

**News and Shoes: Femininity, Consumption and Journalistic Professional
Identity**

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Abstract

This thesis explores the professional cultures, capital and occupational identities of a group of women journalists working in contemporary London-based women's magazines and newspaper supplements. I have mapped this journalistic subfield in order to answer questions about the gendering of hierarchies and structures in the wider journalistic field and the opportunities and limitations provided by women's traditional associations with consumption. Commercial journalism created for, and by women, plays an increasingly important editorial and commercial role within journalism, but has received little academic attention. In this research I demarcate a distinct subfield of print journalism that I term feminine journalism. This female oriented subfield is concerned with lifestyle, fashion, celebrity and the body and extends across women's magazines and newspapers. My research is based on analysis of qualitative semi-structured interviews with a cross-section of forty journalists from across the subfield. I use Bourdieu's notion of habitus and field to interrogate the gendered journalistic cultures that mediate the production of feminine journalism. Through a detailed consideration of working practices, routines and occupational identities, I document a journalistic domain dominated by consumption, taste and aesthetics and inextricably enmeshed with the adjoining commercial fields of fashion and beauty brands. I explore the way in which the cultural and economic interlink to produce a version of commercial femininity, which helps to constitute subjective identities for both practitioners and readers. I argue that the species of feminine, embodied capital deployed by the subfield's agents offers some women power, privilege and success within the journalistic field, but ultimately circumscribes their progress barring them from the professions defining discourses of objectivity and autonomy. This situation supports my wider conclusion that the feminine capital offered to women through consumption represents a limited and contingent form of power, which ultimately reinforces a symbolic order that privileges masculinity over femininity.

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Chapter One

Introduction : Journalism and Consumption

1.1 The Subfield of Feminine Journalism

I prefer to talk about it not as a down market trend but as a feminization of newspapers. Until recently everything important on the papers was done by men, and that was naturally enough reflected in the product. Then people woke up to the fact that 50% of the readers were women. That's not necessarily downmarket at all. It doesn't mean triviality: it means a stronger sense of the human interest in a story. There was a curious sense of dryness in the old days.

Charles Moore, editor of the Daily Telegraph (cited in Engels, 1996)

Speaking in 1996 Charles Moore, then the editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, identified a feminizing trend in newspapers, which has only accelerated and intensified in the intervening years. This feminization has seen a huge increase in newspaper features about fashion, leisure and consumption in all its guises, as well as more celebrity and human interest stories (Aldridge, 2001; Conboy, 2004; Franklin, 2008). This growth in advertising-heavy lifestyle content aimed at a female readership has seen newspapers colonise the traditional territory of women's magazines and has even been termed 'the magazing of the press' (Gill, 2007a:35) or the 'Graziaification¹ of Fleet Street' (Thynne, 2005:20).

Newspaper's expanded interest in 'feminine' content, or what Harp terms 'the four Fs, family, food, furnishings and fashion' (2007:1), has produced a

¹ *Grazia* is a weekly fashion and celebrity oriented women's magazine which has been highly successful and influential since its launch in 2005. *Grazia* perfectly illustrates the interconnection between magazines and newspapers. Nicola Jeal who acted as consultant editor in the run up to the magazines launch was also responsible for the launch of the newspaper supplement *Observer Woman* and initially *Grazia's* fashion team was responsible for *Observer's Woman's* fashion content.

journalistic subfield that straddles newspapers and women's magazines sharing a common subject matter and often produced by the same practitioners. This subfield that I term feminine journalism, forms the terrain of this project and it is explored through the professional cultures and occupational identities of a representative cross-section of women journalists working in contemporary London-based women's magazines and newspaper supplements.

I am aware that the term feminine journalism is problematic, implying as it does an acceptance of a pre-existent group of 'feminine' journalists and readers with a shared set of innate and distinct interests. However, despite these problems I have chosen to describe this type of commercial journalism aimed at a female readership as feminine journalism², rather than female or women's journalism, precisely because I wish to distinguish between the sexually differentiated, commercially oriented version of femininity presented within the subfield and the entirety of female experience³. What Gill has termed 'the re-naturalisation of sexual difference' (2007a:35) has promoted a segregated universe within print journalism in which as she puts it 'girls stuff is lifestyle, home, cooking and leisure and the boys stuff is sports, politics and business' (36). Within the subfield this segregation is presented as organic and natural, and many of its members discuss their work using essentialist and even biological discourses. However, my research sets out to illustrate the constructed nature of the femininity that is represented and the commercial imperatives behind this construction. The term feminine journalism is not intended to denote women's

² In using the term feminine journalism I do not wish to suggest a lack of attention to the long history of scholarship in this area. Women's magazines rest upon an assumption that a coherent group of women readers exist, united by an instinctively 'feminine' perspective, which predates their exposure to the products of commercial femininity. This founding tenet has been questioned and undermined by feminist theory from Simone du Beauvoir onwards. Feminist distinctions between biological sex and a socially constructed gender (Rubin, 1975) and later critiques of even this distinction (Butler, 1993; Moi, 1999) have undermined the notions of a pre-discursive sex or gendered identity, which women's magazines depend upon for their definition.

³ Chambers et al.. (2004) identify a brand of journalism that they characterise as 'materialistic and consumerist ... a feminized confessional style of popular journalism modelled on magazine journalism' (217) and term this category of journalism 'postfeminist journalism'. I have not adopted this term, despite similarities in our characterisations, as I find the term's implicit periodization inappropriate for a subfield, which as I will demonstrate is rather marked by striking levels of consistency from its 19th Century origins to the present day.

inherent values or interests, but as Linda Steiner has noted the ways in which, 'marketing concerns drive the sex-binary packaging of news and the construction of women (readers and reporters) as interested in lifestyle issues and domesticity' (2009:118). Furthermore I am not suggesting that women's interaction with journalism, either as professionals or readers, is confined to the feminine subfield, women are now represented throughout the profession, making inroads into former 'male bastions' such as war reporting (Chambers and Steiner, 2010). However, lifestyle and features still plays a disproportionately large role in women's involvement with journalism (Harp, 2007) and where journalism is explicitly coded as female and targeted at a gendered audience it will usually fall within the feminine subfield.

1.2 The Feminine Subfield: A Historical Perspective

In order to understand the deep-rooted and seemingly tenacious links between women readers and journalists and a particular brand of consumption oriented lifestyle journalism it is necessary to look at the origins of the subfield of feminine journalism in the late 1800s. The emergence of a distinct commercial journalistic subfield aimed at women, extending from magazines into newspapers, can be traced to the final decades of the 19th Century (Beetham, 1996; Rappaport, 2000; Conboy, 2004). During this period, powerful discourse around femininity and consumption aligned with structural and economic changes in the organisation of print journalism to give a new prominence to the female reader and a resultant growth in both women's periodicals and newspaper coverage of 'soft' topics such as fashion, the arts, domestic issues and society gossip. The late Victorian era saw both the beginnings of a modern consumer society and 'the propensity to feminize the realm of consumption' (De Grazia, 1996:15). With the appearance of mass production and distribution, femininity and consumption became intertwined as the commercial realm entered the private domain of the domestic and new forms of retailing such as the department store produced feminized commercial spaces in the public sphere (Felski, 1995; Bowlby, 2000). The ideal shopper, the middle class woman,

became the privileged agent of consumer culture and this position gave women new access to the public spaces of the city and by extension to the printed public sphere. Women were seen as the primary shoppers and women's magazines and pages in newspapers gave advertisers, including the new department stores, access to these female custodians of the family budget. These elements combined to foster a new feminized sphere of consumption as LeMahieu notes, 'it was in the mutual economic interest of department stores, the advertising business and popular daily newspapers to persuade women to become frequent consumers' (1988:37).

Print journalism was at the centre of this feminized consumer culture as Conboy observes magazines and newspapers were, 'crucial to the formation of commodity and leisure culture as an extension of that sphere in print' (2004:137). This centrality was driven by the increasing importance of advertising. Innovations in print technology, changes in the structure of the publishing industry and the repeal of onerous taxation on advertising in 1853 produced a new model of finance for newspapers and magazines and advertising began to dominate the production of print journalism (Curran and Seaton, 2003). With this development gaining the readership of the newly significant female shopper, the primary target of advertisers, became a key objective for both newspapers and magazines. Press barons such as Northcliffe, Newnes and Pearson identified the importance of 'woman appeal' (Conboy, 2004:143) prioritising magazines specifically for women and creating women's pages in newspapers. Magazines for women increased in number and importance (Beetham, 1996), titles such as *Queen* and *The Lady* fostered increased consumer literacy through their fashion and shopping content and began 'the construction of specific forms of femininity emerging from within what might be termed a feminized consumer culture' (Breward, 1994:75). With the proliferation of such magazines the style of writing they had fostered and the reader they had constructed also found a place within newspapers. In 1896 Lord Northcliffe⁴,

⁴ Then Alfred Harmsworth.

already the publisher of successful women's magazines, launched the *Daily Mail*, a newspaper that from the outset targeted women readers. Northcliffe explicitly linked women readers with advertising revenues and demanded that the publication be a 'woman's paper' that featured feminine content (LeMahieu, 1988).

Such developments suggest that the feminization of newspapers, which has been noted in recent years, actually began long ago and that as Conboy argues, 'the dominant trend of journalism from the middle of the 19th Century has been to include styles of writing and illustration of greater interest to an idealized woman reader' (2004:128). This trend was predicated on women's importance as consumers and their move into the printed public sphere was achieved largely through their associations with consumption and advertising. Women journalists were employed and women's pages were instituted as a result of newspapers' desire to promote consumerism, as Rappaport observes, 'female writers made their way into the public sphere by selling a utopian commodified view of both the public and private spheres' (2000:122). These beginnings helped to construct divisions within journalism and perceptions of male and female readers and they have had a long lasting impact on the gendering of different types of content in today's media (Harp, 2007). This study sets out to consider the extent to which this long standing association between women readers and journalists and consumption structures the contemporary subfield of feminine journalism. Through an analysis of the subfield's occupational capital and working practices, I attempt to demarcate the ways in which the space consumption offers women within the journalistic field, 'becomes both a moment of access and a moment of closure' (Radner, 1995:2).

1.3 The Contemporary Subfield

From the outset feminine journalism has created a version of femininity rooted in the private world of domesticity, venturing into the public sphere only through the feminized spaces of consumption. The genre has generally failed to

engage with the public, the political or the civic (Ferguson, 1983; Winship, 1987; Ballaster *et al.*, 1991) and instead has consistently addressed its readership as consumers rather than citizens. Indeed in their study of the genre Ballaster *et al.* claim that ‘the history of the development of the women’s magazine as a commodity is also the history of the construction of woman as consumer’ (1991:47). One of the aims of this project is to establish the extent to which those working within the contemporary feminine subfield define their territory and area of expertise through consumption and to determine the ways in which they construct their readership (Chapters 5 and 6). As well as attempting to gauge the social and political implications of these definitions.

A brief consideration of the recent history of the feminine subfield suggests that the discourses of femininity and consumption that figured so strongly in its creation have continued to mark its development. Indeed in the last few decades women’s magazines have concentrated ever more closely on consumption, marginalising not just broader social issues, but the discourses of heterosexual romance and personal relationships, which in the past have helped to define the genre. While earlier critiques noted women’s magazines limiting preoccupation with heterosexual romance (McRobbie, 1978; Winship, 1987), as Conboy notes, recent years have seen magazines retreat from even these concerns in favour of an intensified interest in the ‘increasingly lucrative combination of advertorial journalism supporting the commodity lifestyles at their core’ (2004:146). Contemporary magazines feature a discourse of feminine pleasure that ‘cannot simply be understood in terms of a heterosexual imperative’ (Radner, 1995: xii), but is rather organised almost entirely around shopping and a commodified version of celebrity. This narrowing of subject matter can be traced to the 1985 launch of *ELLE* and finds its apotheosis in the most recent magazine to enter the market the glossy weekly *LOOK*⁵.

ELLE’s 1985 launch saw the magazine genre move away from the intimate and emotional realm and towards fashion and more particularly shopping and

⁵ *LOOK* was launched by publisher IPC in 2007.

consumption. Just as the periodicals of the late Victorian period capitalised on changing patterns of female consumption *ELLE* sought to appeal to what it saw as a new breed of female consumer through its emphasis on fashion and style. As journalist Sarah Mower observed at the time, 'if sex, relationships and emotion are out of fashion as core subjects of women's magazines, fashion itself is in' (1985:37). While market leader *Cosmopolitan* wrestled with definitions of feminism, launch editor Sally Brampton, coined the term 'postfeminist' to describe the tone of *ELLE* (cited in *Campaign* 1985:32). The magazine was organised around success and aspiration and therefore explorations of women's troubles, either sexual or political, were characterised as unnecessary and outmoded. *ELLE* defined itself against *Cosmopolitan's* investigation of emotions, relationships and problems; instead it was concerned with confidence, style and consumption. Joyce Hopkirk, the launch editor of British *Cosmopolitan*, was *ELLE's* editorial director and she was keen to differentiate between the two magazines, telling a trade weekly:

Features on women's orgasms are a bit passé. Women are no longer interested in very wordy, very anxious articles such as are offered in *Cosmopolitan* and *Company* with fashion thrown in. There's a new breed of reader with no special magazine catering for them. This is where *Elle* will succeed. It is primarily a style magazine with words. (cited in Braithwaite, 1995:129)

The style and shopping agenda set by *ELLE* in 1985 has dominated the women's magazine market ever since, while magazines such as *New Woman*, *Marie Claire*, *Nova* and *Frank*⁶ may have attempted to change the direction of

⁶ *New Woman* was launched in 1988 and its editor Frankie McGowan rejected the 'style obsession' (cited in White, 1988) of *ELLE* and attempted to focus the magazine around emotion and relationships rather than consumption but by 1990 the magazine had a new editor Gill Hudson who rejected what she termed the 'emotional constipation' (cited in James, 1990:23) that had gone before and realigned the magazine to aim at a 'rich' (23) consumption oriented reader, this decade *New Woman* has focused firmly on celebrity style, fashion and beauty. 1997 and 2000 saw the launch and rapid closure of *Frank* and *Nova* both magazines prided themselves on their cutting edge art direction and announced they would offer significant political content. *Frank* editor Tina Gaudoin described her title as 'frocks with politics and human rights' (cited in Cooper, 1997:4). While *Nova* editor Deborah Bee described her ideal reader as 'a feisty young woman who's into

the genre they were forced to close or move their editorial mix in line with the dominant focus on consumption. This is most clearly demonstrated by the history of *Marie Claire*, a magazine that promised ‘to explore beyond the superficial’ (*Marie Claire*, 1988:9) and was marketed as ‘a source of incisive and serious editorial features wrapped in a comfortable layer of fashion and beauty’ (Braithwaite, 1995:141). Despite these intentions, and the critical acclaim that followed its launch, today’s magazine has almost completely jettisoned this agenda in favour of a focus on fashion and product. This shift in editorial priorities was summed up by Marie O’Riordan⁷ who took over the editorship in 2001 and explained:

Until now *Marie Claire* hasn’t reflected the growth of celebrity culture and women’s acute interest in the minutiae of fashion shopping and consumer goods. I want women to be able to open it and go ‘Oh there’s loads of stuff I want to buy’ (cited in Hodgson, 2001:4).

The narrowing focus that has characterised the women’s magazines market over the last two decades found its complete expression in weekly glossy *LOOK*⁸. The magazine’s 2007 launch witnessed the refinement of the traditional content of women’s magazines to an almost complete concentration on shopping. *LOOK*’s publisher IPC proclaimed that what interested young women was ‘celebrities and shopping’ (Thynne, 2007:11) and so developed a remit that focused almost entirely on consumption and ‘fast fashion’⁹. As launch editor Ali Hall explained, ‘There was no weekly magazine catering for girls who go shopping every single Saturday. The number-one leisure activity for women in this age group was going shopping’

lipstick as much as politics’ (cited in Craik, 2000:10). However, neither *Frank* nor *Nova* made a significant impression on either advertisers or readers and both folded within a year of their launch. Within the industry this failure was attributed to ‘over-worthiness’ and a lack of fun and entertainment (Shelton, 1999:8).

⁷ O’Riordan was previously an editor of *Elle*.

⁸ *LOOK* followed hot on the heels of the first ‘glossy weekly’ magazine *Grazia* which had proved a huge success in 2005.

⁹ Since the beginning of the 21st Century the fashion retail market has been characterised by a phenomenon known as ‘fast fashion’, a term commonly used to describe rapid drops in clothing prices coupled with an accelerating turnover of trends.

(Sheppard, 2007:45). The extent of the magazine's shopping content is overwhelming, colonising even the cover where new brands are pictured complete with location and price and Hall has been happy to describe her publication as 'the perfect high street filter' (Farley Jones, 2007) and 'a celebration of the high street' (Sheppard, 2007:45).

It is now nearly three decades since *ELLE* appeared in the UK and despite changes in the magazine sector, its agenda of style and feminine self expression through consumption has endured and finds renewed expression in *LOOK* a magazine launched twenty two years later. Whilst feminine journalism's subject matter has consolidated around consumption its reach has extended beyond magazines and farther and farther into newspapers. In recent decades the response of the newspaper industry to falling sales has been an increasing dependence on advertising and an attendant shift in emphasis away from areas such as hard news and foreign reporting, which have traditionally defined the profession, towards lifestyle and features content (Aldridge, 1994; Davies, 2008; Zelizer, 2009a). This growth in lifestyle content has seen the publication of numerous newspaper supplements that share the concerns, operating principles and many of the staff of women's magazines. The success of the *Mail on Sunday's You* magazine¹⁰, described by one of its editors Dee Nolan as 'a proper upmarket women's magazine' (cited in Rahman, 1998:5), proved influential in the newspaper sector pioneering a trend for 'more and more entertainment and glamour' (*Marketing Week*, 1984:62) and numerous similar supplements have followed¹¹. Commercialisation and tabloidization have characterised the recent history of the newspaper (Gans, 2009; Bird, 2009) and have facilitated the rise of feminine supplements and seen feminine content move beyond their borders

¹⁰ *You* was launched in 1982 and is widely credited with saving the ailing *Mail on Sunday* taking sales from 750,000 to 1.5 million within weeks of its launch (Fountain, 1994:16).

¹¹ *The Sunday Times Style* section was re-launched as a women's magazine in 1997. *The Sunday Telegraph* launched *Stella*, a fashion oriented supplement targeting a 'floating constituency of female readers' (Thynne, 2005:20), in 2005. The following year *The Observer* began publishing *Observer Woman* a glossy fashion dominated magazine aimed at women.

infiltrating features and even news sections. This feminization of newspapers has seen the traditional territory of feminine journalism expand outwards from women's magazines into newspaper supplements and the features and fashion sections. This expansion has produced the unified subfield of this project, which extends across newspapers and magazines and constitutes feminine journalism.

This research seeks to determine the ways in which feminine journalism's simultaneous extension of reach and narrowing of focus has provided possibilities and limitations to the women journalists who work within the subfield. While the feminization of newspapers has undoubtedly increased the size and scope of the subfield my research attempts to determine if it has fundamentally altered the nature of the capital that operates within the journalistic profession. Ultimately this project concerns the imbrications between femininity, consumption and journalistic occupational identity. The two focal questions that structure this thesis are:

- How is the subfield of feminine journalism demarcated and what kinds of capital, practices and professional identities operate within its boundaries?
- How does the subfield of feminine journalism fit into the wider journalistic field and does its growth signal a realignment of professional norms and hierarchies?

In addition to these main research questions, there are also a series of sub-questions that this project sets out to explore:

- What is the version of femininity produced by the subfield of feminine journalism?

- What can the subfield of feminine journalism tell us about the opportunities and limitations offered by women's association with consumption?
- Can femininity operate as occupational capital?
- Are academic conceptions of journalism sufficient to analyse the contemporary profession, and if not, how can they be amended?

1.4 Theoretical Framework and Thesis Outline

To date the study of the subfield I have identified as feminine journalism has fallen between two academic traditions that of feminist media studies and the sociology of news production. These two approaches have segmented the subfield and have rarely reflected upon one another. The texts and readers of women's magazines have been considered through the lens of feminist media studies, but this work has largely ignored production and newspaper journalism and so failed to consider magazines as a part of wider social structures, while the large body of work on journalism and news production has almost completely marginalised the fashion, features and 'soft' journalism of the feminine subfield. This academic positioning has meant that despite its expansion and growing commercial importance, the feminine subfield has not played a significant part in representations of journalism. In both the profession and the academy journalism has been defined through a specific form of hard news. Such conceptions have fostered a concentration on journalism's function in the education of a politically informed citizenry able to enact their role in a public sphere and tended to ignore journalism's arguably equally important commercially driven imperatives to entertain and amuse. Despite journalism's growing commercialization, tabloidization and feminization, scholarly efforts have remained largely focused on a small section of what actually constitutes contemporary journalism (Dahlgren, 1992; Beasley, 2001; Deuze, 2009; Zelizer, 2009a). This focus has left feminine journalism woefully under theorized, work

on women's magazines is patchy, petering out after a burst of activity in the Eighties and Nineties, while the study of newspapers has ignored the lifestyle journalism of supplements and features.

My project does not follow in either of these traditions, but draws on elements from both branches of scholarship in order to build an appropriate theoretical model. Recent work on news production has used Bourdieu's notion of the field to institute a new unit of analysis for research, 'the entire universe of journalists and media organisations acting and reacting to one another' (Benson and Neveu, 2005:11). This model offers the promise of a more flexible, less normative approach to the study of the journalistic profession. However, disappointingly such work has tended to reproduce the failing of Bourdieu's own approach to the media concentrating analysis on news journalism or small-scale limited production whilst marginalising the media's commercial and entertainment functions (Hesmondalgh, 2006). This focus coupled with an incomplete application of Bourdieu's model, which concentrates on the objectivist field half of his theoretical pairing at the expense of the subjectivist habitus, leaves the new journalistic field theory reproducing many of the exclusions of the paradigms that went before it and unable to shed any light on the operation of gender within journalism.

My research appropriates the field theory model, but relies on a more holistic approach to Bourdieu's thinking attempting to integrate fully the notion of habitus, as represented by the subjective identities of my participants, with that of the field. This method facilitates an analysis that is attentive both to the subjective identities of journalists and the economic and cultural structures within which they operate. Despite the critical opportunities provided by Bourdieu's thinking his work often fails to speak to the issues that dominate my area of research due to his inattention to popular culture and limitations in his conceptualization of gender. These ideas outlined in *Masculine Domination*

(2001) are limited by the empirical foundation upon which they rest¹², presenting a seamless picture of gendered socialisation based in mythic sexual structures, and are insufficient to deal with changing sexual relationships or the movement of women across fields (Chapter Two). In order to overcome these problems this project also draws on feminist reinterpretations of Bourdieu's thinking (Skeggs 1997 and 2004, Lovell 2000, Gray 2003, Huppertz 2009) that have used the notion of capital to consider women's utilisation of gendered skills and knowledge, in an increasingly aestheticized workplace. I would position my study alongside this scholarship and hope that I can make a contribution to this nascent body of work by detailing the operation of this feminine capital in the journalistic field. At the heart of my research is a consideration of the construction of femininity, while the role of magazines in the creation of gender has been a standard convention of analysis for over thirty years, a detailed analysis of the commercial and professional mechanics of this process has not been forthcoming. Through a detailed account of the production of lifestyle journalism and the subjective identities of those working within this subfield, my research sheds new light on the way in which the economic and cultural enmesh to produce powerful discourses of femininity.

A synoptic itemisation of the chapters follows.

Chapter 2 (*The Production of Journalism: The Citizen and The Consumer*) argues for a series of alterations in the way the journalistic profession and the production of newspapers are currently conceptualised in both the academy and the profession. I suggest that the current model of journalistic practice is insufficient for an analysis of the subfield of feminine journalism. I will trace the ways in which a journalistic objectivity norm and a Habermasian public sphere

¹² *Masculine Domination* is focused on material gathered during Bourdieu's fieldwork in the peasant society of Kabylia in the late 1950s and early 1960s. As other commentators have pointed out (Lovell 2000, Fowler 2003, Wallace 2003) the empirical focus of this work is extremely limited. Bourdieu relies upon a narrow and far from comprehensive set of examples from Kabylia society to extrapolate a universal theory of masculine domination. This makes for a work which is uncharacteristically reliant on assertion and as Fowler points out, 'fails to acknowledge with sufficient precision the changing characteristics of patriarchy within different periods, most notably that of capitalist modernity' (Fowler 2003:469)

have produced a normative view of journalism that excludes much of women's contribution to the profession. I consider the extent to which recent applications of Bourdieu's field theory to journalistic practice may offer an alternative model and argue that while field theory currently reproduces many of the omissions and biases of the Habermasian model, due to an incomplete application of Bourdieu's theoretical paradigm to journalism, a more rigorous application of Bourdieu's field/habitus pairing does provide an appropriate framework for the investigation of feminine journalism.

Chapter 3 (*The Production of Femininity: Women's Magazines*) in this chapter I consider the production and consumption of femininity through the existing literature on women's magazines. Scholarship on magazines has largely focused on the text and the reader, while the production of feminine journalism and the occupational identity of agents within this subfield have been largely ignored. I argue that the early textual Althusserian work on magazines although largely overlooked and replaced by reader focused studies has much to tell us about the production of feminine subjectivities through consumer culture. I link this early work to the few studies that look at the production of magazines themselves as well as wider research on the utilisation of gendered knowledge and skills in contemporary consumer culture in order to build a framework with which to examine the ways in which practitioners within the subfield of feminine journalism both produce and consume versions of commercial femininity.

Chapter 4 (*Methodology: Feminine Journalism in Newspapers and Magazines*) constructs the object of study. This project does not follow either industry or academic norms and accept women's magazines as a pre-existent category, but instead uses Bourdieu's notion of the field to define the area of research through an exploration of its practices and the kinds of capital that are at stake within it. I explore the ways in which the subfield has been studied in the past and develop a methodological framework through the identification of gendered domains of journalism coupled with editorial and commercial goals

and aims. Through semi-structured qualitative interviews with forty journalists from across newspapers and magazines I endeavour to illuminate the subfield of feminine journalism. This chapter also considers the epistemological effects of a Bourdieusian theoretical framework coupled with a feminist standpoint, suggesting that this combination produces a particularly reflexive situation, which demands that I consider the effects of my own personal history and my position within the academic field.

Chapter 5 (*Feminine Journalism: The Capital and Habitus of the Subfield*) this chapter uses Bourdieu's notions of capital and habitus to interrogate the nature of the occupational identities that produce the field of feminine journalism. Based on interviews with practitioners I investigate the nature of the expertise and knowledge at work within the subfield. Bourdieu's own work did not allow for women to be conceptualised as capital accruing subjects. However, I use feminist reinterpretations of his framework to argue that within this subfield femininity acts as capital for my participants. I demarcate the ways in which taste, personal identity and embodied expertise inculcated through education and self reflexively through feminine journalism itself, produces a spectacular feminine habitus, which offers opportunity and privilege to women journalists. Analysis of participants' interviews reveals the exclusions and struggles that exist alongside these privileges exploring both the pleasure and pain attendant on the realisation of this feminine habitus.

Chapter 6 (*Feminine Journalism: The Boundaries and Practices of the Subfield*) considers how the feminine capital I delineated in the previous chapter sets the limits and influences the practices of the subfield. I use interview data to explore the way in which the subfield is demarcated through a narrow set of editorial and commercial goals defined through entertainment and instruction, both fulfilled through the medium of consumption. This chapter contains a detailed analysis of the working practices of the subfield, particularly focused on its intersection with advertising and public relations. I map a network of

relationships between journalists, advertising brands and public relations professionals that works to produce a particular version of femininity. I argue that advertising not only constrains the processes and conventions of the subfield, but provides much of its identity and meaning, interlocking with editorial goals to produce a sealed and bounded world of escapist, feminine pleasure.

Chapter 7 (*The Journalistic Field: Femininity, Masculinity and Capital*) contextualises feminine journalism within the wider journalistic field. In this chapter I focus on interviews relating to newspaper journalism in order to determine how the highly gendered, aesthetic and embodied species of capital the project has explored function within a field traditionally defined through professional norms, rooted in disembodied objectivity. In answering this question I also explore both the limits of the opportunities offered by women's associations with consumption and the extent to which feminine capital can operate successfully outside the boundaries of feminized spaces. While femininity can offer privileges to women journalists this chapter illustrates the ways in which it can also disadvantage and thwart their careers. I argue that despite the career opportunities offered by the feminization of journalism, it has not fundamentally altered journalism's hierarchies or symbolic capital, but rather reinscribed the gendered divisions that structure the field.

Finally, Chapter 8 (*Conclusions and Implications: The Limits of Feminine Journalism*) summarises the core conclusions of this research project and sets the ground for further debate. I consider the empirical, theoretical and methodological findings of my project as well as reflecting on the future of the feminine subfield. Through a consideration of the feminization of journalism I demonstrate that the utilization of feminine capital can offer women a privileged position within print journalism and that by extension consumption allows women access to forms of subjectivity and knowledge that can be exploited beyond the domestic in public and social spaces. However, such privileges come

with attendant exclusions and limitations that simultaneously reinscribe women's position in the symbolic order. I argue that space and privilege granted on the ground of consumption is contingent and conditional and consider the ways in which falls in newspaper advertising revenue and migration to the Internet may affect the future of this space of feminine privilege and power.

1.5 Conclusion

The journalistic profession is in a state of flux, traditional professional paradigms are hard to maintain as boundaries between 'journalism and non-journalism, between information and entertainment, objectivity and subjectivity, truth and lies' (McNair, 2006:11) dissolve in the face of technological change and commercial pressures. This project attempts to map one portion of this shifting ground and by exploring the under-theorised area of commercial and lifestyle journalism to add to the understanding of wider trends within the profession. Beyond this I hope that my engagement with the intersections of gender, consumption and occupational cultures will illuminate both the operation of gender in journalism and the wider work place and the nature of the relationship between femininity and consumption.

Much of the inspiration for this project comes from my own experiences working in the UK newspaper industry. During the five years I spent in *The Times* newsroom¹³ I witnessed many of the changes that beset the profession and noted the shifting hierarchies and pecking orders within the paper. I was surrounded by some of the papers most 'important' journalists imbued with the professions' symbolic capital, the news desk, the home news editor, defence and foreign desks and political reporters, but despite their standing they constantly bewailed the papers' shifting priorities cursing the commercialisation, the 'dumbing down', the ceaseless demands that they appeal to the young and the female reader. I watched as the ground was cut from beneath their feet by fashion and features, the internet and endless format changes and redesigns. Meanwhile many of my

¹³ I worked as a researcher in the newsroom so was peculiarly placed outside journalistic structures but entirely privy to them.

friends and contemporaries working in features, supplements and fashion saw their domains extended and their influence grow. These experiences left me keen to comprehend the changes in contemporary journalism, and most particularly its much vaunted feminization. I wanted to understand the implications of this extension of feminine journalism both to the profession and to wider structures of gendered power and to determine if these trends amounted to an opportunity or a limitation. This thesis represents my attempt to answer these questions.

Chapter Two

The Production of Journalism: The Citizen and the Consumer

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will examine the feminine subfield in the light of some of the theoretical paradigms that have been applied to the wider journalistic field. Considering how Habermas' theory of the public sphere and Bourdieu's field theory can illuminate the position of feminine journalism both in the profession and the academy. To date the study of feminine journalism has concentrated on women's magazines and been firmly situated within feminist media studies. This placement has left the scholarship isolated from wider disciplinary developments, focused on texts and their consumption to the detriment of production. In this chapter I will generate an alternative theoretical framework that places the subfield in its journalistic context. There is a large body of work on news production and journalistic occupational identity and it is here that I will begin to look for alternative theoretical models. Although application of such paradigms offers the opportunity to consider feminine journalism in its rightful professional milieu the centrality of the public sphere to much of the work on journalism complicates this project. This Habermasian (Habermas, 1989) inflected scholarship is implicitly informed by the structuring exclusions that underpin his notion of the public sphere. Predicated on unspoken gendered conceptions of the individual, the citizen and the consumer such work focuses on 'news' ignoring other types of journalism and produces a partial, gender blind and normative account.

The recent application of Bourdieu's field theory to journalism offers hope of a less exclusionary framework, with the potential to produce a more comprehensive analysis. However, the work in this discipline has applied the notion of the field in a mechanistic fashion and largely ignored its conceptual

partner the habitus (Benson and Neveu, 2005). Such scholarship has reproduced many of the biases and exclusions of the Habermasian model, remaining gender-blind and almost entirely preoccupied with news journalism. Therefore the potential of a Bourdieusian framework for the subfield of feminine journalism remains largely untapped. I will contend that in order to release this potential Bourdieu's work on gender, along with feminist engagements with his thinking, need to be fully integrated with his notion of the field.

A consideration of both Habermas and Bourdieu is necessary for a comprehensive analysis of feminine journalism. Despite the structuring exclusions and normative framework at its heart, public sphere theory, and the study of news production it has spawned, is crucial to an understanding of the organisation of journalism and its political economy. Habermas' critique of the colonisation of the market and the resulting commercialization of journalism, calls for an understanding of the way in which the journalism is defined, organised and financed. However, as Benson (2009) has pointed out Habermas' work leaves the internal organisation of the public sphere unexamined and his analysis leaves outstanding questions such as, 'what is the empirical structural organisation of the public sphere? (and)... What are the complex links between structural characteristics of public spheres and the form and content of mediated discourses?' (2009:180). Application of Bourdieusian field theory helps to answer these questions and to chart the structural and subjective consequences of journalism's organising principles. A combination of these two approaches facilitates a depth of analysis that is often missing from work that considers Habermas or Bourdieu in isolation. While neither theorist makes any significant attempt to account for the gendering of media structures and organisation, a consideration of both is critical in mapping the links between femininity, journalism and consumption that underpin the subfield of feminine journalism.

2.2 Habermas: The Citizen

The Habermasian model, of a liberal press engaged in the 'transmission of and amplification of the rational critical debate of private people assembled into a public' (Habermas, 1989:188), is too narrow to encompass a consideration of the field of feminine journalism. While Habermas himself distinguished between the political public sphere and a literary public sphere, with divergent operating conditions (McGuigan, 2005) most of the application of his work to journalism ignores such distinctions. As McGuigan points out the literary public sphere did not replicate all the exclusions of the political public sphere and contained important sites such as the Parisian *salons*, 'in which women were at least present' (429). He suggests that the literary public sphere offers the possibility for analysis of a cultural public sphere that in a contemporary context, 'includes the various channels and circuits of mass-popular culture and entertainment, the routinely mediated aesthetic and emotional reflections on how we live and imagine the good life' (435). Clearly such a conception offers possibilities for a consideration of feminine journalism, but such thinking is rare and applications of Habermasian thinking to the media are primarily concerned with the political realm and the reporting of its news. Lifestyle or 'human interest' journalism only appears in this kind of analysis when it is deemed to be encroaching on the territory of the public sphere (Dahlgren, 1992). However, Habermas' model cannot simply be ignored for the liberal conceptions of public and private have structured both women's exclusion from the areas of journalism most associated with the public political realm and their inclusion in specialist subfields associated with the private and consumption. The usefulness of a Habermasian analysis of the public sphere may lie not in a search for the ideal, but conversely in the social implications of its integral exclusions. At the heart of these exclusions is the gendered nature of consumption and its relationship to the public sphere.

