativity can legitimately be cultivated through music lessons. Emily and Phil assume their sons' experiences are universal whereby adjusting to rules and keeping a 'low profile' allows freedom. However, as discussed in chapter six, keeping a low profile is easier for some students than others.

After initial misgivings over Mossbourne's atmosphere, Miriam and Stuart also mentioned the partial exercising of rules:

> *Stuart:* Yeah I know, it seemed before we went there, it definitely seemed kind of scary. It did to me. I mean I thought it seemed kind of quite freaky.
>
> *Miriam:* A bit culty.
>
> *Stuart:* But I can't at the moment complain, at least in terms of it does not seem to be making anyone unhappy. They also, as far as I can see, it's more - I don't think they actually exercise all those rules, as much as they, I mean they kind of have them, but I don't really think it's as strict as they say it is in practice.
>
> *Miriam:* Well it's impossible for us to say.
>
> *Stuart:* Yeah, we aren't there.

These comments highlight parents' limited first-hand knowledge of education; as Miriam and Stuart point out, their assertions are merely speculative. Stuart feels Mossbourne does not seem to make anyone 'unhappy', however they later mention how Poppy's friendship group is predominantly comprised of white, middle-class students. They describe that Poppy speaks fondly of ethnic minority students whom she is friendly with in school, but does not socialise with these children beyond school. Miriam explains: 'You know there is this terrible expression which is PLU, so yes, the parents of her friends are people like us, more than people we wouldn't encounter in any other walk of life...' Other white middle-class parents including Veronica, Phil, Emily and Julia attested to a similar lack of inter-ethnic or cross-class socialising

beyond the school gates, reiterating the social divisions explored in chapter six. This lack of mixing reduces Stuart and Miriam's vision to the vantage point of a middle-class and predominantly white parental network. They also point out how the large middle-class peer group available to Poppy was not present for her older brother, attesting to Hackney's rapid gentrification. Although there is not necessarily a perceived threat at every level as in Butler and Robson's (2003) study of London's white middle-classes, the exclusivity of this group is certainly maintained.

For many middle-class parents, discipline was depicted as beneficial, albeit not directly necessarily for their child. This ties to Ms Carrier's comment from chapter four describing how middle-class parents 'tolerate the behaviour system' because they realised it works on a 'whole school level' and 'allows their child to go to a comprehensive urban school'. Discipline was repeatedly associated with ensuring a safe environment. Miriam describes how Poppy's 'horrific' experience at another secondary school in year seven prompted her move to Mossbourne, despite its 'cult-status'. Miriam describes Poppy's transition as '...a transformation overnight. I think that the code of conduct and the discipline meant, you know, she felt safe. It was expected to be polite, which is obviously the way she was raised and how she had to behave at primary school, so all the norms that she had kind of grown up with'. Mossbourne is positioned as offering safety and comfort through familiar norms that fitted Poppy.

Veronica similarly relates her daughter's experience: '..you know she doesn't get detentions and she doesn't really need that level of structure, however I am sure she benefits from it'. When I asked how, Veronica replies: 'Because she feels safe. And because she's allowed to get on. I think she suffered in primary school...she is a high achiever she suffered from many and various distractions during lessons'. Despite his reservations expressed in the previous chapter about the rigid lack of flair instigated by discipline, Daniel's father Alexander, voices a similar opinion:

> I tell you what, one of the things that attracted me to this school was that [discipline] because Daniel did not need discipline. He was already disciplined...I did not want Daniel going to a school where people were unruly school and causing fights and he was being dragged into it. Things like that, so I can't knock it. The discipline was what attracted me here.

Like Veronica and Miriam, Alexander does not think Daniel needs discipline, yet he

does not want him to become involved with situations stemming from a disordered environment. Implicitly Mossbourne's discipline targets someone else's children, whilst protecting theirs from the mayhem potentially caused by imagined others.

Cementing Affinities

Lorna's mother Eve juxtaposed Mossbourne's daily rigidity to the relaxed atmosphere on school trips:

> ...from what both girls have told me, it's not like that [strict] at all when they go away on trips. The teachers are a lot more fun, a lot more outgoing, a lot more lax and allow the kids to express themselves a bit more. But not all the kids are able to experience that side of it.

As a single parent, Eve was thankful for her mother who had helped fund these outings, acknowledging these experiences were not universally available.

Incidentally, a heated exchange about school trips occurred during the group discussion with year nine students including Eve's daughter Lorna. Abisola felt Mr Pierce did not like black people and Lorna responded, saying 'Mr Pierce loves me!' Abisola retorted, 'Yeah, that's because you went on that skiing trip'. Gazi, also not on the trip, interjects that Mr Pierce allegedly said something like 'Thank God there were no black people on the skiing trip'. Lorna and Poppy interrupted, explaining Mr Pierce said 'the reason that you are here is because you can afford it'. Uproar ensued. Charlie exclaimed 'That's not nice!' Gazi asserted this was still racist, while Charlie added that many people cannot afford skiing. Abisola asked Lorna to explain further; Lorna claimed Mr Pierce was not being rude, but simply telling the truth when he said he did not think anyone on the trip received free school meals and that most of them were in top sets. Whatever Mr Pierce's motives for highlighting these 'truths', they did not sit comfortably with the group, starkly highlighting that skiing trips were the preserve of set one, middle-class and mostly white students. Students like Charlie, Abisola and Gazi experience the symbolic violence of exclusion – a violence that often goes unnoticed and unpunished, '…and which is, in the last analysis, the product of the "inert violence" of economic structures and social mechanisms relayed by the active violence of people' (Bourdieu, 2000:233). Differential access to economic resources becomes naturalised and Mossbourne's social structure is shaped through these

exclusions. These activities also allowed students who already occupied a normative status to become more familiar, distinct individuals through sharing informal settings with teachers. These leisure scenes stand in stark contrast to the LSU's dehumanising confinement.

While middle-class students may experience school trips, they often had little experience of the LSU. Despite his involvement with Mossbourne, Phil describes how '...I only recently found out what the LSU was, and a very unfortunate name I have to say...Why do they call it the LSU? It's solitary confinement basically'. Yet Phil concludes that it is 'probably just like the naughty step isn't it really? It's nothing more than that' and proceeds to speculate that his son '...would thrive in the LSU, I'm sure he'd think the LSU is a treat because he just gets endlessly distracted by all the other kids'. Veronica is also unfamiliar with the LSU and uses prison terminology in regards to this space, saying 'I don't have much dealings with the unit or whatever it is called. I don't even know what's it called - the place where they go?' Veronica goes on to describe how her daughter 'does not want to be branded as a unit-goer', because '...if you've done time, you've done time in the unit, you know'. To inhabit this space is to be marked by it.

Phil's equation of the LSU with a benign 'naughty step' contrasts with the accounts of parents whose children had been marked by 'doing time'. Danese, a working-class Afro-Caribbean and English mother, was very distressed about the amount of teaching time her daughter Clarice had missed due to extensive periods in the LSU. Danese said several teachers were impressed at how much Clarice had caught up, yet Danese notes there was a limit to Clarice's ability to compensate, asserting 'they have tried to prevent her from having her grades'. She imagines how well her daughter, previously a straight-A student, would have done if she had been in class instead of isolation, actively questioning the LSU's legitimacy. Gazi also felt the LSU damaged his results because he missed valuable lesson time, while Mary, Shante, Daniel, Osman, Tameka and Charlie all described this space using an array of derogatory terms. Lorna calls it 'the worst place in the school', while Patience exclaimed 'Oh yes, this is prison!' when we walked past. While chapter six and seven showed that discipline for many students was more than a temporary impression created, but a continual pressure applied, many middle-class parents felt Mossbourne was not really strict.

Discipline as Real

Other parents described how their children either felt the weight or recognised the real possibility of discipline, however it is important to emphasise how discipline was frequently perceived as positive. While some parents felt Mossbourne was too extreme, many described how strictness was necessary for their children and society. Marie, a working-class Afro-Caribbean mother, describes her son Marcel's complaint: '...he says that he feels a bit oppressed sometimes, like he is not allowed to express himself, because he is coming to me in the house and said "I just feel oppressed, I can't express myself". Unlike Emily's son, Marcel feels his self-expression is stymied by Mossbourne's parameters, however Marie feels Marcel needs discipline. Although she has disagreed with his repetitive exclusion enough to speak with teachers about it, she does not feel Mossbourne is too strict:

> ...I know that a lot of people say that it is overly strict, but I don't really think it's overly strict. In some ways maybe it has got you know some strict rules, like with hairstyles and stuff like that – maybe I think there could be some kind of limitations on that. But I think the school is a very, very good school, especially if you want your child to come out with like good grades.

Marie feels Mossbourne is academically superior to other nearby schools, offering her son with the best chance for future success. Like Marie, Bernadette feels Mossbourne is 'a good place', but also mentioned speaking to teachers about disproportionate punishments, saying 'Sometimes I think they go to the extreme, and I do make my voice heard when I think that'. Shante's working-class Nigerian and white English mother Beatrice also feels Mossbourne is a 'good school, they have good grades', and thinks children need discipline, but also thinks some of the rules – like students lining up outside without jackets in the winter - are 'silly' or 'too rigid'. Recalling a time when Shante was excluded for something relatively minor, Beatrice said 'sometimes I think crime does not suit the punishment...it was a bit extreme'.

Isaac's father Franklin, a black British middle-class father, also recognises Mossbourne's potentially extreme tactics, describing it as 'absolutely outstanding', but adds '...having said that, it does not everybody and it doesn't suit every parent'. He thinks some parents might be critical because

> ...they probably go beyond what is reasonable in terms of managing the behaviour of the children. But that's their policy, and if you don't like it, then you know you can always move your children really. But at the end of the day, if you want your child to succeed, then that is as good as an environment as almost anywhere else I think.

Franklin and Marie's stance is similar to that adopted by students in chapter seven; although Franklin says Mossbourne may 'rub up parents the wrong way', the institution guarantees good results.

Danese criticises Mossbourne's treatment of Clarice, however she did not send her elsewhere because of its results. She derides Mossbourne's preoccupation with 'being military' and felt their techniques broke students' trust in adults:

> It's all intimidation, they use that all the time in this school...and I think that that form of communication needs to be addressed, because they might not be physically touching our children but they are mentally bullying them.

Yet the academic benefits were clear. Danese describes how 'a lot of people put up with it [discipline] for the grades', yet she felt guilty about making Clarice continue: 'I am sorry in one breath that I have kept her here because I feel like I have tortured my own child and put her through hell just to get an education'. She describes how Clarice suffers from depression and begged her to move schools, but Danese did not want to give Mossbourne the satisfaction. Danese was adamant that Clarice take her exams, adding 'You've done five years for Christ's sake, get something out of it. Man - you walk out of there with nothing you'll regret it for the rest of your life'. After dropping out of school without qualifications, Danese seemed determined that her daughter would not have similar regrets.

Meanwhile Laila, an Irish and Turkish working-class mother, feels that hard discipline helps her son Gazi. Despite his claims that other students' parents 'stick up for them', Laila firmly dismisses Gazi's complaints. She says, 'Yeah, obviously sometimes they are a bit OTT detention-wise, as my son keeps telling me, but at the end of the day it's just a different, it's just a process for them to teach the children

discipline'. Mayifa, a black African working-class mother, also thinks Mossbourne's discipline has been positive for her daughter Tameka: 'I said, Tameka "Now, you are straight now". Yeah, yeah, Tameka is straight now...Before she talked too much...she is not a quiet girl but now this is changing'. Although Tameka and Gazi described enduring bad reputations and criticised differential treatment in chapter six, their mothers felt Mossbourne was a positive influence. Teacher Mr Arkanel described how students like Tameka and Gazi are placed in a double bind:

> ...because your family says Mossbourne is known to be the best school in Hackney, plus you are pushed from your family. You have to stay there, you can't mess about. So the family supports the school ethos, supports the school rules and behaviour policy so the kids are pressured from that. On top of that if the kids - what are they going to say? If they say no to me, that's it - that's an hour [detention]...

Students are bound by their parents' support for Mossbourne as the 'best' school in Hackney and the non-negotiable discipline of the institution.

Celeste and Esther, from Cameroon and Nigeria respectively, both recognised Mossbourne's discipline as positive and corresponding to what they described as African values like respecting elders and not using profanity. They both described carefully directing, protecting and monitoring their sons' development and referenced the permissiveness of Western culture compared to the strictness of their homes. Celeste describes how Samuel benefits from being British and African:

> I think with Samuel, they have got the advantage in this country, that they were born here, but I was born in Africa and they have dual upbringing and culture in this country. So when the school – and I think it's really helping most kids from an African background because we still try to balance our children to make them know that look, despite that you were born here, we still say things are done this way as well. You don't have to talk to people rudely, you can't just make decisions. I told him, I said, 'The only time I will look at you as an adult is when you are 25 years-old'.

While English teenagers believe they have rights and can make key decisions, Celeste questions the quality of these decisions. Joshua's mother Esther emphasised how

orderly households curbed permissiveness:

> ...you have to be strong as a parent and establish that authority because the children nowadays - there is freedom of speech and everything – and especially when you have children who are very good academically and feel they are very sensible...

In stark contrast to the urban chaos discourse that associates ethnic minority students with disorder, Celeste, Joshua and Samuel more readily tied deviant behaviour to the white, middle-class student similarly to Mary and Phil in chapter six.

Like Sir Michael's response to the riots, Esther designates discipline as the remedy for societal disorder. Esther comments, 'If they could even go stricter, I'm for it. Because in Hackney, we can see the whole world is getting, God help us, it's getting - we are hearing so many atrocities everyday', adding '...where they [Mossbourne] are putting in structure, it is very good because Hackney needs a stronger hand'. Afra's mother Nazia, a Pakistani-British working-class woman, is also happy with Mossbourne and emphasises the strictness of her household, linking hard discipline to preventing societal breakdown: 'Without discipline, no - then you will have, I don't know, mad kids. Mad generation'. Emphasising a disciplined domestic sphere that protects their children from surrounding chaos serves to differentiate and demarcate Esther, Nazia and Celeste's families as respectable. Despite residing on estates, they distance themselves from Hackney's 'rough' elements.

Model Student Protection

While middle-class parents were less likely to feel the weight of discipline, working-class and ethnic minority parents were more alive to this possibility and assiduously prevented their children from being marked by discipline's moral judgements through by cultivating model pupils in step with institutional ideals. Nazia, Esther and Celeste all proudly mention how their children are perceived by Mossbourne and their peers as ideal students. Not only are they clearly proud of them, but the production of an 'ideal student' testifies to their capability as mothers. As Walkerdine and Lucey (1989:15) highlight, the mother becomes 'the guarantor of the liberal [democratic] order', responsible for producing not only good students, but good selves. Celeste says, '...most of my neighbours, they will say that these two boys - it's as if they don't

live in this estate, the way they comport and carry themselves'. Her sons' behaviour works to distance the family from the vilified estate where they live. Nazia emphasises her duty to produce good children and the huge amount of labour involved, quoting a Pakistani leader who said 'give me good mothers and I will give you a good nation'. She describes the fruits of her labour:

> ...even if you ask any of the teachers that have taught Omar, Tariq or Afra, they will all say 'Yeah, they are good kids, well behaved, role model'. When people come to me and they say 'Oh, you've got lovely kids' or 'we know Omar, we know Tariq'. That makes me really happy...That's what I tell them, I said 'I have done what I needed to do'. Whenever you go around my friends, teachers, people who know me, they say, 'Yeah, she has done a good job. She gave them 100%' And I said, 'It's up to you now'.

Esther positions motherhood as an obligation to God:

> Although it has taken a lot from me, not going to work and having my own salary money and everything, but one needed to have been in the house 24/7 then...you have to really be there to correct them and mould them fast...

Esther feels she has not experienced discrimination within the education system, suggesting her children's behaviour might have affected this: '...maybe because most of the time my children were well behaved, so the teachers were always proud...And my children were always one of the students they could rely on to help them with the class, or to be good role models for the class'. Single-mother Celeste is aware of the stigma attached to her position, relating '...if he was a troubled kid, then that's when it [single motherhood] would have been noticeable', but, like Esther, she suggests Samuel's ideal status has prevented this:

> From primary school, 'Oh Samuel is a wonderful kid, he is so this, he is so honest, he is so mature, and da, da, da, he is doing so well, okay nice to meet you'. That's it, you know...I think the teachers, they like writing letters like 'Oh this is a perfect student' and so on, so yeah – I don't really have any, I think that's why I am okay with the school.

These mothers are aware of potential pathologisation and take great pains to defend against it by cultivating model pupils. Skeggs (1997:1) writes:

> Respectability is one of the most ubiquitous signifiers of class. It informs how we speak, who we speak to, how we classify others, what we study and how we know who we are (or are not). Respectability is usually the concern of those who are not seen to have it. Respectability would not be of concern here, if the working classes (Black and White) had not consistently been classified as dangerous, polluting, threatening, revolutionary, pathological and without respect.

Unlike white middle-class parents, these mothers do not assume they will occupy a privileged position within the institution. Quite the contrary, they work overtime to ensure their children will escape raced and classed visions to flourish. Their model status must be achieved and continually maintained. While anxiety over school choice was continuously present in narratives of middle-class parents, there was little discussion about continuously moulding and monitoring their children to protecting them from surrounding dangers and pathology. Middle-class parents took a more of a laissez-fair approach, assuming their child would be desired by Mossbourne, yet fighting to insure the reproduction of privilege through the education market. They did not have to continually struggle to assert their value for respectability '...is rarely recognised as an issue by those who are positioned with it, who are normalized by it, and who do not have to prove it' (Skeggs, 1997:1). In this neoliberal landscape, individuals must fight for their own corner.

Rewriting Fantasies of the 'Other'

Responses to Sir Michael's urban chaos discourse show the work this narrative does. Respondents position themselves within this version of Hackney through actively rejecting, deflecting or augmenting these representations, or discussing them in reference to an imagined other. This discourse lends the urban 'other' a shape, a colour, a voice as fantasies of a chaotic 'other' are perpetuated. Veronica's reflections highlight the creative power of Sir Michael's narrative. She describes how he made it clear why 'draconian' rules were in place, yet adds a moment later:

> ...yes the rules are in place and we know why - or we are told why - and

> that seems to work. And I can understand how those kind of rules are successful given the location of the school. I can only reiterate what I have heard Sir Michael say many times, you know.

Veronica acknowledges her 'knowing' is based on Sir Michael's repeated rationale:

> It might be that the structure works, but for entirely other reasons. It might be they are not so chaotic, you only really know what you have been told. And the likes of Sir Michael saying that on national telly adds another kind of weight to that argument, but no, I have not seen any evidence of it, well how would I? I don't know.

Veronica admits that although she has not seen 'evidence' of urban chaos, she has adopted this message. Crucially, she points out how an influential headteacher reiterating this viewpoint in the national press carries 'weight'. As chapter five examined, Sir Michael makes this discourse ring true through the power of ambiguity and repetition.

Julia felt Sir Michael's rhetoric was accurate to an extent, admitting she never thought she would agree with this. Julia describes a conversation between her son Jack and his friend which shaped her perceptions:

> ...they were moaning about this rigid discipline and then one said to the other, 'Yeah but you know that the school was not really designed for the likes of us' and the other one turned around and said, 'No, you're absolutely right'. And when I spoke to them, they had a very strong feeling that the school was designed for the kids on the Pembury Estate, you know, that that was the target audience, you know. And that – so that these nice middle-class kids with two graduate parents who would support them with their homework and you know. They know they have a head start over lots of other kids, they know they do, they are not blind to that. So they felt very strongly that they had to fit in. Well, my son always refused to, but that was the way, that the Mossbourne way was to help the wider population.

Julia's son imagines the school as targeting Pembury Estate children, recognising his

middle-class privilege and the advantage he has over many of his classmates. Despite Jack being perpetually in trouble during his time at Mossbourne, Jack feels Mossbourne's discipline is not targeted at him.

Emily also agrees with Sir Michael's diagnosis, tying estates to a lack of structure:

> I think obviously the catchment area of the school is you've got loads of estates and I can imagine you know, that a lot of children can't do homework or anything because they've got young children to look after. A lot of families don't have much money, so the school is really supportive. And the fact that you can do homework in school is really good for children who don't have that structure at home.