Enlightenment notions of the individual and his rights as a citizen underlie Habermas' conception of the public sphere. The sovereignty of the individual facilitates a model of citizenship that presupposes universal access for all rational beings. As Habermas explains, 'if everyone as it might appear, had the chance to become a citizen, then only citizens should be allowed into the public sphere, without this restriction amounting to an abandonment of the principle of publicity' (1989:87). However, feminist critics (Pateman, 1988; Fraser, 1989; Brown, 1995; Cronin, 2000a) have maintained that the formal equality of this paradigm rests upon conflating the interests of property owning men with those of the entire population. As Cronin puts it, 'the rights of the individual are based on a white, male, classed, heterosexual model which excludes subordinate groups' (2000a:10). The category of the individual is not elastic and cannot simply be expanded to reflect changing social realities, for the individual is conceived in opposition to women and the family and so cannot be extended to include them, indeed 'if liberal autonomy were universalised, the supports upon which it rests would dissolve' (Brown, 1995). Habermas himself accepts that the exclusion of women from the public sphere was not just a historical accident but an integral part of its structure, 'unlike the exclusion of underprivileged men the exclusion of women had structuring significance' (Habermas, 1992:428).

This structuring significance is to be found in the constitutive dualism between public and private that makes the liberal individual possible. The figure of the individual is found in civil life and is defined against the private world of the family, for as Pateman points out, 'the distinction between and separation of the private and public, or particularistic and universal spheres of association is a fundamental structural principle of the modern, liberal conception of social life' (1980:24). Liberalism's key formal universal principles depend upon sameness 'equality before the law means being treated as if we were all equal, regardless of differences in our circumstances' (Brown, 1995:146). In order that this apparent equality can be maintained difference and inequality must be bracketed in the private sphere. Citizens can all be treated as if they were the same in public, if

women represent difference in the private, for 'the sameness of men requires the difference that is women' (153). So the development of Habermas' public sphere depends for its existence on a parallel private sphere, indeed the 'public sphere evolved from the very heart of the private sphere itself' (Habermas 1989:160). This private sphere is 'a realm of necessity and transitoriness' (3) devoted to 'the cycle of production and consumption that is to the dictates of life's necessities' (160). The banishment of life's necessities to a private realm is what makes possible the universalism of the public realm. A separation between 'affairs that private people pursued individually each in the interests of the reproduction of his own life and, on the other hand the sort of interaction that united private people into a public' (160) lies at the foundation of the Habermasian public sphere.

In Pateman's influential reading of the gendered implications of the figure of the liberal individual *The Sexual Contract* this foundational division means that though women can participate in the public sphere through marriage and employment contracts, they cannot fully inhabit the category of the individual in the same way as men (1988). The notion of the individual is underpinned by a possessive individualism whereby the citizen has ownership rights to himself, he 'has the capacity to stand outside himself, to separate himself from his body and then to have proprietorial relation to himself as bodily capital' (Cronin, 2000a:13). Women's contradictory position with regard to the category of the individual means that they do not hold these capacities of self possessiveness and so cannot truly achieve the disembodied status necessary for participation in the public sphere instead they are irrevocably associated with the private sphere and consumption.

2.3 Habermas: The Consumer

Women's exclusion from the public comes as part of their alliance with 'life's necessities' and the role of consumer that comes with this association. As Victoria de Grazia points out:

At the moment people were recognised as having the right to demand necessities. The notion of the necessary was narrowed and the right to representation was denied to those who were most closely identified with the interests of the household in providing for basic social wants, namely women' (De Grazia, 1996:17).

Habermas defines the public sphere as springing from the intimate sphere of the 'patriarchal conjugal family' (Habermas 1989:43) and its ideas of 'freedom, love and cultivation of the person'. At the centre of this intimate province are women and their duties as consumers and it is precisely these duties that exclude them from participation in an ideal public sphere.

The Habermasian public sphere has a conflicted relationship with commerce and consumption. Commodity exchange, free trade and free competition are conceptualised as the preconditions of a public sphere, but it is these same forces that eventually overrun it so producing its degradation. This conflict is also present in Habermas' analysis of the press. He claims newspapers developed through the 'needs of commerce' (1989:21) to their 18th Century high point as a 'genuinely critical organ of a public engaged in critical political debate', only to fall prey to commercialisation and 'a flood of advertisement' (189). In Habermas' view while 'the commercialisation of cultural goods had been the precondition for rational critical debate' (164) in the modern press the debate itself has become commodified and so debased. The public sphere found both its genesis and destruction in commercial culture and commercial spaces, existing for 'one blissful moment' (78) before being corrupted by the same forces that bought it into being (Arvidsson, 2006).

While free trade is deemed to be a precondition for the liberal public sphere, consumption itself is relegated to a private sphere, which is coded female. This public/private split and its relationship with consumption has implications for a consideration of the media. One of its ramifications is the exclusion of women from the political realm and their inclusion in areas associated with the private, intimate realm. Habermas argues that the mass media has degenerated due to commercialisation and the erosion of the foundational split between public and private. He claims that the public sphere in the world of letters has been replaced by a 'sham-private world of culture consumption' (Habermas, 1989:160). In his analysis this world of consumption levelled the split between public and private and produced a sphere that is by definition apolitical because of 'its incapacity to constitute a world emancipated from the immediate constraints of survival needs' (160). So life's necessities have broken free from the individualised private sphere and infiltrated the universal public sphere and its press. Clearly the gendered subtext here is that the female concerns of the private sphere have infiltrated and debased the masculine public sphere.

Habermas doesn't consider the gendered implications of this argument just as he never defines the role of the consumer as a female. However, the areas of journalism that he characterises as bringing about its decline are those most associated with women, so for example his definition of 'human interest topics' as 'romance, religion, money, children, health and animals' (194) is implicitly gendered. As I illustrated in the previous chapter the relationship between women, the private sphere and consumption means that the commercialisation Habermas bewails offered new opportunities for women journalists. Habermas' despair at the decline of the public sphere and the waning of importance of the political realm within print journalism has the unfortunate by-product of condemning the inclusion of women. Although ostensibly gender blind his analysis is actually profoundly gendered and as Rappaport observes:

Habermas' account of the decline of a liberal sphere of rational discourse into a mass-produced public of passive consumers does not adequately capture women's experience of the public, and it inadvertently positions women's presence in any manifestation of the public as a sign of its collapse and corruption. (2000:13)

2.4 The Public Sphere and Journalism Scholarship

The normative, Habermasian ideal of the newspaper as 'the public sphere's pre-eminent institution' (Habermas, 1989:181) that I have outlined, casts a long shadow over academic work on the genre.¹⁴ As Michael Schudson notes 'most studies regardless of the approach they take, begin with a normative assumption that the news media should serve society by informing the general population in ways that arm them for vigilant citizenship' (Schudson, 2005:191). Within this frame journalism is considered with reference to its 'role in maintaining an active healthy body politic, and its impact on the public good' (Zelizer, 2005:208). Study of the journalist's role in the production of newspapers has usually come under the auspices of a consideration of news. While newspapers are actually subdivided into numerous types of writing, ranging from entertainment, through mixed features, to the 'pure' news reporting of the foreign and political pages, academic study has tended to consider them mainly in their role as the purveyors of 'news'.

According to most studies the putative goal of newspapers is to inform and educate the public in their role as citizens, but as Schudson acknowledges, though this may be, 'one goal, the news media in a democracy should try to serve it is not a good approximation of what role the news media have historically played – anywhere' (2005:191). In reality the goals of news organisations are much more mixed than this model would suggest, although they may encompass elements of these public sphere goals. In his seminal 1971 study of newspapers

¹⁴ While Habermas himself complicated his conception of the private sphere in his later work (1992) much of the scholarship that draws, either explicitly or implicitly, on his theory applies it in the normative manner I have outlined.

Journalists at Work Tunstall identified three major goals for news organisations. These were '(a) advertising revenue goal, (b) audience (or sales) revenue goal (c) non-revenue (or prestige) goal' (197:7). Tunstall linked these goals to particular specialisms within the newspaper. Advertising goals were fulfilled by consumer sections such as fashion and motoring, audience goals by sport and crime, and prestige, non-revenue goals by foreign and political news. In Tunstall's view, these multiple goals were resolved into an overriding 'coalition goal', the 'audience revenue goal' (54). All journalists did not pursue this goal with the same vigour, but it was a 'common denominator' (55) to which most working in news organisations consented. However, whatever the emphasis within news organisations themselves, academic study has tended to focus on the non-revenue (or prestige) goal and concentrated on the work of the news reporter, particularly the foreign or political correspondent. As Dahlgren observes scholarship tends, 'to downplay such historical and institutional aspects as journalism's intersection with advertising and entertainment and underscore journalism's role in the rational transfer of socially and politically useful information' (1992:7). These trends bring journalism scholarship into line with journalism's own self-definition allowing for a consensus between the profession and an academy that defines journalism through news and the 'canons of scientific objectivity' (2).

2.5 Objectivity and Journalistic Professional Norms

The history of journalism and the construction of the figure of the journalist have been conducted through a discourse of news. Certain areas of journalism have come to define the profession while others specializations are ignored; these exclusions are largely due to the professional codes that inform the journalistic discourse. Within Anglo-American journalistic traditions notions of objectivity and impartiality have become defining professional norms and a way of demarcating what journalism is, both for the profession itself and for the academy. Academic consideration of this tradition has moved from an early

consideration of the personal biases and idiosyncrasies of individuals (White, 1950) to more nuanced scrutiny of the professional identity of an entire occupation. Scholars have discussed the emergence of 'a professional class of reporters in the context of the development of professional objectivity' (Schudson and Anderson, 2009:92). Such work while not necessarily accepting the validity of this professional objectivity norm has nevertheless taken it as the key to understanding the profession. As Schudson and Anderson suggest, 'explain the reasons behind the emergence of objectivity as an occupational practice, fix a date at which it emerged, and you have gone a long way towards uncovering the "secret" of professional journalism.' (93)

Journalism's status as a profession is not unproblematic, either amongst practitioners themselves (Aldridge and Evetts, 2003) or within academic discourse. As Aldridge and Evetts have pointed out the term 'professional' is hard to define and has many meanings, but the journalist's lack of specialist knowledge and training is normally what stands between him and an easy application of the term. Exponents of 'classic' professions such as medicine and the law:

Are considered to be a select group of high-status practitioners administering specialised services to members of the community. They generally undergo a lengthy period of training in their speciality and when admitted to practice normally enjoy a share in a monopoly in the performance of their work' (Tumber, 2006:63).

Journalism does not share this clearly demarcated and licensed identity, its borders are far more permeable and claims to professional status more tenuous. 'Journalist' can mean many different things and be claimed by many different people, in a way that 'doctor' or 'lawyer' cannot, as Jeremy Tunstall notes when

he describes 'journalist' as a 'label which people engaged in a very diverse range of activities apply to themselves' (Tunstall, 1971:69).¹⁵

The delineation of journalism's borders and questions of occupational identity appear to coalesce around a series of codes rooted in the notion of objectivity. In this context objectivity encompasses notions of fairness, balance and accuracy and a presumption of rational professional disinterest with an attendant banishment of the subjective and the emotional and it has become the chief occupational value in the Anglo-American journalistic tradition (Chalaby, 1996; Schudson, 2001). 'Objectivity is at once a moral ideal, a set of reporting and editing practices, and an observable pattern of news writing' (Schudson, 2001:149) and this occupational practice and moral norm has in many ways come to define journalistic identity. Such professional codes also segment the profession drawing the boundaries between 'news' and features or entertainment and hard and soft news (Tuchman, 1973). The division of 'fact' from values or opinion also marks a line between different types of journalism, placing fact and news at the centre of the profession and subjectivity and emotion at its borders. This demarcation makes the leaky boundaries of the profession more impermeable. As Schudson points out such group norms have several purposes, encouraging ritual solidarity, defining the group in relation to other groups, inculcating institutional norms and controlling group behaviour and all these uses have been ascribed to the journalistic occupational norm of objectivity (2001).

Journalism's process of professionalization is agreed to have begun in the 19th Century (Tumber 2006) and its pretensions to professional status are deeply entrenched in the same empiricist trends that characterise Habermas' ideal public sphere. Adopting the norm of objectivity was one way for journalists to affiliate themselves with powerful discourses of science, efficiency and

¹⁵ This fluidity was illustrated by the outrage with which the profession greeted the news that Coleen McLoughlin (then fiancée now wife of footballer Wayne Rooney) had described herself as a journalist when posting her wedding banns. This claim, based on her status as a columnist with *Closer* magazine, was hotly disputed (Greenslade, 2008).

progression. Journalism as a distinct occupation is then bound up with these discourses as Chalaby puts it:

Journalism is an invention of the 19th Century. The profession of the journalist and the journalistic discourse is the product during this period of a specialised and increasingly autonomous field of discursive production, the journalistic field. Progressively, the journalistic discourse became a distinctive class of texts: agents in the journalistic field developed their own discursive norms and values, such as objectivity and neutrality. (1996:304)

Writers such as Chalaby and Schudson have traced the history of objectivity as a defining professional discourse and attempted to explain its functions. Chalaby uses a comparison of the French journalistic tradition as compared with the Anglo-American, to illustrate the growth of a fact-based, information centred journalistic norm that went on to become 'a global discursive genre' (323). Chalaby maps this discursive genre through the growth of news-gathering illustrated by foreign and political reporting. While the French press still garnered most of its foreign news from the London press until late in the 19th century, their British and American counterparts employed a sizeable cohort of foreign correspondents. Chalaby points out that by 1857 *The Times* had 19 foreign correspondents and by 1870 it had the same number of parliamentary reporters. Chalaby sees the growth of the objectivity norm as intrinsically linked to these two specialisms, which underpin the 'news' genre and mark its separation from other forms of writing. He uses the French experience of a journalistic practice more firmly embedded in a literary tradition to illustrate that objectivity is a practice that has gained currency within a particular journalistic tradition rather than an intrinsic part of the profession. In France the objectivity norm did not accrue the same kind of capital and the journalistic profession employed a 'hierarchy of discursive practices' (315) that did not privilege the strict separation of fact and commentary that marked the Anglo-English experience.

Schudson questions Chalaby's treatment of the American and British cases as completely parallel, preferring to see British journalism as 'a kind of half-way house' (2001:167) between American professionalism and continental European traditions of partisan journalism with literary ambition. Nevertheless his treatment of the history of objectivity as a professional norm in the American press is still relevant to the British experience as he attempts to examine how this norm can be used both to define and control an occupational group. He suggests that as journalists came to feel themselves part of a distinct and separate occupation, complete with 'their own clubs and watering holes, and their own professional practices' (156), they sought to generate their own identity. This occupational character, organised around 'analytical and procedural fairness' (161) came to fruition in America in the Twenties when journalists 'developed loyalties more to their audience and to themselves as an occupational community than to their publishers or their publishers favoured political party' (161).

Schudson sees objectivity as both an 'industrial discipline' (162) that enabled editors to keep reporters in check and as way of forming a group identity distinct from the new profession of public relations. Journalists were faced with a growth in public relations and the increasing manipulation of information and 'felt a need to close ranks and assert their collective integrity' (162), seeking to distinguish themselves by 'a scrupulous adherence to scientific ideals' (163). As Schudson says at this point:

The objectivity norm became a fully formulated occupational ideal part of a professional project or mission. Far more than a set of craft rules to fend off libel suits or a set of constraints to help editors keep tabs on their underlings, objectivity was finally a moral code. (163)

While it might be the case that the objectivity norm is most deeply embedded in American journalistic traditions, cultural notions of objectivity, balance and truth have also become integral to British journalist's self image and professional practice. Even if such norms are not adhered to they act as a

model for the 'best' professional practice and impose their own hierarchies even amongst journalists working in areas where such norms are irrelevant (Deuze, 2005b). Most studies have found a shared professional ideology of objectivity at work within news production. For Tumber and Prentoulis objectivity is the main ideological commitment of the profession its claims provide professional identity and journalism's unique selling point. As they put it:

Journalistic skills rest on the abstract imperatives defined in the code of journalistic practice. The notions of objectivity, neutrality and impartiality, operating in the background of the problems and tasks associated with the profession provide the abstract system of knowledge that allows the differentiation of journalism from other crafts. (Tumber and Prentoulis, 2005:64).

Academics have been sceptical of these claims to truth and objectivity recognising them as labels that guide professional practice rather than absolutes. Academic discourse has seen journalists as in the business of constructing a reality rather than accurately reflecting one. In Tuchman's seminal 1972 study of American 'newsmen', journalists use the word objectivity 'defensively as a strategic ritual' (Tuchman, 1972:678). The term stands between the journalist and his critic and is invoked as a kind of magic protective talisman. Journalists use their putative status as objective professionals to ward off the numerous pressures they face, or as Tuchman puts it 'the newsmen need some working notion of objectivity to minimise the risks imposed by deadlines, libel suits, and superiors' reprimands' (662). Tuchman sees the practices of newspaper production, which are treated by the newsmen as self-evident, as so many strategies to protect themselves and create occupational identity. As she puts it 'It would appear that news procedures exemplified as formal attributes of news stories and newspapers

are actually strategies through which newsmen protect themselves from critics and lay professional claim to objectivity' (676).

Despite the scepticism with which the academy has greeted journalistic claims to objectivity and impartiality, academic study has implicitly accepted the hierarchies that an adherence to objectivity as a guiding principle has imposed upon the journalistic field. Chalaby's work demonstrates that notions of objectivity are created around foreign and political reporting and their ostensible separation from commentary or opinion. The apparent strictness of this separation has led to rigid demarcations between types of journalism such as news and features. Academic study has followed these demarcations concentrating its efforts on news and foreign reporting. The professional distinctions between news and features and the implicit privileging of the former over the latter, are reflected in the proliferation of work on 'news' production. The mirroring of professional distinctions and hierarchies within the academy has led to a neglect of lifestyle journalism and particularly 'soft' journalism that is gendered female.

2.6 Objectivity, Occupational Hierarchies and Gender

This emphasis on news mirrors the profession's own stress on objectivity and the related occupation hierarchies that follow from it, as Tunstall found when he investigated the views of specialist journalists working in British news organisations in 1971. Tunstall defined his fields in relation to the three overarching goals he had identified for news organisations. By considering the self-image of the specialists in a particular field, the views of other specialists about those in a particular field and the views of senior executives, he determined the over-riding goal of each specialist field. These ranged from the non-revenue prestige goals of the foreign correspondent and political lobby, through the audience goals of crime and football reporting to the advertising goals of fashion and motoring.

While only 18% of the selected specialists were prepared to see their own field as having an advertising interest, 42% were prepared to acknowledge circulation/audience interest. This demonstrated for Tunstall the 'greater legitimacy within journalism of audience interest' (82) and the relative denigration within the profession of commercial areas focused on gaining advertising revenues. Tunstall found that 'occupational pecking order is inversely related to the revenue goal emphasis in particular fields' (108). So when specialists were asked about the relative status of specializations they universally placed either foreign or political reporting in the highest regard and motoring in the lowest:

The specialists acknowledge a status order, which accords the highest status to non-revenue foreign correspondence, followed by the political lobby, the mixed fields, then the audience fields, the motoring correspondents have a lower relative opinion of themselves than does any other field about itself (110)

The operating norm of objectivity means that the farther away from the economic revenue goal journalists are placed the higher they will be regarded within their industry.

Tunstall is almost unique in conducting a relational study of specialist fields in British journalism, but even he acknowledged a bias towards non-revenue prestige goals in his own research and that has been repeated in numerous other studies that have examined journalists through the lens of the public sphere, objectivity and professionalism. This emphasis leads to a partial analysis as Cottle points out:

Ideals of 'objectivity' and its closest correlates 'balance', 'impartiality' 'fairness', 'truthfulness' and 'factual accuracy' – do not exhaust the epistemological claims of journalism. Tabloid and populist forms of journalism for example, underwrite their particular claims 'to know' and the

'truthfulness' of their news stories by a more subjective epistemology. (2007:11).

Many types of journalism are excluded from this kind of analysis, not only journalism from other mediums such as tabloid or popular forms, but also journalism that operates within lifestyle sections of major news organisations. This omission becomes increasingly glaring as newspapers turn to entertainment and lifestyle content to gain readers. As McNair observes, 'the growth of the weekend newspaper supplement in the late twentieth century, the intense journalistic interest in lifestyle and leisure, all reflect the increased dedication to entertainment of all news media' (2006:38). This dedication has begun to blur the boundaries between news and features and subjectivity and objectivity, making academic study of revenue driven journalism more important. This entails looking at journalists who may be at the centre of their occupational group working in major news organisations, but on the margins of a professional identity organised around a concentration on 'news' and objectivity. As Mark Deuze has pointed out in his work on tabloid journalists in the Netherlands, such journalists may 'deviate from what the current consensus about what good or real journalism is' (Deuze, 2005b:862) as defined both in the profession and the academy. However, the study of such journalists offers unique insights 'into how journalism organizes and defines itself, how this process of definition is structured, and how, in turn this influences how journalism functions' (862).

The adoption of objectivity as journalism's defining operating principle has particular effects on women working within the profession. Journalists are still more likely to be men, as Weaver's 2005 research drawing on surveys of the US and twenty other countries illustrates. He found that 'men were more typical than women in newsrooms in all nineteen countries or territories reporting gender proportions' and that the average proportion of women journalists was one third (2005:47). These proportions still leave men as the norm in journalism and the figure of the journalist is, in the profession, the popular imagination and

for the most part the academy, a man. Of the 30% of women working within journalism the majority are concentrated in sectors considered to be soft news this often means 'human interest stories, features and the delivery of a magazine style journalism' (Chambers *et al.*, 2004:1).

Demands for objectivity and neutrality necessarily demand that the figure of the journalist himself is absent or erased his own viewpoint and existence absent from his copy. This goal, though clearly untenable, is best represented by newspaper's habit of leaving stories without a by-line, which continued well into the last century, the journalist remains nameless a disembodied voice speaking for the institution¹⁶. As Steiner observes in her study of women's experiences in the newsroom, this 'demand for disembodied objectivity immediately butted up against the notion that women are inherently embodied' (Steiner, 1998:147). As I have outlined women's associations with life's necessities and particularities makes it difficult for them to cast off the body and all its inconvenient specificities and inhabit the universal figure of the individual. The same forces that structure women's exclusion from the theoretical ideal public sphere impede their ability to meet journalism's professional ideals for as Steiner points out journalism 'is itself a particularly public form and public forum, even more so when its cornerstone is objectivity' (1998:147).

This exclusion from the public sphere and association with the private sphere and the body has meant that women journalists have been concentrated in very specific areas of the profession. For, as I outlined in Chapter One, women's entry into the newspaper came under the auspices of consumption and these origins have dogged their progress in the profession ever since. Despite the feminization of newspapers and the significant inroads that women have made into the prestigious news and foreign areas of the genre, women remain associated with consumption as Chambers *et al.* note 'many of the changes in news values have been prompted by commercial imperatives and, as such,

¹⁶ *The Times* did not introduce regular by-lines until January 1967 before this point stories were merely attributed to a Times reporter

women continue to be typecast by being assigned fashion, lifestyle and education and health issues' (Chambers *et al.*, 2004:11).

Associations with consumption and advertising mean women are often found in areas of the paper that conform to Tunstall's revenue goal. Indeed fashion journalism, along with motoring, was his exemplar of this goal. Tunstall defined the predominant goal of the field of fashion to be attracting advertising. Tunstall saw the work of journalists within advertising goal fields as 'easy' information and pictures were readily provided and foreign travel was a perk of the job. The close relationship with advertising and public relations facilitated the work of newsgathering, meaning stories were often provided rather than sought out, indeed 'fashion (where PR is heavily developed) is the field where more calls are received than made' (1971:152). The nature of the work meant that the revelation and exclusives that were important in other fields were not relevant 'most correspondents agreed that exclusives were either virtually unknown or rather trivial' (209). Over 30 years later Marchetti came to similar conclusions in his study of specialist journalists. He found that general news reporters often stigmatised specialists as 'having been captured by their sources' they were usually portrayed as 'having a narrow, incomplete vision, too partial and technical, that is to say, more inclined to underline continuity rather than the latest news' (Marchetti, 2005:67). This stigmatisation is particularly likely in a field such as fashion that is often perceived within the profession as intrinsically silly and trivial. These operating conditions mean that women journalists working within areas such as fashion and lifestyle are at the boundaries of a professional identity composed around objectivity. They are bound up with commercial and revenue goals and divorced from prestige goals. While these commercial pressures may not be felt as strongly by female journalists working outside fashion, such journalists are often to be found in features or lifestyle sections where emotion, subjectivity and personal experience are at a premium (Coward, 2010), a situation that effectively separates female journalists from the objectivity norm that governs the profession.

This placement at the edges of journalism's professional identity means that most of the work on news organisations and news production has ignored gender. When it has been considered, the focus has been on 'counting men and women, identifying positions and mapping employment patterns' (de Bruin, 2000:225). Scholarship's definition of journalism through its professional centre has led to a focus on news and women's encroachment into and influence on its production. The field of fashion and lifestyle and its production has been largely ignored in academic considerations of women's role in journalism where the emphasis has been on women's efforts to be taken seriously within prestige categories (Beasley, 2001). Feminist studies of news production are rare and have been keen to avoid reproducing essential categories of 'maleness' and 'femaleness' by focusing on lifestyle journalism, instead they concentrate on women working within 'hard' or foreign news. This has implicitly reproduced the hierarchy that structures both the journalistic profession and mainstream scholarship, implying that 'soft' journalism is not of a high enough status to merit consideration.

This tendency is illustrated by 2004's book *Women in Journalism*. The authors draw attention to the fact that foundational journalistic notions 'of objectivity and impartiality' were 'anchored within a partial male oriented construction of knowledge' (Chambers *et al.* 2004:7). However, at times they appear to reproduce this paradigm dismissing gossip and fashion as trivial and so not worthy of attention and focusing instead on 'serious' news. While it is hard to argue with their disapproval of the ghettoisation of women in certain areas of journalism, there does appear to be a normative framework underpinning their analysis. One is left with the distinct impression that only very particular types of female journalist are worthy of serious consideration. This is encapsulated by the attention they pay to female war reporters, particularly Kate Adie, whom they quote at some length. Such analysis merely serves to entrench the structuring exclusions of the Enlightenment model valorising the public sphere and dismissing and ignoring the concerns of the private. This focus on the most

stereotypically macho of journalistic specialisms risks an implicit acceptance of male news values and hierarchies of importance (Beasley, 2001). What Van Zoonen terms 'the low social status' (Van Zoonen, 1998a:132) of popular journalism aimed at women is often reproduced in the assumptions and priorities to be found in media research even when it is conducted by feminists.

Much of the academic work on newspapers and journalism seems to have accepted the profession's own self-definition even while ostensibly questioning its operating norms. As Dahlgren has noted a great deal of scholarship is cast 'in terms that rhetorically either reproduce the canons of scientific objectivity and/or express explicit compatibility with journalism's traditional self understanding. This solidarity means that it normally tends to avoid critical confrontation with the fundamental precepts' (1992:2). The reality of journalistic practice is very different from the normative ideal suggested by much of the scholarship and the profession itself. As Zelizer has pointed out in her illuminating work, 'journalism is a world of contradiction and flux, held in place by those with central access and stature while challenged by those on its margins' (2005:198). She suggests that the study of journalism is incomplete and not mindful enough of the occupation's internal contradictions and disparities. Van Zoonen has also noted these kinds of omissions suggesting that it is part of journalism's own mythology to bewail the advent of entertainment, consumption and popular culture into newspapers when in fact they have been present from the beginning of the genre. This mythology appears to be largely accepted by the academy, which also regrets the advent of popular culture and consumption into the public sphere. An understandable concern at the potentially homogenising effects of market imperatives, which prioritise satisfying the advertising industry over all other goals, has meant the gendered subtext of many of these trends has been ignored. The reproduction of media industry hierarchies within the academy means that lifestyle journalism is largely ignored only considered sporadically within the arena of feminist media studies where it seems doomed to meet with only textual analysis.

2.7 Field Theory: An Alternative Paradigm?

As I will explore further in the next chapter, feminist analyses of women's magazines have much to tell us about the construction of femininity and its links with consumption (McRobbie, 1978; Winship, 1987; Ballaster et al, 1991; McCracken, 1993), however, the textual focus of this scholarship means it can only provide a partial understanding of the subfield of feminine journalism. Such work fails to consider the genre as part of a wider social structure and does not place the subfield in its professional and economic context, considering it in relation to other sectors such as newspaper journalism or fashion. Magazines are considered merely as part of an abstract symbolic or ideological system in the context of their effects on individual readers. Conversely, as I have illustrated, the study of newspapers has considered the genre in its role as a social institution, as evidenced by the spatial metaphor of the public sphere. However, exclusionary interpretations of Habermas' public sphere and an attendant attention to a model of professionalism defined by objectivity, means that the majority of the work on news production is not a useful framework for the study of feminine journalism.

In the last ten years there has been an increasing movement to apply the theories of French sociologist Bourdieu to journalism. Bourdieu wrote few books that dealt directly with journalism, his only major work being the polemic *On Television* (1999a), which was greeted with disappointment by media scholars (Hesmondhalgh, 2006; Couldry, 2007). However, his theoretical model of the field has recently been applied to journalism with illuminating results (Benson and Neveu, 2005; Atton and Hamilton, 2008). Like the public sphere the field provides a spatial metaphor through which to consider institutions like journalism, but it allows for a more flexible, less normative analysis. Bourdieu's field theory is in the tradition of Weber and Durkheim in 'portraying modernity as a process of differentiation into semi-autonomous and increasingly specialised spheres of action' (Neveu, 2007:336). These fields are structured systems of

social relations they are what Neveu terms 'meso-level' environments - between the organizational and societal level – that structures social action' (336).

Society can then be sub-divided into as many fields as there are social actions, these fields are organised around different types of activity, political, economic, legal, artistic, literary and journalistic. Fields are made up of a series of positions and are sites of struggle and contestation in which actors vie for access to specific resources or stakes. These resources vary according to the social arena where the struggle is occurring meaning that each field has its own logic and structure that is determined by its defining content, or in Bourdieu's words:

A field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions. (1992:97)

The journalistic field is composed of institutions like newspapers and television companies, rules and rituals like deadlines and objectivity, titles and positions like foreign correspondent and editor, all working together to produce a discourse called 'journalism'. However this is not a seamless process and the composition of the field is also determined by struggles between agents in the field seeking to gain ascendance and between different types of journalists, or institutions, all seeking to define the kinds of capital that are valid in the field and the discourses that can legitimately be a part of 'journalism'. It is this interaction between the institutions of journalism, its rules and rituals and the practices of journalists and other agents that makes the field an adaptable and dynamic arena rather than a static unit.

Bourdieu places fields across an axis between the two poles of heteronomy and autonomy or what he calls the two principles of 'hierarchization' (1992).

Parts of the field closest to the heteronomous pole are bound up with other fields and express their values this usually means they are subject to the influence of politics and the economy and engaged in large scale cultural production for mass audiences. Parts of the field closest to the autonomous pole are more independent and operate according to the rules and principles of the field itself, this aspect of the field is more isolated from the pressures and influences of the rest of society and engaged in restricted cultural production. Bourdieu characterises the field of journalism as a whole as 'one of the most heteronomous forms of cultural production' (Bourdieu, 1993a:35). However, each field is subject to both autonomous and heteronomous pressures and to its own laws and norms and it is even possible to see both poles at work within one organisation. As Champagne points out 'one finds this dual structure within one and the same paper, different areas offering greater or lesser degrees of relative autonomy according to the paper and the section'. (Champagne, 2005:56).

For Bourdieu, the social world is structured around a basic opposition between two types of power or as he terms it, capital. These species of power are economic and cultural capital. This fundamental division is at work within all fields, each field may have a specific set of values and operating principles but they are homologous, because of the divide between economic and cultural capital at work within them all. A battle between these two kinds of capital is waged in every field, agents rich in economic capital struggle with those possessing greater cultural capital with the former usually wielding greater power. Benson and Neveu apply this model to journalism with the following result:

Inside the journalistic field, economic capital is expressed via circulation or advertising revenues, or audience ratings, whereas the "specific" cultural capital of the field takes the form of intelligent commentary, in-depth reporting, and the like the kind of journalistic practices rewarded each year by the US Pulitzer Prize. (Benson and Neveu, 2005:4)

It is not hard to see how these notions of journalistic capital and opposing autonomous and heteronomous poles can be mapped easily onto Tunstall's prestige and revenue goals and professional codes of objectivity.

Field theory represents a possible route out of the impasse I have identified between the two research paradigms that have been applied to different parts of the field of feminine journalism. Field theory is by definition relational, indeed Bourdieu claimed that the concept fosters a 'relational and analogical mode of reasoning' (Bourdieu, 1992:74). Rather than considering journalism as a part of the 'communication apparatus' or as an institution or a unified profession, field theory encourages us to see it as 'a profession and practice structured and split by complex cleavages' (Neveu, 2007:337). The Althusserian work on women's magazines (see Chapter Three) conceptualises them as functioning as part of an apparatus that worked seamlessly to pass on a patriarchal ideology 'an infernal machine, programmed to achieve certain purposes no matter what, when or where' (Bourdieu, 1992:102). The work on news production attempted to avoid these limitations considering journalism as an institution rather than an apparatus but as Neveu says:

Even the notion of "Institution" can suggest the same significations if it is defined only by a high degree of role definition by law or history, if the idea of something slowly but firmly structured by history or the repetition of practice has the upper hand in the attention paid to struggles and contradictions present in any institution. (Neveu, 2007:337)

The work on newspapers has tended to fall into this trap defining journalism from its centre through a normative Habermasian model and so ignoring its boundaries and internal dissonances. Neveu argues that both apparatus and institutions suggest a coherent and unified structure whereas the notion of field encourages relational thinking that takes into account competition, contestation and flux.

Field theory also avoids the textually determined position of the work on women's magazines, bypassing what Bourdieu termed the 'short circuit fallacy' (Bourdieu, 1992:69) whereby cultural products and the groups they apparently represent are correlated with no recourse to their production. Under the terms of this 'short-circuit' sociologists 'put in direct correspondence cultural objects and the social classes or groups for or by which they are presumed to be produced'. So in Bourdieu's example a particular form of theatre is presumed to express 'the dilemma of a rising middle class' (69). This 'short circuit fallacy' applies to the scholarship on magazines in which the genre is presumed to shed some light on the condition of women in a patriarchal capitalist society by virtue of an analysis of its textual features and reception. Bourdieu contends that such analysis omits 'the crucial mediation provided by the relatively autonomous space of the field of cultural production' (69)¹⁷. Bourdieu's conception of the field enables a framework that draws together commercial and cultural space and so enables a study of magazines that can incorporate both their symbolic and economic realities. Equally the application of a Bourdieusian framework avoids the oscillations of the news production studies that veer between voluntarism and organisational functionalism, variously awarding journalists agency and withdrawing it. The field is then:

a route out of this forced choice, of refusing the choice between an internal reading of the text which consists in considering the text in itself and for itself and an external reading which crudely relates the text to the society in general, between the two there is a social universe that is always forgotten, that of the producers of the works. (Bourdieu, 2005:33)

The recent application of field theory to journalism by writers such as Benson and Neveu offers a useful framework for the consideration of feminine journalism. A Bourdieusian paradigm allows for a consideration of feminine journalism across genres, the boundaries of study imposed not by industry

¹⁷ In turn Bourdieu's own work has been criticised for taking an 'absurdly reductionist' (Couldry 2007:213) view of the consumers of media outputs.

categories, but by an analysis of the kinds of capital, stakes and habitus that are present. It allows for a social and relational analysis that investigates the field of feminine journalism's place in the wider journalistic field and in relation to other fields such as fashion and advertising. However, the existing work within this burgeoning discipline contains many of the flaws to be found in the wider work on news production, indeed much of this work, 'replays standard conclusions from decades of journalism research' (Couldry, 2007:211). Despite Bourdieu's own contention that the divide between the genders is foundational (2001), the work that has been conducted on the journalistic field is completely gender blind reproducing many of the implicit exclusions to be found in the public sphere inflected work. As Hallin points out, 'field theory involves a normative preference for the autonomy of fields' (2005:230), this preference present in Bourdieu's own work is reproduced in the study of the journalistic field and once again expresses itself in a privileging of Tunstall's prestige categories. Specialisms clustered near the autonomous pole of the profession, such as political and foreign news, are allowed to determine the nature of academic study, while specialisms at the heteronomous pole such as fashion and lifestyle journalism are largely ignored.

Hesmondhalgh has noted Bourdieu's inattention to the production of popular culture professing astonishment at, 'how little Bourdieu has to say about large-scale, 'heteronomous' commercial cultural production' (2006:217). Hesmondhalgh also notes that Bourdieu's normative argument in *On Television* calls into question the aesthetic relativism he displays in works such as *Distinction*. In his discussions of journalism Bourdieu draws clear value judgements between what he describes as the 'purest journalists' (2005:42) and impure commercial forms. These distinctions lead Bourdieu and his followers to concentrate their research efforts on 'the relatively autonomous prestigious institutions of French journalism' such as *Le Monde* and not on 'the complexities that might be involved in those sections of the

market aimed at larger audiences' (Hesmondhalgh, 2006:218). This instinctive bias is evidenced by Bourdieu's associate Champagne's definition of the social role of the journalist as oscillating between the:

Prestigious role of the great reporter, who sometimes pays with his life to cover conflicts, the investigative journalist who uncovers scandals and thus serves democracy and the political commentator, who censures or celebrates the nations officials and an opposite highly negative pole: the corrupt journalist who writes puff pieces. (2005:48)

His analysis is explicitly normative with the first role defined as 'good' and the second as 'bad'. As I have illustrated such journalistic categories are implicitly gendered but this is not acknowledged and autonomous news reporting is privileged throughout the Bourdieusian work on journalism.

2.8 Feminist Amendments to Field Theory

Although Bourdieu's own work on the journalistic field does not engage with the importance of the gender division, elsewhere in his work he acknowledges its importance and key role in structuring social fields. In *Masculine Domination* he contends that sexual difference is the foundational division that underpins a system of 'homologous oppositions' (2001:7), which together compose hierarchical relations of difference. So male/female is the basis for outside/inside, public/private and a related series of dichotomies that permeate and underpin all social fields, 'inscribed in the physiognomy of the familiar environment, in the form of the opposition between the public, masculine universe and private, female world' (Bourdieu, 2001:57). Structuring oppositions are inculcated into the dispositions of male and female subjects through social institutions, beginning with the foundational sexual division of labour within the family and continuing through the workings of 'the church, the state, the educational system, and also in another order of things, sport and journalism' (viii). Bourdieu is aware of the effects this division can have on the world of work and the way in which it 'authorizes and

favours certain behaviours that are technical and social but also sexual, or sexually marked' (58). He suggests that a feminine habitus predisposes women to certain kinds of work because of the – 'harmonious encounters between dispositions and positions' (57).

Bourdieu's thoughts on gender can obviously be applied to journalism, where as I have outlined, women are clustered in certain areas of the profession but those who have used his work to consider the media have completely ignored this element. The only real acknowledgment of gender comes in Marchetti's work on specialised journalism where he comments that:

The gender division of specialities reflects in a large part that of news consumers (the specialities defined as more masculine tend to be read by men and vice versa) or the social sector covered. The increase since the 1980s in the development of the specialised magazine press has thus participated in the feminization of French journalism.

(Marchetti, 2005:74).

However this observation is never pursued and the subject division he describes is taken as self-evident or natural. Bourdieu's words on the gendering of the social world and its effects can be applied both to the journalistic field and the attendant academic work, as this passage illustrates:

All the calls to order inscribed in the order of things, all the silent injunctions or muted threats inherent in the normal course of the world are, of course, specified according to the particular fields, and the difference between the sexes presents itself to women, in each field, in specific forms, through for example the dominant definition of practice that prevails within it and which no one would think of seeing as sexed and therefore open to question. (Bourdieu, 2001: 62)

Bourdieu's words perfectly sum up the effects of objectivity as the 'dominant definition of practice' within the journalistic profession and the effects of the public sphere model in the attendant media studies scholarship.

Field theory's failure to account for gender is explained by an incomplete application of Bourdieu's theoretical paradigm to journalism. The work on the journalistic field, as its title suggests, is focused on the structural and objectivist element of the field/habitus pairing. The paradigm of the field as a spatial metaphor composed of competing positions is embraced in this work, but its subjectivist correlative, the internalisation of these structures in the habitus is largely ignored. In the volume *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field* (Benson and Neveu, 2005) the habitus is reduced to little more than a device for describing journalist's education and its huge potential for illuminating gender or class positions remains untapped. Bourdieu sets out a tripartite system for using the concept of the field in social research, this involves analysing the field's relationship with the field of power, mapping the 'objective structures' which compose the field and finally the habitus(es) of the agents within the field must be analysed and 'the different systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalising a determinate type of social and economic condition' (Bourdieu, 1992:105). The existing work on the journalistic field neglects the final element of this schema in favour of its first two operations. This is particularly detrimental to a consideration of the field of feminine journalism where what is at stake is the interaction of a feminine habitus with the journalistic field.

Although the concept of the field dominates the recent Bourdieu influenced work on journalism, it needs to be analysed in conjunction with Bourdieu's other key theoretical innovation the habitus. Bourdieu's work seeks to strike a middle path between structure and agency and so transcend the objectivist/subjectivist dichotomy. As Jenkins says the central theme of his work, 'is the attempt to understand the relationship between 'subjectivity' – individual

social being as it is experienced and lived, from the personal inside out so to speak and the 'objective' social world within which it is framed and towards the production and reproduction of which it contributes' (Jenkins, 2002:25). While concerned with the reproduction of society through its structures, he also seeks to understand how these structures are inhabited by social agents, he attempts to do this by combining his notion of the field with that of the habitus. The habitus is a system of dispositions, sets of thoughts and actions that individuals develop in response to the objective conditions of their existence, through a process of socialisation in the family, education and profession. Habitus is Bourdieu's term for structures, rules and dispositions as they are embodied in human beings, the internalisation of external structures. These structures are internalised at the level of the body and expressed through its practices, 'the concept of habitus does not denote just the process in which the norms are inculcated upon the body, but also the moment of praxis or living through of these norms by the individual' (McNay, 2000:36).

The habitus is a particularly useful theoretical tool for the consideration of, the operation of gender within journalism, because in his 2001 book *Masculine Domination*, Bourdieu describes gender as the supreme example of the formation of the habitus. Gender, a socially constructed 'cultural arbitrary' composed of a system of rules, norms, perceptions and practices is inculcated into the agent by a long process of socialisation that results in a masculine or feminine habitus, in Bourdieu's words:

It is only after a formidable collective labour of diffuse and continuous socialization that the distinctive identities instituted by the cultural arbitrary are embodied in habitus that are clearly differentiated according to the dominant principle of division and capable of perceiving the world according to this principle. (2001:23)

A gendered habitus is created through the practices of everyday life, 'femininity is imposed for the most through an unremitting discipline that concerns every

part of the body and is continuously recalled through the constraints of clothing or hairstyle' (27). It produces a particular feminine habitus, which is expressed bodily in a feminine appearance and submissive postures and mentally through particular inclinations and dispositions. Bourdieu uses his notion of habitus to account for the way in which individuals internalize and invest in dominant social structures and the institutions that represent them. These dispositions are deeply ingrained over time and often make themselves felt, not at a conscious level, but as 'bodily emotions – shame, humiliation, timidity, anxiety guilt – or passions and sentiments love, admiration, respect' (39). This phenomenon explains why people remain attached to structures that objectively may appear to oppress them and why change may not occur even when formal obstacles have been removed. In Bourdieu's view the Althusserian model, which offers the possibility of liberation from domination by exposure to science, or feminism (see Chapter Three), forgets 'the opacity and inertia that stem from the embedding of social structures in bodies' (40).

Gender provides the most complete example of the operation of the habitus, but its formation also works to produce a particular habitus within a field. So the journalistic field will produce, and be produced by, not only a set of approaches, values and practices, but also a particular journalistic body. We can see this process in action if we think of the stereotyped appearance of the Fleet Street hack or the fashion journalist. Social agents acquire the habitus that provides them with the skills necessary to operate within a particular field. All fields apply certain criteria to those who wish to enter them and to operate successfully the individual must absorb the structures and rules of their chosen field. We have seen this internalisation of structures at work within the journalistic field where the objectivity norm comes to define a journalistic identity or habitus. The inculcation of these rules and norms produces actions that correspond with the structures of the field and in this way what Bourdieu called a doxic relationship emerges. Doxa are a set of core values and standards that form the fundamental principles of a field and that tend to be viewed by its

agents as taken for granted and accepted truths, when in fact they are true only within the existing conditions of the field with no inherent universal validity. So the newsmen of Tuchman's study saw objectivity as an inherent and intrinsic part of their occupation rather than a strategic practice. Operating successfully within the field happens almost automatically, as Bourdieu says, 'the agent does what he or she 'has to do' without posing it explicitly as a goal, below the level of calculation and even consciousness, beneath discourse and representation' (1992:127). Bourdieu uses the term 'illusio' to describe this emotional and cognitive investment and belief in the rules of the game that define the field. Agents are caught up in the game and implicitly believe that it is worth playing and that its stakes are meaningful and valid. In the case of journalism as Neveu suggests in relation to foreign correspondents, 'the belief that journalism is one of the pillars of democracy – or more cynically that it allows one to be where the action is – gives the war correspondent the impetus to take risks' (Neveu, 2007:339).

The habitus and field pairing bridge the divide between subjectivism and objectivism, because they are inseparable terms that depend upon each other for existence. The field is comprised of the agents operating within its boundaries, it only exists because its members possess the dispositions and actions that enact its structures so 'the habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world' (Bourdieu, 1992:127). By the same token in order to participate in the field agents incorporate its structures into their habitus, 'for a field to work there must be stakes, and people ready to play the game equipped with the habitus that enables them to know and to recognise the immanent laws of the field, the stakes and so on' (Bourdieu, 1993b:72). The habitus and the field are mutually constitutive effects that together work to reproduce social structures so that '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 around itself for granted' (Bourdieu, 1992:127). An analysis of these kind of effects is missing from field theory, nowhere is it acknowledged that men can only truly

access the perfect fit between habitus and journalistic field, 'the fish in water' effect. Within the journalistic field only those with a male habitus can operate with this kind of unthinking ease, as Steiner says, 'men had already defined journalism in male terms. No wonder then that men, as males, could be comfortable with their work and their male identities' (1998:158).

Field Theory's almost total inattention to the crucial notion of the habitus explains its failure to account for the operation of gender in journalistic practice. However Bourdieu's theoretical model has been subject to feminist critique that suggests it has fundamental deficiencies in this area. Bourdieu is widely perceived to have privileged class divisions over those of gender in his work and to largely have ignored feminism. His attempt to apply his methods to gender, *Masculine Domination*, did little to alter this perception. The 2001 work failed to connect fully with feminist scholarship, despite addressing many of the same issues as feminist anthropologists; most notably Ortner's famous question 'Is female to male as nature is to culture?' (1974). However, Bourdieu did not consider this work in any detail, leading to accusations that he remained, 'somewhat oblivious to the diverse range of important feminist work that has historized sexual division' (McLeod, 2005:19). Beyond this failure to engage with feminism, Bourdieu's work is problematic because of its seamless account of the creation of gendered identity and perceived failure to include any possibility for a political project that produces change. These problems have led feminist critics such as Butler to question the very basis of his theoretical paradigm.

The existence of two separate categories, field and habitus, is fundamental to Bourdieu's attempts to overcome the subjectivist/objectivist dichotomy. The notion of an encounter between these two categories is invoked, 'both to separate and to render dynamic the productive convergence of the subjective domain of the habitus and the objective domain of the field' (Butler, 1999:117). However, many commentators including Butler have found this pairing problematic and maintained that Bourdieu remains 'trapped within an objectivist

point of view' (Jenkins, 1992:91). As we have seen in the Bourdieusian work on journalism the field can easily become the dominant partner in the field/habitus pairing. Indeed Butler argues that the distinction between the habitus and the field is at best tenuous because the habitus is created by an internalisation of the rules of the field. The habitus is in effect, the result of playing the game within the field and in Butler's view this means, 'the habitus presupposes the field as the condition of its own possibility' (Butler, 1999:117). While Bourdieu contends that the habitus/field pairing is characterised by dynamism and fluidity and so is open to change, hence his claim that the habitus is 'creative and inventive, but within the limits of its structures' (Bourdieu, 1992:19), his critics see the pairing as rigidly bound together with the structural element of the field firmly in the ascendant.

It is this perceived structural dominance that leads critics to characterise Bourdieu as a conservative, determinist thinker whose model has no space for social change. If as Butler contends, 'the ideal of adaptation governs the relation between habitus and field, such that the field, often figured as pre-existing or as a social given, does not alter by virtue of the habitus, but the habitus always and only alters by virtue of the demands put upon it by the 'objectivity' of the field' (Butler, 1999:117), then social structures will almost inevitably seamlessly reproduce themselves. Bourdieu's failure to account for change has been particularly problematic for feminists. His investigation of the creation of a feminine habitus in *Masculine Domination* produced an account of gendered socialisation that is arguably too seamless and complete. There seems to be no alternative for the little girl, but to embrace the feminine habitus, which is imposed by her family and education, and this process is conceptualised as invariable, comprehensive and successful. The habitus must then submit to the demands of the field. While feminist theory has often occupied itself with the breakdown of this process and conceptualised the adoption of femininity as an uneasy, unstable fit that must be endlessly re-enacted and repeated. Bourdieu has been accused of not attending to things that do not fit, or as Jenkins says:

Any substantial deviance from the imperatives of the habitus is so inconceivable that he does not even consider it. His model of practice, despite all of its references to improvisation and fluidity, turns out to be a celebration of (literally) mindless conformity (Jenkins, 1992:96).

However, despite these criticisms some feminist commentators have suggested ways in which the potential of the habitus/field pairing could be harnessed for feminist thought. In her 2000 book *Gender and Agency* McNay argues convincingly that, while there are undoubtedly problems with Bourdieu's application of the habitus/field pairing to gender, the theoretical model itself is a useful one. McNay contends that the problem with *Masculine Domination* is the reverse of that to be found in the work on the journalistic field. Here it is the concept of the field that is left relatively unexplored, 'the conceptual implications of the idea of the field are not brought to bear sufficiently on the idea of the gendered habitus' (McNay, 2000:53). This failing is explained by Bourdieu's concentration on mythic sexual structures in a peasant society. Bourdieu's empirical focus is on material gathered during his fieldwork in Kabylia in the late 1950s and early 1960s, by taking as his example a deeply traditional peasant society, in which gender relations appear to be largely unquestioned, Bourdieu is able to illustrate how gender divisions permeate society's structures in ways that are often hidden, taken for granted and experienced as natural. However, 'his reliance on the Kabyle material makes him underestimate, the level of crisis we are experiencing in gender relations today' (Moi, 1991:1033). A concentration on the creation of a gendered habitus to the exclusion of the consideration of the effects of the field, 'results in an overemphasis on the alignment that the habitus establishes between subjective dispositions and the objective structures of the field with regard to gender identity' (McNay, 2000:54). There is little consideration of the effects on the gendered habitus of the movement across fields that are characteristic of modern society. His analysis oversimplifies gender relations and so becomes monolithic, an example of the kind of structural determinism that Butler and Jenkins accuse him of.

However, McNay suggests that these problems are not inherent to his theoretical model and could be overcome if the concept of the field were considered in conjunction with the idea of the habitus. Such an analysis leads to a fuller consideration of the 'generative dynamic between habitus and field and leads to a more nuanced view of political agency in terms of the idea of regulated liberties' (56). This conception of power relations does not deny agency but is more cautious about the possibilities of subversion through symbolic power seeking always to relate it back to social realities. McNay proposes this formulation of 'regulated liberties' that are 'durable but not eternal' as a useful one for considering 'significant assertions of women's autonomy in the last twenty years which rest on an ambivalent relation with conventional notions and images of heterosexuality' (56). It is the kind of 'ambivalent' negotiation that takes place within the field of feminine journalism, which has built a notion of independence and empowerment on a foundation of femininity and consumption. When considering the field of feminine journalism it is the durability of femininity that is most striking. The history of the magazine and feminine journalism is one of continuity and change, but as I illustrated in Chapter One, consumption and a strong investment in the reproduction of a feminine body are constants that if anything have flourished with renewed vigour since the advent of feminism. Such a field cannot be completely explained by theories that concentrate on the fluidity of sexual identity, but rather is evidence of McNay's contention that 'gender identities are not free-floating: they involve deep-rooted investments on the part of individuals and historically sedimented practices which severely limit their transferability and transformability' (26). The field has demonstrated a persistent attachment to femininity in the face of decades of dramatic change in gender relations. While it has reflected these changes the field has also remained extraordinarily loyal to its leitmotif of femininity and consumption. Suggesting that McNay might be correct when she suggests, 'the destabilisation of conventional gender relations on one level may further entrench, in a reactive fashion, conventional patterns of

behaviour on other levels' (41). Bourdieu's notion of the habitus provides an explanation for the 'durable dispositional subject; what we might encounter in everyday life as an obstinate and tenacious loyalty to forms of life into which, for some reason, the subject has been enrolled' (Lovell, 2000:12).

Despite the charge of determinism that is frequently levelled against Bourdieu, he does include an account of social change in his model. He suggests that when there is a lack of fit between habitus and field, when the agent is no longer a 'fish in water', a more critical reflexivity emerges that can produce breaks in the status quo. The conjunction between objective and subjective structures is disturbed, leading to reflection on previously unexamined dispositions and practices. Feminist theorists such as (McNay, 2000; Lovell 2000) have suggested that the transformative power of Bourdieu's theories will be found in the exploration of this disjunction. As Adkins says, 'this thesis involves the argument that in late modernity there is a lack of fit between habitus and field in certain public spheres of action via an increasing transposition or movement of the feminine habitus from private to public spheres' (Adkins, 2004:191). McNay gives the example of women returning to the labour market after having children and contends that such women will be more attuned to its deficiencies and reflect critically upon these inadequacies. If as McNay suggests, the concept of the field were brought to bear upon that of the gendered habitus and vice versa, the apparent determinism of Bourdieu's model would be broken. This idea is particularly resonant when applied to the movement of women into the journalistic field and the break in fit between habitus and field that this has entailed, producing the possibility of concurrent changes in both spheres. The feminization of journalism may have taken place within the boundaries of a journalistic field organised around objectivity but it has nonetheless produced significant changes. These changes attest to Bourdieu's assertion that the field is a site of contestation and fluidity open to change even as it attempts to reproduce itself.

Attempts to integrate the gendered habitus more fully with the notion of the field has produced a fledgling body of work that suggests femininity can now act as a form of capital in the employment market (Lovell, 2000; McRobbie, 2005; Skeggs, 2000). Bourdieu's idea that there are different forms of capital, beyond the strictly economic meaning of the term, is central to his thinking. In this schema, as well as economic capital (i.e. material and financial wealth) it is possible to accrue 'cultural capital (i.e. knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions, as exemplified by educational or technical qualifications), 'symbolic capital' (accumulated prestige or honour) and so on' (Thompson 1991:15). Capital holds differing value depending upon the field where it is applied and, 'one of the most important properties of fields is the way in which they allow one form of capital to be converted into another – in the way for example, that certain educational qualifications can be cashed in for lucrative jobs' (15). Feminist theory has begun to consider the ways in which the skills and knowledge of femininity might function as a kind of capital in a world of work which places an increasing premium on aesthetic and emotional labour. In Bourdieu's own account women's positioning in the symbolic order means they can contribute to the production and reproduction of symbolic capital only as objects of exchange. At the foundation of this order of exchange is the matrimonial market and 'women can appear there only as objects, or, more precisely, as symbols whose meaning is constituted outside of them and whose function is to contribute to the perpetuation or extension of capital held by men' (Bourdieu, 2001:43). So women are limited to contributing to the symbolic capital of their group or family by turning economic capital into symbolic through the operation of taste and management of the appearance of the family. Bourdieu saw the increasing employment of women in the 'production and consumption of symbolic goods and services' (101), as a simple extension of this traditional role, for him it was no coincidence that it was to these fields 'that women owe the most striking demonstration of their professional emancipation' (102). He took an extremely pessimistic view of this phenomenon seeing such employment as an extension of

women's symbolic domination. Women are merely granted the appearance of freedom in order to secure their submission to the symbolic order of which they are the victims. This is an argument that resonates with Pateman's arguments about women's position within the liberal contract and their inability to access the possessive individualism that is available to men.

However, what is missing from this argument as Lovell has pointed out is any analysis of women as capital-accumulating subjects in the social world rather than capital bearing objects for their group or family. Again Bourdieu's argument suffers from its dependence on Kabyle peasant culture and failure to consider the movement of the gendered habitus across fields. While women still function as capital bearing objects they can also be subjects with capital-bearing strategies of their own unrelated to those of their family or kinship group. Post-Fordist shifts in the employment market and women's movement into the public sphere has led to a situation in which 'femininity as cultural capital is beginning to have broader currency in unexpected ways' (Lovell, 2000:25). This notion of femininity as capital in the labour market has been explored by Skeggs and McRobbie who have both considered the operation of a particular form of classed femininity as capital. Skeggs suggests that a certain kind of legitimised middle class femininity can act as capital, indeed her analysis is particularly telling as it describes femininity as a 'range of things; it can be a resource, a form of regulation, an embodied disposition and/or a symbolically legitimate form of cultural capital' (Skeggs, 2000:24). This entire range is surely traversed by the field of feminine journalism where femininity is at once a form of regulation and capital for the agents within the field and its consumers.

McRobbie has considered the role of middle-class femininity as capital in makeover shows and suggested that:

The overall use of Bourdieu's writing is that it shows more forcefully how social rearrangements along gender lines takes shape within media and popular culture by means of habitus readjustment to ensure conformity

with the requirements of the fields of employment and consumer culture.
(McRobbie, 2005:150)

In the field of feminine journalism, 'femininities like masculinities, may be assets on the labour market as well as the marriage-and-family market, tradable therefore for economic if not for symbolic capital' (Lovell, 2000:25). The questions then are how might such a change in the nature of femininity as capital affect both the gendered habitus? And the operation of the field in which it finds itself, in this case journalism? And as Lovell asks, 'what kind of 'investment strategies' do women follow in what circumstances? How may the existence of women as objects – as repositories of capital for someone else – be curtailing or enabling in terms of their simultaneous existence as capital-accumulating subjects?' (22). Fully combining exploration of the journalistic field with feminist work on the gendered habitus should avoid the kind of binary analysis that constructs field as structure and habitus as agency, and draw out the generative and dynamic capacities of the pairing. An exploration of the field of feminine journalism and the habitus that goes along with it might begin to answer some of these questions and shed light on both the nature of a feminine habitus and the journalistic field in which it operates.

2.9 Conclusion

Traditions of scholarship in feminist media studies and the sociology of news production both illuminate aspects of the field of feminine journalism. The work on women's magazines, organised around gender, representation and meaning, contains many thematic and textual insights (see Chapter Three), while the studies of news production have explored working practices within media organisations and the professional norms that structure meaning. However, the separation of these two academic disciplines has meant that these two canons of work have never fully intersected or been made to inform one another. This intellectual disconnection has resulted in a very partial and patchy analysis of feminine journalism, which ignores its huge importance for the entire journalistic

field. The recent Bourdieu influenced work on journalism continues in this tradition, missing the opportunity that his work undoubtedly provides, to overcome some of the dichotomies that have structured the academic study of journalism. A Bourdieusian framework provides ways out of the various oppositions, subjectivist/objectivist, material/symbolic, political economy/textual, which have prevented an entirely convincing analysis of women's magazine and newspaper journalism. This framework facilitates a move beyond the textual analysis of the work on magazines, allowing for an empirical analysis that avoids the normative pitfalls of the Habermasian public sphere model, whilst still considering the field in its wider journalistic context. While feminist scholars have begun to consider how Bourdieu's theoretical framework might be applied to women's movement into social space and employment, it is a project that has hardly begun and the increasingly feminized journalistic field would seem to make the ideal object for further study.

Chapter Three

The Production of Femininity: Women's Magazines

3.1 Introduction: Feminism and Femininity

While the work on newspaper production has largely ignored the feminine subfield, women's magazines have formed an important part of the area of expertise demarcated by feminist media studies. These investigations have moved from early Althusserian studies of the texts of magazines (McRobbie, 1978; Winship, 1987), through attempts to consider the experience and power of the reader (Frazer, 1987; Hermes, 1995) to abortive efforts to analyse the production of the genre (Gough Yates, 2003). Feminist media studies have produced only a partial account of feminine journalism, largely ignoring newspapers and with the exception of Marjorie Ferguson's work (1983), almost completely marginalising production. Despite these omissions, the textual analysis produced through this branch of scholarship has illuminated the issues of femininity and consumption that lie at the heart of this project, beginning to outline the ways in which a normative version of femininity is produced through the intersection of capital and gendered ideology. In the following chapter I will examine the ways in which feminist media studies both set the terms for considerations of feminine genres and delineated consumer culture's production of feminine subjectivities.

An opposition between feminism and femininity has framed feminist investigations of popular genres (Brunsdon, 2000; Hollows, 2000; McRobbie, 1997). Historically the two discourses have been in a critical relationship, often used to define one another. In the popular media feminism regularly underpins articulations of femininity through irony (Whelehan, 2000) or dispute and is routinely used as a straw man 'invoked only to be summarily dismissed'

(McRobbie, 2004a:259), while in feminist writing there has sometimes been an opposition 'between 'bad' feminine identities and 'good' feminist identities' (Hollows, 2000:9). Discussions of popular culture have played a crucial role in academic feminism, the study of women's genres, such as soap opera, romance novels and women's magazines helping to bring into being the figure of the 'feminist intellectual' (Brunsdon, 2000:19). The feminist academy has remained in a complex and at times conflicted relationship with these popular objects of study, their producers and their 'ordinary' female consumers. In the field of magazine scholarship this relationship has been particularly intense, as the genre has remained somewhat marginal to mainstream media and cultural studies (Chapter Two) and has been explored primarily through feminist study and so 'remained a debate among women' (McRobbie, 1997:192). This intensity is unsurprising as both feminism and women's magazines are discourses concerned with 'women's worlds', both given over to representation of the category woman and striving to define that category (Ferguson, 1983; Rabine, 1994; McRobbie, 1997).

The battle between feminism and femininity, on the ground of the women's magazine, was set in motion by Friedan's 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique*, a foundational text of second wave feminism. Friedan, a former magazine journalist, saw femininity as fundamentally at odds with women's equality, and even their humanity, and identified her former profession as one of the key sites of feminine myth making. Content analysis of magazines enabled Friedan to identify a dramatic shift from the determined 'New Women' of the Thirties and Forties to the 'Happy Housewife' of the Fifties. She claimed that the magazines of this period 'narrowed women's world down to the home' (58) and helped to create a generation of women in thrall to an oppressive ideology maintaining, 'that the highest value and the only commitment for women is the fulfilment of their own femininity' (38). Friedan set up a division between a public sphere, 'the world of thought and ideas, the life of the mind and spirit' (32)

and a debased private sphere, of the home and body that was the primary concern of women's magazines.

Freidan's foundational split between femininity and feminism structured the work on magazines that followed. As Brunsdon points out in her book *The Feminist, The Housewife and the Soap Opera* (2000), the debate between feminism and femininity has been played out in a tripartite relationship between the scholar, the text and the ordinary consumer. The housewife has haunted the study of popular cultural forms, including magazines, where Friedan's 'happy housewife', gave way to Joke Hermes protests against readers being characterised en masse as 'silly housewives' (Hermes, 1993:147). It is possible to fit magazine scholarship into the 'repudiation-reinvestigation-revaluation schema' that Brunsdon suggests characterises 'the relationship between second-wave feminism and mass cultural feminine forms' (2000:21). The ideological work of McRobbie (1978) and Winship (1987) providing the reinvestigation, while a renewed focus on the reader in the work of Hermes (1993) and Frazer (1987) begins a process of revaluation, continued in McRobbie's later work (1997, 2004).

Brunsdon's research reveals that for feminists engaged in scholarship on popular genres in the 1970s and 1980s, the housewife acted as an 'abandoned or fictional other – the female consumer of popular culture' (Brunsdon, 2000:5). This housewife is not so much a 'real' person as a position against which feminist intellectuals could define themselves, an 'other' who was at once the woman they might have been and a person on whose behalf their research was conducted. As Brunsdon illustrates, the feminist's relationship to this archetypal housewife is a complicated one, which seems to combine fear, guilt and longing, as she notes:

It is because of, on behalf, of this 'ordinary' woman that much research has been conducted. It is also on to this figure that recalcitrant feminine desires are projected, however, at the same time, it is with this figure that unity is desired assumed and felt (4).

The scholarship on magazines has demonstrated this ambivalence, the feminist scholar may critique the magazines, and at times conceptualise the readers as passive; but many also acknowledge something of a 'love-hate relationship with the genre' (McRobbie, 1997:194). The ordinary reader, the housewife, or often in the case of magazine scholarship the teenage girl, is at once both the critic and her abandoned and sometimes disavowed other. Initially critics conceptualised this 'ordinary' reader as almost entirely determined by the text, but later she became a more challenging figure whose pleasures and refusals dominated the scholarship. However whether textually determined or resistant, the critic and the reader remain locked in a relationship in which there is 'a kind of seesawing between the idea of the media as progressive or reactionary, readings as duped or resistant, audience as ideologically caught or popularly resisting' (Walkerdine, 1990:20).

What is missing from this seesawing and from Brunson's three-cornered relationship is any serious consideration of the producers of popular genres. The magazine journalist is largely absent from scholarship. Although Friedan had worked as a freelance journalist, *The Feminine Mystique* contains only anecdotal evidence about this role and she does not engage in a sustained or systematic way with her own former profession. In the decades that followed Friedan the producer almost vanished from analysis, ignored altogether or presumed to be acting in the interests of capital and conceptualised vaguely as 'the enemies of women' (Bartky, 1990:40). The production process remains a mystery as McRobbie points out 'nobody, it seems, has thought to study the people who put these pages together' (McRobbie, 1997:206). There have been embryonic moves to consider the female journalist in a more nuanced light (Rabine, 1994; McRobbie, 1997; Gough Yates, 2003), but these readings remain undeveloped. The theoretical juxtaposition of the feminist critic with the housewife, is one in which the 'expert' faces the 'ordinary' reader. The female journalist constitutes another 'expert', operating in the public sphere with an investment in the representation of women and is in many ways a more logical

notional 'other' for the feminist critic than the housewife. The producers of women's magazines are overwhelmingly female and the introduction of this third female figure into the debate between feminism and femininity may help to break what can sometimes appear to be an impasse between an omniscient feminist critic and a reader who is variously duped or resistant.

3.2 Postfeminism and Femininity

In the contemporary subfield of feminine journalism,¹⁸ the relationship between feminism and femininity has become more complex and reflexive, as feminism and its criticisms of feminine consumer culture have informed the production of magazines. As McRobbie notes many of the women who work in magazines are the product of academic study that includes feminist scholarship, and are often 'feminist-inclined' (McRobbie, 1997:206). This shared educational background means that when studying such journalists the feminist academic cannot assume a position of total theoretical superiority or be sure that the ground of feminism is entirely hers. Indeed discourses of feminist emancipation have been taken up and woven into the traditional fabric of women's magazines, producing a new postfeminist¹⁹ version of femininity. As Brunsdon points out, one of the achievements of the 1970s feminism she documents was to denaturalise notions of a 'woman's place'. However, this resulted not in the complete dissolution of the feminine, which was perhaps envisaged, but 'in complex, contradictory and to some extent unpredictable negotiations with

¹⁸ I use contemporary subfield to denote the period from the launch of British *ELLE* onward which I delineated in the Chapter One.

¹⁹ Postfeminism is a notoriously contested term, which incorporates many, often conflicting discourses, indeed 'it seems to have entered wide use without necessarily any clear agreement about its meanings and it exhibits a plasticity that enables it to be used in contradictory ways' (Negra 2004). Postfeminism can at once used to describe a rejection and backlash against feminism (Faludi 1993) and as a more positive term describing the intersection of feminism and post-colonialism (Brooks 1997). The term becomes a marker of periodization, used to describe the end of second-wave feminism (Hollows 2000) and a descriptor for a type of third wave 'sex-positive' feminism (Baumgardner and Richards 2004). However, it has perhaps been most widely used to 'describe mainstream redefinitions of feminism' (Projansky 2001) which have emerged in popular culture since the early 1980s and it is this final definition which is most useful for the current discussion. In fact the term is best used as Charlotte Brunsdon suggests 'in an historically specific sense to mark changes in popularly available understandings of femininity and a woman's place that are generally recognized as occurring in the 1980s' (Brunsdon 2000:297).

traditional femininities' (Brunsdon, 2000:14). One of the key sites for this negotiation has been the women's magazine, where a re-imagined 'modernised' discourse of femininity has both appropriated and repudiated feminist ideas to produce a distinct 'postfeminist sensibility' (Gill, 2007b). In Gill's analysis, this 'postfeminist discourse' is composed of a number of features:

The notion that femininity is a bodily property; the shift from objectification to subjectification; the emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and discipline; a focus on individualism, choice and empowerment; the dominance of a makeover paradigm; a resurgence in ideas of natural sexual difference; a marked sexualisation of culture; and an emphasis upon consumerism and the commodification of difference. (149)

Feminine journalism forms a key part of Gill's postfeminist sensibility, indeed many of the elements she identifies were developed within women's magazines. A strong discourse of choice and empowerment expressed through consumption alongside an attendant emphasis on bodily discipline and self-surveillance defines the contemporary field of feminine journalism.

The brand of consumption and style-oriented women's magazines that were heralded by the launch of *ELLE* in 1983 were instrumental in the creation of a postfeminist sensibility and the term was even used to describe the magazine in the publicity surrounding its launch (Chapter One). Such magazines belong in a wider media context and can be considered along with other explicitly feminine media products. Films like *Working Girl* and *Pretty Woman* (Brunsdon, 1997) and television programmes like *Sex and the City* (Arthurs, 2003; Negra, 2004) dramatise the concern with dress, fashion and the performance of femininity to be found in the pages of *ELLE* and *Cosmopolitan*. Brunsdon recognises that the antecedents of this new relationship with femininity may lie in magazines, in her 1997 consideration of 'shopping films', when she says, 'what in critical theory is called the performativity of gender, always an element of the common sense of women's magazines, is currently much more widely available in the popular

media' (86). What these products have in common is an overwhelming concern with the pleasures of consumption, which explains Brunsdon's desire to 'juxtapose two terms, 'postfeminism' and 'shopping'' (Brunsdon, 1997:83). Her contention that, 'something happens in 1980s in the conjunction (in the West) of the new social movements, with their stress on the claiming and reclaiming of identities, and the expansion of leisure shopping and consumption' (84), can be applied, not just to the films she is discussing but to the women's magazines of the period. As Brunsdon argues, the subject of this postfeminist media is 'a figure partly constructed through a relation to consumption' (85) but she 'also has ideas about her life and being in control which clearly come from feminism' (86). The reader of women's magazines may be largely defined by how she looks and what she wants to buy, but the bank balance is her own and she is firmly characterised as in control of her own life. This imagined reader, like the leading ladies of Eighties shopping films, is 'a new kind of girly heroine who, while formed in the wake of 1970s feminism, disavows this formation' (Brunsdon, 1997:101). It seems that just as in the late Victorian period (Chapter One), consumption offers women opportunities for access to the public sphere and new forms of feminine subjectivities.