Although Emily sympathetically attempts to envision the issues faced by parents on estates, her comments belie how middle-class portraits of working-class lives are pieced together with very little first-hand knowledge or contact with actual people. As Emily says, she can only 'imagine' this urban other, despite living in close proximity – a disconnect that relates to the lack of mixing between students outlined in chapter six. Ball shows how middle-class parents produce boundaries by making judgements that do not centre around knowledge, but were a means to gain power and reproduce their class position where struggle is based on 'a playing out of affinities and aversions' that becomes 'in a sense symbolic' (2003:76-7). How Emily comes to symbolically define these affinities and aversions in practice will be explored below.

Several mothers living on estates worked within the urban chaos discourse's parameters to deflect the wholesale demonisation of their families. Celeste describes how her estate is considered 'rough', yet she feels disorder is not unique to Hackney, but happens across London. Celeste's sons are 'aware of the dangers' and she drives them elsewhere to play outside, asserting: '…some of us are living here because we've got no choice…if the council offer you a place, what can you do? Just teach your children to make the best of it'. Laila describes how a drug dealer used to live in her block, which made entering and leaving her flat 'a really horrible experience'. Although her block 'has quieted down', she also tells me 'no one likes living on an estate babes, you know what I mean?', explaining:

> I don't like living on the estate, no, that's why I am working so hard to get

> my career up and running so I can one day afford a mortgage and actually move my kids out of there. Everyone's dream is that, but I just think as long as you got a roof over your head and keep yourself to yourself, you know. You can live in a house and still get grief. It doesn't just mean to say that just because you are living in an estate that it's why it's like that.

Both Celeste and Laila realise they live in denigrated spaces, yet financially there is no alternative, despite both of them working full-time. Celeste's use of 'some of us' distances and differentiates her family from the roughness of the estate, once again asserting respectability.

Bernadette rejects the urban chaos discourse entirely. She was born on a nearby estate and has lived there 35 years: 'We knew, well we know what the estate's like, but to us it's just the estate and where we lived'. This estate is her matter-of-fact reality, as Bernadette describes long-term ties:

> So still a lot of the old neighbours was there that knew us when we was little and then I had all three of my children on there, so everybody knew everybody. But Charlie did get beat up there the other week and that made us more determined that we was gonna move away.

Although violence against her son highlights the real dangers and strengthened her resolve to relocate, Bernadette repudiates Sir Michael's idea of unstructured homes as 'wrong':

> All the school is here to do is, when the children come in at, I don't know, half past eight, lessons start, is to look after them in the school, make sure they are safe, they do their work and then they go home afterwards. What goes on at home, behind closed doors, it's not for him to say that.

Bernadette renounces the demonisation of her home, anticipating and refuting Mossbourne's implicit critique of single parents, adding, 'I've got friends who are bringing up children on their own and discipline is top priority'. Bernadette feels that once her children have done their homework, the rest of the day was their time and none of Mossbourne's business, asserting, 'And you're not gonna let your children run around and cause mayhem - even though some people do, but there is some of us that

don't do that, they give their kids kid's time to do what they want and be a child'. Like Celeste, Bernadette uses the phrase 'some of us', clearly aware her family is implicated in this discourse, while simultaneously differentiating herself from parents who permit mayhem. Bernadette rejects intervention into her home as a space she has jurisdiction over; constructing a home-school boundary '...to create a nurturing space in which to soothe the injuries and injustices of class' (Gillies, 2007:144). Bernadette asserts that although everybody puts Hackney down, 'There's places worse than this, you know so. I think they should - them kind of things they should keep as opinion to his self'. Marie also refutes ideas of unstructured families as stereotypical, admitting that Hackney has problems but these would happen anywhere:

> ...I think as a community it's actually quite close knit. I have lived in Hackney all my life...So for me, this is the way the community is. And I don't think that - you would be surprised how many parents have got a stable and structured home.

Beatrice, Danese and Fatima also reject Sir Michael's assessment of Hackney. These mothers are directly implicated in tales of pathology, while middle-class parents speak of unknown, imagined others from afar. Although parents welcomed a good quality local school, they did not need a masculine 'hero' to save their children, however these media-worthy rags-to-riches stories are essential ingredients of success in a competitive education market.

Through the Lens of Urban Chaos

The juxtaposition of Emily and Celeste's respective accounts of parents' evening examined below illustrates how the white middle-class parent acts as a person of value casting judgements on others. As Reay and her colleagues write:

> In a class-ridden, racist society, to embody both whiteness and middle classness is to be a person of value. It is also to be a person who makes value judgments that carry symbolic power; a valuer of others. And despite the rhetorical flourishes around difference and diversity, it is sameness that routinely gets valued (2007:1042).

Class' relational aspects are foregrounded as black and white working-class children

deal with the punitive consequences of being positioned within middle-class imaginaries as 'others' to a middle-class norm. Celeste recognises her stigmatised position as a single black mother and justifies her approach. Celeste describes how she supports Samuel before exams by helping him make a timetable and shopping during the week so she can stay home at the weekend, making food and cultivating a studious atmosphere to take advantage of the chances Mossbourne provides. While she does not feel Mossbourne has 'transformed' Samuel, she feels it pushes him. When on benefits, Celeste describes how she studied and moulded her children:

> Because when I was on benefit, I still gave time to my children. In fact that was the time that I gave them the foundation of what they are today...that's because I sacrificed that time as a single parent. I could not handle work and two children, so I said okay, I will bring them up to a certain age. But while I was doing that I was studying, until, you know I only graduated in 2008. And they saw me studying...and that is the same thing Samuel is doing now.

Celeste serves as an example to her children, but worries about how a single-parent upbringing might negatively effect them. She recalls a debate she had with Samuel about single versus two parent families. Samuel was against two parents, as they might disagree on child-rearing, while Celeste was for two parents:

> ...I said, 'Well you know if you have a dad in the house, a dad and a mum, then you kind of have a steady home, a steady family'. But then he said, 'Mum our home is very steady, you know. You are there, you go to work'. I said, 'But you see to me, it's hard. I'm really pushing myself. Everything I have to pay for everything'. He said, 'Mum, you don't look stressed. The way you are just doing - it's as if no one can tell we don't have a dad in this house'. I just said, 'Well, but you guys do not know how hard I am pushing myself'.

While Celeste admits being a lone mother is stressful, Samuel reassures her and defends their home as so 'steady' no one would notice the absence of a father. When I asked Celeste if ethnicity or class affects how the school treats pupils, she reflected:

> ...when I go to the school for parents evening, I always go on my own. I

kind of feel a bit..you know, just having to sit in front of the teacher year after year on my own. Of course, they know Samuel is from a single parent family, and I thought that it was going to affect how they treated him. But I think the Samuel has really proven that part wrong, because of the way he is...some people feel just because you are a single parent, your child will be a loose cannon. But some children with two parents have not achieved half of what I have achieved with the two boys...so our greatest hope now is just his results. So I say, 'Samuel, you know what the impression is that people have about kids from single parents - please, please, please - I want you to remove that, so just do really well with your results'.

Celeste relates feeling seen and potentially judged for repeatedly attending parents' evening alone, anticipating the assumption that her children could be unstructured troublemakers. Although her children have proven this wrong, Celeste still occupies the position of surveyed subject.

Meanwhile Emily fits Mossbourne's normative ideal as a white middle-class professional living in a Victorian detached house with her husband and son. When I ask her the same question as Celeste regarding how ethnicity or class may affect discipline, she comes up with a very different answer, automatically shifting the question's focus from institutional practices to lone black mothers:

Emily: I don't know really. I will tell you what my perception, I think what I have noticed on parents evening is that there's a lot of women, Afro-Caribbean women that attend parents evening and no men, so I don't know whether that is affecting some of the discipline at home with the boys. I don't know, it's just a kind of - where are all the guys, where are the men?

CK: Do you and your partner both go?

Emily: Yeah, yeah not all the time, but you kind of do a little scan around the room and I am thinking, oh gosh, it is always the women with their kids, but it is very rare there is a father there. And I don't know whether there's a lot of absentee dads at home. There's a lot of refugees I think as well isn't there? I am not sure of the make up of the school. So you don't know whether a lot of those boys and girls do not have any structure or

> discipline at home so they are coming in to the school, you know, having a little bit. As I say, I am sure most of them cannot do homework at home or there is other stuff going on, so. But I thought that was quite an interesting, cause I always have a little scan to see, oh that's quite interesting, where are all the guys?

Emily scans the room to find Celeste alone at parent's evening, yet Celeste's situation does not match the assumptions projected by the urban chaos discourse, and more particularly Emily, onto her. Still, Emily acts as the surveyor and arbiter of judgement, casting the gaze that Celeste anticipates receiving. Celeste comes to symbolically represent the lone black mother with an undisciplined household. Meanwhile, numerous white single-mothers like Veronica or Eve remain less visible or are deemed unproblematic. Veronica never mentions the pathological hazard of single-motherhood; quite the opposite, she is a valued member of the PTA. These unequal positions of surveyor and surveyed are repeated and re-imagined through Mossbourne's urban chaos discourse.

'Making the Adjustment'

Alexander and Franklin, black British middle-class fathers, drew on their middle-class capital to defend themselves and their families from pathological discourses. Franklin described how Sir Michael's comments about unstructured families was 'tokenism in the sense of people quite want to put everyone into – package them as this, this, this. Yet quite often you will see endless examples of people that you cannot categorise in that way'. A media professional, Franklin recognised Sir Michael's need to convey to the press that his job was made more difficult by having disadvantaged children, but this 'is not the whole story because there are lots of children there now who are motivated to work from well-adjusted families and all the rest of it…' Franklin was irritated at how this rhetoric overemphasised negative aspects of Hackney, suggesting most parents were unsupportive.

Alexander references his West Indian heritage to reject Sir Michael's claims, asserting 'I think a little research here is needed you know'. Alexander points out the sweeping generalisation inherent in this discourse, describing the disciplined church-going routines of many West Indian families, interjecting 'A lot of West Indians are more English than the English'. Alexander employs his class position to defend against both

raced and classed suppositions:

> So I think that comment is an easy comment to make, but when you really look into it, a lot of West Indians have come from a well to-do background of people that's always wanted them to do well and have always encouraged them to do well and come from a strong family background. And I don't think my family is unique to that, I think they are all very similar.

Alexander asserts that his family is not an anomaly. Franklin makes a similar point, saying 'Am I am bucking the trend? Actually, no. My whole entire family went to university, my sisters, my brothers, my cousins. You know, this is not uncommon in my family so, and that is another thing that the media portray...' These fathers highlight how the achievements of black British people are subsumed *and* made more difficult by narratives of black pathology reiterated by the urban chaos discourse. Franklin highlights the discourse's effects on teacher's perceptions:

> So the point I am trying to make here is that you constantly get this thing where it's 'Oh well, if it's a black boy it's going to be a challenge to teach them, because more likely than not they are going to be from a single parent family'.