Consumption practices promise these 'girly heroines' empowerment, enjoyment and self expression. The protagonists of 'shopping films' and television series and the readers of women's magazines are offered what Hilary Radner terms, 'a space of privilege' (1995:2). The occupant of this space is often a journalist, specifically a fashion journalist. Such journalists not only produce feminine consumer culture, but figure within its texts, often taking centre stage in both magazine editorials²⁰ and as characters in fictional works²¹. These texts represent the female journalist as the ultimate subject of consumption, the

²⁰ Female journalists are increasingly present within the pages of magazines, both visually often acting as models in fashion pieces and textually discussing their lives and bodies in articles (see Chapter Five).

²¹ Carrie Bradshaw the heroine of Television series *Sex and The City* is a journalist who we see writing for *Vogue* while *Ugly Betty* is set in *MODE* magazine, the heroines of films such as *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Day* (2003), *13 Going on 30* (2004), *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006), and *Confessions of a Shopaholic* (2009) are all magazine journalists and their relationship with consumption provides much of the dramatic content of these films.

entitled bearer of feminine expertise and skill. Their working environments and practices are portrayed as the apotheosis of feminine expertise and opportunity; indeed, it is the fetishized fashion magazine closet²² that most vividly represents Radner's 'space of privilege' within feminine texts. This cupboard filled with a dizzying array of designer clothes and shoes, features in numerous almost orgasmic scenes²³ of pleasure in both the fictional and factual products of feminine consumer culture. The closet is portrayed as a space of unlimited potential that offers not just pleasure but transformative opportunity, (of the kind Gill highlights in her foregrounding of the postfeminist makeover), and empowerment to those who are able to access its space. The fashion journalist is the privileged subject who, through her feminine expertise and dedication to consumption, has gained admission through the hallowed portals of the fashion closet. The ability to access these products, combined with the skill and knowledge to make the right choices, is depicted as the ultimate act of empowering self actualisation and this self expression is achieved entirely through consumption practices. This project seeks to investigate the production and consumption of feminine culture not through its texts or its 'ordinary' consumers, but rather through these paradigmatic ideal subjects. Examining the working lives of these professional consumers offers an opportunity to develop a more material and grounded understanding of the ways in which the demands of capital and discourses surrounding gender combine to create conditions in which feminine subjectivities are produced through the skills and practices of consumption.

3.3 The Production of Femininity: Text and Ideology

Feminist magazine scholarship has primarily concerned itself with the ways in which a normative version of femininity is shaped through the texts of

²² The fashion closet is a cupboard or room in which the sample clothes and shoes used for magazine fashion shoots are stored.

²³ Most notably Carrie Bradshaw's visit to the *Vogue* fashion closet ('A *Vogue* idea' 2002) in Season 4 of *Sex and the City* and Andy Sach's makeover in the fashion closet of the fictional *Runway* magazine (*The Devil Wears Prada* 2006).

magazines and inculcated in the reader. An Althusserian notion of ideology has informed much of the seminal work on women's magazines. Scholars using this approach (McRobbie, 1978; Williamson, 1978; Winship, 1987) see the magazine as 'a system of messages, a signifying system and a bearer of a certain ideology' (McRobbie, 1978:1) and view the genre as a part of an 'ideological state apparatus', which functions to secure 'submission to the rules of the established order' (Althusser, 1971:7). In the case of magazines obedience to this established order entails reproduction of women in, 'the image, which a masculine culture has defined' (Winship, 1987:11). The ideology of women's magazines tends to render this image 'as natural, sometimes as biologically natural, but also as just what seems normal and proper, rather than as the outcome of social and historical factors' (21). In his essay 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus' Althusser extended the Marxist conception of a state, which existed in the 'repressive state apparatus' of the police and army and functioned mainly by force, to include 'ideological state apparatus' such as religion, education and communication that functioned mainly through ideology.

In Althusser's model, although ideological state apparatus lack unity and can appear contradictory, ultimately they all work towards the same goal, 'the reproduction of the relations of reproduction, i.e. of capitalist relations of exploitation' (28). Each apparatus works in the appropriate manner for its form, 'the communication apparatus by cramming every 'citizen' with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, liberalism, moralism, etc, by means of the press, the radio and television' (28). Early magazine scholarship conceptualises women's magazines as a part of this communication apparatus, functioning to reproduce a capitalist system. However, in common with Althusser's own work, the mechanics of this reproduction and the political economy of media institutions go unexamined. Instead these authors concentrate on the way in which an unremitting focus on consumption obscures issues around production and class inequalities and fosters an

acceptance of the capitalist order. As Williamson explains in her analysis of print advertising 'the fundamental differences in our society are still class differences, but use of manufactured goods as means of creating classes or groups forms an overlay on them' (Williamson, 1978:13).

Ultimately magazines are commodities that encourage the purchase of further commodities, through their editorial and advertising content; therefore they express the interests of capital and the process of commodification. This purpose, though key to this analysis, remains under-theorised and taken for granted. Instead we are directed toward the way the texts of magazines work in capital's interest to obscure class relations by addressing women as a homogenous group, 'a false totality' (McRobbie, 1978:3) and so asserting 'a sameness, a kind of false sisterhood' (3). Winship also identifies a 'women's world' (1987:7) created by magazines which does not accurately represent a more fragmented reality. Both McRobbie and Winship contrast the isolation of women's lives, perpetuated by the personal focus of magazines, with the false community the genre presents. Magazines' organisation around romance and consumption forecloses both female solidarity and any concern with the public world of political empowerment instead placing women in the 'world of the personal and the emotions' (McRobbie, 1978:3). The intimate tone of women's magazines creates what Winship calls, 'the 'we' women feeling' that works to constitute the reader as a particular type of feminine subject, isolated in the private realm of consumption and emotion. Both McRobbie and Winship focus on this 'ideology of individuality' (Winship, 1987:64) and attribute to it the perpetuation of both class and gender relations.

Within this formulation ideology is not just present in apparatus it is also conceptualised as existing in subjects. Althusser's exemplar is religion that has an institutional existence, but also a material presence in the subject through ritual and practice. According to Althusser the function of ideology is

'constituting concrete individuals as subjects' (45) and in turn ideology works through the subject, there is 'no ideology except by the subject and for subjects' (44). A theory of interpellation is used to explain this process. The function of subjectivation is achieved by the interpellation of 'individuals' who are addressed as already subjects and so constituted as such. Althusser's example is the policeman's call of 'hey you there' (88) to the passer-by who, recognising that they are the subject of the call, turns around. Interpellation 'appears to stage a social scene in which a subject is hailed, the subject turns around, the subject then accepts the terms by which he or she is hailed' (Butler 1997:106). Although Althusser's model is concerned with class relations and ignores gender distinctions, it is possible to take his notion a step further and imagine the constitution of a gendered subjectivity through ideology. De Lauretis illustrates how this might be done when she substitutes gender for ideology in the Althusserian formulation. Instead of 'ideology has the function (which defines it) of constituting concrete individuals as subjects' de Lauretis suggests, 'gender has the function (which defines it) of constituting concrete individuals as men and women' (1987:6). It is this notion of gendered subjectivity through interpellation that underpins the Althusserian influenced work on women's magazines.

Readers are constituted as subjects through this process, they respond to the magazines 'hey you', or in this case 'hey girls', and so take up the suggested subject position. The reader responds to the magazine's hail and metaphorically turns around, it is in this metaphorical turn that ideology is an active constitutive process, 'we are active in it, we don't receive it from above: we constantly recreate it. It works through us, not at us' (Williamson, 1978:41). Though, as Williamson points out, in Althusser's model subjects play an active role in the creation of creation ideology, this role appears to be pre-determined there is no room for any resistance. The individual is only free in that she must freely choose to reproduce the ideology of women's magazines, 'the individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of

the Subject, i.e. in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection' (Althusser, 1971:56). The procedure of interpellation is conceived as invariable and complete, the 'voice of interpellation is figured as a voice almost impossible to refuse' (Butler 1997:110). Therefore when an Althusserian model of ideology is applied to magazines, it is taken for granted that their readers receive the values, desires and preferences of normative femininity in the process of reading. The attitudes of readers are apparently transparent, and can be determined by a textual analysis of the magazines. Publications such as *Jackie* are conceptualised as 'an ideological bloc of mammoth proportions' (McRobbie, 1978:3). Once the ideological message of a text has been determined readers are assumed to fall in with its dominant message and appear to be powerless to resist the adoption of the suggested subject position or as McRobbie puts it 'the uses are prescribed by the map' (6).

The Althusserian work on women's magazines is now thirty years old and it has met with much criticism and revision in those intervening years. It is the attitude to the reader, to be found in this early work that has provoked the most vehement criticism. Hermes' suggestion that at worst such scholarship, 'assumes readers are not capable of assessing the value of the text and are completely taken in by it' (Hermes, 1995:149) typifies this kind of criticism. This kind of assessment of the ideologically driven work can sometimes overstate its case. McRobbie acknowledges that the girls who read *Jackie* may be using the magazine in a subversive way to express 'boredom and dissatisfaction' (McRobbie, 1978:6), whilst Winship recognises that readers may relish the fantasies created by advertising and still 'know full well that those commodities will not elicit the promised fictions' (Winship, 1987:56). McRobbie also acknowledges that 'until we have a clearer idea of just how girls 'read' Jackie and encounter its ideological force, our analysis remains one-sided' (McRobbie, 1978:50). McRobbie and Winship do not then, entirely discount transgressive uses or readings, but they do place the power of the magazine at a textual level contending that it 'has a powerful ideological presence as a form' McRobbie (6),

quite apart from these potentially rebellious uses. Their unremittingly textual focus means that there is no room for an analysis of the reader who is implicitly assumed to fall in with the ideological message of the text. This has led critics such as Hermes to claim that this early work leads to 'horrifying stereotypical views of women's magazine's heterogeneous audiences and portrayed them as en masse as silly housewives' (Hermes, 1995:148).

Ideological approaches have also been criticised for their apparent elitism, which appears to place the theorist outside ideology. While Althusser claims that 'ideology has no outside' (Althusser, 1971:49), he also maintains that it is only possible to perceive that one is in ideology from a position outside it, in scientific knowledge, or Marxist analysis. The workings of ideology can only be perceived by moving 'from the space of ideology to the space of scientific or real knowledge' (De Lauretis, 1987:25). The feminist application of ideology to women's magazines replicates this division, with feminism standing in for scientific or real knowledge, whilst femininity is dismissed as ideological. Feminist commentators have been criticised for placing themselves in a privileged position with regard to this division, while an ideology of femininity is theorised as blinding the readers of magazines. It can appear that such writers believe themselves to be in possession of a concealed true version of womanhood, which could be more accurately represented in a different or better type of magazine. As McRobbie later acknowledged her, 'emphasis on ideology also presupposed some state of purity, knowledge and truth outside ideology, a space which in those early days feminism felt itself to occupy' (McRobbie, 1997:174) McRobbie and Winship have been criticised for their apparent omniscience, as Frazer puts it 'theorists commit the fallacy of reading 'the' meaning of a text and inferring the ideological effect the text 'must' have on the readers (other than the theorists themselves of course!)' (Frazer, 1987:411). Although it is easy to make such criticisms, I think much of the early Althusserian work on magazines is slightly more nuanced than this characterisation would suggest. Despite an assumption of feminist truth, some of this work attempts to

set up a complex position, 'at the same time both inside and outside the ideology of gender, and conscious of being so' (De Lauretis, 1987:10). This consciousness is exemplified by Winship's 'simultaneous attraction and rejection' (Winship, 1987:xiii) of magazines and Williamson's attempt to reconcile Marx and *Honey* magazine (Williamson, 1978:9).

3.4 The Practices of Femininity: Althusser and Bourdieu

The early work on magazines and advertising began to consider the ways in which the texts of feminine consumer culture construct a particular version of consumption-oriented femininity. The weakness of this approach lies in its textual focus. It produces an ideology of femininity that remains text-bound with no presence in the material world of production or consumption. However, rather than rejecting this work out of hand, I would suggest that these approaches pave the way for a consideration of feminine subjectivity that is created through process and practice rather than simply inculcated through texts. Althusser himself stressed the importance of the subject to his model and later readings of his work by Butler, focus on practices and skills to create a more material version of ideology. This reworked notion of an ideology rooted in practice is more compatible with the Bourdieusian model of the habitus that informs this project, as Butler notes:

Bourdieu's notion of the habitus might well be read as a reformulation of Althusser's notion of ideology. Whereas Althusser will write that ideology constitutes the 'obviousness' of the subject, but that this obviousness is the effect of *dispositif*. The same term reemerges in Bourdieu to describe the way in which a habitus generates certain beliefs. (Butler, 1999:126 Note 2)

Bourdieu critiqued Althusser's structuralist approach for reducing 'real life actors' to an 'epiphenomena of structures' (Bourdieu, 1985 cited in Jenkins, 17:2002). His emphasis on practice led him to be suspicious of a model that tends to project formal theoretical properties onto the informal world of routine practices. Bourdieu acknowledges the power of objective structures but

maintains that 'the social activity of individuals both originates and develops in the practical mastery of these structures' (Swartz, 1997:59). This emphasis places Bourdieu at some distance from the early Althusserian work and its suggestion that patriarchal ideology seizes on pre-existent women and distorts their reality turning them from a possible feminist truth. However, Butler's (1997) interpretation of the Althusserian model comes much closer to Bourdieu's notion of the habitus, suggesting that the subject is produced through ritual and practice and questions if a consenting subject exists prior to these rituals. In this formulation the reality of the subject is not distorted by ideology, rather their very subjectivity is produced through ideology. So readers of magazines are not turned from a feminist path by gendered ideology but rather produced as gendered subjects in their reading, 'what is called subjectivity understood as the lived and imaginary experience of the subject, is itself derived from the material rituals by which subjects are constituted' (Butler, 1997:122).

Bourdieu's theory of practices was developed in part in reaction to Althusserian Marxism, he stressed that action was not regulated by obedience to rules or norms, but was strategically improvised through internalised dispositions, through the notion of the habitus he attempted to, 'distance himself from strict structuralist forms of determination by stressing the importance of agency within a structuralist framework' (Swartz, 1997:98). However despite the textual immateriality of much of the work he influenced, Althusser too ostensibly gave ideology a material existence through its presence in the subject. The Althusserian individual behaves in particular ways and 'adopts practical attitudes' (Althusser, 1971:41) which are those of the ideological state apparatus from which stem the ideas in which he believes, 'his ideas are his material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject' (43). Althusser adopts Pascal's formula for belief 'kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe' (43). It is then in the performance of an individual's relationship to the institutions and ideas that form ideological state apparatus

that subjectivity is reproduced. Butler focuses on this element of Althusser's work underscoring the importance he placed on skills 'the ideological work of acquiring skills, a process central to the formation of the subject' (Butler, 1997:115). Althusser focuses on the 'diverse skills' that must be learnt to ensure the reproduction of labour power and suggests that increasingly these proficiencies are taught not by the company, but through education and culture. It is in the reproduction of these 'skills' that submission to the established order is reproduced. The subject masters a skill and at the same time is mastered by that skill so 'the lived simultaneity of submission as mastery and mastery as submission, is the condition of possibility for the emergence of the subject' (117). This interpretation comes much closer to Bourdieu's notion of the habitus and description of the 'feminization of the female body' as an 'immense and ... interminable task' achieved through 'the training of the body' (2001:56).

This conceptualization of femininity as a set of a set of bodily practices and skills has a great deal of potential for the study of feminine journalism. For the feminine subfield is largely concerned with the material production of a perfect gendered self. However neither the early Althusserian work nor Bourdieu's work on gender (2001) fully explore the ways in which feminine journalism is instrumental in a process whereby 'performing skills laboriously works the subject into its status as a social being' (Butler, 1997:119). Despite his attention to the production of femininity through bodily training in *Masculine Domination*, in general Bourdieu's conception of the creation of the habitus focuses 'on the role of educational institutions, rather underplaying the role of commercial organizations and the media' (Lury, 1996:92). Bourdieu tends to marginalise the work of feminine consumer culture in the production of gender focusing instead on fundamental symbolic relationships drawn from his study of Kabyle society (2001:68). The early Althusserian work on magazines touches on the importance of skills, McRobbie contends that the rituals and routines of fashion and beauty 'compromise a set of endless chores to be repeated daily' (1978:42), while Winship suggests that beauty is 'a work executed in everyday life not by the

'experts' but by women themselves' (Winship, 1987:12). However, the textual focus of this work does not allow for an engagement with these 'embodied rituals of action' (Butler, 1997:119). Despite Althusser's ostensible focus on the subject, as McRobbie later acknowledges, it is a 'relatively empty category' (McRobbie, 2005:125). The early work on magazines does not engage fully with the interface between the text and the subject, or develop the idea that such texts may in fact be integral to the formation of subjectivity.

This failure to account for the role of feminine journalism in the creation of a feminine subjectivity leaves such work unable to explain the pleasure and enthusiasm with which women embrace the products of feminine consumer culture. Butler's analysis of Althusser highlights his inability to explain the subject's eagerness to submit to the law, their willingness to turn towards the policeman's 'hey you'. Butler suggests that what Althusser overlooks is the subject's attachment to the law. 'Althusser would have benefited from a better understanding of how the law becomes the object of passionate attachment, a strange scene of love' (Butler, 1997:128). In the Althusserian work on magazines this blindness to attachment translates as a failure seriously to consider the pleasures of the genre. While Winship and Williamson acknowledge their own enjoyment of magazines, this enjoyment is envisaged as a kind of misrecognition. So Williamson uses ideology to explain why she couldn't 'reconcile what I knew with what I felt', her Marxist beliefs with her enjoyment of *Honey*, 'I knew I was being exploited, but it was a fact that I was attracted' (1978:9). Ideology is conceived as the key to this contradiction, which is explained by the fact that 'feelings (ideology), lag behind knowledge (science)' (9). Using this formulation one can conceive of enjoyment of feminine journalism as a kind of false consciousness that can be thwarted, once the ideology has been scientifically deconstructed the 'passionate attachment' to magazines should vanish. Butler's use of Althusser conceives of the subject's attachment to the law differently. She suggests that as the subject is produced through ideology, a separation from this process is almost impossible for 'one cannot criticise too far the terms by which

one's existence is secured' (Butler, 1997:129). This position would suggest that the ideology of femininity is integral to the production of gendered subjectivity, which would make repudiation through science and knowledge more problematic. Instead of maintaining that women could be freed from their ideological femininity by a judicious application of feminist knowledge, Butler instead asks 'under what conditions does a law monopolize the terms of existence in so thorough a way?' (130). Bourdieu answers Butler's question²⁴ with the notion of the habitus, which has the capacity to 'fill out the missing spaces in Althusser's 'empty' subject of ideology' (McRobbie, 2005:135) and explain the enduring power of the law and its social structures. However, in order to utilise Bourdieu's thinking it is necessary to move beyond Althusserian textual analysis and abstract conceptualisations of superstructure to a consideration of cultural processes and institutions.

3.5 Feminine Journalism: Critics and Readers

The work that followed the textual Althusserian analysis of magazines began this process by turning its attention to the way in which the genre was consumed by readers. The textual dominance of early work on magazines was called into question by several interlinked movements within cultural studies. Feminists pointed out that women were often the primary fans of popular culture, and were moreover symbolically allied with the popular. Therefore critiques of popular culture reproduced a patriarchal logic in which female cultural forms were undervalued and female audiences conceptualised as powerless dupes unable to resist the force of the culture industries. Such thinking led to work that attempted to revalue feminine popular genres such as soap opera and romantic fiction (Ang, 1985; Modleski, 1982; Radway, 1987). As Brunsdon points out, 'this focus on 'mass' forms for female consumers coincides with a more general turn to the audience' (Brunsdon, 2000:20). Audience focused work by Morley (1980) and Gray (1987) moved away from a passive

²⁴ Although Butler herself remains unconvinced by the notion of the habitus suggesting that it answers her question too completely.

model of the audience and placed its emphasis on the interpretative work of active audiences, arguing that consumers have the power to remake texts within specific social contexts. Such studies disturb the primacy of the text and concentrate instead on reception as a historically located, culturally specific activity.

These movements in media and cultural studies influenced the study of women's magazines and led to the more reader centred approaches of Frazer (1987) and Hermes (1995). Both Frazer and Hermes question the assumption that effects could be read off from magazines and contend that, 'Texts acquire meaning only in the interaction between readers and texts and that analysis of the text on its own is never enough to reconstruct these meanings' (Hermes, 1995:10). Hermes and Frazer attempted to demonstrate that readers questioned the authority of their magazines, disagreed with them, reinterpreted them, or were simply bored by them. These reader centred theoretical approaches effectively nullified the text of women's magazines, instead valorising the power and pleasures of the reader. While such reader focused studies may contain possibilities for exploring the ways in which the ideology of feminine consumer culture manifests itself in everyday practices (Radway, 1987), this potential was not realised in the work on women's magazines. Indeed I would suggest that the work of both Frazer and Hermes does far less to elucidate the production and consumption of femininity than the Althusserian studies they critique.

Both authors are keen to redress the wrongs done to 'ordinary' women by earlier approaches, but their eagerness to validate the experience of the reader, produces an account in which commercial feminine culture has no influence and is freely rejected by an entirely rational self-directing subject. Both Frazer and Hermes contend that magazines hold little or no power for their readers and there is no attempt to explain their enduring popularity or the remarkable consistency of their messages. Frazer's work sought empirically to test McRobbie's 1978 arguments about *Jackie* by interviewing teenage girls about

their reading habits. Frazer's interviews reveal a sophisticated group of readers who approach Jackie as fiction, often discussing the stories in a register of literary criticism, and assess the magazine 'in the light of a pre-existing ideology of gender' (Frazer, 1987:416). These teenage girls appear to reject the suggested reading position and by extension the subject position created by the ideology of the magazine. Frazer uses this empirical evidence to suggest that, 'the kinds of meaning which are encoded in texts and which we might want to call ideological, fail to get a grip on readers in the way the notion of ideology generally suggests. Ideology is undercut, that is, by these readers' reflexivity and reflectiveness' (419).

The deep methodological flaws²⁵ in Frazer's work make it difficult to draw any wider conclusions from her findings, but it is worth noting that despite the sophistication of the readings offered by the teenage girls, when Frazer asked them to think beyond the generic constraints of the magazine they were unable to do so. Despite having complained about the nature of the magazine's problem page, when asked to write their own version, they failed to discuss the 'serious problems' they had highlighted and instead reproduced the style and content of the magazine's page. As Frazer says, 'they couldn't think 'writing problems' outside the conventions of the problem page.' (421). There is then, I would argue, every reason to suppose that their reading of fiction might work in the same way. Despite their criticisms of romance plotlines and awareness of conventions and genre, such narratives of heterosexual love may indeed still have structured their thinking and made it hard for them to think 'romance' outside its conventions. Frazer does not acknowledge that this framing of thought and desire through the conventions of women's magazines may suggest that such discourses hold a

²⁵ There are very significant problems with Frazer's methodology. The girls who took part in Frazer's research were part of a wider study on femininity and were therefore aware that she was keen to know how cultural products affected them. These conditions mediated in favour of a critical and reflexive reading and in no way reproduced the everyday practices of magazine consumption. By the time Frazer conducted her research *Jackie* was well past its 1970s heyday and would have seemed outmoded and anachronistic to many of her sample (Barker 1989). Frazer's sample were also older than the magazines' target audience (13-17 rather than 10-14) and so were likely to be more sophisticated than the material on offer. Frazer's sample were not natural *Jackie* readers and she looked at an old-fashioned magazine in a critical gender inflected context; it is then unsurprising that she should have produced a reflexive, sophisticated and even oppositional reading.

power beyond that which can be simplistically disavowed through ostensibly resistant readings. It is here in the structuring power of commercial discourses of femininity that we might uncover the part such magazines play in the creation of gendered subjectivity, but this theme remains unexamined.

Hermes' 1995 study *Reading Women's Magazines* takes an ethnographic approach, attending not to the content of magazines, but to how, when and where they are read. She contends, 'the media text has to be displaced in favour of readers' reports of their everyday lives' (148). Hermes' concentration on magazine reading within lived experience could provide the missing link between the immaterial textual focus of McRobbie and Winship and Butler's reading of Althusser, with its focus on skills and rituals. Hermes highlights the importance of material rituals and everyday practices saying, 'reading women's magazines, even if it is not important in itself, may still have its place or its importance in the structure of everyday routines' (19). Hermes identifies several reading repertoires including a 'fantasy of an ideal self' (Hermes, 1995:39). This 'repertoire' recalls Winship and McRobbie's concern with consumption, beautification and perfectibility, echoing Winship's idea that advertisements offer a 'pathway to accomplishment' and an optimistic hope about what the daily labours of femininity can deliver (Winship, 1987:56). Similarly Hermes says that this repertoire 'may help the reader gain (an imaginary and temporary) sense of identity and confidence, of being in control or feeling at peace with life' (Hermes 1995:48). However, Hermes' failure to engage with the content of magazines makes it impossible to trace the embodiment of for example, fashion and beauty rituals. Instead the temporal and material aspect of the research is used to highlight the perceived unimportance of the genre, Hermes' primary contention is that 'media use is not always meaningful' (15). The fact that 'reading women's magazines is the ultimate in-between activity' (32) is used to undercut any presumption of meaning. Hermes maintains that the substance of magazines is unimportant as magazines are 'read more for their adaptability than for their content' (34), magazine reading is conceptualised as an essentially meaningless

activity which only has effects 'at precisely those moments when they are read' (51). Hermes' acknowledged disinterest in the magazine genre (9) seems to permeate her research and the lack of engagement she discovered in her readers is in direct opposition to the 'connoisseur's interest' exhibited by many of the women in the earlier study by Ballaster *et al.* (1991:129). If the subject of Althusserian study is an empty, duped figure then the participants in these reader studies are entirely rational figures left completely unmoved by the products of consumer culture. Once again the pleasures and attractions of femininity go ignored and unexplained.

The desire to reach the 'ordinary' reader found in the work of Frazer and Hermes and as part of a wider trend in cultural and media studies, may have served as a necessary corrective to the apparently monolithic and overwhelming power of the text in the ideological work that preceded it, but it throws up numerous problems of its own. The desire to reach this ordinary reader or viewer, although it springs from seemingly more noble impulses, mirrors the desire found within popular cultural forms for audience participation and feedback. Ballaster *et al.* acknowledge this in their chapter on readers, 'it is, after all, a familiar ploy of the magazines who use the voice of 'real people' in the shape of letters, 'true experiences', the make-over, to add interest, lightness and realism' (Ballaster *et al.*, 1991:136) Ballaster *et al.* recognise that, in common with magazines themselves, they include the voice of readers to add a 'note of authenticity and interest' (136). This confirms Brunsdon's contention that a focus on the audience can easily become a 'search for authenticity' (Brunsdon, 2000:125). This search for the authentic 'native' reader who, unsullied by academic contact, can provide a reading that will tell the truth about the genre appears to me to be a fruitless one, fraught with ethical problems. For as Ballaster *et al.* concede, when they or women's magazines use the readers voice, 'to break the dominance of the editorial voice. The reader's voice breaks that authority only to confirm it'. So despite Hermes and Frazer's desire to privilege the voice of the reader and suppress their own theoretical concerns, it is

necessarily their own authorial voices that are heard most clearly. The empirical focus of Frazer and Hermes' work masks its theoretical positioning, for which the reader becomes a kind of magical talisman, readers' 'ordinary' voices used to discredit opposing theoretical positions and confirm the position of the author. Despite Hermes' protestations to the contrary, research must be inflected by the author's own concerns and the interview data they present must necessarily be seen through the lens of their theoretical interpretation.

From a feminist perspective, this division between the theorist and the ordinary reader creates its own problems even if it originates, as in Frazer's case, from a desire to shield this reader from perceived attack, for as Ang warns:

We should try to avoid a stance in which 'the audience' is relegated to the status of exotic 'other' – merely interesting in so far as 'we the researcher, can turn them into 'objects' of study, and about whom 'we' have the privileged position to acquire objective knowledge. (1989:104)

This is particularly true when dealing with feminist critiques of popular women's genres such as women's magazines. Here a division between the critic and the reader can easily reproduce earlier distinctions between high and low culture, even while explicitly attempting to avoid this. In their assertion that the 'ordinary' reader must be studied and their everyday media habits observed, Frazer and Hermes run at least as much risk of painting these readers 'en masse as silly housewives' (Hermes, 1995:148), as the textually focused critics who came before them. Indeed Hermes' contention that 'ordinary viewers are not lay theoreticians' (16) is patronising in its assumption of a huge gulf between a 'we', who read magazines critically and a 'they' who do not. It seems that the moment one reflects critically upon a magazine, one loses the status of 'ordinary' reader. This contention seems insulting to the mass of magazine readers who may, like academics, both enjoy and critique magazines. In this schema scholars can never be 'ordinary' readers, but surely it also rules out anyone asked to reflect on their

magazine reading by a researcher. All of which would suggest that the experience of the 'native' reader is truly unreachable.

Modleski, although a part of the work to revalue women's genres that sparked much reader centred research, has suggested that there may be problems in taking such an approach. She contends that the feminist critic should be part of a broader movement of women and that there are therefore dangers in researching 'through ethnographies that posit an unbridgeable gap between the critic's subjectivity and the subjectivity of 'the others' (Modleski, 1991:44). The reader-focused work on magazines posits just such an unbridgeable gap, rarely approaching the texts as something that could potentially mean some of the same things to the 'ordinary' reader and the feminist scholar. Williamson attempts to bridge this gap when she investigates 'the drive that keeps thousands of women – including myself – buying magazines like *Cosmopolitan* every month' (Williamson, 1980:55). While Williamson may go on to produce much harsher critiques of women's magazines than either Frazer or Hermes, her explicit attachment to the genre and positioning of herself with the 'ordinary reader' actually produces not only a more ethical framework for study, but a nuanced analysis that does justice to the power and attraction of the genre.

3.6 The Production of Feminine Journalism: The Commercial Domain

The ethical and practical difficulties that come with attempting to access the experience of the 'ordinary' reader can be overcome by moving the focus of study away from consumption and toward production processes (Chapter 4). Feminist media studies' concentration on 'media texts and their various meanings at the expense of any detailed sociological considerations of those who actually make these texts' (McRobbie, 2000:255) has meant that several key areas of study have been neglected. As Gough Yates points out 'existing perspectives effectively marginalise the specificities of social, political and economic formations and their impact upon not only women's magazine production, but also the lived cultures of the magazine producers themselves'

(2003:7). A consideration of the cultural processes and institutions that are involved in the manufacture of feminine journalism actually allows for a closer and more empirically grounded account of both production *and* consumption. Demarcating feminine journalism's relationship with the rest of the journalistic field, the fashion industry, advertising and public relations, places the subfield in a wider system of commercial domains. Such an approach highlights what Du Gay terms 'the relationship between commercial rationalities and individual subjectivities' (2004:99), exploring the way economic relations manifest themselves in the creation of feminine identities.

A concentration on the production of feminine journalism does not entail a neglect of acts of consumption. The centrality of consumption practices to the subfield and the crucial role they play in the professional knowledge and expertise of its producers means that a study of production also necessitates a consideration of consumption. This extends to the products of feminine journalism, the reflexivity of this subfield is such that the producers of feminine journalism are also amongst its primary consumers. As Cronin discovered in her study of the advertising industry, 'as both producers of ads and consumers of ads and products, practitioners are implicated in a self-referential, recursive enactment of creativity, change and consumption' (2004:354). A study of the working lives of female journalists will necessarily include an exploration of their own relationships with women's magazines and newspaper supplements, both as professionals and readers, as well as their wider consumption practices within the fashion and lifestyle arena. Therefore an empirical study of production also offers the possibility of a material analysis of consumption.

Thus far, accounts of feminine journalism have rarely touched upon its place as part of a wider commercial field. Scholars have not positioned the subfield in its wider journalistic context or examined the intersections between magazines and newspapers, nor have they considered the imbrications between feminine journalism and adjacent fields such as fashion and beauty or advertising

and public relations. Instead the products of commercial feminine culture are usually considered in isolation rather than as a part of an extensive commercial landscape, as Nixon notes, 'the established approaches that have framed the study of consumption and commercial cultures within cultural studies have tended to privilege consumers and practices of consumption at the expense of a more expanded account of the commercial domain (Nixon, 2003:4)'. This has a particularly negative impact on feminine journalism, because of its dual functions as an economic as well as a symbolic system. While analysis of advertising and fashion has featured heavily in assessments of women's magazines, it has largely been conducted through semiotics and their material economic effects have been ignored. Economic factors loom large in magazine scholarship, used as an explanation for most of the genre's shortcomings, but concrete economic detail, around questions of ownership or advertising, is often sketchy. Work on magazines falls into a tradition of 'post-Althusserian cultural analysis' (Nixon, 1996:198) that assumes relations of determination between economic and cultural practices. These foundational assumptions are rarely made explicit or investigated. The idea that magazines are the handmaidens of capitalism is so foundational and naturalised that further consideration seems to be deemed unnecessary. This leads to a situation in which economic factors are at once over determined and under theorised. Casting a shadow over the analysis but never addressed directly, the mechanics of the relationship between economic and cultural factors have not been investigated in any depth.

In the Nineties the omissions in scholarship around women's magazines was thrown into relief by work on the burgeoning men's magazine sector. While scholarship on women's magazines placed its emphasis on the act of consumption, work on men's magazines, which centred on a notion of a 'new man', gave more consideration to institutional practices. Nixon explains this shift away from consumption in his book *Hard Looks*, 'there is much to be gained from a shift of emphasis onto the more neglected moments of production and circulation within these circuits of culture' (Nixon, 1996:6). Nixon's work

considers 'new man' imagery, but rather than focusing purely on the text or the reader, he considers the 'advertising and publishing knowledges' (145) that produce this imagery. He breaks what he sees as the 'magisterial centrality' (200) texts have commanded in magazine studies and he does this, not by focusing on readers, but by considering the 'commercial institutions that dominate the field of representation' (200). He places the 'new man' in a wider context of fashion design, advertising and magazine publishing and this allows him to consider the interplay of cultural and economic factors. Unlike much of the scholarship on women's magazines Nixon makes explicit the 'central institutional determinant of the magazines', which he sees as 'economic relations between advertisers and publishers' (144). However despite explicitly identifying this key factor he does not make simplistic generalisations, rather his detailed analysis of the commercial fields surrounding magazines allows him to 'delimit the imbricated and interdependent nature of some of the economic and cultural practices within this sphere of cultural production' (198).

Clearly feminine journalism is part of a similar network and my initial consideration of the shopping-oriented contemporary subfield of feminine journalism (Chapter One) suggests that it contains complex and interdependent relationships with other sectors. Fashion and beauty account for not only most of the content of feminine journalism, but crucially the majority of its financing. This interdependence between magazines and commerce produces what Nixon calls 'a regime of representation' (Nixon, 1996:200) centred on femininity and consumption. However existing approaches to women's magazines have been insufficient to explain the multifaceted relationship between commerce and culture that exists in the sector. Ferguson's 1983 study remains the only significant attempt to consider the production of the genre in any detail. Her work prefigures some of Nixon's conclusions, exploring the ways in which cultural and economic forces combined in the role of the magazine editor. Like Nixon, Ferguson found that the central determinant of the magazine was commercial success achieved largely through advertising revenues. She

identified a shared foundational belief, 'that professional success is to be defined in economic terms' (139) and judged that this was, 'the most pervasive and influential group belief of all, because all other rewards derive from it' (140). Ferguson begins to examine the ways in which the messages of femininity which she identifies in magazine content is enmeshed with these economic factors, suggesting for example that beauty, 'dedication to the pursuit of perfection of face and form' (94), was the genre's most consistent message due to its status as both advertising and editorial category. However, despite outlining both economic and cultural factors in her analysis Ferguson does not fully explore their mutually constitutive nature or systematically consider the effects of advertising on editorial.