This anticipation of pathology connects to Celeste's worries about being a single mother and the defensive, protective work mothers perform.

Both fathers commented on the necessity of asserting their middle-class credentials to get respect. Alexander pronounced that he did not have a problem with teachers; although there might be an element of condescension at first, they soon realised 'we are on the same level' as professionals. He felt 'what all teachers need to do is have an open mind. When I go into a room, I don't make any assumptions'. For Franklin, the inherent negativity surrounding ethnic-minority students effects how he negotiates teacher relations:

> And I think that [*negativity*] is part of the issue…even in my own case, I mean yes, as I sit here talking to you, you know, people sort of get that this, 'Oh yes, an intelligent person'. They even, if I am on the telephone, think that I am not even black. Okay. They think, Hmm, are you black? Ah,

hmm, I'm quite surprised by that.

Intelligence and middle-classness are linked with whiteness, thus a disembodied middle-class voice on the phone often leads teachers to suppose Franklin is white. These raced and classed optics do not allow room for the recognition of black *and* middle-class bodies, for the ethnic minority body is automatically marked with classed expectations. This reflects recent research on black middle-class educational strategies where parents were aware they did not have the same 'security of entitlement' as their white middle-class counterparts and needed to actively demonstrate their status and position to be engaged with as equals (Vincent et al, 2012).

Franklin discussed how he and his wife have developed strategies to deal with these raced and classed assumptions:

> So if I am talking to teachers...in the past my wife would go to the school and that is even more of an anomaly for them because my wife is a doctor. So, oh hello! *(He laughs)* I'm just a journalist...It's like 'Oh my god!' So in a way, it's good sport…because you just sit there being amused by this person and you can see during the course of the conversation their attitude changing. In some cases, they start off by being – in some cases - condescending actually. *(Sarcastically)* Okay, so you think I can't understand what you are saying or you are trying to explain it in a way that makes it simple for me, well, guess what! Just give it to me - tell me. Then when you start challenging them or asking them particular questions, they're like 'Oh'. Cause sometimes they are just not used to it, or they are used to it, but not from the person who is sat in front of them. So that is quite fascinating, but I just see it like sport really. It is part of life and it just amuses the hell out of me.

Franklin and his wife draw on their resources as black middle-class professionals to show teachers they are their equals. Teachers may be used to being challenged, but they do not anticipate challenges issuing from bodies that look like this, attesting to 'the harm that racism inflicts on our ability to see, hear, feel and understand' (Back, 2009:465). Franklin amuses himself with these situations, unveiling his position and watching teacher attitudes alter. Instead of invoking racism, these interactions become a sporting game where Franklin accepts stereotypical interpretations as an inevitable

'part of life'.

Franklin thinks Mossbourne's attitude to black boys is often very negative, particularly if they challenge authority, something his son has occasionally done. Franklin recounts talking to a teacher about Isaac's behaviour:

> ...just the way they talk to me or approach me if they have not met me – those that know me already, then they have gone through that adjustment. Because again, it is easy for the teachers to sit there thinking 'Oh well, he is not behaving or performing to the best of his ability because of some other external factor to do with the home' because that must be reason. It can't be because he is just being awkward or being himself…it's not due to some other external factor.

Teachers must overcome the hurdle presented by blackness and make the adjustment to a more middle-class treatment where the home and the parents are not intrinsically problematic elements. This allows Isaac's misbehaviour to become a 'normal' case of adolescent rebellion without being rooted in parental pathologies. Rollock and her colleagues show how the black middle-class '...strategically make use of a range of resources including accent, language and comportment to signal their class status to white others to ultimately minimize the effects of racial discrimination' (2011:1089). These resources signal respectability and class status. Rollock points out how this 'extra work' performed by the black middle-class to gain legitimacy within white society unsettles any notion of racial equality, as inclusion involves becoming palatably 'whiter'. This work and movement signals the continuing privilege of an unchallenged whiteness (2011:1090). Black Britons must be able to access and display middle-class cultural capital in order to undo racialisation and prove their compatibility with normative white middle-class hegemony.

Meanwhile the favourable treatment eventually available to middle-class black parents highlights how other parents are permanently excluded from accessing these concessions. Franklin's challenges must eventually be taken seriously by teachers as middle-class professional challenges, whereas the response to working-class parents' challenges are very differently responded to by teachers. These parents cannot diassociate themselves from the abject home. These 'adjustments' are unnecessary when dealing with white middle-class parents and routinely denied to working-class

parents like Danese who do not have the resources to assert themselves as the teacher's equal. Unlike Franklin, they do not possess the requisite equipment to play this sport with any success.

Around the Houses

Alexander concludes:

> ...I think if I started going around those kids houses one by one, I would see structure...I know people are struggling to make ends meet - that goes without saying. But I would see that there's a mother and father or maybe just a father or a mother, all the combinations, whichever. And he's doing the right thing to the best of his ability and he has his child's interests at heart.

Alexander would indeed find Laila, working late nights in a restaurant to save money for a mortgage and raising two sons with her husband who works in maintenance. Or Marie, working part-time as a teaching assistant while completing a degree and raising two sons. Or Christine, giving up her professional career to raise five children while her husband works in accounting. Or Bernadette, raising three sons while serving as a carer for her terminally ill husband. This list goes on, but even when there was something resembling 'chaos', this was not due to a lack of love or support, but connected to life changing events like marital break-up or mental health issues or a parents' sudden death. The complexity of parents' lives highlights the danger of pathological discourses and the damage they inflict along raced and classed lines on personhood value.

When Numbers Don't Add Up

> …the current research is suggesting that class is a bigger impact, a bigger effector of achievement than anything else. So I have to be aware of it and acknowledge it and we have to be challenging it. But I think at this school…when we look at children, and I take it from a data perspective, there are two types of children: those who are achieving what they should be and those who aren't. The ones that are, they are doing fine. The ones who aren't, we need to do something about.
> *Mr Vine, SMT*

Unsurprisingly these discourses shape Mossbourne's vision and judgments; class becomes something to be 'challenged', as if it is a cancer that can be eradicated. Yet Mr Vine adds that children are solely perceived as data, despite previous chapters showing how Mossbourne's institutional structures and the 'data' produced are not value-free, objective entities, but shaped by raced, classed and gendered norms. While Mossbourne is hardly unique in terms of how student and parental treatment is shaped by these value judgements, this process is accelerated by the intensification of competition and the aspirational, colour-blind doctrine epitomising its approach. This forecloses spaces for dealing with the persistent inequalities brought into Mossbourne and frequently perpetuated by its structures. Competition's demands also make it imperative to weed out labour intensive students or allow them to 'fall by the wayside' while simultaneously recruiting high-achieving, external students.

The necessity of this dual process was highlighted through staff briefings and exchanges with teachers. In one February briefing, Ms Morrison announced that two 'very bright, good pupils' in the top sets would be starting year seven. Sir Michael asked 'how can we say that for sure?' Ms Butler replied 'We can promise, we have done our research this time!' Everyone laughed, noting the reference to another pupil who had arrived with similar guarantees only to be deemed difficult. One teacher described how a new student had introduced themselves as 'one of Sir Michael's specials', leading to speculation amongst staff about the 'special' nature of her admission.

Conversely, weeding troublesome students off the conveyor belt was equally important. When a long list of excluded children was read out at a briefing, Sir Michael jested, 'Do we have any children left in this school?' Another teacher jokingly replied, 'Only good ones!' One SMT member announced in briefing that Jamal would now be escorted from lesson to lesson and was not allowed to move through the building on his own; Jamal and his mother knew this was his 'last chance' and all incidents with Jamal needed to be logged on SIMS to keep a comprehensive record. Later a staff member commented that Sir Michael wanted 'to get rid of Jamal' because he took up too much time.[38] Another staff member mentioned how Terence was also 'on the way out', asserting that the SMT were trying to get him permanently excluded

[38] Sadly Jamal ended up in prison shortly thereafter, arguably taking up a lot more time (and money) ultimately.

by making him so uncomfortable that he did something bad. When Jerome, a set one pupil who had frequently been in trouble, was considering moving schools, one teacher commented that although moving might be bad for him, it would be '...good for us you know. Off he goes!' It did feel that once the SMT had decided to rid itself of a 'problem' pupil, this process was accelerated through increased surveillance and pressure, while evidence was carefully electronically compiled to justify this action. This mimics the 'stepping up' of teacher surveillance described by Mr Vine in chapter four. Notably, all the aforementioned students were black boys.

At the non-compulsory sixth form level, weeding students off the conveyor belt became much easier. Mr Vine describes, 'When it gets to A level they have to meet certain criteria, and if they don't meet certain criteria, then we can say no'. Although year eleven student Duane had achieved five good GCSEs, Mr Vine explains his departure:

> ...the best course of action for him would have been a B tech or vocational course which would have led him into work or an apprenticeship, but he wanted to do A levels. Our experience would have told us that there was a very, very high chance he would have completed badly and ended up with nothing. So we said 'No, we will not let you take that course of action'. He then went to B6 up the road who said, 'Oh absolutely!' and he wasted a year and got nothing out of it.

Rather than giving Duane an opportunity to study with teachers he is already familiar with, Mossbourne does not want to risk his potential failure and the harm this would inflict on their league tables. Instead Duane went to another sixth form where his failure is framed as guaranteed. One teacher thought students like Duane were some of 'the saddest cases', describing how Tyler, another year eleven student, had also achieved the necessary grades, but was not 'strong enough' to study the A levels he was interested in and went elsewhere. This teacher added that it was a shame because it would be too difficult and Tyler would probably fail. Several teachers thought some students with five good GCSEs were not actually 'C' students and incapable of A level study. One teacher described how GCSE marks did not reflect the student's ability; due to 'hot housing' students could 'get the marks without being that bright really'. Although these students technically possess the right data, this data is subjectively interpreted and untrusted. Mr Turner feels that Mossbourne 'generally gives students

a fair start', but 'you could also say that it is forcing children to achieve in as much as it's not a true measure of the child'. Results are not seen to measure what they are supposed to because of the immense amount of teacher labour that has gone into their production.

Several teachers and students were unhappy that 'spoon-feeding' continued at A level. Sixth former Olivia suggested it was 'probably really immoral because if I am not willing to put in loads of work myself perhaps I should not be getting good grades...' Florence also questioned Mossbourne's methods, saying 'I know they need the good grades for like their tables and whatever, but they should not really force someone...' Alara worried that students' lack of independent study habits could prove detrimental at university, saying 'I mean it's almost as if they have been churning out these good grades by um, because of the teachers – if that makes sense. Because teachers are always the ones there to push to students and it never really comes from the students…' Alara questions who is ultimately responsible for producing results, suggesting that teacher labour generates grades via the student. This raises questions about what these results which schools 'live and die by', as Sir Michael extolled in a briefing, actually end up measuring?

One teacher described how many year eleven students would not return for sixth form, outlining how restricted A level offerings helped push unwanted students off the conveyor belt. He described how there were many good candidates, both internal and external, so Mossbourne could afford to 'get rid of some of the less appealing ones'. The table below shows an increasing ratio of external students compared to Mossbourne lower school graduates, rising from three externals out of 116 students in 2009 to 61 out of 187 students in 2012 (see fig. 1.0.). Offering students courses they did not want to do would effectively force them to leave. This teacher offered Abdul as an example. Abdul 'was not a bad kid, but a bit rude...not the most appealing sort of candidate', so they could admit him to the sixth form, but tell him he can only do 'the crap courses', forcing him to go elsewhere. And 'if they multiply this scenario by 30 or 40, then they get rid of a lot of the people they don't want'. Yet where do results and intelligence intersect with the desirability of a student's personality or disposition?

Entry Year	External			MCA			
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Grand Total
2012	34	27	61	57	69	126	187
2011	23	36	59	52	51	103	162
2010	15	7	22	39	58	97	119
2009	3	0	3	51	62	113	116

Fig. 1.0. External and internal intake of Mossbourne's sixth form by year

Judging the 'appeal' of students is a highly subjective process where data is clearly not the only adjudicator. Unsuitable bodies are dispensed with by sixth form. Florence replies when I ask if there are rebellious students left in sixth form: 'No. They've left. They've made sure that they've left'. As Angela McRobbie argues in reference to reality television's make-overs, 'There is no suggestion that the victims will ever truly belong to the same social group as their improvers. This is made clear in a multiplicity of small ways such as the consoling words and concluding comments on the part of the experts who retain an ever critical and sceptical eye' (2004:104). As with Mossbourne's make-overs, as it is rare for students to be able to 'catch up' and achieve parity with other students, even if they submit to their improvement.

This filtering out and filtering in of students has real effects on social relations. When I returned to Mossbourne in the spring of 2013 to catch up with some of the year eleven students from my sample who were now nearing the end of sixth form, Isaac, Samuel, Joshua and Tameka all described the atmosphere as 'segregated'. Isaac described how everyone mixed at the outset, until a group of predominantly white, middle-class students coalesced. This group is referred to by non-members as 'the white group', while Joshua half-jokingly called them 'the white supremacists'. While I do not have space to adequately explore these follow-up interviews here, I want to make a key point regarding Mossbourne's structuring effects. Although Isaac says that he knows 'it sounds terribly bad', he feels integration breaks downs from year seven onwards and details how this process is exacerbated by the introduction of external

candidates at sixth form level. I asked him why he thought this happened:

> Because the groups form, like by the end of year 11 you kind of have groups, but you are still united as a year group cause you remember what happened. You remember years seven, eight, nine and ten when you've kind of been friends with everyone. However in the sixth form...you have some externals who have never been in that and they are automatically in a group so I think by the end of sixth form it is a lot more segregated than at the beginning, definitely. So I know it's bad to say, but I think the way Mossbourne is structured almost encourages the segregation. Because, also I know they cannot help it, but because they try and take mixed ability then they get separated into classes, so like sets, so based on your ability you are put into sets. So then yes, there will be a bit of everything in the top sets – in the top sets you will have Asians and Blacks and working-class and middle-class however more towards sixth form that kind of gets undermined because Mossbourne kind of recruits a bit more of middle-class educated, you know, more A stars so the balance kind of gets shifted. So it is more, I know it sounds bad. I know it sounds very bad what I am saying, but without intending to they encourage segregation, definitely.

Isaac's reflection shows how structuring education systems around the marketplace and results inherently undermines racial and social parity and the development of a more integrated society. Mossbourne's need to recruit A star students who are likely to produce good A level results, coupled with the fact that many of these students are white and middle-class, in addition to the simultaneous exclusion of 'less appealing' candidates like Abdul, results in a very different student body. The social balance shifts as a large, white and middle-class social group establishes and excludes itself from the rest of the cohort.

Conclusion

Mossbourne cannot repair and transcend wider social inequalities that students and their families face and bring with them to school. Although New Labour's academy programme posited that it would do just this, the actuality is a different story. Diane Reay reflects on how instead of reducing inequality, middle-class advantage has been embedded and extended by Blair's New Labour, 'a sad record

for any political leader but a travesty for a Labour one' (2008:647). Adonis' presentation of Mossbourne as an engine of social mobility is problematised by his own comments showing how this engine powers other movements, referencing how middle-class gentrifiers were 'giving the academy a try rather than decamping to the suburbs or the private sector. A friend in No. 10 moved close to Mossbourne to get a place for his son, waving the acceptance letter at me one morning as if his son had got a scholarship to Eton' (2012:6). While some parents were encouraged to stay in the borough as Veronica mentioned, other middle-class parents with enough capital could buy a place at Mossbourne by moving house. Rather than critiquing how the education market does not distribute equitable opportunities but embeds inequality, Adonis presents this as a charming anecdote evidencing Mossbourne's popularity.

Mossbourne reinstates middle-class hegemony as white middle-class parents successfully manipulate the education market to create an 'oasis' in Hackney. Images of energetic, youthful professionalism appeal to middle-class parents who admire Mossbourne's efficient productivity, concealing issues of teacher labour. Meanwhile, parents' relationship to discipline is shaped through their status; while illusory for white middle-class parents, discipline carries real weight for other parents who often perform extensive protective labour to protect their children. Ultimately the urban chaos discourse works to redraft fantasies of the 'other', reinstituting damaging power dynamics and an optics which creates raced and classed categories. These pathological imaginings are compounded by the need to remain competitive by 'getting rid' of labour-intensive students who might jeopardise the production of results. These subjective judgements move along raced, classed and gendered lines, making it more and more likely that certain children remain winners while others are deemed losers.

In Conclusion

Tracing the Frayed Edges of the Fantastic Conveyor Belt

Mossbourne Community Academy is a symbolic and material response to the perceived failures of progressive, urban education, public anxieties over the loss of nationhood, the prestige of empire and a crisis of authority in urban areas where racialised, classed cultural disorder is allegedly leading young people astray. Mossbourne epitomises the school effectiveness agenda, applying recipe-style disciplinary methods to achieve new heights of perfection while remaining decontextualised from the surrounding area and disengaged from structures. Now that Sir Michael is Ofsted inspector general, this thesis is not only relevant as an empirical study in a contextualised space, but more broadly applicable as his vision shapes national policy.[39] Mossbourne is a model neoliberal school, running in sync with and constitutive of market needs. Rather than uncritically celebrating its capacity to steadily generate test results, this thesis interrogated what a result-driven agenda does in terms of rearranging social hierarchies and shaping subjectivities. It portrayed Mossbourne's daily routines through the accounts of teachers, students, and parents who both shape and are shaped by the institution. It has aimed to show how raced and classed positions are (re)produced within Mossbourne through the idea of structure as discipline which liberates by civilising Hackney 'natives' into dominant value systems.

Chapters one and two focussed on the social and historical context underpinning the advent of Mossbourne, both within the context of Hackney as an urban space and within education policy's development. I argued that space is a social process built on histories which make some actions more or less possible in the present, whereby Hackney functioned as a symbolic space representing educational failure and served as fertile ground for the public-private finance initiatives like academies. Situating the research site within a historical context was crucial to understanding narratives of the present where postcolonial civilising missions and moral panics over a unassimiliable 'urban residuum' continues. Tracing the mutual development of categories like race and class through the exploration of urban explorers at home and abroad has enriched discussions regarding how these categories are being re-made. *Chapter three* examined how the research methodology was shaped by Mossbourne's institutional parameters, while interrogating methodological assumptions and

[39] Recent journalism suggests that under Wilshaw Ofsted is acting as a tool of government, forcing academy conversions through the reclassification of school assessment systems (see Adams; Harris, 2013).

reflexivity's limitations. I remained mindful throughout that knowledge-making through research ties to urban sociology's advent and the making of the very categories and power relationships I want to dissect. By looking across a variety of scales and levels, speaking to people with the power to make decisions about educational structures, as well as those with little option but to live with them, I hoped to connect micro and macro issues, private stories and public troubles to offer a broad, yet still fragmented story. This contextualisation aimed to avoid reproducing Mossbourne's narrative, portraying itself as a floating oasis detached from Hackney's desert.

Chapter four examined how Mossbourne's parameters are ideally and reflexively envisioned, showing how teachers become simultaneously subjects and subjected while their collective efforts are contradicted by senior management's dictatorial direction. Accountability is passed down, but power is not. *Chapter five* explored how an evangelical belief in the institution is cultivated, as ambiguity and repetition conceal paradoxes. Both teachers and students occupy similar positions within different levels of the institutional hierarchy, while Mossbourne's steady production of results is a powerful salve smoothing over ambivalent feelings. *Chapter six* untangled the normative particulars implicit in Mossbourne's universals, showing how the white middle-class student is produced as ideal. The privileging of the 'buffer zone' student is aided by a market-driven focus on results which compounds pre-existing inequalities. Meanwhile, ethnic minority and working-class students undergo heavier surveillance and struggle to acquire value. Mossbourne's structures shape social groups in the playground, but students also subvert these structures for their own future mobility. I have tried to show the complexity inherent in student modulations, as students negotiate Mossbourne from a range of positions where liberation entails more loss and compromise for some than others. Who can stay on Mossbourne's neoliberal conveyor belt and who falls off more easily is shaped by the institution of white middle-class norms as universals, whereby liberation comes to infer freedom from essentialised representations of working-class and ethnic minority ways of being.