McCracken's 1993 book *Decoding Women's Magazines*, essentially a reworking of Williamson's findings, does attempt a more systematic analysis and seeks to uncover 'the crucial role of advertising in shaping the cultural content of these publications' (McCracken, 1993:3). This reading of magazines begins to illustrate how advertising permeates magazines, in fact McCracken suggests that up to 95% of the contents of magazines could be deemed advertising material; she comes to this figure by developing the term 'covert advertising', which she uses to describe hidden or disguised material. Numerous types of 'covert advertising' are identified from editorial tie-ins and brand reciprocity to shared form and placement. McCracken convincingly illustrates the ways in which advertising runs throughout magazines and is 'best understood not as a series of separate instances of disguise in a magazine but as a system of mutually sustaining techniques and themes' (41). This reading also draws out the importance of infrastructural analysis to fully understanding the role of advertising. A consideration of ownership often reveals that one company owns numerous brands that are advertised in a single issue of a magazine, some overtly and others covertly. While McCracken's work begins to draw out the complexities of the relationship between advertising and editorial her focus on semiotic textual analysis necessarily limits this area of work.

Though both Ferguson and McCracken acknowledge the importance of advertising to magazines their work does not fully explore its constitutive effects on both editorial and professional identities. My research is influenced by the more material approach of scholars such as Cronin who give advertising a force that is neither merely textual nor economic. Cronin has successfully argued that in semiotic accounts such as those of Williamson and McCracken advertising is 'presented as both the material form, or the embodiment of the essence of capitalism, yet also as a mere representation or symbol of the real issues of ideological power and the circulation of capital' (2000a:38). By contrast Cronin's own analysis focuses on the 'advertising's mediation of meaning in its role in the communication of identities' (39). She suggests that the practices and knowledges of advertising help to constitute particular target markets and 'materialise the social categories that it names' (41). Cronin's analysis can be applied to the subfield of feminine journalism, in which ideal groups of readers are constituted through gender, age and class and sold to advertisers. This constitution through economic regimes of consumption is not confined to readers but extends to the institutions of feminine journalism and the agents of the subfield. Feminine journalists must simultaneously attract both readers and advertisers and its practitioners must position themselves as expert and exemplary consumers for both these target markets.

3.7 The Production of Feminine Journalism: Feminine Subjectivities

Considerations of women's magazines have rarely dealt with the role of the journalists who produce them, or acknowledged that such practitioners may be enmeshed in the very discourses which they produce. The Althusserian analysis of magazines seems to position their producers as somehow outside ideology engaged in a 'semiotic offensive' (McCracken, 1993:70) against 'ordinary' women. Similarly in her work on advertising Williamson observes that, 'obviously people invent and produce adverts, but quite apart from the fact that they are unknown and faceless, the ad in any case does not claim to speak for

them, it is not their speech' (1978:14). This neglect, possibly unintentionally, creates the impression that the practitioners of feminine journalism somehow consciously work to produce an ideology that they themselves are not a part of. In this work it appears that both the feminist critic and the magazine journalist can hold a position outside the ideology that catches and dupes the ordinary reader. However, the few studies that have featured magazine journalists, suggest that such practitioners, far from standing outside ideology, in fact produce their own professional and gendered identities through the same discursive regime that features in the publications that they work to produce.

Both Gough Yates (2003) and Crewe (2003) have characterised magazine journalists as cultural intermediaries (Chapter 5) who parlay their gendered expertise into capital to succeed with the journalistic field. They highlight the way in which magazine practitioners attempt to embody or personify the genre, focusing on the importance of the editor as a representative of the magazine for readers and advertisers alike. Ferguson identified the beginning of this trend in 1983 when she said, 'increasingly, the creative, leadership and competitive aspects of the job all place a premium on projecting distinctive personal image' (Ferguson, 1983:120). The creation of an exemplary and highly-gendered professional identity is found to be crucial in the production of both men's and women's magazines. Crewe's work on men's magazines foregrounds the importance of journalist's 'self-narratives' (Crewe, 2003:108) in defining the magazines they produce. He uses the personal narratives of James Brown and Tim Southwell, the founders of *Loaded* to situate the 'new lad' discourse within a broader context and to illustrate how Brown and Southwell sought to embody their magazine's brand of 'honest masculinity' (100). Gough Yates develops similar themes using Glenda Bailey, then the editor of *Marie Claire*, to make corresponding points about personification and professional identity. Bailey like Southwell and Brown sought to embody her magazine even claiming, 'I am *Marie Claire*'. Gough Yates saw this as part of a wider trend in which 'editors professed not only to be in 'tune' with their ideal reader, but also to personify new

formations of feminine lifestyle' (Gough Yates, 2003:121). Both these studies begin to consider the 'gendering of the workplace culture' (Nixon 1996:210) that Nixon identifies as a key area of further study. Such work suggests that magazines function in the creation of gendered identities not just for readers but for practitioners themselves.

This approach offers the possibility of materialising the 'empty subject' of Althusserian work and considering the way that femininity is reproduced through the practices and rituals of consumption both within and outside the subfield of feminine journalism. Despite suggesting this opportunity, scholarship to date has not succeeded in producing a detailed account of the production of feminine journalism. Although Crewe and Gough Yates make good use of the discourses surrounding magazines neither gained institutional access, nor spoke directly to journalists. Gough Yates' work is particularly flawed in this respect, she identifies the deficiency of the work that preceded her and suggests that an ethnographic study is needed, but on attempting it she encountered 'insurmountable obstacles' (Gough Yates, 2003:23) and so was forced to confine herself to the secondary sources of the trade press. This leaves her work in the peculiar position of stressing the importance of the specificities of production and occupational identity, but unable fully to elaborate them. Although Crewe and Gough Yates open up interesting areas for future study, their ideas remain something of unsubstantiated template awaiting validation by more detailed study. Crewe acknowledges there is a 'need for further enquiry into the relationship between the sexual politics of production cultures and the cultural products that they generate' (Crewe, 2003:109).

This project aims to provide the further enquiry that Crewe suggests, through an investigation of the production of feminine journalism that goes beyond the textual and illuminates the cultural, institutional and occupational practices that inform the subfield. I hope that a study of the professional identities of the women who create feminine journalism will paint a more

complete picture of the way in which the subfield is instrumental in the production of gendered subjectivities. While taking up some of the themes of earlier Althusserian inflected scholarship I intend that my research, grounded as it is in the practices, skills and routines of the subfield and the professional biographies of its practitioners, will offer a more material and substantive account of the intersection of commercial femininity and gendered identity. My focus on the capital and skills at work within the subfield and its cultural and economic practices produces a conceptualisation of femininity that is close to both Butler's reading of Althusser's work and Bourdieu's notion of the gendered habitus. Such a conceptualisation means, 'understanding the interconnections between these various bodies: the discursive, the textual and the lived body and between the actions of agents who are themselves embodied' (Entwistle, 2000:236).

3.8 Conclusion

The field of feminine journalism's positioning within scholarship, between feminist media studies and the sociology of news production, has produced a 'gendered division of labour' in which for the most part women have addressed 'arts and humanities-based topics' (McRobbie, 2000:255) while men have pursued issues of political economy. This has meant that while issues of production and political economy have been considered within the tradition around news production, gendered divisions of labour and the content and discursive regimes of femininity that they produce have been ignored. While feminist media studies has concentrated on these very issues within a textual framework and marginalised production, remaining inattentive to the positioning of cultural texts and gendered discourses within a wider commercial and cultural domain. This split in the scholarship concerning print journalism has led to a partial analysis of feminine journalism in which its role in the newspaper sector has been overlooked almost entirely and gendered issues of content and production have not been considered together.

By placing feminine journalism within its institutional, journalistic context and extending my analysis across both magazines and newspapers and using Bourdieu's notions of habitus, capital and field to explore the creation of gendered professional identities, I hope to come to a more complete analysis. I hope to draw out both the opportunities and limitations that are offered by the postfeminist sensibility of the contemporary field of feminine journalism. Analysis of this sensibility has been focused around textual analysis of a very limited area of the media as Tasker and Negra point out, 'scholarship on postfeminist media culture tilts heavily towards analysis of the romantic comedies and female-centred sitcoms and dramas that have been so strongly associated with female audiences since the 1990s' (2005:107). By widening this focus to incorporate institutional analysis and contextualising it within the journalistic field, research can move beyond a consideration of the effects of postfeminist discourses in a text bound feminine world. Once postfeminist media products are no longer viewed as a discrete entity it is possible to see the ways in which this feminine sensibility is forced to compete with other powerful discourses. Making it possible to determine the limits of Radner's postfeminist 'space of privilege' and to judge, if as she maintains, such privileges are only offered within patriarchal institutional structures and through, 'the capacity to act as a consumer' (1995:3).

Chapter Four

Methodology:

Feminine Journalism in Newspapers and Magazines

4.1 Introduction: Constructing the Object of Study

- How is the subfield of feminine journalism demarcated and what kinds of capital, practices and professional identities operate within its boundaries?
- How does the subfield of feminine journalism fit into the wider journalistic field and does its growth signal a realignment of professional norms and hierarchies?

These two questions are at the heart of this thesis and their implementation has practical, methodological implications. At the root of the first of the questions are the nature and limits of the subfield of feminine journalism. Demarcating the boundaries and territory of this subfield is one of the major objectives of my project and this goal impacts upon the way I define my area of study and my research sample. The reach of my second question demands that I incorporate the entire journalistic field extending my research across newspapers and magazines. These concerns influenced the composition of my research sample, this project depends upon interviews with forty journalists. My choice of participant deliberately traversed the entire subfield, both vertically and horizontally, extending from fashion and editorial assistants to editors and from women's magazines to newspapers. Similarly, attempts to understand the professional identities, practices and crucially, the capital that defines the subfield, influenced the decision to use qualitative interviews as my method of

data collection. In this chapter I will clarify my object of study by defining the subfield of feminine journalism and explain how I have interrogated this subfield. I will also consider the epistemological effects of a Bourdieusian theoretical framework and a feminist standpoint. I will suggest that this combination produces a particularly reflexive situation that demands I carefully consider the effects of both my personal history and my position within the academic field.

Bourdieu suggests that we should not study the 'preconstructed object', but rather the 'genuinely constructed scientific object' (1992:231). In the case of my research this has meant rejecting the professional and academic categories of the newspaper and the women's magazine and instead mapping a new object of study using Bourdieu's notion of the field. The use of the field as the unit of study, rather than the institution, the profession or the genre allows a movement beyond pre-existing industry or academic norms to define an area of study through its operating conditions and the nature of the capital to be found within it. As I have illustrated (Chapter Two and Chapter Three) academic custom has separated newspaper and magazine journalism placing the two practices in very different research traditions. However, this separation is more a reflection of gendered cultural hierarchies than substantive differences in working practices or content. As Van Zoonen observes:

Journalists working for women's magazines, for instance, have hardly ever been deemed worthy of research but differ little from their colleagues working for the women's pages in newspapers, who have turn have much in common with journalists working in other audience oriented subfields. The present distinction between these fields signifies mainly an acceptance of a hierarchy of serious and popular news (which is comparable to the distinction between high and low culture), rather than a distinction between truly different kinds of journalism. (1998b:126).

As we have seen academic scholarship has followed professional hierarchies considering newspaper journalism through a public sphere inflected discourse

of news, while largely ignoring popular and commercial objectives and focusing on magazines only to consider issues of gendered representation through textual analysis. Despite the organisation of much journalistic field theory around pre-existent, unexamined industry categories (Benson and Neveu, 2005) a field should not be defined by recourse to 'occupational taxonomies' (Bourdieu, 1992:241), but instead by an exploration of its properties and the kinds of capital that are at stake within it. In this formulation players give reality and meaning to the field by believing in the existence of its game and its stakes, which will be organised differently in each field, as Bourdieu says, 'in empirical work, it is one and the same thing to determine what the field is, where its limits lie, etc, and to determine what species of capital are active in it' (99). This throws up methodological problems as the field cannot be wholly predetermined, but must be interrogated in order to reveal its limits.

While it is imperative to draw some boundaries for the object of study, these cannot be set by accepting the media's own divisions and settling on women's magazines or women's pages of newspapers. Instead it is important to define a subfield within journalism that operates by its own rules and traditions and constitutes feminine journalism. As a starting point it was crucial to place this subfield in the wider context of the journalistic field as a whole rather than in a completely separate ghetto marked women's magazines. While feminine journalism may have goals and working practices that are at odds with the stakes that characterise other parts of the journalistic field, it is nonetheless an important part of the profession. Bourdieu characterises the field as a locus of relations of force 'and of struggles aimed at transforming it, and therefore of endless change' (103). In the journalistic field the subfield of feminine journalism is part of these struggles and the feminization of newspapers has played an important role in changing the nature of the field and the worth of the various kinds of capital within it (Chapter One). As Brenda Polan a former women's page editor of *The Guardian*

references this struggle for position, when she credits her pages with helping to lay the foundations:

for the modern newspaper, breaking ground by being the first to import all those soft features, all the up-close-and-personal stuff, all the solipsistic 'new' journalism that was once the exclusive territory of women's magazines and which has so much edged hard news to the peripheries. (Polan, 2007)

Part of the remit of this project is to determine the extent to which the changes that Polan highlights have fundamentally altered the hierarchies and species of capital to be found within the journalistic field. Therefore feminine journalism needs to be evaluated in its journalistic context in order to understand both its workings as a subfield and its impact on the wider journalistic field.

Having established the broad principle that my object of study should extend across newspapers and magazines it was imperative to find a criteria for inclusion within the subfield in order to construct a manageable research sample. Numerous smaller areas of expertise segment the journalistic field, as Marchetti notes in his essay on subfields of specialised journalism. He points out that one of the organising principles of the journalistic field is 'thematic specialization' and that the role 'specialization plays in structuring journalistic production may only be grasped relationally' (Marchetti, 2005:64). He makes the important point that specialized journalists operate under different conditions than those experienced by more general reporters, but also that they all operate differently from one another. So the journalistic field is made up of many smaller subfields each operating according to its own specific logics. This explains why a journalist working in the sports section of a national newspaper will feel little in common with the fashion editor of a women's magazine and vice versa even though both will identify as journalists and share many working practices in common. For as Bourdieu says:

Each field has its own logic, rules and regularities, and each stage in the division of a field (say the field of literary production) entails a genuine qualitative leap (as for instance when you move down from the level of the literary field to that of the subfield of novel or theatre (1992:104).

I built my research sample by attempting to define some of the logics, rules and regularities that segmented the journalistic field and produced the feminine subfield. I did this by considering content and readership, goals and occupational identity and gender. The first stage in this process was an exploration of the way that previous relevant studies had segmented and defined the journalistic field.

4.2 Defining the Subfield: Consumption and Readers

As I illustrated in the previous chapter, existing explorations of feminine journalism, have defined their object of study generically through the category women's magazines. While this grouping has often been taken as self-evident and not considered any further it is actually hard to define exactly what constitutes a magazine. As American media scholar Wood points out:

About the only generalisation one dares to toss out are that the magazine is usually bound or stapled (unlike most newspapers) and is normally published on a regular schedule (unlike most books). The one characteristic common to the magazine industry is that, with a few notable exceptions, magazines are aimed at specialised audiences (Wood, 1983:83).

The problem of definition Wood identifies is compounded when the 'specialised audience' in question is defined only as 'women' and potentially incorporates over 50% of the population. As Ferguson notes, 'as a genre of specialist production women's magazines are notable for the size of the audience they command' (Ferguson, 1983:2). This heterogeneous target market ensures that the products on offer within the women's magazine genre will be varied and as former women's magazine publisher Braithwaite says, 'women have been

bombarded with a plethora of products written and produced expressly for them. Whether they be housewives, career women, debutantes, sportswomen, brides, teenagers or dowagers they have represented that important figure known as the reader' (Braithwaite, 1995:7). Within this disparate sector it is a largely female readership and a particular type of shared content organised around consumption, the personal, emotional and domestic that is normally used to define the sector. The 1986 *Key Note* market research report into the industry is typical, maintaining:

what women's magazines have in common is an editorial content which revolves around a formula of romance, fashion, cookery, beauty slimming, children, marriage, knitting, sewing, home making, health sexual problems and profiles of celebrities. In this respect women's magazines have not changed much for a hundred years or more. (*Key Note*, 1986).

The textual and audience focus of almost all the academic study on magazines has meant that this industry definition has been replicated in the academy where magazines have also been defined through their content and readership. However, both these elements are shared by sections of newspapers, which have not until now been included within this scholarly tradition. Writing in 1995 Braithwaite observed that, 'newspapers are increasingly becoming magazines, not only in their day-to-day features but with their Saturday and Sunday supplements, where the editorial is often directed towards women' (1995:30). This blurring of genre divisions is also referred to in *Key Note's* 2007 report on consumer magazines where newspapers are identified as:

a distinct threat to magazines as they seek to emulate magazines with more ad hoc magazine-style supplements. For many newspapers, the only way forward is to go upmarket, and that means offering more magazine supplements to their readers. This has two effects: it eats away at the core editorial offering of magazines and it takes away their advertising revenue. (*Key Note*, 2007).

This trend has accelerated in recent years with the launch of more and more supplements such as *Observer Woman* and *The Sunday Telegraph's Stella*, but it has been present for decades. Ferguson, observed the blurring of media genre boundaries as early as 1983 commenting that, 'just as national newspapers were becoming more like magazine by emphasising feature content in the face of television's greater news immediacy, so women's magazines were attempting to narrow the gap between the timeless and the topical on their pages. (Ferguson, 1983:98) Ferguson's statement could be applied to the contemporary media scene in which newspapers have responded to competition from 24-hour news and the Internet with increased supplement and features content and the magazine sector has sought to rival the immediacy of newspaper supplements by producing weekly fashion titles, such as *Grazia* and *LOOK* that combine news and fashion coverage. Content and readership analysis provide a vital component in assessing the nature of the subfield of feminine journalism and was routinely used by my participants to define their territory and area of expertise (Chapter Six). However, this kind of definition does not justify the divisions that have separated the study of women's magazines and elements of newspaper journalism.

4.3 Defining the Subfield: Goals and Operating Conditions

While feminist media studies has concentrated on content and readership, this study is focused on production and occupational identity and so must also include aims and operating conditions in a demarcation of the subfield. As I outlined in the previous chapter several commentators have identified the relationship between magazine publishers and advertising brands as key and defining (Ferguson, 1983; McCracken, 1993; Nixon, 1996). However the most detailed account of the importance of advertising to goals and operating conditions concerns newspapers. Tunstall's 1971 book *Journalists at Work* distinguishes the goals of different subject specialisms within newspapers. Tunstall made a study of specialist journalists on all 23 general news

organisations at a national level in Britain. The book was 'an attempt systematically to investigate specialist news-gatherers at work and to compare specialists from different fields of news' (Tunstall, 1971:3). Despite its age this study is extremely pertinent to the current research and worth discussing at some length. Tunstall divided his subject into selected fields, these fields were politics, aviation, education, labour, crime, football, fashion and motoring and foreign correspondents. His inclusion of fashion journalists represents one of the few opportunities to consider feminine journalism in its wider journalistic context. Tunstall's research illustrates the merits of placing fashion journalism within this context, as it allows him to set out its goals, methods of operation and constraints. His study also considers the occupational identity of journalism as a profession and the relative status of fashion journalism within it.

By considering the self-image of the specialists in a particular field, the views of other specialists about those in a particular field and the views of senior executives, he determined the overriding goal of each specialist field. These ranged from the non-revenue prestige goals of the foreign correspondent and political lobby, through the audience goals of crime and football reporting to the advertising goals of fashion and motoring. Tunstall defined the predominant goal of the field of fashion to be attracting advertising. He went on to characterise the working practices and routines of the field in relation to this goal, identifying both internal and external pressures in connection with the primacy of advertising revenues. Internally pressure came from the advertising department, executives and sub-editors. Externally the pressure was exerted by the fact that 'news sources tend also to be advertisers', he saw these sources as being in a particular powerful position in relation to fashion and motoring journalists able to control the supply of both revenue and information. This power was demonstrated by their ability to withdraw advertising and to control and embargo stories in a way, which would not have been tolerated in other fields. The traditions of fashion journalism and its defining goal meant that journalists were for the most part powerless to resist these pressures. Tunstall's work is

almost unique in acknowledging the existence of a field of feminine journalism produced in relation to these goals and extending across newspapers and magazines. He sees the occupational identities and career trajectories of fashion journalists as lying firmly within this subfield, pointing out that agents' backgrounds and possible future opportunities were more likely to lie in magazines than in other areas of the newspaper. At one point he sees 'the strong demand for fashion journalists outside general national news organisations (e.g. on magazines)' (140) as a strength, which explains fashion journalists' relatively high salaries. However, it is also used as an explanation of their weakness with regard to their news sources saying 'fashion journalists are mostly women with magazine, not newspaper, backgrounds – which reduces their career opportunities' (161). Tunstall delineates a discrete field, which extends across newspapers and magazines and is defined through its advertising goals.

However, like most studies of newspaper production, Tunstall's work is gender-blind and he does not consider the way gender operates to structure the various journalistic subfields he identifies. Van Zoonen (1998b) sought to rectify this omission in her later demarcation of journalistic domains. Van Zoonen drew on Tunstall's divisions, but included gender in her schema, identifying, 'two prominent distinctions within journalism: goals and gender' (1998b:126). She separates the goals of journalism into those 'that have to do with the status of journalism as a prime institution of democratic societies and goals that have to do with the journalistic organisations' need to satisfy and serve their audience' (126). These goals map onto Tunstall's prestige and audience and advertising goals, although Van Zoonen names the first 'institutional' and compounds the second two into 'audience'. She claims that an orientation towards the audience goal:

Produces a frame of reference for journalists that is said to be characterised by interesting (as opposed to 'important') issues, convenient and practical information commitment and emotionality (rather than objectivity and

rationality) and a mode of address that assumes audiences as consumers (126).

Van Zoonen then maps gender onto this operational frame of reference, pointing out that masculinity and femininity help to define audience target groups and determine the composition of the workforce of the various journalistic subfields. By 'projecting the particular goals of journalism and its gender features onto each other and placing journalism's genres in them' (127) she produces a cruciform diagram with the poles of masculinity and femininity intersecting with those of institutional and audience. In this formulation 'institutional masculine journalism' comprising financial, foreign, news and the quality press amongst others is opposed to 'audience feminine', which includes human interest, women's pages and women's magazines²⁶. Van Zoonen characterises audience feminine as sharing a 'profound sense of community amongst their audiences' and while the gendered composition of their journalists and audiences vary within this domain 'women have a higher visibility' (132) than in the two masculine domains. Van Zoonen uses journalistic goals to illustrate the ways in which journalistic femininity is associated with the popular and the commercial.

Overlaying Van Zoonen's demarcation of different journalistic domains on Tunstall's goals and the content and readership analysis of feminist media studies adds the final gendered element necessary to define the subfield of feminine journalism. The field is characterised by its largely female readership and staff. The goals of the field are a combination of audience and advertising, which places it at the heteronomous pole of Bourdieu's field formation. These goals determine the content of the field, which is marked by categories which foster consumption such as fashion, beauty and lifestyle and human-interest stories in a subjective and emotional register. Women's magazines lie at the heart

²⁶ The final two categories she identifies are institutional feminine a fairly empty category containing feminist media and some elements of the local press and audience masculine which includes sports magazines, men's magazines and motoring.

of this journalistic subfield and the genre includes many publications that fully conform to all the criteria I have identified, but so too do large swathes of newspaper journalism. When the subfield is demarcated in this way it is possible to see huge crossovers between women's magazines and newspapers both in types of content and at an operational level in terms of movement of staff and relationships with advertising.

4.4 Demarcating a Research Sample

Having used the existing literature to define an extensive area of print journalism²⁷ extending across genres, with no clear-cut institutional borders, it was imperative to draw some distinctions between different types of publication in order to build a manageable research sample. The UK women's magazine and newspaper sectors are both large areas of print journalism, incorporating many different types of publications and it would not have been possible or desirable to cover this entire territory in one project. Therefore I delineated a smaller area which most closely conformed to the content, readership, goals and gender orientation I had outlined. I attempted to identify the magazines and newspaper, which met my criteria and so constituted a coherent subfield. In order to do this I needed to attend to the subtleties of content and operating conditions which divided both the magazine and newspaper sectors.

The women's magazine market may display a basic continuity of content and readership but in reality it is segmented and subdivided in numerous ways. Using the most functional of divisions there is a divide between weekly and monthly titles. Within these temporal categories there are more subtle distinctions, for example it is possible to sub-divide the weekly women's

²⁷ As I pointed out in Chapter Three this type of journalism has a presence in film and television. As Angela McRobbie has noted in connection with makeover TV shows this feminine subfield constitutes 'a new feminized social space which is defined in terms of status, affluence and body image' (McRobbie 2005:149). However a consideration of the whole of this space within one piece of research is not possible and the organisational cultures, production methods and goals to be found in television and radio are sufficiently different to justify their own separate study.

magazine sector into numerous smaller categories. *Key Note's* 2007 market report into the industry identifies:

Three distinct parts to this (weekly) market: the older, traditional titles such as *Woman*, *Woman's Weekly* and *People's Friend*; the real-life titles such as *Take a Break*, *Real People* and *Love It!*; and then the celebrity titles such as *Hello!* And *OK!* (Key Note: 2007)

A new category of fashion weekly could also be added to these 'distinct parts' in order to account for recent additions to the weekly market such as *Grazia* or *LOOK* which don't fit easily into the existing groupings. The monthly market is equally varied ranging from up-scale fashion-orientated titles such as *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* to domestic monthlies such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Prima*.

The women's magazine medium is often characterised as a fairly homogenous and uniform genre, but in fact magazines within the sector differ both in terms of content and operating conditions. So although *Take a Break* and *Grazia* could both broadly be defined as weekly magazines aimed at women, containing some basic content in common, there is much that divides the lurid sensationalism of *Take a Break* from the resolutely glossy and up-market *Grazia*. *Take a Break*, the best selling UK weekly women's magazine, has a mass circulation of 900,016 aiming at C1 and C2 women aged from 25-55 with children and claims to be read by one in ten women in the UK (H Bauer Publishing 2010). By contrast *Grazia* aims at a highly specific audience of 'upmarket women in their thirties' and has a much smaller circulation of 229,732 (Bauer Media 2010). These descriptions of the two magazines' target audiences are aimed not at readers but potential advertisers and illustrate the extent to which appealing to specific advertising markets structures the targeted readership and so the content of publications. *Take a Break*, with its huge circulation, is less dependent on advertising than a niche publication such as *Grazia* which is financially reliant on luxury brand advertising. The two magazines advertise very different products and brands within their pages and

this is also reflected in the type of editorial content they contain. Gough Yates (2003) traces the way that the demands of advertisers has driven the magazine market, leading to segmentation and reconfiguration of titles and it is possible to see these effects in the contemporary sector. So while both *Take a Break* and *Grazia* feature real-life features and fashion, the treatment and emphasis of this joint subject matter is very different. Women's magazines may have a shared repertoire of content, but the prominence they give to each element is wildly divergent and 'it is this varying degree of emphasis which differentiates one product from another. Fashion, for example, might occupy less than 5% of a popular women's weekly's pages but nearer 40% of a monthly aimed at younger ABC1s.' (*Key Note*, 1986).

My project's focus on the relationship between femininity and consumption and my concern with the structuring effects of advertising necessitates that the centre of my research sample will be titles such as *Grazia*, rather than mass-circulation magazines such as *Take a Break*. Therefore this project concentrates on magazines that emphasise fashion and consumption and aim at 18-40 year-old ABC1 women. This necessitates a focus on monthly glossy titles such as *ELLE*, *Vogue* and *Marie Claire* as well as weekly fashion publications such as *Grazia* and *LOOK*. These magazines correlate most closely to the criteria I have outlined around, content and goals and so constitute the heart of the subfield of feminine journalism with the magazine sector.

When identifying an appropriate sample within the newspaper market I applied a similar rationale around advertising goals and content and this entailed focusing on broadsheet and mid-market titles rather than tabloids. In a pattern that mirrors the one I have identified in women's magazines, mass market tabloids with high circulation figures are less dependent on advertising than their broadsheet counterparts. As Tunstall observes, 'in terms of commercial income, upmarket papers are primarily in the advertising business, while downmarket papers are primarily in the sales business' (1996:14). The

segmentation of the newspaper market into ‘quality and popular papers’ has been attributed to this division in financing models, quality newspapers’ dependence on advertising influenced their editorial policies for, ‘they did not obtain significantly more advertising if they sold more copies to a non-elite audience’ (Curran and Seaton, 2003:115). These operating conditions meant that I concentrated my research on daily and weekly broadsheets such as *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* and mid-market titles such as *The Daily Mail* and *The Evening Standard*. Within these newspapers I interviewed journalists from areas of the paper which most closely conformed to my criteria around content, readership and goals. My participants were drawn from supplements specifically and explicitly aimed at a female audience as well as areas such as fashion and features within the main body of the newspaper. I found during the course of my research that the magazines and newspapers I had identified did indeed constitute a coherent subfield. Many of my participants had moved between the titles I had selected and during interviews participants regularly identified other publications within the sample as their direct competition²⁸.

4.5 Detailing the Research Sample

The sensitive nature of much of the information I discussed with my participants, particularly around advertising and gifting practices (Chapter Six) led to an agreement that all my participants would remain anonymous. While some journalists would have been happy to be named many others would not have agreed to participate in the project unless their identity was protected, I therefore decided to present all quotations using pseudonyms which I chose for participants. The ethical importance of anonymizing testimonies extended beyond merely assigning pseudonyms and means that I am not able to identify the publications that comprised my research sample. It became clear that if I named the publications from which my participants were drawn it would be an

²⁸ My research suggested that a similar subfield existed across tabloid newspapers and gossip magazines such as *Heat* and *Closer*. However, although this celebrity oriented subfield had much in common with my area of research, its operating conditions and aims were sufficiently different to justify exclusion.

easy matter to work out who they were using their job titles and other details provided. Therefore I have limited identification to the broad defining categories that I have outlined in the previous sections. Of my forty participants nineteen were drawn from broadsheet newspapers, five from mid-market newspapers, ten from monthly glossy magazines and five from weekly titles. However, these distinctions are somewhat misleading and suggest divisions between the two sectors that don't exist in reality. While these categories best described my participants' current and primary employment, twenty five participants had careers that either currently or previously had extended across newspapers and magazines. This fluidity ranged from careers that encompassed editing both newspaper supplements and women's magazines to eight journalists who worked for both genres simultaneously at the time of interview. The importance of maintaining anonymity also impacted upon my research design in other ways. I had initially anticipated including an element of content analysis and detailing the relationship between the practitioners I interviewed and the specific publications and articles they worked on, I soon realised that this would not be possible within the terms I had agreed. So to some extent this project has been constrained and curtailed by the importance of respecting the wishes of my participants and the concern not to include detail or material that would lead to their easy identification.

I conducted my research in two stages, transcribing the first fifteen interviews before approaching the second batch of twenty five; this enabled me to identify gaps in my sample as well as refining my questions and interview technique. I attempted to cover the subfield both vertically and horizontally and my sample covers a range of job titles. I interviewed seventeen editors and deputy editors, thirteen fashion editors and deputy fashion editors, four features editors and deputy features editors, ten writers and two assistants. Of the sample three journalists were freelance while the others were all primarily attached to a title (although many worked for more than one publication simultaneously).

4.6 Research Design: Interviews and Analysis

The method of semi-structured interviewing was employed in order to enable a flexible and conversational mode of communication, which could also remain focused and informative. My interviews were structured around a series of topics and consisted of open-ended questions that allowed me to explore the subfield. The interviews were designed to reveal participants' own way of viewing things and I endeavoured not to impose my own preconceptions on the interview situation, to this end interviewees were encouraged to express their own views at length and in their own terms. I spoke to most of my participants for at least an hour, although the high pressure nature of their jobs meant that a few interviews were shorter than this. Unlike quantitative interviews, based on highly structured questionnaires, the order in which questions were asked varied, as did the nature of the questions. The semi-structured interviews with the use of an interview guide detailing a set of topics and themes fostered a conversational style and allowed participants to lead the discussion. I began all my interviews by encouraging participants to recount the story of their professional lives. This opening gambit provoked a great deal of information and often produced an extensive conversation, which encompassed not just occupational identity, but relationships and personal reflections. Like Gray I found that these, 'detailed (auto)biographies recount experiences, trajectories and the accumulation and deployment of knowledge in the process of identity formations' (2003:501).

There was no substantial separation between my data collection and analysis, the difficulty and complications attached to the involvement of busy and high profile professional participants meant that I conducted my interviews over a long period of time often with substantial gaps. While this was often frustrating it meant that I analysed and coded²⁹ interview transcripts as I went along, which allowed early data to inform and refine the process of conducting later

²⁹ I coded my interview transcripts using NVIVO

interviews. I developed my theoretical framework through the coding process, defining what was happening in the data and coming to an understanding of what I thought it meant without imposing theoretical tropes or meanings. I focused my coding around actions and processes rather than topics and this led to interviews which focused on working routines and practices.

I chose interview as a research method over extended ethnographies based in particular publications for a number of reasons. Interviews allowed me to traverse the whole field in a way that an ethnographic approach would not. I think this breadth is particularly important when conducting research in a subfield of journalism, which has received very little attention. In order to determine the boundaries of the field and the types of capital that operate within it I needed to be able to examine the whole subfield rather than predetermining which publications maybe of ethnographic interest. My years of experience working in *The Times* newsroom also leads me to believe that while participant observation is invaluable in understanding journalistic culture, on its own it does not necessarily allow a detailed understanding of occupational identity. Whilst working alongside journalists has given me an understanding of the way the field operates, I think conducting detailed interviews has complimented this experience and provided a deeper insight. I don't think that ethnographic observation would have provided the same level of detail around processes and routine, while still allowing me to traverse the entire subfield.

4.7 Epistemology: Bourdieu and Feminism

As well as practical methodological implications for my research sample and design, the use of a Bourdieusian framework has epistemological implications. One of the major strands of Bourdieu's intellectual project was the development of a reflexive sociology. This involves a reflexive and reflective attitude to research practices, which attempts to take into consideration the way that the researchers' own experiences and position within institutional and intellectual fields will impact upon any research they undertake. This reflexivity

was fostered by his engagement, as a social researcher with social systems with which he was either already acquainted, or in some cases a fully-fledged member. Research he conducted into the Bearn district of France (1989b), where he grew up, and into the French higher education system (1990) of which he was an important and influential member, encouraged him to take his own position as researcher into account in the research process. Bourdieu saw this as an 'epistemological experiment' in which he 'set out to apply to my most familiar universe the methods of investigation I had previously used to uncover the logic of kinship relations in a foreign universe, that of Algerian peasants and workers' (1992:67). This project attempted to overturn the 'natural' relation of the observer and their object of study in favour of a more complex relationship, which attempted 'a full sociological objectivation of the object and of the subject's relation to the object'. Bourdieu termed this process 'participant objectivation' (68) and claimed that it involved a radical process of self-criticism in which not only the researchers' own social and cultural background, but also the research process itself 'the hidden interests that are invested in it and the profits that it promises', are all subject to the same objectivation as the research object itself. This approach has much in common with the feminist research practices which have informed the study of women's magazines, as Terry Lovell points out:

Bourdieu's 'reflexive sociology' has a certain affinity with feminist traditions of reflexivity in research, and his sociology of intellectual life may be made to resonate with long standing concerns over 'academic feminism'. Reflexive sociology and feminist academic practice share similar anxieties and concerns. (Lovell, 2000:26)

As Skeggs has noted in her work on feminist ethnography (Skeggs, 2001), many of the concerns of male researchers such as Bourdieu are mirrored or pre-figured by longstanding debates within a feminist tradition, where the relationship of the researcher to the researched, issues of power and powerlessness and the position of the academic have always been at issue.