C*hapter seven* describes how a relentless quest for results curtailed critical thinking as teachers ensured students could reproduce information for exams so numbers could be entered into the assessment system, as Mr Arkanel mentioned in chapter four. Yet the veracity of these numbers is called into question at GCSE level, signalling a lack of trust in their means of production as the subjective judgement of sixth form

candidates shuffles 'undesirable' students off the conveyor belt. Although sometimes deemed unfair, many students saw Mossbourne as preparing them for an imagined future world of work exemplified through Mossbourne's labour practices. Even though many participants commented that the institution did not listen and found this problematic, this qualm was alleviated by a pragmatic refrain that Mossbourne 'worked'. The vast majority of parents were delighted that their child had secured a place, while students were aware that they did not attend a pathologised Hackney school, but a celebrated winner. Yet liberation comes with a price; like teachers, students who could not or did not comply with the regulations could get over it or leave. Mossbourne does not consensually negotiate, but dictates.

Finally *chapter eight* showed how the urban chaos discourses had real effects on how Mossbourne related to parents and how parents view one another. While many middle-class parents accepted Mossbourne's strict discipline, it was often depicted as largely illusory whereas other parents described anticipating or guarding against feeling discipline's weight, even if discipline was regarded as positive. Most white middle-class parents realised their favoured status and positioned urban chaos to be about nearby, yet unknown, imagined others, other parents actively defended their family from this pathology. Some parents rejected ideas of urban chaos entirely, while black middle-class parents had to mobilize their cultural capital to secure favour and assert themselves as teachers' fellow professionals. Before concluding, I will discuss the changing relationship between raced and classed inequalities in Hackney and, relatedly, how Mossbourne helps establish a white middle-class hegemony in this rapidly changing inner urban area.

Changing Urban Culture?

Although Mossbourne's 'oasis in the desert' was allegedly built to transform urban children, my thesis argues that Mossbourne has also become a haven for Hackney's middle classes and goes about changing urban culture in other ways. Besides grafting cultural capital onto its students, it actively seeks out those who already have the capitals it requires to excel in the education market. I concluded in chapter eight that this reiteration of middle-class hegemony gives 'oasis in the desert' new meaning, as middle-class parents can deploy their cultural capital in the education market to secure preferential treatment and address the insecurities of class reproduction. I was surprised at parents' complete lack of resistance to a market model of education in a

left-leaning borough like Hackney. Instead middle-class parents worked to ensure their social reproduction and secure a position of authority through playing the education market, suggesting that Mossbourne is remaking this urban space in ways completely unacknowledged by New Labour policy descriptions, albeit boasted about by former minister Andrew Adonis. Instigating urban regeneration through education provides what seems an obvious, neutral solution to deprivation and an effective response to the narratives of endemic failure surrounding Hackney's education system from the 1980s onward and explored in chapter two. Here the invocation of a progressive-fuelled crisis, coupled with negotiations over inequalities in Hackney and council mismanagement, paved the way for a radical educational resettlement.

As Ms Carrier discussed in chapter four, Mossbourne holds 'universal appeal' and most parents keenly embraced its advent. This is not surprising given the turbulent past of education in Hackney and the low expectations faced by many students, yet this regeneration via education has other, unanticipated dimensions. Describing the redevelopment of Spitalfields in early 1990s, Jane M. Jacobs discusses how

> The processes of urban transformation are part of the means by which a racialised architecture of power – material and ideological – operates. This is not simply a case of some 'imperialist' obliteration of the local by big capital. The colonial resonance of redevelopment lies in more than a convenient mirroring of imperialism' territorial expansions, frontier quests and 'foreign' invasions. Contemporary urban transformation is far more likely to engage consciously with the local character of an area than rapaciously obliterate it. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the varying ways in which heritage is mobilised as part of the legitimating framework of contemporary urban transformation (1996:72).

Although Sir Michael uses gun-slinging rhetoric in regards to creating docile employees and students, his speeches also engage with the local area through referencing Clive Bourne, an East End boy turned millionaire. He also references Barack Obama as a beacon of hope for the black community, while appealing to a sense of former neglect through photos of the crumbling Hackney Downs. Redevelopment through education is an effective way of reorganising an urban space – who does not want a good school in their borough? His position seems obviously positive, but obscures how education markets effect education within and beyond

Hackney. Creating 'goodness' and 'success' requires that 'badness' and 'failure' persist and remain elsewhere so that 'goodness' can be produced in binary opposition to other schools' 'badness'. The market demands the constitution of difference as necessary to maintain these binary divisions; for success there must be failure. There must be a stagnating, immobilised and transgressive 'other' sitting outside of this transformative process in order for Mossbourne to possess superior qualities. Not everyone can be transformed; untransformable losers must persist in order for Mossbourne to create winners. Although this site's demonisation has been lifted and students can be proud to attend Mossbourne, this does not 'solve' the wider problem; hierarchies persist within the school and outside of it. Pathology moves elsewhere in this zero sum game, to Hackney Free or to Tottenham or beyond, but this demonised place must exist to make Mossbourne great.

While Mossbourne is positioned as a tool transforming Hackney's urban culture, it also provides an 'oasis' for middle-class colonisation. Discipline civilises these 'unruly' spaces, making Mossbourne safe for middle-class consumption. As chapter one outlined, middle-class men like Edward Denison felt the East End needed a resident gentry to improve the area through bringing their superior culture to them. Mossbourne aids the re-establishment of resident gentry, actively recruiting a middle-class 'buffer zone' to prevent Mossbourne from being a 'sink school'. Yet, as Foucault cautions us, this is not simply a return to the era of the nineteenth century settlement house, but the creation of something new. Firstly, these students are not simply desired for their superior culture that serves as an antidote to pathologised urban forms, but the expectation of their steady production of test results with minimal teacher labour. Privilege begets privilege as a middle-class enclave is created within this space, as the demand for results both feed off and into Mossbourne's predilection for the white, middle-class student. Secondly, it is not only white, middle-class bodies that can excel within this space and come to symbolise ideal pupils. As the experience of Joshua, Samuel and others exemplifies, the black (and often male) body can come to represent an ideal cosmopolitan body if it can display white, middle-class normative behaviours.

Reproducing Difference, Differently: Shifting Articulations of Raced and Classed Inequity

This thesis also suggests how race and class are being lived in different ways through

neoliberal regimes like Mossbourne which (re)produce difference differently. Gayatri Spivak (1988:296) famously highlighted the long tradition of 'white men saving brown women from brown men', however at Mossbourne we have a mixed-raced man of working-class origins and teachers from a range of backgrounds saving working-class and ethnic minority students from Hackney's malignant culture. The flexible porosity of these categories highlights their impermanence, where race cannot be fixed as a transhistorical category. Instead its meaning alters and splinters across different contexts, manifesting in local, specific ways that connect to larger public discourses (Solomos and Back, 1996).

The treatment race and class receive as categories is therefore tied to the context of Hackney and the shifting significance of the East End in the public imaginary. Although unfixed and context-reliant, race and class become fictions made real through the parameters of institutions and the treatment they mete out. Through the performances that institutions like Mossbourne prefer and demand, which are in turn reacted to, noticed, and negotiated by students, these categories are produced and given stability. Critiquing social constructionism's reiteration of race, Nayak asks

> To what extent is whiteness a social construction if it is always reliant upon a white subject to enact and materialize it?...The problematic of why whiteness as a practice is collapsed into the social category 'white people', and its implications for our understanding of race, are worthy of closer scrutiny (2006:417).

This thesis has show how whiteness is not reliant upon white subjects to be materialised. Sir Michael comes to be perceived as white because of his embodiment of whiteness; he represents this normativity and teaches it to students. Joshua actively adopts the controlled, compact and concise modes of being exemplified by the white middle-class group of students. This shows the flexibility of race, as blackness can sometimes (and temporarily) be undone by class – at least within the parameters of Mossbourne. The threat of black criminality is removed through the application of a middle-class whiteness, which arguably makes Joshua, Isaac or Samuel's blackness an added resource or value through their class orientation. They can, within the confines of Mossbourne, become exemplary multicultural bodies. Whiteness is detachable from the white body; it can be transported to and worn by other bodies, however it is important to recognise that the valued mode of whiteness is a middle-class one. While

girls like Bridget may be white, they do not adopt what Joshua references as the three c's in chapter six. Her type of whiteness is the wrong class variety, lacking value as a racialised, filthy whiteness (Tyler, 2008). This shows how working-class whiteness can be positioned as a block to modernity's progress as Haylett (2001) described, in contrast to the forward-facing ethnic minority subject.

These shifts in who can or cannot embody valued subjecthood brings me to reflect on Stuart Hall's pronouncement that for black people in Britain 'race is the modality in which class is lived', where black people were understood historically as primarily racialised, rather than classed subjects (1996b:58). More than thirty years later, class and race seem to be remaking each other in new ways within Mossbourne and Hackney as these historically mutually constituted categories continue to fluctuate. I would argue that the racialised subject is conceptualised through the lens of class within this landscape. At Mossbourne both pathological blackness and dirty whiteness can be 'lost' through the application of middle-class behaviours and the respectability they confer, yet this shift requires labour, loss and conformity. It suggests that racism travels via the classed implications of race, as a temporary escape route from pathology is found by these aspirational boys through class. Their wearing of white middle-classness presents an opening for blackness of the right kind to gain value, but only within particular spaces like Mossbourne. I would also like to emphasise that the black body remains marked and tied to historical racialisations in ways that the white body never can be marked, however this draws attention to the interplay between raced and classed categorisations. This becomes not only or just about the straightforward reinstatement of clear-cut categories, but about the formulation of a slippery new model of neoliberal privilege which is dependent on the reflexive, mobile self where these categories are being reproduced in new ways (Adkins, 2002). The flexibility Mossbourne gives to these categories while simultaneously remaking them is a testament to the ambiguous effectiveness of the neoliberal agenda. There are openings for the inclusion of new bodies as valuable, yet there are closures occurring at the same time. This makes it very difficult to confront these methods and mechanisms as they individualise while totalising; they hold appeal yet there are multiple conditions for their acquisition.

The disavowal of the continuing structuring force of these categories as Mossbourne and wider public discourses adopt an unreflexive post-racialism makes it difficult for students, parents and teachers to discuss and critique how difference continues to be

produced. To bring up raced or classed discrimination either within the school or within Hackney is either seen to be unfathomable with Joshua, or, as Lorna describes in chapter six, to potentially risk becoming a racist. These structuring structures have become unspeakable as there is a distinct lack of vocabulary to name or contest continuing inequalities which become individuated problems. Teachers like Mr Turner and Ms Austin are left to solitarily grapple with how to modulate their practice and interpret the myriad black boys sitting outside of teacher offices in chapter six. Instead students, parents and teachers are meant to be happy, colour-blind subjects who have transcended these difficult pasts; to remind anyone of their persistence is to become a killjoy (Ahmed, 2010).