As well as resonating with a feminist tradition of reflexive research, Bourdieu's concerns are particularly relevant to my own research stance, which is complicated by my position within a feminist academic tradition, my professional history and my own conflicted relationship with the magazine genre. All these factors necessitate a high level of reflexivity in the research process, for 'feminist research is characterised by a concern to record the subjective experiences of doing research' (Maynard, 1994:16) and in this instance my personal history makes me to some extent, the subject of my own research. My multifarious relationship to magazines and newspapers means that I have at one time or another been a reader, a producer³⁰ and a critic. I have read magazines from an early age, I worked in newspaper production and as a freelance journalist for ten years and I am now undertaking academic research on the genre as an institutional scholar. These identities are separate and distinct but also concurrent, for producers and critics are also readers and although I am no longer an active producer, my history in the field will by necessity affect my relationship with those I research. For the remainder of this chapter I will consider the epistemological impact of my various positions as reader, former practitioner and scholar.

- My Position: Reader

The first and foundational personal identity that impacts on the research process is that of magazine reader. The figure of the reader has loomed large in academic work on magazines, initially as a duped, spectral presence and later as the direct object of study. There is an implicit assumption that much of the research into magazines has been conducted because of, or on behalf of, the 'ordinary' reader. The ideologically informed scholarship on magazines (McRobbie, 1978; Williamson, 1979; Winship, 1987) suggests that if magazines can be deconstructed, their grip on readers will loosen, leaving them free to read

³⁰ Working at News International Newspapers from 1996 to 2006 as a researcher culminating in five years in *The Times* newsroom. During this period I also contributed articles on fashion and lifestyle to the Virgin website.

different or 'better' titles. Whilst the work that followed (Frazer, 1987; Hermes, 1995) positioned itself as a defence of an 'ordinary' reader, in need of protection from elitist academic attack. Despite attempting to bridge the gap between the academic and the reader, the work of Hermes and Frazer actually widens this division. While Williamson and Winship explicitly identified themselves as magazine readers, so in one sense they were the object of their own research. Frazer and Hermes did not position themselves as readers and concentrated their analysis on the experience of the paradigmatic ordinary readers of their study. The 'everyday media uses' work of Frazer and Hermes attempts to overcome the methodological issues that arise from their institutional position as privileged academics by shifting emphasis away from the text and towards the experience of the 'ordinary' reader. However this tactic comes with its own problems, for as Ang points out 'scrutinising media audiences is not an innocent practice' (Ang, 1989:104). Attempts to access the experience of the 'native' reader are laden with their own ethical concerns for it must be acknowledged that the 'ethnographic interaction ... is usually a profoundly unequal one between an 'informant' and an ethnographer who comes to the situation with the resources to narrate and thus to control the account of their dialogue' (Radway, 1989:5).

Frazer and Hermes both acknowledge such power differentials but their research remains subject to them and their positioning outside the discourse of magazines only adds to these problems. While Frazer is concerned that she may leave the girls she studies 'painfully aware of their own incoherencies' (Frazer, 1987:413), she never raises the possibility that she might have incoherencies of her own. The work of Williamson and Winship avoids this potentially patronising model by acknowledging contradictions around their own enjoyment of magazines. The reactions provoked by commercial femininity can be complicated and conflicted as Winship explains:

My desires for reading magazines, like my desires for the kind of woman I want to be are perversely contrary. They sway between demanding the gloss, the dross and the hype of femininity, with its unlikely dreams, and finding just those qualities of commercial magazines repellent. (Winship, 1987:5)

I wish to follow in this tradition by recognising contradictions and maintaining that I am at once reader and critic. After all I was a magazine reader long before I undertook academic research on the genre and I do not think one identity need or should obliterate the other.

I have read magazines since I was a child and not in the casual, detached and uninvolved way, that Hermes describes in her book *Reading Women's Magazines*, but as an avid and voracious reader of one magazine after another. My childhood reading of the comic *Bunty* meant eager anticipation of Fridays when the next part of serials like 'The Four Marys' would be revealed. These simple pleasures gave way to the seemingly more sophisticated beauty and fashion of *Looks*. My attachment to the genre reached its height at university. I lived in a house with three other girls and our interest in fashion meant that we read *Vogue* as if it were the bible. One of us had a subscription and we would wait breathlessly for it to arrive, fighting over the right to open the envelope, before poring over the fashion stories and heading into Leeds city centre to reinterpret the looks courtesy of Oxfam. Williamson observes in her work on advertising, 'as a teenager, for example, it really is possible to live in a kind of dream world of magazine stories and images and this seems more real than reality' (Williamson, 1978:170). This was certainly true of us, it really felt as if we lived in the world of *Vogue* moved amongst its images and peopled our house with its stars, Kate, Linda and Naomi³¹ were talked of with as much familiarity as we spoke of each other or our friends.

³¹ Kate Moss, Linda Evangelista and Naomi Campbell were among the most famous models of the period.

The intervening years have seen a change in my outlook on both magazines and femininity and I now question the hold these discourses of commercial femininity had on my imagination and the time and energy that I devoted to beauty and fashion rituals. However, despite a more ambivalent attitude to the pleasures of women's magazines, I still enjoy reading *Grazia* every week and would always turn to *Style* before the main news section of *The Sunday Times*. Magazines may be the object of my critical inquiry, but I haven't lost the ability to read them in a register of pleasure. In my experience the pleasures of reading outlive the deconstruction, for as McRobbie observes, 'the fantasy of the perfect body, the wonderful romance, the glamorous lifestyle continue to have a presence in our lives even when we try to deny it' (McRobbie, 1997:194). My decision to study magazines is partly informed by my engagement with feminism, but also by my enjoyment of the genre because as Williamson says, 'people who study things aren't fuelled by different drives from anyone else' (1980:12). Williamson maintains that the academic obsession with desire:

The drive to read endless articles about it in theoretical journals has ultimately the same impetus as the drive to read endless articles about it in *Cosmopolitan* or *Over 21*: it is just that academic work satisfies both appetite and duty and gives an important sense of control. (Williamson,1980:12)

This is equally true of my drive to study the magazines themselves. Pursuing academic study of magazines legitimises my interest and attachment, allows me to remain connected to a genre and group of people that have been important to me. In trying to understand the relationship between femininity, consumption and feminism I am in part attempting to reconcile my own conflicted and confused attitudes to these discourses and gain the 'important sense of control' that Williamson speaks of.

My attraction to the magazine genre and the perfectible version of commercial femininity that it offers certainly affected the research process and

my interactions with my participants. In one sense it was a positive which helped to facilitate the interview process as I felt that I spoke the same language as my participants and could understand and appreciate their investments in the skills and knowledge of femininity. To some degree we shared a common feminine habitus rooted in fashion, consumption and the discourses of commercial femininity. However, I also found this commonality to be problematic and something which I needed to remain conscious of particularly during the analysis process. I wasn't immune to the ideal feminine subjectivity presented by my participants, their glossy, groomed exteriors, impressive shoes, handbags and Smythson notebooks were both attractive and intimidating. They combined this glamour with a high level of education, intelligence and success and like the participants Gray describes in her study of Women in Management, 'they were pragmatists and 'can do' personalities; they asked sharp questions; they were full of self belief and confidence; they worked hard, but they were excited by and passionate about their work' (2003:490).

The narratives that my participants wove around their professional lives and their position as the ideal feminine subjects of consumption were full of self-fulfilment, fun, freedom and creativity. As someone who had spent the previous twenty years consuming these very narratives in women's magazines I found these discourses extremely seductive. Like Gray I was tempted to see my participants as 'a powerful version of feminine feminism' (504) and this is certainly one dimension of my research. However, I was also conscious of all the exclusions, limitations and disadvantages that accompany such narratives of feminine empowerment and the need to attend to these hidden exclusions both during interviews and analysis.

- My Position: Media Professional

As students my friends and I may have lived in an imaginary world of *Vogue*, but in the years that followed we all moved into the media world for real³² and it is on this second identity as media practitioner that I wish to focus my study. Bourdieu suggested that one way of achieving the reflexive position he advocated was to conduct research within a familiar field. Claiming that there was a 'reflexive return entailed in objectivizing one's own universe' (Bourdieu 1992:67). My professional background does not place me firmly in the subfield of feminine journalism as I was largely concerned with news journalists, so I would not claim that the field of feminine journalism is exactly my own universe. However, my background as a media practitioner means that I have been immersed for a decade in the world of my research, I have extensive experience of both tabloid and broadsheet newsrooms, I number many journalists amongst my friends and acquaintances and have written articles on fashion, so to some extent 'I have already lived what I am researching' (Greed, 1990:147). My experience of the journalistic field as a whole necessarily impacts upon my academic research, meaning that I cannot absent my own subjectivity from the research process but must explicitly write myself in.

Until fairly recently I was a part of the sector I intend to examine 'with all the emotional involvement and accusations of subjectivity that this creates' (Greed, 1990:145). Some of my participants are amongst my oldest and closest friends, I share an institutional history with others and I depended on the media practitioners I know, to put me in contact with many of my participants who weren't personally known to me³³. This familiarity with my field of research contains both opportunities and potential pitfalls. Bourdieu suggests that familiarity with the social context of research subjects is important and helpful.

³² Those Leeds *Vogue* readers are still some of my closest friends and now they literally do move in the world of *Vogue*, as a fashion editor, a stylist and an agent for a fashion photographer.

³³ A quarter of my participants were personal friends, while another quarter were friends of friends, the remaining half of my research sample were not known to me and were approached for the first time via email and letter.

This attitude is best demonstrated by the research methods used in his book *The Weight of the World*. For this work a team of researchers spent three years interviewing men and women in France about the conditions of their everyday lives. The point of the research was an investigation of the effects of poverty on people's lives but Bourdieu also used the work to explore methodological issues and consider the interview process at some length. He attempted to write familiarity into his research design by choosing interviewers who were conversant with the social worlds of their interviewees. As he says, 'we left investigators free to choose their respondents from people they knew or people to whom they could be introduced by people they knew. For social proximity and familiarity provide two of the conditions for 'non-violent' communication.' (1999b:609). He suggested that this kind of proximity limits the asymmetries to be found in the interview process whereby the interviewer holds all the power and is predisposed to objectify the interviewee.

This kind of objectification has been present in the feminist work on women's magazines, which has encapsulated the kind of 'violent communication' that Bourdieu describes. The relationship between the feminist academic and the journalist has been a fairly limited one, only Ferguson (1983) and McRobbie (1998) have included face-to-face encounters in their research. The feminist critic has traditionally concentrated her attention on the reader, in much of the scholarship on magazines practitioners are ignored or conceptualised vaguely as the 'enemies of women' (Bartky, 1990:40), their role is seen as economically determined and so not deemed worthy of further consideration. This has led to a polarisation between the journalist and the feminist critic that has mediated against academic access. Gough Yates highlights this problem in her research on women's magazines, attributing her failure to gain institutional access to 'attitudes of mistrust and disdain towards academic research' (Gough Yates, 2003:23). I found that my previous position within the journalistic field led to a less polarised relationship with the media practitioners who form the object of my research.

My professional history helped me gain access to journalists who might otherwise have proved resistant and shared knowledge and 'sub-cultural signals' (Greed, 1990:148) were useful during the interview process. Both Ferguson's work on magazines and Greed's work on her 'experiences as a feminist surveyor doing research on the position of women in surveying' (1990:145) provide a useful point of comparison. Greed found that shared professional experience enabled her 'to develop 'sensitising concepts' more readily, because I already have an awareness and empathy with the issues that an outsider would not be able to develop so effectively in the time available' (Greed, 1990:147). While Ferguson found that her previous role as a magazine journalist facilitated access to elites within the profession and added to her understanding of the research data she gathered. These conclusions recall Bourdieu's contention that:

When a young physicist interviews another young physicist, as someone sharing all the characteristics capable of operating as major explanatory factors of that person's practices and representations, and linked to them by close familiarity, their questions spring from their dispositions, objectively attuned to those of the respondent. (Bourdieu, 1999b:611)

I found that my familiarity with the mechanics of media production and the position of female journalists operated in a similar way to Greed's knowledge of surveying and Ferguson's of magazine journalism. My position as a former 'insider' went some way to overcoming the obstacles to access, which are an attendant problem of elite interviewing. My media contacts made it a lot easier to gain access to some participants who were initially resistant or suspicious. I was also surprised to find that other participants in busy and high profile positions were prepared to be involved despite being approached 'cold' with no introduction. However, neither my contacts nor the generosity of many within the subfield could entirely overcome the problems that come with attempting to interview busy professional subjects. Some of the practitioners with whom I was

most keen to speak refused and I contacted many more journalists than I interviewed. I learnt that as Goldstein's work on elite interviewing illustrates, 'no matter how good a job you do and how lucky you are, you will not be able to interview a portion of your target sample' (Goldstein, 2002:671). However, having gained access I discovered that familiarity with the routines and structures of news production was a useful shared knowledge, creating shorthand, which facilitated the interview process.

Interviewing close friends and even acquaintances was fraught with its own problems and possibilities, for 'when the principals are close friends, the relationship fosters special opportunities but also present unique challenges' (Treleven, 1998:611). My existing friendship with many of my participants was a benefit in that rapport, trust and familiarity were present from the outset and did not need to be created in a short time. My relationship with my subjects helped to overcome some of the problems associated with elite interviewing. Berry suggests that gaining a connection with such subjects is crucial and indeed that 'excellent interviewers are excellent conversationalists. They make interviews seem like a good talk between old friends' (Berry, 2002:679), in some cases during my research this was literally the case. I found that in a few instances when interviewing participants who were strangers to me, particularly editors of publications, it was hard to move the conversation beyond the publications' branding and public image. This could lead to unsatisfying material that reproduced the magazines' publicity material³⁴. But close relationships also provided their own challenges, as oral historian Treleven explained in reference to interviews with his close friend activist Frank Wilkinson. He found that an assumption of shared knowledge sometimes proved a bar to gaining explicit and detailed transcripts and required a special vigilance of its own, as he says:

³⁴ However the investments that these participants felt in the discourses that surrounded their publications and profession were interesting and valuable in themselves.

My presence at relaxing dinners at the Wilkinson home or attendance at Frank's public speeches posed a more vexing problem. During interviews I made sure that Frank repeated now familiar points on tape in as much detail as he had during meal conversations and public presentations. (1998:617)

I was keen to interview friends who work in newspapers and supplements partly because informal conversations with them were an impetus behind my research project. I began discussing my area of research with friends long before I considered academic work in the area, like Greed, 'I was doing all this instinctively before it became official research' (Greed, 1990:151). This meant that my 'research' flowed naturally out of our existing relationship and shared concerns and in one sense interviews were just one of many conversations we have had around these topics. While this intimacy proved beneficial there were also numerous dangers with this approach, for research is not natural discourse and so must be constructed scientifically. Both Bourdieu and Ferguson call attention to these dangers in their own reflections on methodology. Ferguson recognised that her previous position within the magazine field applied restraints as well as offering advantages and she was aware that her relationship with her respondents could ameliorate against having 'specific objectives in mind, and not being 'led' by the data' (Ferguson, 1983:217). She was conscious that the elite nature of the interview group might lead to a situation in which the interviewee began to control the nature and subject of the interview. Bourdieu also warns against this phenomenon in *The Weight of the World* when he cites the example of a particularly eloquent interview subject who was too aware of what was required and delivered an interview that read like a literary text. I found it harder to control and structure interviews with very close friends and in some cases I found myself forced to transcribe hours of material much of it not directly relevant to this project. I was attentive to the fact that some participants might be aware of my concerns and those of my project and tailor their interviews accordingly. However, the

investment that my participants had in their subfield was certainly equal to my own investment in my research and they did not display a desire to please me, but rather to do justice to their profession and its practices. If there was a problem with the eloquence of my participants it was rather around their desire to present their work using the extremely positive narratives of creativity and fulfilment, which I outlined earlier in the chapter. Despite the pitfalls and problems associated with interviewing friends, overall their involvement has been a huge benefit to my thesis, providing not only access and contacts, but a level of insight and honesty that I don't think would always have been possible without these existing relationships.

As well as presenting problems during the interview process, intimacy with my research sample also affected analysis of my research data. These conversations were not in fact the informal chat of friends but the object of study and I shared Greed's embarrassment 'at the thought that after they have trusted me with their innermost thoughts and treated me as a friend, I am going to spend the evening objectifying them' (Greed, 1990:149). While a friendship or affinity with my research sample proved helpful during the interview process it became more complex when I came to write up my research. As Brunsdon found when she interviewed fellow feminist academics for her book *The Feminist, The Housewife and the Soap Opera* 'the friendship and collegiality which gave me easy access to the interviewees, has had certain consequences in the writing up of the project' (Brunsdon, 2000:91). Brunsdon was reluctant to critique her friends, she found herself 'unwilling to compare or disagree with my friends-I haven't wanted to appear to criticise their experience, or their narrating of it' (Brunsdon, 2000:92). She was aware, as was Greed, that she had a future with her interlocutors, that she 'would meet them again both at a professional and personal level' (Greed, 1990:145). This further complicates the pre-existent ethical concerns around the researcher's power to control the narrative and offers 'a longitudinal interpretative framework of some complexity' (Brunsdon, 2000:92).

The dichotomy between feminism and femininity, which Brunson identified in her work on soap opera, further complicated my research. The final identity in my tripartite positioning is that of feminist but much of my research sample either did not share this identification, or their understanding of this position was different to my own. A shared history and intimate knowledge of the professional and personal lives of some of my interviewees meant that I wished to interpret their stories, (as I already know them and as they were recounted) through a feminist lens. My participants, including those that I count as friends, had a deep investment in the skills, knowledge and capital of their subfield and would not agree with all the interpretations I have made or the conclusions I have come to surrounding their working lives. However, I have attempted throughout the process of analysis and writing to do justice to the testimonies I received. I have made a conscious effort to allow the voices of my participants to speak through the research and this has given my interview data an integrity beyond any theoretical or philosophical frameworks that I may have wished to impose upon it. By the same token I was also always aware that in attempting to do justice to the subjects of my research I could fall into the trap of endorsing their world view and end up implying 'that there are no battles to be had with the world of girls and women's magazines' (McRobbie, 1997:206). So in this thesis I have attempted to strike a fine balance between honouring my interview subjects and their own interpretation of their working lives and environment and critiquing this subfield and drawing attention to the limitations of the version of feminine identity which it offers.

- My Position: Critic

The last personal position that impacts upon my research is that of institutional scholar situated within the academic field and a Bourdieusian framework demands that this final identity is also taken into account within the research process. He contends that:

What must be objectivized is not (only) the individual who does the research in her biographical idiosyncrasy but the position she occupies in academic space and the biases implicated in the view she takes by virtue of being off-side or out of the game. (Bourdieu, 1992:72).

This means considering the relationship of the feminist academic to the subfield of feminine journalism. The figure of the feminist academic has been erased in much of the work on magazines and scholars in this field have rarely considered their own position or its effects on their work. Bourdieu's complaint that 'people whose profession it is to objectivize the social world prove so rarely able to objectivize themselves, and fail to realise that what their apparently scientific discourse talks about is not the object but their relation to the object' (69), could be applied to some of the feminist work on magazines which leaves the position of the feminist academic unquestioned.

The tendency to leave the institutional position of the academic unexplored is compounded in feminist media studies by its objects of research. Magazine scholarship's focus on the text and the figure of the reader, at the expense of any consideration of the producer is mirrored throughout the feminist study of popular genres. This preoccupation means that the feminist academic has usually studied groups with less cultural resources than herself and has rarely been brought into contact with competing cultural authorities. The asymmetry of the interview/interviewee relationship is compounded by this social asymmetry whereby 'the investigator occupies a higher place in the social hierarchy of different types of capital, cultural capital in particular' (Bourdieu *et al.*, 1999b:609). Hence the methodological debates in this area have centred round issues of empowerment and education and the power differential between research and researched.

My research shifts this focus away from the reader and towards the female journalist. This group constitutes a successful and powerful cultural elite, operating from within a centre of cultural power equal to if not greater than,

that occupied by the researcher, as Radway notes in work on elite ethnography, 'the structurally similar social positions and role shared by the elite informant and the academic ethnographer will entail... that their background, education and literacy level will be more than roughly equivalent' (Radway, 1989:9). This structural similarity is particularly striking in the case of the feminist critic and magazine journalists, as has been noted in the literature on magazines (Ferguson, 1983; Rabine, 1994; McRobbie, 1997). These two roles could be seen as mirror images both defined by, and seeking to represent, the category woman. Moving the focus of study towards an object with parallel resources mediates against casting that object as 'exotic other' and in favour of a more complex reflexivity. Radway highlights these possibilities in her essay 'Ethnography Among the Elites', a discussion of issues raised by her research on the editorial structure of the Book-of-the-Month Club. She suggests that ethnography among an elite can not only teach us about the way power operates in other cultural centres, so providing material for critique, but can also illuminate the position of the researcher in useful ways.

The editors at the Book-of-the-Month Club were aware of scholarly discourses and in fact defined their own position against the academic. They created an 'editorial identity that is explicitly constructed in opposition to the other subjects engaged competitively in the business of cultural production and distribution' (Radway, 1989:7). This is equally true in my own area of study, the fractious relationship between feminism and femininity that structures feminist media studies, is also at work in popular genres where female journalists often explicitly define themselves against the figure of the feminist. Women who work in magazines are aware of feminist debates indeed 'feminism exists as a strong point of reference for the whole way in which women's and girl's lives are now presented in popular mass media and magazines in particular' (McRobbie, 1997:205). The presence of feminism within the magazine discourse means, that unlike most ethnographic subjects, the journalist is not at the mercy of the researcher's narrative but has recourse to their own representative regime and

'mastery of similar if not even more extensive resources and roughly equivalent access to less powerful populations' (Radway, 1989:5). This places the feminist and the magazine journalist on equal terms, both seeking to represent women and in so doing asserting their own expertise, for as Radway points out 'the academic ideology of research and originality is not driven solely by a desire to 'know' some truth but also by the desire to stake out and legitimate a professional claim to a certain territory' (Radway, 1989:8). Indeed Gough Yates' experiences in attempting to gain access to women's magazines testify to this knowledgeable competition. She found that magazine journalists made:

Calculations about my political investments, based upon a knowledge of previous academic studies in the area. As a woman and an academic it was assumed that my intellectual stake in studying the magazine industry must have its roots in what was perceived to be a 'retrograde' form of feminist politics. (Gough Yates 2000:23)

This is similar to the situation Radway encountered at the Book-of-the-Month club and she suggests that, while as researchers we will not whole-heartedly embrace the world view of the elite we study, attending to observations of academic discourse that come from outside the academy itself may 'usefully complicate the reflexive turn' (Radway 1989:10) that characterises feminist ethnography. Radway suggests that by studying another centre of cultural power, the critic might gain a greater insight into her own institutional position. This is an idea that prefigures Rabine's work on women's magazines. Rabine ends her article 'A Woman's Two Bodies' with an extended exploration of the similarities between the position of the feminist academic, and the magazine journalist. These positions resonate with my experience of the research process, whilst I do not endorse the worldview of participants or their version of commercial femininity, I understand their reasons for proposing it. I am also fully aware that my own investment in competing gendered discourses is structured by my own institutional position in just the same way as those of my

participants. By taking this reflexive attitude to the position of the feminist academic, I hope I have come to a better understanding of the position of the female journalist, for as Bourdieu says of researchers generally:

It is solely to the extent that they can objectify themselves that they are able, even as they remain in the place inexorably assigned to each of us the social world, to conjure themselves in the place occupied by their objects (who are, at least to a certain degree, an alter ego) and thus to take their point of view that is, to understand that if they were in their shoes they would doubtless be and think just like them. (1999b:260).

4.8 Conclusion

Study of magazine and newspaper scholarship reveals that each new approach, while attempting to solve existing problems, brings with it another set of methodological difficulties. I am aware that my own approach produces a new set of dilemmas. My attempt to inhabit multiple positions, combined with my proposed research sample, brought with it problems, succinctly identified by Radway, as ‘paralytic narcissism and non-judgemental relativism’ (Radway, 1989:10). The attempt to research an elite group, with whom I have pre-existent relationship, is fraught with problems as well as possibilities. However I think that studying the journalist rather than the reader or the text, brings unique opportunities to understand the relationship between feminism and femininity and their complex, often troubling relationship both in the journalistic field and the academy. By taking a reflexive approach to feminine journalism I hope I have come to a more nuanced understanding of both the field and the agents within it.

This chapter has outlined the methodologies employed to address the research questions, namely qualitative interviews within the framework of Bourdieusian field theory. The following three chapters report on the empirical findings which resulted from the methodological and epistemological positions described here. Chapter 5 is an exploration of the species of capital I found

operating within the subfield of feminine journalism. Chapter 6 is a detailed examination of the practices and goals of the subfield, concentrating on its relationship with advertising and public relations while Chapter 7 attempts to place the subfield within the wider journalistic field and to determine the extent to which it has altered journalistic hierarchies and forms of capital.

Chapter Five

Feminine Journalism:

The Capital and Habitus of the Subfield

5.1 Introduction: Journalism and Feminine Capital

After being named Young Journalist of the Year, at the 2004 British Press Awards, Daily Telegraph news reporter Elizabeth Day wrote an article entitled 'Why Women Love Journalism', in which she asked 'what is it that now attracts so many young women to print journalism? And what makes young women such attractive prospects to newspaper employers?' (2004:22). She suggested that market-driven changes in print journalism, most notably the 'trend toward celebrity news,' had created a need for 'female characteristics' such as glamour, 'feminine wiles' and 'empathetic qualities'. Day concluded that within this new order of journalism being a woman was a 'career asset'. In many ways this contention is nothing new, for commercialisation and feminization have offered career prospects to women journalists since the end of the 19th Century (Chapter One). However Day's comments do reflect more recent changes in the value of femininity both in journalism and in the wider workplace. Her comments also mirror feminist attempts to interrogate the operation of femininity in the workplace using Bourdieu's notion of capital.

The growth of consumer culture has placed creative or cultural industries at the heart of the economy and workers in areas such as the media, arts, entertainment, advertising and marketing have grown in number and importance. Increasing emphasis on consumption choices has driven a demand for expert cultural and aesthetic knowledge and given a new prominence to groups that guide and influence these choices. The proliferation of these cultural intermediaries (Bourdieu, 1986; Featherstone, 2007) has seen increasing potential for women's traditional associations with consumption to function as

capital (Gray, 2003). Cultural intermediaries blur traditional boundaries between high and low culture as well as between 'personal taste and professional judgement, or leisure and work' (Negus, 2002:503). These occupations allow the transfer of expertise traditionally concerned with the private sphere, the personal and the body, into the public realm of work and often call for skills and knowledge stereotypically associated with femininity. In these professions women's socially constructed concern with 'themselves as aesthetic objects', and by extension with 'everything concerned with aesthetics, and more generally with 'the management of the symbolic capital of the family' (Bourdieu, 2001:100), can be utilised as valuable workplace capital. Women can exploit traits and skills, inculcated in a feminine habitus and historically deployed in the service of the family, in a professional arena. Bourdieu notes that traditionally feminine dispositions benefit women within some branches of the creative industries (1986:361), but the notion that gender might function as capital is not fully explored within his work and remains somewhat vague and contradictory.

Despite Bourdieu's acknowledgement that a feminine habitus could be employed to advantage in an expanding group of professions, he did not fully theorise women as capital accruing subjects in their own right. Instead he maintained that women's position in the economy of symbolic goods confined them to contributing to the capital of the family. Indeed he argued that women's success as cultural intermediaries actually ensured their continued domination. In Bourdieu's formulation women's work within professions concerned with the exchange of symbolic goods merely serves to reinforce an order and market, which takes them as its 'prime victims' (2001:102). Bourdieu's limited application of the concept of capital to women, has failed to keep pace with their evolving position in both the family and the work-place and feminist commentators have sought to differentiate new forms of gendered capital (McCall, 1992; Skeggs, 1997, 2004; Lovell, 2000; Gray, 2003; McRobbie, 2004; Huppertz, 2009). This stream of research considers the possibility that women may employ gendered dispositions in the pursuit of capital within specific

occupational contexts (tourism: Adkins, 1995; the Women in Management Group: Gray, 2003; paid caring work: Huppatz, 2009). In this work femininity is positioned as a kind of cultural knowledge and resource which can be accessed by some women to their own professional advantage, rather than merely in the service of their family (Skeggs, 1997; Lovell, 2000).

This notion of feminine capital has not been applied to the journalistic field although much has been written about its feminization. Newspapers have become increasingly dominated by lifestyle content, as evidenced by the proliferation of features and supplements which advise the reader on the correct consumption choices in everything from fashion to food. The dominance of consumer culture has found expression in an emphasis on consumption and has naturally expanded the reach of feminine journalism, which has specialised in aesthetic judgments about consumption since the 19th Century. As well as this focus on consumption, lifestyle journalism has also turned towards the concerns of the private sphere, resulting in a personalisation of much journalistic content. A huge growth in first-person columns and features concerned with the private, emotional or bodily sphere (Coward, 2010) has involved journalists, 'offering (or selling) (their) own art of living as an example to others' (Bourdieu, 1986:370).

The idea that these shifts may have made femininity a marketable commodity within the journalistic field has received little attention within the academy. However, Van Zoonen (1998a) and Holland (1998) have drawn attention to the possibilities for women offered by the 'intimization' or 'feminization' of news. Holland even suggests that the 'consumer-oriented and market driven' direction of journalism means it could transform from a 'male-dominated domain' into 'an area that has the potential of becoming dominated by women' (Holland, 1998:45). Despite these interventions there has been no sustained engagement with the operation of femininity in a professional journalistic context. In this chapter I will use interview data to argue that within an increasingly personalised and aestheticised journalistic field a feminine

habitus and the cultural and social capital that go with it can act as valuable currency.

5.2 Feminine Journalism: Female Capital

In her 2009 exploration of women's paid caring work Kate Huppatz distinguished between female and feminine capital, explaining that female capital was the benefit gained from the possession of a female body, 'whereas feminine capital is the gender advantage that is derived from a disposition or skill set learned via socialisation, or from simply being hailed as feminine' (2009:50). This distinction is important as it avoids naturalising femininity as a 'generalised female condition'. Practitioners within the field of feminine journalism routinely conflate femininity with a body that is gendered female and naturalise a cultural knowledge grounded in a particular version of middle-class femininity as intrinsically and universally female. In this chapter I will try and draw out the distinctions between the two forms of capital and illustrate the ways in which feminine capital is often accessed through a particular class position, race, age or set of bodily attributes.

Participants' gender was often cited as an advantage in gaining and sustaining employment within the field. Journalists from women's magazines tended to depict this kind of gendered capital as obvious, so unworthy of comment. However, in the more traditionally masculine context of the newspaper the operation of female capital was thrown into stark relief. My research data echoes the contentions of Bourdieu, Day, Holland and Van Zoonen, with many participants describing a process of feminization that has resulted in their gender functioning as a professional asset. A recurrent theme during interviews with newspaper journalists was the increasing importance of a female readership, as one former newspaper journalist Beatrice put it newspapers, 'were obsessed with women readers'. Participants depicted this desire for women readers as something which directly affected editorial content and in turn created demand for women journalists. They described a feminising

process, whereby editorial decisions were taken with women readers in mind. For instance when asked about her relationship with her newspaper's editor, supplement editor Audrey described the changes he had instituted:

When (editor's name) came in, his first thing was I want more women readers. I want to feminize the whole package... I want features and colourful stories and human interest stories in the main paper because that's what women want.

She went on to describe how these changes had benefited her, leading the new editor to promote her to number three on the paper, because as he told her, 'I need you there to tell me what women want'. The desire for women readers and the resulting feminization of content appeared to offer opportunities to women journalists, enabling them to rise within editorial structures.

Several participants felt that being a woman had been a 'positive' or a 'great advantage' in part because of the relative scarcity of women within a newspaper context. Frances, the associate editor of a newspaper suggested that her promotion had been easier, because the editor, 'clearly thought I want a woman in that top three. So he didn't have that many options'. Charlotte, a newspaper columnist, supported this view claiming, 'it's easier to be a female writer than a male writer in the 21st Century'. She justified this statement by describing the ways in which her newspaper was focused on, 'chasing a young female audience':

We were so driven features wise on 30 or 40 something womany features. I mean it was just fucking big handbags at dawn every day. It was nuts how classically female centred the whole thing was... I know I've absolutely reaped the benefits of being a female journalist, because there just aren't that many young female by-line pictures out there so you're something of a rarity.

Participants suggested that a female advantage operated within the journalistic field driven by a desire for women readers and the relative scarcity of women journalists. Moreover, they provided evidence of its operation in their own careers. I would suggest that underlying the apparent advantages provided by feminization is the assumption that women journalists are intrinsically better able to produce content that appeals to a female readership than their male counterparts. Ferguson described this assumption as the ‘ultimate editorial credo’ of women’s magazines, the idea that, ‘femininity and womanliness are so wholly different from masculinity and maleness that they require a separate vocabulary, dialogue and tone of voice’ (1983:6) has always underpinned the field of feminine journalism.

5.3 Female Capital vs. Feminine Capital: The Reader and the Producer

Participants repeatedly referenced their gender when explaining how they generated editorial content. The belief that women journalists were in possession of a particular gendered expertise went unquestioned and was reinforced by the two interviews I conducted with male fashion journalists. Both men felt that their gender had interfered with their ability to work within fashion journalism, explaining that they felt excluded from the increasingly personal tone of the field. As former newspaper fashion editor, Lucas told me, ‘I certainly had more than once, people saying you don’t know you’re a man. What would you know?’ Female participants replicated these gender binaries when discussing male colleagues, explaining how in their view men were less able to appeal to women readers. Newspaper features commissioning editor Nancy stated:

The features editor, despite him being very senior and seasoned in newspapers you know some twenty years, he often gets it wrong because he doesn’t think like a woman. So he’ll pitch an idea for a lead story...and the (female) editor of (*name of features section*) will have to shape it and

repackage it so it's more feminine. So it's more interesting to our readers, who are women.

These male journalists were perceived to lack a female habitus, and the expertise and skills that accompanied it, which placed them at a disadvantage in the field. By contrast female participants foregrounded their gender when discussing their own professional expertise. Journalists working in both newspapers and magazines described story selection and commissioning as an organic process, which grew out of their shared habitus. This is encapsulated in these two highly gendered descriptions of editorial meetings:

The reason everyone says that's so true, that's such a good piece, is because it's generated in a conversation we've had as women... generated in a way that's like a coffee morning but in a magazine, which makes it sound a bit mother's meeting but it has to be like that. (Jenny, newspaper supplement features editor)

Our brainstorming sessions are very girly, it's a very girly brainstorming session and things are appreciated from a very woman's angle. (Nancy, newspaper features commissioning editor)

This expertise is rooted in what Ferguson calls, 'what every woman knows', a shared feminine knowledge, which creates a 'bond of commonality' (1983:7), between the journalist and the reader. It is this gendered commonality between reader and producer which helps to produce the totalizing 'we women' feeling of magazines identified by Winship (1987) which positions the reader as a particular type of feminine subject (Chapter Three). This sense of commonality was highly prized by participants because it was perceived to give them a unique and gendered understanding of their female readers. Journalists set great store by their similarity to their readership and in most instances were at great pains to characterise a publication's readers and staff as a coherent body. As magazine editor, Janice explained, 'I think the (*magazine title*) reader is me and its most people that

work in this office.’, while magazine deputy editor, Estelle stated, ‘the magazine has very much come from an evolution of who we are and what we wanted, because we’re that demographic’. Bourdieu describes this mirroring between reader and journalist as homology or the, ‘elective affinity between the journalist, his paper and his readers’ (240), whereby the ideal journalist naturally speaks the language of the ideal reader. It was this, apparently effortless ability to discern the concerns of their readers, described by Ferguson as ‘gut feel’ (1983:142), which many of my respondents prized in themselves and their colleagues.

This highly gendered ‘gut feel’ approach to journalism was enabled by the assumption that a cohesive cohort of women journalists spoke to an equally cohesive group of women readers. Participants often characterised themselves and their readers as a uniform group in possession of a shared female habitus that could be invoked to provide appealing editorial content. However, the distinction between female and feminine capital meant that there were tensions and breaks in this apparently seamless process. The figure of the woman journalist and the ideal reader were both constituted through a very narrow definition of femininity, which was sometimes disturbed by the actual diversity of professionals and readers. Class, race, age and an insufficiently feminine body were all factors that stood between women and the effortless deployment of feminine capital.

These dissonances were highlighted by participants’ discussions of their readership, particularly when it came to the issue of age. Journalists, particularly those who worked for magazines, were able to specify their perfect reader in some detail. They used age, class and consumption habits to describe their model and aimed their publications at a young, affluent, middle class reader, as in these two descriptions from the editors of glossy magazines:

she's around 28 she's urban she's fascinated and interested in fashion and shopping is something she loves to do, but she's bright and intelligent and wants to know about the world outside of it as well.(Cleo)

We know that she's ABC1, we know that her average household income is double the national average. We know that she spends a lot on clothes and shopping. (Janice)

Journalists from newspapers also wanted to pitch towards this ideal reader, but the portfolio nature of their publications and large circulation figures mediated against this kind of specificity. During interviews with respondents from newspapers an awareness of the actual diversity of the female audience sometimes disturbed the notion of the ideal reader. Newspaper respondents contrasted their desired audience with the reality, often in disappointed tones as in these comments:

We're told that we should be aiming at a young mum, early to mid thirties to forty, someone who is interested in fashion... someone educated so they'll be interested in the books and the arts things. Also interested in reading intelligent features about women, and women and men and marriage and babies, and all that sort of stuff. But then we get a lot of letters from women who are in their sixties or seventies... I think the reader is a lot older than we'd like to think. So we sort of spread it between both, but the target reader is the younger one. (Julia, newspaper supplement features editor)

Our average reader is probably in her mid to late forties. As much as we like to think she's a real fashionista, 25 to 35, I don't think she is. (Megan, newspaper deputy fashion editor)

As well as expressing dissatisfaction with an older readership participants also talked of their own fears around ageing. Youth appeared to be highly prized within the subfield, particularly by those working in fashion, which was repeatedly depicted as 'a young person's game'. This discourse is typified by the

youngest participant newspaper supplement fashion assistant, Louise, in her comments about longevity in the fashion industry:

There aren't many old people in our industry you can probably count them on your fingers and that's a bit scary. It's like what do I do when I get to 45? That's quite scary because I have a 30 year mortgage.

Bourdieu suggests that a lack of fit between habitus and field provides an opportunity for critical reflexivity. When the agent is not 'a fish in water' (1992:127) the parameters and operating conditions of the field cease to be taken for granted and are subject to scrutiny. This process is demonstrated by participants' attitudes to age. Feelings around age revealed a fault line splitting the apparently cohesive version of femininity at work within the subfield. Although participants were a relatively homogeneous group, there were other examples of a disjunction between habitus and field and these fissures highlighted the specific nature of the feminine capital at work.

One of the most striking examples of variance between actual and ideal habitus came from my only black participant, Nancy, the features commissioning editor of a newspaper, who felt that her race and non-British national identity placed her at a distance, both from her colleagues and the ideal reader. She explained, 'I am not the readership. I am childless, I am single, I am black' and went on to detail the ways in which she struggled to assimilate the required habitus:

Our readership is hysterical middle class white women... And so often we'll be writing some bullshit story, like 'Are you a bad mum?' and doing for and against home mothers versus mothers who have to work. Versus I'm black and we've been working since year dot... So all of the women in the office that are like 35 and over, are like 'my mother never worked' and I just think that's crazy.

Nancy talked at some length about how problematic she had found this cleavage between her own habitus and that of the rest of the office and the imagined readership. She contrasted her experiences with other members of staff who, though younger and more junior, she perceived as more confident than herself because, ‘they knew that they belonged there’. She went on to explain that in order to function successfully at the newspaper she had been forced to assimilate the habitus of those around her and she had ‘embraced it and now I think like they think’. Deputy fashion editor Megan my only other non-white participant placed less emphasis on her ethnic habitus, but she did recount how her ethnic identity had led to a feeling of disjunction at the beginning of her career

I’m (ethnic identity) and I’m short, I’m 5ft and I think there was this intimidating thing about all these tall glamorous people, because they were all blonde and brunette and different to you. I grew up here, but I suppose just different to you.

Interview data suggests that female capital, the mere possession of a female body, is not sufficient to operate successfully within the field. A precise version of femininity is required to ensure an effortless fit between habitus and field. Ruptures occurred not just around age and race but between different notions of what it meant to be female. The gap between female and feminine capital and the specificity of the version of femininity endorsed by the subfield is illustrated by the comments made by magazine features commissioning editor Sadie, about her gender. Sadie’s journalistic career had begun in music and gossip magazines and she had freelanced for more overtly masculine publications. Although extremely feminine in appearance she described herself as the ‘tomboy’ of the office and illustrated this with an anecdote about her job interview:

When I came for my job interview the first thing (*editor’s name*) said when she looked at my CV was “ooh you’re virtually a man aren’t you?” because I was a music journalist for five years before I came here ... I’d been on (*Name*

of gossip magazine) before that and I'd freelanced for a few football magazines and I'd done quite a lot of what was considered slightly more blokey stuff.

Sadie's back-ground in music journalism led her to question some of the gendered assumptions implicit in this reaction to her CV. She was very critical of women's magazines' arts coverage saying, 'there's this kind of misnomer that women aren't very interested in films and music'. However like Nancy, Sadie had altered her habitus in order to operate more effectively in the field. She went on to explain that, despite her lack of direct professional involvement with fashion:

You do become naturally much more interested because that's the environment around you. So probably down to thinking about what I'm going to wear to work in the morning a bit more than I used and being a little more groomed and that kind of thing.

Sadie's interview underlines the specialized nature of the capital at work in the field. Female capital the simple possession of a female body is not enough, Sadie's lack of feminine expertise led to her being described as, 'almost a man', despite her overtly female body. It is feminine capital, the possession of a particular socialised skill set, defined through aesthetics, consumption and the body that operates within the field. In the next section I will draw out the exact nature of this feminine capital and the professional expertise that it produces.

5.4 Feminine Capital: Taste

Interview data suggests that good taste is a major component of feminine capital. In his book *Distinction* Bourdieu describes how aesthetic concepts such as taste are determined through class power. For Bourdieu taste is not a gift of nature but a product of upbringing and education, the operation of taste confers distinction and acts as a marker of class, or in his famous words 'taste classifies and it classifies the classifier'(1986:6). Aesthetic judgements are expressed through cultural consumption and 'aesthetic stances in matters like cosmetics,

clothing or home decoration are opportunities to experience or assert one's position in social space' (57). Bourdieu suggests that the classed operation of taste is often expressed through gender. Particularly useful for the current study is his observation that, 'there are as many ways of realising femininity as there are classes and class fractions'. In Bourdieu's analysis middle class women are particularly concerned with matters of taste, aesthetics and the maintenance of cultural capital. It is this concern, which leads them to excel in 'the group of occupations whose common factor is that they ensure a maximum return on the cultural capital most directly transmitted by the family: good manners, good taste and physical charm.' (152)

Good taste and the ability to make the 'correct' aesthetic judgements underpin the feminine capital that operates within the subfield. Participants, particularly those involved in fashion, placed great emphasis on their good taste and described it as a major part of their professional expertise. As fashion assistant Louise explains, 'my boss always says that we've got our jobs, because we've got really good taste levels and she wants that level of taste to kind of filter through the magazine'. While Binky noted that a large part of her job as a newspaper supplement fashion editor was dependent on her good taste and that of her team, 'with the girls in the office it's about people's taste level, so a lot of what I do is finding people that are easy to communicate with, that you have a taste level in common with.' Another newspaper fashion editor Paula endorsed this view agreeing that taste was a vital attribute in her team, 'I work with people who I really respect and who I think have got good taste. They know how to edit fashion'.

Participants described taste as a currency and a means of communication, 'good' taste was a basic requirement of the subfield as evidenced by their repeated use of the phrase 'taste level'. The operation of taste permeates the field of feminine journalism, (Chapter Six). Participants' ability 'correctly' to rank luxury goods, adverts, publications and celebrities was repeatedly described as a

key component of their professional expertise. This was most frequently expressed as the facility to choose between products or 'to edit fashion'. Participants highlighted their 'knowledge of new goods, their social and cultural value, and how to use them appropriately' (Skeggs, 2004:136). It was this cultural knowledge that they felt readers sought from the subfield and as I will outline in the next chapter advice on shopping dominates its editorial content. Participants explained how they guided readers to the correct shopping choices, relating a process whereby taste was passed from the professional to the reader or, as supplement fashion editor Kirsty put it, transferring your consuming skills to your public through the magazine that employs you'.

Bourdieu describes this kind of professional utilisation of taste as 'cultural missionary work' (1986:613) and many of my participants described their profession in similar terms. Good taste gave them cultural authority and they described a process of instruction. As newspaper supplement fashion editor, Tina told me her readers, 'definitely think I know more than them and they trust what I say'. While Binky characterised her job as, 'almost to hand your taste level to someone'. Bourdieu suggests that cultural intermediaries 'make a profession of supplying the means of bridging the gap between 'is' and 'ought' in the realm of the body and its uses' (153). Participant's endorsed this suggestion explaining how they guided their anxious readers to the right decisions and describing themselves as, 'arbiters of taste' (Lucas) and 'the women that are dominating the tastes of the nation' (Wendy).

Although good taste was referred to throughout my interviews participants did not define the term, but took its meaning for granted. Taste was usually presented as an innate aesthetic knowledge and instinctive grasp of what was correct, fashionable and cool. As with other aspects of their gendered expertise, taste was understood as 'gut feel' as fashion editor Kirsty explained:

The fashion business is hugely dependent on this thing of being cool and not naff. So it's just absolutely do not go there if it's naff. It's the most damaging

thing you can do. So we're all aware of what is naff and what isn't. It's very difficult because it's all about taste and somehow taste doesn't add up, but you just have to know.

Taste was often expressed as a defining personal characteristic rather than a learned professional expertise. Interviewees depicted their good taste as something which predated, and often directed them toward, a career in feminine journalism. Several participants explained how their career had come about as a seemingly natural progression of their personal style and taste. Stylist and fashion editor Patricia recounted how she had chosen her career after one of her friends told her, 'you know how you always buy second hand things? People do that for a job'. While Louise described her career as a fashion assistant as a logical extension of her shopping habits:

It kind of escalates from going shopping. You think I'm really, really interested in this, this makes me happy, this makes me excited and you think you know... I didn't know that such things as a stylist existed until I was about sixteen, seventeen and then you kind of think well I can dress myself and get comments from other people, so I could go and do this.

In a similar narrative Kirsty told how her fashionable appearance led to promotion from secretary to fashion assistant. 'I got my job because of the way I looked. People noticed me the editor just noticed me I was running around with the shortest skirts, with Twiggy eyelashes, you know little cute hair-do'. Many participants believed that their good taste and interest in fashion was an intrinsic part of their identity and the ability to express this passion formed a large part of their job satisfaction.

- Taste: Formal Education

This view of taste as a natural gift and expression of an individual personality runs counter to Bourdieu's more structural contention that taste is a product of education and upbringing. While none of my participants explicitly

linked taste to class, there were discourses within my interview data which suggested that taste was to some extent a skill set, learned through formal and informal education. My sample was a culturally privileged group 85% educated to degree level, 53% of those at prestigious Russell group universities. Most had studied English, art or languages with classics and philosophy represented amongst the group. A quarter of the sample had some kind of formal education in fashion, art and design ranging from art foundation courses to fashion journalism MAs. Comments from participants appeared to suggest this sample was fairly representative of the wider industry, former newspaper deputy fashion editor Edward noted that, 'at least 50% of the newspaper journalists, probably more, now have come from that academic background, from an English, or certainly from an academic background'.

Participants drew on this education to define their expertise through an understanding and knowledge of the history of fashion and design. Olivia, a newspaper fashion writer with a postgraduate degree in costume history, exemplified this strand. Her education appeared to give her confidence and a sense of authority, as she told me, 'I have a speciality in something, I have an expertise'. This expertise allowed her to interpret and explain fashion to her less knowledgeable readers:

If I'm writing a womenswear feature I try to instruct, I just wrote a piece about Forties tailoring so I put it in a context to explain why it's here and its background and then try and address how you might do that.

This approach was endorsed by other participants who foregrounded the importance of fashion's history, former magazine editor Wendy spoke at length about her disapproval of people who tried to enter fashion journalism without this knowledge, 'I'm always appalled and astonished by people who know nothing about the history of fashion. They don't understand what St Laurent did, they don't know what Dior's New Look was, they don't know who Madame Gris was.'

Such participants linked fashion to fine art and design during interviews and viewed fashion as in the words of deputy fashion editor Celia ‘an art form, like photography, a design form, it’s just one of the arts actually, culture’. These participants spoke of fashion in a register of high culture often developed through an art education. Magazine executive fashion editor Amelia was typical of this type of participant, she had ‘studied fine art and visual arts and that was kind of my track, throughout my education was towards fine arts’. She saw her career in fashion as an extension of this education explaining:

A lot of people come from the arts and there’s a natural kind of affinity between fashion and fine art. A lot of the same language a lot of the same ideas about design and the ways we talk about design.

My sample were highly educated, often in elite institutions, this education provided them with a cultural capital which often expressed itself through knowledge of art and other high-cultural products. This educational capital undoubtedly informed their tastes, and in their own terms, helped them to distinguish between the ‘fabulous’ and the ‘naïf’. Educational capital, combined with the informal types of cultural capital that I will detail in the next section, instilled my participants with confidence in their own aesthetic judgements and a belief that they were in a position to bestow their cultural knowledge on others in the form of ‘good taste’.

- Taste: Informal Education

The elite nature of the education of many of my interviewees suggests that they possess a high level of cultural and social capital, which they can draw upon in their professional lives. However, formal education did not dominate the composition of feminine capital, instead in a highly self-reflexive process it appeared to emanate from the subfield of feminine journalism itself. Bourdieu’s analysis of capital has been critiqued for its focus on education to the detriment of other forces such as the media (Lury, 1992). My interview data suggests that is

the media, specifically women's magazines, which is responsible for inculcating much of the feminine capital at work in the field. It appears that feminine dispositions are not exclusively the product of formal institutions or even the family, but are also fostered by what Bourdieu describes as 'semi-legitimate legitimizing agencies' (1986:77) such as women's magazines. This conclusion recalls the stress Gray places on 'informal knowledges' in her assessment of feminine capital, which she suggests is developed not through formal education:

But through, among other things, the use of 'self-help' literature, including women's magazines, TV programmes, books and videotapes and the 'work' of consumption, browsing, shopping for clothes, fabrics and furniture, which develops competence in selection, combination, construction of a 'look' or 'lifestyle' and other forms of personal expression. (2003:492)

This description is highly pertinent to my research and resonates with my participants' narratives of personal taste developed through consumption and exposure to commercial feminine culture.

A large majority of my participants spoke of early formative reading experiences, as stylist and fashion editor Patricia told me, 'I remember looking at magazines a lot and being really influenced'. This reading was often portrayed as fanatical or extreme. Numerous participants described themselves as magazine junkies or portrayed their reading using terms such as 'pathological' or 'obsessive'. Many began reading women's magazines from a very young age as in magazine fashion editor Natasha's description of her reading habits, 'I read *Vogue* from the age of 8, I didn't know what I was reading but I read it anyway. It was just very fascinating to me and I've always been attracted to beautiful things one way or another'. Interviewees talked of magazines in an emotional and passionate register, this reached an extreme in Nancy's description of her reading, 'I've always, always read lots of women's magazines I love them, love, love, love'. Other participants talked of collecting magazines, evidencing their love of the genre, like magazine editor Cleo, by

telling me, 'I've got all the first year's issues of *Just Seventeen*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Vogue*'. Obsession was a term that was used again and again as in deputy fashion editor Celia's depiction of her relationship with newspapers, 'I've always been obsessed with newspapers, like I read absolutely everything I buy all the Sunday papers and read everything and I'm particularly obsessed with fashion, obsessed with fashion supplements, with lifestyle supplements.

Participants described how they had accrued aesthetic, visual knowledge through their interest in fashion and magazines. Fashion editor Tina's description of her early reading exemplifies this type of response:

I used to read a lot of fashion books as well and knew a lot about the history. I guess my interest started when I bought my first *Vogue* when I was about 13 and it was fabulously mesmerising. Because where I came from was a very ordinary semi-detached environment and then there was this incredible ridiculously glamorous world. I kind of learnt all these new French phrases and about all these crazy people.

Such accounts suggest that participant's early reading of women's magazines played a large part in their attainment of feminine capital. There was a strong educational narrative in many interviews with participants describing learning about femininity from magazines. Supplement editor Sandra explicitly set reading magazines against formal educational in her account saying:

My education was a little inadequate... but I've always been a magazine junkie, I would go out and buy magazines. I remember during my O-levels buying magazines and sort of stacking them up as a reward for when I'd finished my exams.

Several participants link their early experiences reading magazines to their careers, suggesting that they were honing skills that would later serve them in a professional context. Some journalists even talked of using magazines to create what they called 'mood boards', 'tearing out bits of magazines and pasting

it all together' (Megan). Fashion editor Binky explained this process in the most detail:

I used to spend a lot of time making kind of scrap books and at the time maybe I didn't understand what I was doing, but I was cutting out pictures from magazines and almost making mood boards and putting trends together. I spent a lot of recreational time on it, but didn't really know how to channel it to good use.

Participants depicted women's magazines as a source of authority and judgment and this depiction was a constant through discussions of their childhood experiences to descriptions of their professional activities as taste makers. The strong discourse of instruction which reverberates through my interview data is echoed in academic considerations of magazines, which have often suggested that, 'becoming feminine is a task to be accomplished through the acquisition and consumption of the magazine itself' (Ballaster *et al.*, 1991:74). These descriptions of a particular feminine subjectivity achieved through the consumption of the products of feminine culture and the material rituals of consumption recalls Butler's (1997) reading of Althusser's work (Chapter Three). Such testimony goes some way to fleshing out the empty subject of the Althusserian work on magazines and illustrate the way that feminine journalism is instrumental in the creation of an embodied feminine subjectivity through its dissemination of the, 'techniques of femininity... characterised by techniques of display and projection of the female body' (Craik, 1993:44). My interview data suggests that much of the feminine capital at work within the field emanates from the successful employment of these techniques and that, as Craik suggests, women's magazines play a central role in the propagation of these skills. This circular relationship between the production and consumption of feminine culture fosters consistency and endlessly reproduces the feminine subfield in its own image. As Cronin argues of the 'self-referential, recursive relationship' between consumption and

production to be found in advertising it 'reproduces social divisions and hierarchies' (2004:353). Despite the conservative nature and reflexivity of the subfield my participants characterised the accumulation of such feminine expertise as strategies that offered possibility and movement.

Feminine capital may in part be conferred through the class privilege of the family and formal education. These institutions provide some of the cultural knowledge that underpins the field and gives it legitimacy. However, much of the specifically gendered elements of feminine capital are conferred through the commercial world of fashion and beauty and most particularly from within the field of feminine journalism itself. For many of my participants this commercial world held out the promise of perfectibility, success and movement through the achievement of femininity. As Tina told me when describing her early passion for *Vogue*, 'you definitely got a sense that there was something really exciting going on out there and if you could just get in there and be involved in it somehow, then life would be good'.

In common with many of my interviewees Tina narrates a move from 'an ordinary semi-detached environment' into a world of glamour and success through the medium of fashion and femininity. Such narratives suggest that feminine capital forms part of what McRobbie has termed a 'new sexual contract'. This contract offers the young woman, 'capacity, success, attainment, enjoyment, entitlement, social mobility and participation' (McRobbie, 2009:57) in exchange for educational success and crucially the production of a particular kind of female identity, which is 'consummately and reassuringly feminine' (57). Some of my interviewees had educational achievements at the very highest level, but as I will illustrate in the next section it was their feminine labour and capital, which dominated both the field and their professional identity.

5.5 Feminine Habitus and Embodied Expertise

Sender's 2004 book *Business not Politics* uses Bourdieu's notion of capital to interrogate the development of a gay market and the identities of individuals working within it. She points out that, 'media professionals produce not just texts but their own professional identities through taste, sub-cultural capital and specific forms of expertise' (Sender, 2004:16). She maintains that in certain circumstances a gay habitus can become a professional asset, 'gay subcultural capital may become a marketable commodity' (18). In some professional arenas, a 'display of personal identity' (64), which in normal circumstances would be considered unprofessional, can constitute capital and expertise. As I outlined in Chapter Two, the journalistic field is defined around norms of disembodied objectivity and so a 'display of personal identity', particularly one that foregrounds the body, would normally be deemed unprofessional and indeed antithetical to the field. However, as I have suggested in the first section of this chapter, within the subfield of feminine journalism such displays 'constitute a significant part of the expertise' (64) of my participants.

In Bourdieu's analysis displays of personal identity form a large part of the work of cultural intermediaries. By exhibiting, 'their consciously model lifestyle(s), the new tastemakers' (1986:311) parlay their social and cultural capital into economic advantage. Despite its apparent attachment to objectivity the journalistic field has also felt the effects of this kind of personalisation, which has been variously termed the 'feminization, sexualisation and privatisation of front-page journalism' (Hartley, 1998:62). As in Hartley's description the personalisation of journalism is often conflated with its feminization, because 'historically the role of the female newspaper writer has been to leaven the serious (male) stuff of reportage and analysis with light dispatches – news from the realm of the domestic, the emotional, the personal' (Heller, 1999:10). Women journalists have always been associated not just with consumption, but also the personal and the body. It's therefore unsurprising that within the subfield of

feminine journalism the ‘displays of personal identity’, which characterise both the work of cultural intermediaries and the direction of commercial journalism, should take on a particular intensity. Indeed Bourdieu identifies, ‘journalists who exhibit and glorify their own lifestyles in women’s weeklies’ (1986:153) as a particular exemplar of his thesis.

Many commentators have pointed out that early women’s magazines acted as conduct manuals helping to prescribe norms of femininity (Tinkler 1995; Beetham 1996). However Gill maintains that in postfeminist media cultures, ‘femininity is defined as a bodily property rather than a social, structural or psychological one’ (2007b:149). Emphasis has shifted from rules of feminine behaviour to, ‘surface presentation of the self’ (Bordo, 1989:17), so the possession of a particular type of thin, groomed and sexy body has become the key to the creation of femininity. My research resonates with Gill’s claim that:

The body is presented simultaneously as women’s source of power and as always unruly, requiring constant monitoring, surveillance, discipline and remodelling (and consumer spending) in order to conform to ever-narrower judgements of female attractiveness. (2007b 149)

My participants were preoccupied with these bodily discourses and they dominated both content production and professional norms. Much of the capital and content of feminine journalism resides in what Bordo terms, ‘the pursuit of an ever-changing, homogenizing, elusive ideal of femininity’ (1989:14). This pursuit provides countless pages of the texts that constitute feminine journalism and much of the expertise and skill-set of agents operating within the subfield. In the rest of this chapter I will examine the habitus and professional identity that is produced through this pursuit of a feminine ideal.

Feminine journalism is ‘a labour market in which physical appearance (is) valorised in the performance of the job itself’ (Bourdieu, 1986:202). Many of my interviewees acknowledged that their professional responsibilities extended far beyond the production of content, into their personal lives and bodily

dispositions. In magazine features editor Sadie's words they had to 'be there looking good embodying the magazine'. My participants positioned themselves as 'arbiters of taste' and underlying this claim to authority is the suggestion that they have the expertise needed for the successful realisation of the elusive feminine ideal. Along with this authority comes responsibility and there was a strong feeling amongst participants that maintaining a certain physical appearance, expressed through fashion, beauty and bodily ideals, was an important part of upholding their professional credibility. As deputy fashion editor Celia put it, 'No one's going to take your taste seriously, you know your diktats seriously, if you don't look the part yourself'. The notion that the maintenance of feminine ideals underpinned the field was most clearly expressed by supplement editor Trixie, who suggested that a lack of attention to personal grooming undermined professional integrity:

I mean if you're writing about the way women want to look, and you're not doing it yourself, then it means that you don't really believe in it. It's just important to care, to care and to make the effort, because if you're expecting everyone else to, then you've got to be prepared to do it yourself

While many participants identified this phenomenon and were happy to acknowledge that, 'the whole magazine and supplement industry is all about beauty and fashion and surface things' (Phoebe, executive fashion editor). Many others appeared to be uncomfortable with these ideas, often placing such values outside their own publications. So participants from magazines identified newspapers as the source of such standards, making comments such as 'in newspapers it's incredibly important to dress a certain way' (Estelle). However, newspaper employees claimed, 'it's worse on a magazine' (Mia). Despite such caveats almost all my participants were prepared to acknowledge the significance of their personal appearance. So newspaper fashion editor Mia may have downplayed the importance of a fashionable demeanour in a newspaper

context, but she ended by saying, 'I'd be lying if I said there wasn't a correlation between what you do and how you're supposed to look, of course there is'.

The majority of my participants accepted that maintaining a certain physical appearance was an important part of their professional identity and expertise. However, this was generally not depicted as an onerous task, but as a natural and integral part of their personal identity. As with feminine knowledge and taste, such embodied expertise was depicted using Ferguson's 'gut feel' discourse. As magazine fashion editor Natasha explains, 'I love dressing, I like to look good, it's part of what I do...It's part of who I am and wouldn't do it if I didn't really love it'. Participants suggested that the field would not be an appropriate one for anyone who did not 'naturally' wish to attain a certain ideal of femininity. I was repeatedly told that it was entirely obvious and natural that only those who were interested in fashion and beauty would wish to work within the subfield, or as Tina says, 'it sort of attracts people who like that stuff anyway so they are going to put the extra effort in and they are going to dress up'.

My interviewees were keen to suggest that the field naturally attracted those with a feminine habitus, rather than inculcating or imposing such a habitus on those that worked within it, as former magazine editorial assistant Pippa told me, 'to my mind it's a really natural part of the process. If the people that were writing this magazine came to work in New Look jeans and flip-flops and didn't care, then this magazine wouldn't exist'. However Pippa's interview also illustrated the extent to which a feminine habitus was fostered within the workplace and the effects of such an environment on employees. She felt that she would not have got her job as an editorial assistant on a glossy magazine, if she 'hadn't looked the part as much as walked the walk'. She went on to tell me:

They have a beauty therapist come into the office every Wednesday afternoon and it was my job as editorial assistant to send an email around the entire office asking who wanted appointments and book everybody in. So every woman on the staff could have a manicure, a pedicure, their

waxing, their eyebrows done in the office on a Wednesday afternoon. So there's no obligation to do that, but the fact that it's available gives you an idea of what's important to that atmosphere.

Pippa's background (academia and science) placed her at a distance from feminine journalism and in fact she had decided to leave the field. However, like Sadie whom I focused on earlier in the chapter, she felt working in the field had fundamentally altered her habitus. She described the drastic impact her environment had exerted on her appearance; 'my entire wardrobe was made over. I literally retired almost every item of clothing I had. Suddenly I was wearing skinny jeans. I'd gone from a size 12 to a size 8.' She expressed her feelings, about her time within the subfield, using a transformative 'coming of age' discourse; it was 'an education' in the techniques of femininity, which had made her, 'a bit more grown-up and glossy'.

Participants such as Pippa and Sadie, who identified an initial disjunction between their own habitus and the field, illustrated the importance of feminine expertise to the field. Internalising the capital and skills of the field, becoming 'glossy' and 'groomed', allowed them to feel at ease and to become a 'fish in water'. My interview data repeatedly revealed the production of a feminine habitus to be the mainstay of feminine journalism, but its importance was thrown into the sharpest relief by interview data, which pertained to stylists and fashion weeks. In the following sections I will explore these two paradigmatic examples in more detail.

- Stylists³⁵

In her 2003 book *Understanding Women's Magazines* Gough Yates drew attention to the heightened visibility of women working within the genre. She highlighted the way in which women journalists felt a responsibility to

³⁵ Stylists are concerned with the creation of fashion images; they are responsible for determining the themes and narrative of fashion shoots as well as choosing and combing clothes on fashion shoots. While styling is a facet of the work of all fashion journalists, four of my interviewees (three fashion editors and one assistant) were purely stylists with no writing responsibilities.

'literally personify new formations of feminine lifestyles' (2003:121). The importance of exemplifying the content of magazines and supplements was something that many of my participants also stressed. As Wendy, the ex-editor of several glossy magazines, told me:

The staff of a magazine is the magazine. When the staff walk in the door in the morning the magazine arrives, when they walk out the door the magazine leaves. So of course you have to have people who absolutely typify and exemplify the whole spirit of the magazine.

The notion that expertise should be embodied by professionals was most strongly expressed during interviews with stylists. Unlike the other journalists who made up my cohort, a stylist's skill-set lies purely within the visual realm. Stylists' aesthetic function meant that they felt the field's unspoken exhortation to represent their expertise particularly strongly. This was most eloquently expressed by Patricia, the fashion editor of a monthly magazine and a freelance stylist, when she told me:

You're an advertisement for what you create aren't you? I certainly do feel sometimes that I'm an advert for all the people that have got something to do with me so I have to try to be physically something for them.

Stylists Binky and Louise echoed these sentiments saying, 'so much of our job is being on brand for who we work for' and 'It's very personal you are walking around saying this is how I look and this is how my pages look'. This responsibility to, as Patricia put it; 'show your knowledge' was expressed through a particular high fashion habitus. Stylists felt an obligation to appear particularly tasteful, fashionable and creative as Binky said, 'you're somehow expected to be a bit quirkier'. This responsibility was keenly felt and, as Patricia explained, came with some financial consequences:

People say to me "oh you spend an awful lot of money on shoes why are you all the time?" Well I have to be in the world I'm in and to be in that world

you have to show an excitement about all the things around you... You have a job to do and part of that job is to be visual.

Patricia's contention that stylists must maintain a financially punitive aesthetic standard was validated by magazine editor Cleo's criteria for employing stylists. She explained 'I do try to employ, particularly with my stylists, people who are classic (magazine's title) girls who can really put stuff together and just look as if they know what they're doing'.

- Fashion Week³⁶

While stylists were revealed to be the occupational group under the most pressure visually to demonstrate their skills, this was a compulsion felt by a majority of my participants. For the most part these feminine duties were characterised as natural and pleasurable. However, they were sometimes expressed as burdensome obligations and a source of pressure. Freelance journalist Alice articulated this disquiet most succinctly saying, 'sometimes I worry that people look to me for an expertise that I feel I can't embody'. While Patricia admitted that she could, 'hardly bear to say that I'm stylist... because it's like saying 'hello I'm beautiful, hello I'm stylish, hello I'm chic'. Here the duty to physically represent the skills of the subfield was represented not as an instinctive pleasure, but as an anxious labour. Such interview data revealed tensions and breaks within the apparently seamless discourse of feminine perfectibility that underpinned the field. These accounts of fear or strain cohered around descriptions of fashion weeks.

Fashion weeks are structured around catwalk shows during which the female body is at its most visible, but this visibility extends beyond the catwalk and into the audience. My participants described such events as intensely stratified sites of rivalry in which agents from the subfield of feminine journalism

³⁶ A fashion week is a fashion industry event, lasting approximately one week, which allows fashion designers, brands or houses to display their latest collections in catwalk shows. All the most important players from the fashion industry are present during fashion weeks, the most prominent of which are held in London, Milan, Paris and New York.

and the wider field of fashion jockey for position and status. As fashion writer Olivia told me, 'there's a lot of pressure I feel at fashion week. Everyone's there to prove how fashionable they are, or how chic, or how elegant, or how on the pulse they are'. As Olivia's words illustrate this competition was primarily focused on the body. Status and position appeared to be expressed through bodily dispositions, leading deputy fashion editor Celia to term fashion week 'a visual expression of competition'. This competition is most famously expressed in complex systems of hierarchy around seating plans, but as my participants explained it is also painfully embodied.

Entwistle and Rocamora describe London Fashion week as 'the field of fashion materialised' and use the event as an example of how a field is, 'constituted and practised through embodied action' (2006:735). In bringing together all the participants from the field of fashion they argue fashion week renders visible, 'wider field characteristics, such as field boundaries, positions, position taking and habitus' (2006:736). They too note that fashion week, 'is a particularly visible realm where identities are created through visible performances'. My participants stressed the intense visibility associated with fashion shows as magazine editor Debbie says, 'you're out there on display'. There were many references to feeling scrutinised, examined or inspected. Fashion editor Megan's description is typical, 'there's a lot of pressure... it's the scrutiny, the levels of scrutiny are hideous'. At fashion week 'women's bodies are evaluated, scrutinized and dissected' (Gill, 2007b:149) and this assessment was the source of a great deal of stress although it was universally accepted as a normal part of femininity.

Participants described the ways in which they were both the subject and object of this scrutiny, as fashion editor Tina said 'people do scrutinise and judge you. I'm part of that and I'm sure they all do that to me as well, I'm sure they probably think 'oh last season's coat'. Scrutiny appeared to focus on clothing, shoes and bags or in Entwistle and Rocamora's words, 'objectified forms of

cultural capital in the guise of clothes and accessories from fashionable and exclusive brands' (2006:746). However, inspection also extended to bodily features such as weight, with several participants noting feelings of discomfort around their shape and size during fashion week. This was exemplified by fashion editor Mia's feelings of discomfort at the first fashion week after the birth of her child, 'after I'd had my daughter I felt more self conscious about whether I'd put on weight and whether I'd be judged by my appearance'.

The necessity of looking the part and embodying one's publication or brand, which I have discussed with reference to stylists, was felt very keenly during fashion week and encompassed writers and editors as well as stylists. As Debbie, the editor of a glossy magazine explains, 'I just want to look stylish and represent my brand'. In order to feel comfortable and to operate effectively within the field agents needed to be able demonstrate that they had accrued the correct capital and mastered the habitus of the field. During fashion week these demands were magnified leading to numerous expressions of unease. This pressure and anxiety was most fully articulated by Celia who told me the following anecdote about the first day of London fashion week:

I got there and I was just like oh my god what am I wearing and looked around and the show's really minimalist and everyone was dressed really minimalist... and there am I wearing converse, boot-cut jeans and no mascara. So I got a taxi to Uniqlo³⁷ and spent a hundred quid on just some neutral but fashionable stuff and I wasn't the only person who did that I spoke to a couple of other people who'd done the same thing.