In the introduction, Hackney Downs Old Boy Geoffrey Alderman attributed his alma mater's downfall to an influx of ethnic minority migrants who were unwilling to assimilate, however Mossbourne students' comments about the segregation of the sixth form in chapter eight invert this commonplace sentiment. Rather than a group of unassimilable immigrants keeping themselves apart, several sixth formers pointed out how some white, middle-class students formed an exclusive group which did not integrate with the rest of the sixth form. The possibility of fostering a vibrant multiculture that stands in opposition to post-colonial melancholia is lost, as this boundary drawing and assertion of privilege is not broken down, but reified through the practices of the school which are driven by market imperatives. Here it is not the 'dirty white' working-class who are obstructing modernity's melting pot, but a privileged white, middle-class who are drawing boundaries between themselves and their ethnic and classed others. Reay and her colleagues discuss how schools should take some responsibility in trying to balance the equality scales by departing from subject setting, noticing a lack of social mixing and addressing class antagonisms (2011:165-6). Unfortunately none of these things are happening at Mossbourne; although there is a mix of pupils, social distance is compounded by institutional structures, while the belief that subject setting raises attainment levels has become an orthodoxy, despite research highlighting its social divisiveness. Reay (2007:1199) urges white, middle-class parents and students to move towards an engagement with rather than avoidance of raced and classed 'others', however this movement is not valued or encouraged by a marketised system focused on results. As chapter four showed, Roger's optimistic initial plans for Mossbourne to be open and accessible to the community were quickly subverted by a focus on secure environment in the service of results. Yet it should also be pointed out that comprehensive education

should not be regarded as a 'silver bullet' solution to solving social inequality as some have suggested (see Pring and Walford, 1997). Schools cannot and should not be expected to eradicate societal imbalance; better understanding and mixing alone does not erode inequalities.

The Hard Graft of Neoliberal Subjecthood

Although Geoffrey Alderman acknowledges Mossbourne's success, he asserts that Sir Michael has not been fettered by various factions like the headteachers of Hackney Downs. This invests in the narrative that freedom from local authority management instigates innovative success, ignoring how headteachers like Sir Michael are not simply 'free', but inherit new parameters of obligation. Their hands are tied by different imperatives. Heads might transcend having to address race, class, or gender inequality, or dealing with staff concerns and union demands, but quantifiable results must be consistently produced. Results become the central organising theme as education is tied to an imagined, external market looming in the distance and directing the action. Yet these imagined futures are made real through the performance demands placed on teachers. School management remains irrevocably bound to the directives of central government and their business partners, but not to the concerns of teachers, students or most parents. This pivotal shift in accountability is a hallmark of the neoliberal state.

Mossbourne's 'structure liberates' ethos and its sociological companion, the reflexive modernity thesis, both assert that modernity presents new openings for subjects to write their own biographies as our enhanced reflexive agency is freed from social structures. Yet Mossbourne's web of disciplinary structures shows that this self-regulating subject does not make itself, while reflexivity is not a universally available subject position. Instead neoliberal subjecthood is coercively produced at Mossbourne through a range of disciplinary practices. The surveillance of Foucault's Panopticon and the division of spaces and bodies to break collectivities combines with the punitive coercion of shouting, audit and the evangelical cultivation of good life fantasies which work to structure not only the subjectivities of students, but teachers in chapter four. This web of mechanisms mirrors de Certeau's argument that a range of polytheistic disciplinary practices persist beside the Panopticon (1988). Multiple forms of coercion, including disciplinary and sovereign power, are necessary to bring this neoliberal self into being and the neoliberal school is the obvious venue for shaping this subject.

While Lauren Berlant describes how capitalism has always generated 'destabilising scenes of productive destruction' whereby the market's whims have made and unmade lives and resources, she adds that theorists like David Harvey have suggested that new forms of instability are being generated by neoliberal economic formations (2011:192). While this movement bears some of the hallmarks of Hall's (1980) writing over thirty years ago about Britain drifting into a law and order society led by an authoritarian state, we have shifted to a marketised state guiding these movements. This brings Berlant to ask 'What does it mean even to propose that a spreading precarity provides the dominant *structure* and *experience* of the present moment, cutting across class and localities?' (2011:192, author's italics). Whether an economic or political condition, a way of life, an affective atmosphere or an existential truth, this precarity indicates that 'there are no guarantees that the life one intends can or will be built' (2011:192). Schools are some of the final frontiers for finance capital to colonise, compounding their historical role as producers of unequal labour relations explored in chapter two. As these public institutions are now being parcelled out for privatisation, education can be ever more closely tied to market demands. Mossbourne's neoliberal education shapes subjects so they can be made amenable and flexible to market precarity.

Mossbourne's structures enable students to expect, adapt and conform to these 'flexible' or expendable conditions. Students learn to endlessly compete and strive, they learn to endure difficult circumstances, and, most importantly, not to contest or question the necessity of this endurance, but to perceive it as key to their future happiness and success. It is what must be done to be a self. As Ms Davis mused in chapter four, perhaps self-regulating, market-driven 'automatons' are what is needed to endure the bumpy ride ahead, as teachers make and are made by this process. Teachers and students do not act as automatons, but as chapter five showed continuously grapple to justify their labour and disciplinary procedures through the production of results.

Students and teachers inhabit similar disciplinary spaces, undergoing monitoring and offering analogous justifications for enduring these parameters. In the service of imagined future gains, they meet current demands. These demands are seen to be externally produced somewhere 'out there' in the world; these demands will be experienced in the work place as they are experienced within the school and Mossbourne serves as a model of this future work place. Teachers

exemplify the expendable, tireless worker always ready to 'go the extra mile', their work given value through a missionary-like drive to salvage urban children. Parents, students, and teachers suspend their misgivings and complaints because of the pragmatic notion that Mossbourne 'works'. However, staff turnover among teachers continues to be high; at least nine out of the nineteen teachers in my 2008 sample have now left Mossbourne and teachers in chapter four questioned the sustainability of the enormous workload. Berlant describes how the conditions of ordinary life 'wears out' the subject:

> The conditions of ordinary life in the contemporary world even of relative wealth, as in the United States, are conditions of the attrition or wearing out of the subject, and the irony that the labor of reproducing life in the contemporary world is also the activity of being worn out by it has specific implications for thinking about the ordinariness of suffering, the violence of normativity, and the 'technologies of patience' that enable a concept of the *later* to suspend questions about the cruelty of the *now*' (2010:28, author's italics).

Teachers and students are meant to patiently withstand the onerous labour of the present and suspend their critique in order to serve the later, which is the future to come. Producing this present is not an inevitability, but a creative process realised daily through the implementation of structures in service to the market. Presenting this model of education as the only way to deal with children in Hackney and imperative to fulfilling an externalised, naturalised market conceals how education itself is part of the production, feeding and creation of this market. It enacts these futures to come, while the market is not regarded as a socially produced object. Mossbourne does not obliterate dreams, as chapters five and seven showed, but encourages and inculcates an expansive belief in dreams through its training. Yet these future imaginaries are narrow and individualised. These neoliberal dreams are moulded in the guise of good life fantasies starring the limitless, acquisitive individual, as dreams of the successful self-enacting normative values becomes the only dream worth having. As Massey described, neoliberalism has altered the 'scaffolding of our imagination', changing the way we perceive ourselves and what is possible to do and be. The idea that there is no alternative to Mossbourne's educational format is powerfully evidenced in the narratives of students, parents and teachers.

Although some Mossbourne students may get ahead in the employment market, there are numerous side effects to this approach which carry much wider implications. The cultivation of docility which fosters an uncritical submission to authority, a lack of imagination, a narrow sense of agency are a few. Critical thinking and critique is a messy, time-consuming and disruptive activity that only impedes the progress of the conveyor belt and its production of results. This uncritical docility connects to the academy programme's democratic vacuum where there is little recourse for the public shaping or influence of educational provision. The lack of democratic participation available in the outside world mirrors the situation at Mossbourne where the student council is an anti-performative formality, the institution does not listen to the voices of students, teachers or (most) parents, and thinkers are not cultivated. The dictation of knowledge by capital without any democratic recourse is a problematic dynamic embedded within the longstanding conflictual tension between capitalism and democracy, descending from the days of Utilitarian-led educational models and their paradoxical aims. Berlant talks about this conflict being resolved through offering a bit of voting, privacy and unfettered consumer privilege 'to prop up the sense that the good-life fantasy is available to everyone' (2011:194). Yet these paltry concessions are being rapidly retracted from the educational landscape, particularly 'voting' in the sense of local participation in educational provision. Subsequently, the compensatory focus rests on consumption through the idea of parents as consumers - an empty promise when education consumption is tied to the capacity to wield legitimate cultural and economic capital. Being framed as consumers, not citizens, inhibits equality as only some parents can access a range of educational products. In addition to silencing dissenting voices, this educational model silently reinstates white middle-class values as normative, while other ways of knowing and being are excluded.

Whose Knowledge?: Loss, Fantasy and Value

Achieving appropriate modes of subjecthood is a project which cannot be disassociated from the achievement of raced and classed norms, as more movement is required for some subjects to approximate ideal subjecthood than others. Severing Mossbourne from the surrounding area, both rhetorically and spatially, designating Hackney's culture as the wrong sort of culture, proves alienating and detrimental for many students. Many students who do not inhabit the white, middle-class normative position have more difficulty staying on Mossbourne's conveyor belt and must lose or

disidentify with anything related to 'street culture' in order to acquire value. These affective attachments to good life objects are necessary for educational success and more difficult for some to make than others. Yet many students, like Tameka in chapter six, laboured to keep themselves on the conveyor belt, optimistically anticipating that this would accrue her future gains.

Mossbourne's paradoxical values are fused together in an ambiguous, slippery package. Berlant describes how fantasy acts as both an opening and a defence where 'The vague expectations of normative optimism produce small self-interruptions as the heterotopias of sovereignty amid structural inequality, political depression, and other intimate disappointments' (2010:49). Mossbourne creates a fantasy space, presenting itself as an oasis where these heterotopias could be accessed. Yet Berlant adds, 'In scenarios of cruel optimism we are forced to suspend ordinary notions of repair and flourishing to ask whether the survival scenarios we attach to those affects weren't the problem in the first place' (2010:49). In this way, the affects Mossbourne offers are part of the problematic, adopting white middle-classness as universal and normative and designating ways of being outside of this position as illegitimate. Although Mossbourne may graft on legitimate forms of capital, this added value is underwritten by necessary loss and sacrifice. Meanwhile, as explored in chapter seven, some subjects like Shante, Osman, and Clarice cannot withstand the inscription process and Mossbourne's good life fantasies remain out of reach; not everyone can inhabit the privileged space of reflexive subject.

I will close by arguing that what counts as knowledge and personhood needs to be widened beyond a racialised, classed and individualised conception of the acquisitive self in order to imagine more equitable futures and egalitarian educations. As Foucault remarked,

> …the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the workings of institutions, which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize and attack them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight against them (2006:41).

I hope that the thesis interrogates and unpacks how Mossbourne does not function in a vacuum of detached neutrality, but as part of a lengthy and contested political

trajectory. Its aims make certain worlds more or less possible. As Reay (2007) and Skeggs and Loveday (2012) urge, we need to move towards a position where positive meaning and value can be accorded to working-class ontologies, and I would argue, to other cultural forms worn by bodies of various colours. As Michael Keith comments:

> We are witnessing some major changes in the institutions involved in the socialisation of young people. In this context the simple division between what is and what is not the state is perhaps not very helpful when the legislative changes relate much more to a transactional relationship between forms and norms of behaviour and of official sanction (2005:155).

This institutional socialisation process, bound to the market through the state, leaves little room for creativity or imagination. It realises working-class radicals' fears over two hundred years ago regarding the implementation of a non-democratic education system. Currently the academy programme is forging ahead, with 304 Department for Education staff currently dedicated to its implementation and an 'Academies Central Operations Division' overcoming 'obstacles' to the conversion process (Mansell, 2013). This model is positioned as the only answer and there is a stark absence of viable alternatives being offered from the Left or elsewhere. This dead-end obsession with the production of exam results creates a landscape where individuals are left to transcend inequitable structures which simultaneously compound disadvantage through the narrow forms of personhood subjects are required to adopt in order to possess value.

Appendix A: Core Student Cohort

Year Eleven Students (14-15 years old)

Tameka says she is Black British, but 'actually African', describing herself as from Congo and Hackney. Tameka describes herself as a 'normal teenager' who does 'normal' things, adding 'We don't look at like if you are working class or higher class like, that's what most of the posh people do, but for us it's like if you've got nice clothes you're alright'. Tameka is in set four lessons and lives on a nearby estate with her mother, (mostly absent) father, older sister, younger brother.

Joshua describes himself as Nigerian, not British. He was born in Nigeria and came to the UK when he was three. Joshua thinks he would be described as middle class because his dad works in the City and he is not planning on becoming a plumber. Joshua feels that people do not talk about things like class and that they do not matter. Joshua is in set one and lives on a nearby estate with his mother, father and four siblings.

Samuel designates himself as Black British. Both of his parents were born in Cameroon, but he was born in the UK. Samuel feels people do notice who does or does not come from a wealthy background from how they look and speak, but little is actually said about it. He feels this is something one has at the back of their mind. Samuel occupies an ambivalent position in relation to these differences; he is in set one and does not speak slang, but lives on a nearby estate with his younger brother and mother. Samuel is aware of economic precarity, describing the potential impact of government cuts on his mother's job in a hospital.

Mary describes herself as white British. She is in set three and four lessons and does not identify with the white, middle-class group of students in her year group who she describes as exclusive and snobby. She does not refer to herself as middle-class, but thinks her sister who is in set one is a 'snob'. Mary lives with her mother and sister in housing association flat. Her mother has a long-term illness and cannot work, but volunteers in the community.

Shante defines herself as multi-ethnic because she is black, but also has white ancestry. She does not say 'mixed-race' because she describes herself as more black than white. Although she holds a British passport, she sees herself as more Nigerian than British.

Shante does not recognise class as relevant, but describes aspiring to a 'good life' where she can pay her way. She lives on a nearby estate with her mother who is looking for a job, as well as her brother and two sisters.

Clarice describes herself as mixed-race, explaining that she does not say white and Afro-Caribbean because her mother and father were mixed too. 'Class' meant little to Clarice, yet she thinks people are very aware of who has more resources than others. Although she lives on benefits, Clarice said that her friends think she is the richest among them, suggesting that this might be because they presented themselves like people with money. She is an only child, in set one lessons and lives with her grandmother.

Isaac identified as black British**,** describing how his grandparents were from Jamaica but one was half Portuguese. He also has some German Jewish heritage. Both his parents were both born in the UK. Isaac felt social divisions were about class, not ethnicity. While Isaac did not place himself in a class group in year eleven, by year 13 he described himself as middle-class. Isaac is in set two lessons and lives with his parents and two siblings in a large Victorian house. His mother is a doctor and his father is a journalist.

Shazia describes herself as Bangladeshi; although born in the UK, both of her parents are from Bangladesh. Shazia says she might add 'British' to this description. Shazia did not relate to the concept of class, but described how people thought Mossbourne was a posh school, adding that it just looked posh. She did not feel transformed by it, implying that she did not see herself as 'posh'. Shazia is in set one for her lessons and lives with her parents.

Osman described himself as 'a member of the human race', adding that he did not care about any of this stuff, only if you were a good, loyal person. He later added that he was Turkish. He also did not care about how much money people had; he would be friends with anyone if they were okay. Osman said he worked to make his own money after school and on weekends and did not expect anything from anyone. Osman is in set two and three lessons and lives with his mother on a nearby estate.

Patience described herself as African. Although she was born here, both of Patience's parents are from Ghana and she would not describe herself as British. Patience did not

think differential resources mattered and felt ethnicity divided students more than anything else. Patience is in set one and two lessons and lives with her mother, a health care worker, and her sister on a nearby estate.

Year Nine Students (12-13 years old)

Lorna describes herself as both black and white, yet adds that the black girls often called her black and her white friends called her white. This led Lorna to joke that she was 'whack', but 'definitely middle class'. She describes how being middle class was not just about having money, but a certain style and interests, while set grouping also played into this. Lorna is in set one and two lessons and lives in a housing association flat with her sister and mother who works as an administrator.

Poppy describes herself as white and middle class; she is described by Lorna as the most middle-class of her peer group due to having a large Victorian house and a horse. Like Lorna, Poppy describes how class was not about having money, but about interests and speaking style. Poppy describes how her mother 'used to be working class', but her grandmother made her speak 'proper English' to not sound 'common'. Poppy is in set one and lives with her father, a journalist, and mother, a media professional.

Gazi describes himself as Turkish Cypriot, although he is also a quarter Irish. Gazi feels that students do talk about differences in resources, adding that he was rich with at least £3,000 in the bank from his dad who he seldom saw. Gazi does not hang out with 'posh nerds', claiming this group had no style or fun. In contrast, Gazi describes his friends as bad boys – but not 'really bad, bad boys' - who knew how to take a dare and have fun. Gazi's mother works as a waitress and his stepfather does maintenance work. Gazi is in set four and lives with his younger siblings on a nearby estate.

Afra describes herself as Pakistani, as both of her parents were born there. Afra felt students were aware of resource distribution; they could tell who was a bit poor if they came to school with their hair uncombed or their uniform messy or if they looked generally scruffy. They could also tell who had a lot of money - like one girl who always bought her friends really expensive birthday presents. Afra is in set one and lives with her father, a mini-cab driver, her mother and her siblings in a housing association flat.

Charlie is white British and says that no one talked about money unless they were trying to make someone else feel bad. Charlie felt people were more aware of which area you were from – ie. the Pembury Estate vs Amherst Road – more than anything else. Like Gazi, Charlie calls the large group of mostly white, middle-class students 'nerds' who liked to separate themselves from everyone else. Charlie is in set three and four and lives on a nearby estate with his two brothers and his mother who cares full-time for his chronically ill father.

Daniel said he would probably describe himself as Black British instead of Afro-Caribbean because he was born in the UK and had spent most of his life here, not in Barbados or Ghana where his parents were from. Daniel did not think material resources mattered and felt social groupings were due to interests and style - like his friends Poppy and Lorna. Daniel lives in a Victorian house with his three siblings, his father, a surgeon, and his mother, a psychiatrist. He is in set one.

Abisola describes her ethnicity as Nigerian-American-British. She drew similar distinctions as Gazi and Charlie between the 'nerd group' who she joked listens to Bach and her friends who are into dancing, music, shopping and having fun. Abisola does comment about resources, but is very excited to get a Nike track suit from her father who works for British Gas. Abisola is in set two and three and lives with her brother and mother on a nearby estate.

Appendix B: Teacher, Parent, and Sixth Form Sample

Teacher Sample

Women	11
Men	9
Senior Management Team	8
Teachers	11
Other	1
Total	21

Parent Sample

Name	**Parent of (if applicable)**	**Ethnicity**	**Class Identification**
Veronica		White British	Middle Class
Alex	Daniel	Black British	Middle Class
Beatrice	Shante	White British and Nigerian	No
Danese	Clarice	White British and Afro-Caribbean	No (but some teachers think they are 'too classy')
Emily		White British	Middle Class
Laila	Gazi	Turkish and Irish	'Cockney Eastenders'
Celeste	Samuel	Black Cameroonian	No
Julia		White British	Middle Class
Phil		White British	Middle Class
Miriam	Poppy	White British	Middle Class
Stuart	Poppy	White American	Middle Class
Nazia	Afra	Pakistani British	No
Bernadette	Charlie	White British	'Not Posh'
Marie		White British and Afro-Caribbean	Working Class
Mayifa	Tameka	Black Congolese	No
Esther	Joshua	Black Nigerian	Middle Class
Eve	Lorna	White British	Working Class
Franklin	Isaac	Black British	Middle Class
Fatima	Abisola	Black Nigerian	No
Sarah	Mary	White	Not Middle Class

Sixth Form Sample

Name	Ethnicity	Class identification
Alara	Turkish	Working Class
Olivia	White British and Black Zimbabwean	Middle Class
Emily	White British	No
Derek	Black British	No
Lawrence	Black Caribbean	No
Florence	Black British	No

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