This kind of experience was replicated in other interviews with many participants explaining how they planned their outfits far in advance and 'bought loads of stuff just so I wouldn't run out of clothes to wear' (Mia).

³⁷ Fashionable high street shop.

As Entwistle and Rocamora noted, ‘bodily ease is acquired only through prolonged presence in the field and the mastery of its habitus, a mastery made flesh’ (747). This finding was replicated during my interviews, participants described a passage from anxiety to ease, displayed in Mia’s comments, ‘I think I’m more relaxed about it now I’ve been doing it for too long to worry’. In common with Pippa and Sadie, Mia’s words illustrate how prolonged presence in the field of feminine journalism led to Entwistle and Rocamora’s ‘mastery made flesh’. Participants describe how they mastered the techniques of femininity associated with the subfield and accumulated the capital that allowed them to make the correct decisions about clothes and accessories. This knowledge and capital is expressed at the level of the body allowing agents to produce and display an appropriate habitus, which will secure their position within the field.

Descriptions of fashion week highlight the extent to which the subfield of feminine journalism is concerned with the body. As Entwistle and Rocamora point out:

The field of fashion is one where the appearance of the body is absolutely critical, in contrast to fields where sublimation of the body and its appearance are central, reflecting the demand to ‘transcend’ the body in order to ‘get on’ with one’s work (2006:746)

As in Sender’s description of the gay market, here ‘displays of personal identity’ expressed at a bodily level act as capital. The wider field of journalism has historically demanded the transcendence of one’s body (Chapter Two). The disembodied objectivity which organises the field and forms a large part of a journalist’s capital can only be achieved by casting of the specificity of one’s body. However, as the example of fashion week illustrates, within the subfield of feminine journalism capital is rooted firmly in the body. This bodily capital is not merely exploited in internal competition within the field itself at events such as fashion week, but as I will illustrate in the next section extends to the pages of magazines and supplements.

5.6 The Female Journalist as Spectacle

My interview data suggests that displays of personal identity and bodily expertise define the capital which determines position taking within the subfield and also constitutes much of the professional skill used in the production of feminine journalism's content. Far from being a shadowy disembodied impersonal writer within feminine journalism, the figure of the journalist is embodied and highly visible. Female journalists are often literally visible, pictured within the pages of their publications and when not visually represented their bodies are inscribed upon the page in endless columns and articles detailing their struggles to maintain a feminine ideal. Chambers *et al.* observe that female journalists often become 'spectacles part of the news themselves, in a manner which is peculiar to their femininity' (Chambers *et al.*, 2004:3) and it is this spectacular femininity that dominates feminine journalism.

- Photographs

Images of female journalists proliferate within feminine journalism, from picture by-lines and pictorial coverage of journalists at fashion shows to staged photographs illustrating features, the faces and bodies of women journalists fill the pages of magazines and supplements. Such photographic representation increases the centrality of embodied expertise. Executive fashion editor Phoebe highlighted this connection between photography and perfectibility saying, 'people care about what they're wearing at fashion shows... because you're being photographed for different style pages'. Fashion journalists and editors are often called upon visually to represent their skills and knowledge for the reader. The scope of this representation ranges from picture by-lines to journalists acting as models in fashion shoots³⁸. Participants suggested that this kind of representation fostered faith in the journalist's capability, as Mandy, the former deputy editor of two magazine, says it allowed journalists to 'be a bit

³⁸ There are numerous examples of this phenomenon, *The Times*, *The Sunday Times* and *The Guardian* all feature weekly columns in which fashion journalists pose as models in the outfits they are writing about. While *Grazia's* journalists regularly model outfits they've chosen in the magazines pages.

more personal with the reader, so the reader can see the person who's advising them... I suppose it instils a little bit of trust'.

However this phenomenon is not confined to fashion writers reassuring their readers of their style credentials, but extends into features journalism. Alice a features writer told me, 'I have had my photograph taken more often in the last five years than ever before in my life, even as a child'. She confessed to feeling 'uncomfortable' with some of the more spurious photographic accompaniments to her articles, but was strategic about the practice:

What I've learnt is if you're prepared to be photographed doing something silly you'll get more words. So if I'm prepared to do that, it has the chance of being a cover it immediately would not be 1,200 words it would become 2,200 words.

Despite this pragmatism she expressed discomfort at this aspect of her job, acknowledging that at least one photograph had left her 'very upset'.

- Girl Columns and Confessional Journalism

The embodied, gendered nature of the capital at work within the subfield did not end with visual representations of women journalists, but permeated their work, pervading even their written words. Many of my participants cited writing as their primary professional skill and source of job satisfaction. A talent for and enjoyment of writing was often given as a reason for a career in journalism. Deputy supplement editor Daisy's effusive 'I'd always loved writing, I'd always completely loved writing' was typical of many responses. Writing was characterised as a professional journalistic skill, participants described themselves, like editor Cleo, as 'trained writers' and were proud of these professional abilities, as freelance writer and former supplement editor Lola explains:

I'm a writer first and a fashion journalist kind of second. Given the chance I could probably write interestingly about a flowerpot if I had to. I think if

you're a writer it really matters very little what you're writing about if you can write persuasively.

As Lola's comments illustrate, when discussing writing my participants defined themselves first and foremost as 'journalists', they looked beyond the subfield of feminine journalism to the wider journalistic field. They sought to blur distinctions between newspapers and magazines depicting their writing ability as the 'skill base' (Cleo) common to all journalists whatever their specialism. However, despite this characterisation, descriptions of writing were not immune to the gendered, personalised discourses, which typified the subfield. Participants described their writing style in gendered terms, often using gender to explain their decision to work within features rather than news. Fashion writer Olivia's account of her preference for features writing encapsulates this theme, 'I think as a woman as well, I can be much more expressive in a features piece'. She went on to say that she considered features writing more suited to women because, 'it's less linear, which I prefer and I find it a bit more spontaneous and a bit more personal'.

Many of my participants dwelt on the possibilities for self-expression that the subfield offered and these discourses of self-actualisation extended from the body and personal appearance into writing styles. A focus on the expression of gendered individuality produced a particular brand of intimate, embodied writing, which foregrounded the journalist's identity, or as former newspaper editor Georgina, puts it, 'the first person pronoun is all over the place'. This 'I' journalism is not confined to feminine journalism its effects can be seen throughout newspapers, as Coward observes, 'this autobiographical writing, exposing intimate personal details, is part of rapidly growing cultural trend towards the inclusion of "real-life stories" in the media, and linked to exposure of ever more intimate personal details' (2010:226). As Coward notes, 'several newspapers have sections or supplements dominated by this kind of writing: *The Sunday Times's "News Review"*; *The Guardian's "Family"* section and *The Daily*

Mail's "Fe-Mail" (227). This brand of journalism is strongly associated with women and again feminine journalism's traditional concerns place it at the vanguard of movements in journalism. Ferguson described women's magazines as 'surrogate sisters' offering support with reader's problems and crucially, 'they project empathy with, and sharing of those same problems' (Ferguson, 1983:9). Ferguson calls this the 'we're all in this together approach' (9) and claims that it is typical of magazine journalism. Such an approach rests upon the field's familiar assumption of commonality between women and demands personal revelations from the journalist.

The 'we're all in this together' approach migrated from magazines to newspapers in the early Sixties with Katherine Whitehorn's pioneering 'Slut' columns. Whitehorn was the first 'woman to be allowed to write a personal column of quite that sort' (Whitehorn 2007:139), but she paved the way for a whole brand of journalism, which Zoe Heller a later exponent of the art of confessional journalism, termed 'girl columns'. Heller defines this particular type of writing as the 'daffy girl piece in which a youngish single female confides the vagaries of her rickety personal life' (Heller 1999:11). These 'girl columns' have placed the body of the female journalist at the centre of journalistic discourse, discussing weight, sex, fashion and beauty in an intensely personal and confessional register, from Whitehorn's Sixties columns to Liz Jones' contemporary offerings. The influence of these girl columns has been felt throughout journalism, opening the field to topics that would previously have been considered taboo. Such columns are no longer only authored by women as the proliferation of fatherhood columns attests, however this type of journalism is still gendered female and often found in sections of the newspaper aimed at women. Coward suggests that, 'most journalists working in this genre are women, it being a form of journalism with strong "female" associations', and that women journalists experience a pressure to reveal personal and intimate details not felt by men. Many of my participants still associated this kind of writing with women, as supplement editor Audrey's comments illustrate:

There's definitely a brand of female columnist when it's all about them in a cocktail dress, drinking a cocktail or their car-crash relationships and I think that is still a brand of confessional journalism, which is largely female owned, which is not to say there aren't male equivalents, but it is a mainly a female thing.

Interview data about confessional journalism was rooted in gendered discourses and recalled Nancy and Jenny's description of their 'girly' editorial meetings. Once again there was an assumption that confessional, emotional journalism was facilitated by a gendered expertise. As Sandra, a supplement editor, says, 'women have always talked about their emotions more than men', while deputy supplement editor Daisy maintained that, 'women are much better at doing personal stuff'. This kind of assumption bought with it particular expectations, as Charlotte, a columnist, explained: 'I am very aware that female journalists are encouraged, people do like female journalists to write about their personal experiences more'. Sandra confirmed this view telling me, 'I think right now we're in a place where people expect you to open up personally. You need to be able to open up personally, for us as a magazine... this is about women, this is about your feelings'. This data confirmed Coward's contention that, 'feature writers, especially women, are experiencing pressure towards this emotional striptease' (2010:228).

The 'we're all in this together' approach of feminine journalism meant that the bodies and private lives of female journalists were the foundation of its editorial content. Sandra described this process to me in detail, explaining how her marriage breakdown became so much grist for the mill:

My marriage was falling apart. I had a tiny baby... the editor taught me a lot, because she'd say what happened today Sandra? And I'd say well I've had to go and see a divorce lawyer and he told me I'd shot myself in the foot because I've got a job... Ahhhh! She'd say we must do a piece about this, we must do the woman's divorce guide to money. It was like she was exploring

life through me and of course what I was going through was being experienced by tens of thousands of women so it got played out in the pages of the magazine. And it was real, real stuff.

Sadie, the features editor of a magazine, echoed these sentiments when she described the commissioning process, revealing that she too found her writers' personal lives to be fruitful ground for story ideas:

I find the best stories come when you're having a coffee with one of the writers and you're just chatting about what's going on in their lives and they tell you that they've given up drinking after some crazy incident and you think hang on that might be a good feature, 'why I turned teetotal'.

This approach meant that the lives and bodies of female journalists were exposed on the page often in graphic detail. Journalist Jill Parkin has termed this brand of journalism 'fem-humiliation' and complained that commissioning editors no longer value her 'way with words', but demand she sell her 'body and soul' (Parkin 2009:30). My participants also identified this trend, freelance writer Alice described the phenomenon most forcefully telling me that she no longer noticed her visual and physical presence in the newspaper, because, 'for me it just became normal'. She went on to tell me:

The word I use is disinhibited, which is a psychiatric term for when people get their cocks out all the time, and I used to feel that once I'd written about having my pubic area stripped of hair, or colonic irrigation... I've had something stuck up my arse for my newspaper and maybe you do start to become a bit disinhibited.

This branch of confessional journalism was characterised not so much by demonstrations of expertise, but by revelations of the work and struggle involved in the production of a feminine habitus. As Chambers *et al.* note 'it is now permissible for women to expose their own and other women's personal insecurities' (2004:217). Beyond being 'permissible' the exposure of bodily

insecurities acts as capital within feminine journalism linking the writer and reader and reinforcing the commonality of female experience. Freelance journalist Lola explained that she was happy to talk about her body and its maintenance telling me:

It's a way of befriending the reader; it's a way of making them feel comfortable. Particularly if you're self-deprecating, it's a way of saying you're not weird you're just like us... We don't look like Kate Moss we look like you. That's one of the big strings in a lot of what I write particularly about body shape. I've dabbled with diets, I fight my belly. I love my ankles. I don't mind saying this sort of stuff because I think most women have a similar thing going on.

Lola, Alice and many of the other journalists I interviewed regularly detail their quest for feminine perfection in the pages of their publications. Hair removal, diets and plastic surgery are their stock in trade. Their interviews revealed a double narrative that at once valorised a feminine habitus and bewailed the travails involved in its production. Both the attainment of embodied expertise and the narrative of the labour involved in its achievement acted as capital within the subfield of feminine journalism. Recalling Hilary Radner's discussion of Jane Fonda's body, my participants conceptualised their bodies as, 'a site of struggle, but also a terrain that can be recolonised endlessly for profit' (1995:172). These practitioners appeared to be subject to the same, often punishing bodily discourses that they produce and they positioned themselves with their readers in relation to this discipline. Journalists seek to bond with their readers by undercutting their own expertise and acknowledging the pain and insecurity that exists alongside the pleasure, in the realization of a feminine habitus. However, as Radner points out in her analysis of Fonda, my participants were in a particularly privileged relationship with the routines and demands of commercial femininity, that they helped to create and 'most women are not quite as lucky or as adept at

cultivating and exploiting their own bodies' (172). It was never acknowledged that access to this feminine habitus was unequal instead it was portrayed as a universal experience intrinsic to the terms of an identity that was gendered female. The centrality and importance of a feminine habitus went unchallenged and defined both the content and professional identities of the field. Femininity and its accomplishment are the doxic practices of the field and were undisputed by most of my interviewees, for as Bourdieu says, 'players are taken in by the game, they oppose one another, sometimes with ferocity, only to the extent that they concur in their belief in the game and its stakes; they grant these a recognition that escapes questioning' (1992:98).

5.7 Conclusion

My research suggests that, in common with Sender's work on the gay market, the capital at work within feminine journalism is rooted in displays of personal identity, which encompass taste, embodied expertise and writing itself. Many of my participants cited the opportunities the field provided for highly gendered forms of self-expression as a source of job satisfaction and one of its main attractions. Executive fashion editor Amelia's explanation of why she enjoys her job exemplifies this discourse.

I like that I can bring my personality to my job. I don't have to cover it up underneath a business suit... I can be as eccentric as I want to be ... You bring your personality to your job and in fact you're promoted because of your personality. Your identity is a big part of what makes you successful in this job.

Within the feminine journalism there was little or no separation between self and skills. Throughout my interview data participants expressed their professional skills as fundamental to their existence, conflating them with their bodies, their gender and their personalities.

Adkins and Lury have suggested that this process which they term 'naturalization' is a feature of gendered relations of production and that 'women's labour (including the production of workplace identities) is frequently embodied as part of themselves.' (1999:604). Echoing Bourdieu's contention that women cannot achieve the status of capital accruing subjects, they suggest that, 'identity practices for women cannot be detached from the person, contracted out and freely exchanged; on the contrary these identity practices are rendered intrinsic to women workers through relations of appropriation' (604). So the performance and labour of femininity is not accessible for women as a workplace resource, 'instead for women workers feminine corporeality is normalized as part of their selves'. A more complex relationship between femininity and workplace identity exists within the bounded subfield of feminine journalism. Here femininity is at once naturalized and normalized as the terms of existence and acknowledged as a laborious performance that can be mobilised as capital. In many ways my interview data brings me to conclusions that echo Huppatz's 2009 findings. In common with paid caring work, female journalism is a field in which a female body, and more importantly a feminine habitus, act as valuable capital. This feminine capital allows entry to the field and to a large extent determines progress within it, like Huppatz I, 'found that feminine skills and aptitudes are also a form of cultural capital within the field, because they enable the participants to play 'the game' of the field and play it well' (2009:61). The subfield of feminine journalism is undoubtedly an arena in which women can parlay their gendered capital into success, economic achievement and power. Many of the women I spoke to had accomplished a great deal within the traditionally male dominated field of journalism, by deploying their femininity and appealing to a similar habitus in their readers. The centrality of women readers and advertising revenues had allowed some of my participants to rise to positions of power and authority within media organisations.

In my participants' own narratives, feminine capital and expertise was universally characterised as a source of strength and empowerment. These

narratives questioned the contention that women are doomed to remain the objects of consumer culture and situated them instead as cultural intermediaries in their own right, possessive individuals accruing their own capital. My participants portrayed themselves as agents who used their feminine capital not in the service of their family, but as individuals, indeed my interview data contained many examples of women taking on the traditionally masculine-role of the breadwinner within the family and so using a feminine habitus to provide not just the family's symbolic capital, but its economic means of support.

However, despite the seductive nature of these narratives of feminine success, in order to truly understand the operation of feminine capital within a journalistic context it is important to look beyond the almost exclusively feminine world of the subfield. Huppertz is careful to point out the limits of feminine capital within paid caring work, pointing to the failure of women to achieve the most senior positions. In an argument that recalls Adkins and Lury's work she claims 'that there are parameters to these types of female privileges. In investing so deeply in feminine practices, women possibly cut themselves off from the masculine and become 'feminine selves' (61). Zoe Heller one of the most prominent journalists to emerge from the subfield of feminine journalism in the Nineties suggests that the same dangers exist for female journalists, warning that writing 'as a woman' means, 'you are required to pretend that your femaleness is all - that every one of your opinions is refracted through the lens of gender' (Heller 1999:15). Such caveats suggest that the operation of feminine capital may be more complicated outside the bounds of the subfield and that feminine journalism's interaction with the wider journalistic field may call into question the ultimate value of feminine capital. In the following chapters my analysis will extend beyond the subfield of feminine journalism and include an examination of the ways in which femininity operates in the wider journalistic field. In the next chapter I will examine the practices that are produced by feminine capital, considering the journalistic cultures and operating conditions of the subfield and

in my final chapter I will look at the place feminine journalism occupies in the field of journalism as a whole.

Chapter Six

Feminine Journalism:

The Boundaries and Practices of the Subfield

6.1 Introduction: Branded Femininity

In the previous chapter I delineated the particular species of capital at work within the subfield of feminine journalism and the feminine habitus that both produces the subfield and is reinforced and reaffirmed in this production. However, as Bourdieu points out, ‘the value of a species of capital... hinges on the existence of a game, or a field in which this competency can be employed’ (1992:98) and in this chapter I will consider how the feminine capital I have discovered sets the limits and influences the practices of the subfield. As I discussed in Chapter Three, economic factors have occupied a strange position in previous analysis of feminine journalism, presumed to determine its content and defining discourses but remaining largely unexplored. In this chapter I will try to rectify these omissions with a detailed examination of the commercial practices of the subfield. I will examine how the pairing of femininity and consumption works to demarcate subject matter and working norms, considering in particular the way in which luxury fashion brands help to constitute the subfield and its version of femininity.

My research confirms Lury’s definition of a brand as a, ‘set of relations between products or services’ (2004:1). I discovered that brands were not merely the adverts that featured in the pages of magazines, but a complex web of relationships and exchange, which constituted and defined working practices. Brands lay at the heart of the production of femininity and celebrity which represented much of the work of the subfield and their reach extended into all areas. The relationship I uncovered between feminine journalism and luxury brands met Lury’s characterisation of brands as ‘a platform for the patterning of

activity, a mode of organising activity in time and space ... extending into – or better implicating – social relations’ (1). While previous treatments of women’s magazines (McRobbie, 1978; Winship, 1987) were correct in their assumption that consumer capitalism was fundamental to the genre, the actual relationship between the cultural and economic that exists within the subfield is far more complex than has been suggested. This chapter seeks to represent this complexity by attending to the particular form that commercial practices take within the feminine subfield and tries to illustrate, ‘the way the world of commerce and goods acts upon social experience and subjectivity’ (Nixon, 2003). Through an in-depth examination of working practices around advertising and public relations I hope to illustrate the way in which commercial practices, skills and knowledge help to constitute feminine subjectivity both for practitioners themselves and through the discourses they create for their wider community of readers.

6.2 The Limits of Feminine Journalism

In Chapter Three I considered the ways in which Althusserian influenced work on magazines (McRobbie, 1978; Winship, 1987) had focused on the construction of a false totality around women’s experience which isolated readers in a private world of consumption and emotion. My research justifies the focus of this earlier work revealing a journalistic subfield which places women firmly in a private intimate sphere of consumption. In the first half of this chapter I will look at how my participants defined and delineated their professional territory and reflect upon the ways in which the occupational feminine capital I identified in the previous chapter translates into a journalistic area of expertise limited and bounded in the private realm. My participants demarcated the borders of their subfield through the rituals, expertise and skills that comprised the feminine capital and habitus they shared. During their interviews this highly specific version of femininity was generalised and made to

stand in for the whole of women's experience. Participants described a situation whereby they addressed their entire female audience through this feminine capital, explaining how they set their editorial agenda through a discourse of feminine consumption that rigidly circumscribed their subfield's subject matter and set its boundaries in the embodied private sphere.

Consumption was unanimously characterised as the subfield's central and defining discourse, indeed many participants portrayed their publications as shopping aids. While other editorial goals were identified, such as education, information, entertainment or escapism, these aims were always linked back to the subfield's central theme and were usually fulfilled through the purchase of goods of one kind or another. The reader's positioning as a consumer remained stable, whether the products in question were clothes, leisure activities or cultural goods. The conflation of the female reader and the consumer was crucial to the aims and identity of the subfield and provided the gendered address that distinguished it from other areas of journalism. The inseparability of femininity and consumption within journalistic structures appeared to make it self-evident that publications or sections of newspapers that targeted a female audience, would automatically address their readers as consumers. This assumption informed my participant's differentiation of their subfield, they repeatedly suggested that while women might be interested in many different types of content, readers would not expect or desire to find areas such as news and current affairs covered with any detail within journalistic products that were gendered female.

Feminine journalism's *raison d'être* is provided by the assumption that female readers need a distinct journalistic sphere to reflect their concerns. Most of my participants took this gendered division of readership for granted and expressed it as a simple and uncomplicated truism. Like Ferguson, writing twenty-five years earlier, I found a shared and implicit set of assumptions about both the genre and its audience. The most marked of these was the notion 'that

women's magazines by definition are a separate, specialist genre devoted to 'female interests' and that their devotions accord with the presumed homogeneity of the exclusively female culture they reflect' (Ferguson, 1983:159). Ferguson's interviews revealed that for journalists working within magazines 'divisions of feminine concern were pre-ordained' and 'natural'. This was equally true for my participants who displayed a high level of consensus about what constituted female culture and which categories of experience could reasonably be assigned to their subfield. Lola, a freelance writer, encapsulated the definition of feminine journalism that appeared to prevail amongst my participants, when summing up her own expertise, 'basically food, fashion and shoes, plus the kind of things that make girls happy and sad. That's my bag really.'

Participants from women's magazines tended to take the female composition of their readership for granted, but journalists who worked for newspapers were more likely to reflect upon this gendering process. In his work on journalistic specialisation, Marchetti suggests that the, 'role specialization plays in structuring journalistic production may only be grasped relationally' (2005:64). My interview data supports this contention. My participants defined their specialism against other more 'masculine' areas of the newspaper such as news, business and sport. They described a journalistic field polarized along gendered lines, suggesting that the features and fashion of feminine journalism was the natural destination point for female readers, while men would turn to more 'serious' sections of the newspaper. Newspaper features editor Jenny expressed this gendered bifurcation very strongly when discussing reading patterns, explaining that her supplement was, 'for women readers basically, if you're taking the traditional reader it's the man who buys the paper for the financial pages and the news and it's the woman who gets the magazine and reads it all week.' Another newspaper feature's editor Nancy supported this view suggesting that, 'the husband is bringing in the newspaper and he reads the news section and the features section is passed on to the wife.' While other participants were more wary of depicting gendered reading in such simplistic

terms, there was a universal perception that fashion and features content was the main attraction for a female readership. Participants often cited market research to support this view as in these comments from Trixie, the editor of a newspaper supplement:

Within the paper it's meant to be the USP for 18-45 year old women and it is the reason to purchase, they call it. There was a massive research project done over the summer and it was confirmed as the main reason to purchase amongst 18-45 year-old women. So that's what it is, it's a drive to purchase editorially.

Many commentators have noted that women's magazines are confined to the private sphere, only approaching public concerns through the medium of the personal (McRobbie, 1978; Ferguson, 1983; Winship, 1987; Ballaster *et al.*, 1991) and my interview data does nothing to disturb this view. Participants defined the nature of their specialism using a system of gendered binaries, an embodied private sphere of consumption was set against a masculine public sphere. This relational approach to the demarcation of their field necessarily excluded many types of editorial material. Magazines and supplements were viewed as part of a portfolio of products that women could access to fulfil their various interests. The presumption was that women would not seek content relating to the public sphere from publications that were coded female, but instead would access such material through other media sources. Therefore, subject matter relating to politics, civic life and international affairs was judged unsuitable for the subfield. While participants were keen to impress upon me their belief in their readers' varied lives, interests and responsibilities, they deemed many of these interests unsuitable for inclusion within publications or sections of newspapers that were explicitly gendered female. Feature editor Sadie explained that her monthly magazine did not cover political stories because:

I just think those kind of stories ... don't really fit very well in the mix and I think you can read newspapers and I think you can watch the news. I'm not

saying our readers aren't interested, they're intelligent people, but I think they get that stuff from elsewhere.

Cleo, the editor of the same magazine, shared this commissioning principle telling me, 'we don't do investigative reports into war-torn areas that's not why women buy magazines'. Even when participants gave examples of material they considered to be 'serious' it usually related back to the body or the private sphere. They often cited sexual and domestic violence and reproductive rights, as in this example from Cleo, a monthly magazine editor, 'we did a lot of political campaigns. We did a lot of campaigns to help women who'd been raped. We did a campaign against domestic violence'.

Feminine journalism's gendered address refracted politics or foreign affairs through what magazine editor Beatrice termed a 'filter of style or consumerism'. This filtering meant that most issues were approached through the medium of consumption as in this example from Beatrice, 'we've commissioned a piece on the American election, but through the fashion scene, so we've got a writer looking at how the American designers are reacting to the fact that there's an election'. Participants from the new brand of weekly magazines revealed a slightly different editorial criterion that saw a juxtaposition of news, fashion and consumption content. Mandy, the former deputy editor of two such weekly titles described this mix, 'one minute you've got your £20 shoes from New Look and JLO or whatever and suddenly you've got women who are binding their feet in China'. Participants dubbed this approach 'news and shoes' and credited it with much of the success of weekly titles, as Janice, the editor of a weekly explains:

I think what's most unique about it is this mix. I think that's what people love. It's really modern that you can go from a spread on something that's happening in Afghanistan, to a spread on Kate Moss' relationship, to a four page on hot new gladiator sandals.

Despite the stress participants from weekly titles placed on news coverage, the image oriented, commodified nature of the reporting did not disturb the subfield's central discourse. Instead women's interest in news and current affairs was conceptualised as part of their general preoccupation with consumption. News was placed on a level with 'must-have handbags', as a necessary commodity, as these comments from Estelle, the deputy editor of weekly magazine make clear:

It's just like you might watch GMTV in the morning and then you might pick-up *The Guardian* and while talking about a serious subject you might be looking in a shop window at the next pair of shoes you'd like. That's what women are today. You can be intelligent as well as wanting nice things in your life.

The selection of news stories was predicated on an ability to conform to the glossy editorial values of such weekly magazines and photographs dominated news coverage. Participants revealed that the choice of images played a crucial role in story selection, as Mandy explained, 'its image led, it's so visual. Yeah we'll do a story about the crisis in Sudan or whatever, but it will have to be accompanied by a really beautiful or sensational image'.

The submersion of news and current affairs beneath an overwhelming discourse of consumption was most clearly expressed by Mandy, a former newspaper journalist who had gone on to work in magazines. She expressed a great deal of frustration with the editorial hierarchy she found in magazines and the lack of importance placed on news stories and illustrated this with an anecdote about a reader's response to a story about rape:

We had a story about a girl who had been gang raped, and ok we gave her a bit of a makeover just to make her look nice, and a girl wrote in saying 'oh it's terrible that she got gang raped, but can you tell me where she got her dress from?' So that's the sort of reader you're dealing with. I think they do get a bit confused at the end of the day it's all about shopping.

Despite Mandy's contention that the reader was 'confused' her description of the editorial values of both the magazines that she had worked for suggested that in fact the reader was entirely correct and it was indeed, 'all about shopping'.

My interview data suggests that contemporary commercial journalism aimed at women, 'continues a process begun over a century ago of approaching and appealing to women as domestic consumers, rather than as fully-fledged citizens of a public sphere' (Chambers *et al.*, 2004:227). Just as participants drew on a shared feminine habitus to define their professional expertise, they cited this same discourse when demarcating the boundaries of their subfield. The impossibility of separating women and consumption meant that explicitly female journalism was presupposed to be concerned with a very limited set of subject matter. My participants were careful to note that women were in fact citizens concerned with the public sphere, but they were also insistent that journalism that was coded female could not facilitate these concerns. Instead, they were adamant that women should look outside the subfield to a wider journalistic field, which was implicitly masculine. Therefore, despite their caveats my participants painted a picture of a subfield that continued to define itself against a masculine public sphere and to associate women with consumption, the body and the private realm. These assumptions resulted in the narrow set of editorial aims I will consider in the next section.

6.3 The Editorial Aims of Feminine Journalism

In 1976 Beatrix Miller, then the editor of *Vogue*, described her magazine's remit as, '60% selling a dream and 40% offering practical advice' (cited in Winship, 1987:13). My interview data suggests that this combination of indulgence and instruction still defines feminine journalism over thirty years later. Miller's comments find an echo in fashion editor Tina's description of what she thinks contemporary readers want from her supplement:

They want to have glamour so they want to see the most beautiful dresses, shot on gorgeous models, somewhere really fabulous, but then they also want to know what's the cool jeans, or what are the It bags this season, it's that mix of information and escapism, which the modern fashion industry is all about.

These twin aims applied across the field, all my participants told me that entertaining and informing their readers was their primary goal. However, my interview data suggests that both these ends were met by editorial material that related to consumption.

- Entertainment

Participants placed a high priority on entertaining their readers and this goal was expressed through the related discourses of aspiration, luxury, glamour and celebrity and almost invariably related back to the field's primary theme of consumption. Those working within feminine journalism set out to provide escapism, indulgence and comfort for their readers. Many participants spoke of their publication as an opulent commodity in its own right, as in freelance journalist Ella's description of magazines as 'a luxury item I suppose an affordable luxury item for women'. Interviewees dwelt at length on the temporal and spatial nature of reading a magazine and the opportunities for indulgence and relaxation it afforded. Participants placed both the content of the field and the reading experience itself firmly in the private sphere, providing comfort, relaxation and indulgence. The genre was strongly associated with certain environments and there were many evocations of reading in the bath, reclining on the sofa, or on a long train journey. Interviewees portrayed the reading experience as leisurely and protracted, time and again participants characterised their publications as a retreat from the reader's busy, pressurised and

demanding day-to-day life³⁹. These comments from Trixie are typical of many others:

Basically what I feel is you want your reader to be picking up (*supplement title*) on a Sunday evening just after she's run her bath taking a glass of wine or a cup of tea and really enjoying it for that 40 minute she spends soaking in the bath on a Sunday evening in preparation for the week.

As well as this strong discourse of leisure, relaxation and luxury, participants delineated the editorial goals of their publications through themes of escapism, glamour and aspiration. The belief that readers wanted to escape into another more exciting existence was ubiquitous within the subfield. Magazine editor Cleo maintained that 'women buy magazines to be inspired. It's to go into another world, to be part of something that's very different from their day-to-day.' Fashion editor Tina agreed explaining that her readers wanted 'a peek into a really glamorous world that doesn't necessarily resemble their own lives.'

This 'glamorous world' was largely constructed through consumption, it was a world of abundance and plenty in which people made the 'right' consumption choices and through these choices assembled a perfect lifestyle. As Bourdieu noted in *Distinction* 'lifestyle' represents, 'a systematic commitment, which organises and orients the most diverse practices – the choice of a vintage cheese or the decoration of a holiday home in the country' (1986:56), and feminine journalism's primary editorial concern is the organisation and orientation of these 'diverse practices'. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, the possession of 'good taste' forms a large part of the capital at work within the subfield and in editorial terms this capital manifests itself as innumerable articles detailing the consumption choices of the rich,

³⁹ This kind of interview testimony strongly recalled Radway's seminal work *Reading the Romance* (1987) in suggesting that the products of feminine commercial culture provided women with space and time for themselves.

famous and professionally tasteful, or as editor Debbie put it ‘an insight into the lives and style of the best taste-makers in the world’.

Feminine journalism’s editorial content presents ‘the universe of cultural goods as a system of stylistic features constituting a life-style’ (Bourdieu, 1986:230). Implicit throughout this editorial is the notion that this fantasy lifestyle can be attained by the readers if they too make the correct decisions about which goods and leisure activities to purchase. Supplement editor Trixie made this explicit when setting out her editorial manifesto:

It’s very important that it’s aspirational, but at the same time its accessible and that’s a really hard editorial line to tread. So yes here’s some lifestyle porn, here’s some nice houses and here’s some recipes that you can do yourself and here’s some things you can do in your own home. So isn’t this beautiful? But guess what? You can have a bit of it.

Numerous participants repeated Trixie’s desire for an ‘aspirational’ publication, indeed aspirational was one of the adjectives most commonly applied to the subfield. Participants maintained that their audience wanted to read about people living a lifestyle placed economically and socially above their own and crucially that the reading process helped them to aspire to achieve something of this lifestyle for themselves. During interviews participants presented me with their own narratives of movement and success, achieved through good taste and the realisation of feminine ideals (Chapter Five) and this same discourse dominated the pages of their publications.

- Education

As I detailed in the previous chapter feminine journalism offers the possibility of a transfer of taste from the ‘professional taste makers’, the journalists, celebrities and other cultural intermediaries, to the reader and it is around this transfer that the other editorial aim of the field, ‘practical advice’ or ‘information’ is organised. Participants consistently depicted themselves as

providing a service, they felt they were informing, educating and instructing their readers. This goal mirrored one of the classic functions of journalism to inform and educate citizens in order to help them engage in debate and participate in public life (Chapter Two). However, within the subfield of feminine journalism the reader is almost always addressed as a consumer rather than a citizen and the advice and education is usually about shopping and consumption, as Kirsty, the fashion editor of a supplement put it, 'you are a shopping service, that's what you are, you're informing people out there'. Magazines and supplements were variously described as 'a vehicle from which you can shop', 'a facilitator for shopping' and 'an information oriented service industry'. This shopping function was identified as a primary purpose by everyone who worked within fashion and beauty and by the editors of magazines and supplements. When asked what they felt women wanted from publications, shopping advice came top of many participants' lists. As Mia, a newspaper fashion editor, put it, 'I think they want quite a lot of practical advice. I think they want to be told where to buy things'. Interviewees claimed that their often anxious readers trusted them to sift through the products on offer and guide them to the 'correct' choices. Tina explained:

You get the product right and people trust your choices and your edit on the product because people don't necessarily want to have to think about every single piece of product that's out there. They want you to think about it for them, so they can at least know that, that thing from Selfridges is nice and if they go and buy it, it's ok. There's a lot of insecurity.

While Beatrix Miller's editorial combination of dreams and practical advice still defined the subfield, the percentages devoted to each element appeared to have shifted. Miller placed, 'offering practical advice' as the lesser partner in her credo, but my participants were unanimous in depicting their subfield as increasingly focused on the provision of information. This information was almost entirely concerned with consumption and mainly

consisted of the detail of products and shopping. As fashion editor Paula told me, 'the direction that fashion is going in, in every newspaper including this one, is shopping'. This distinction between fashion and shopping was made by numerous participants and was linked to the fast fashion movement detailed in Chapter One. The widespread availability of cheap, designer influenced fashion appeared to have translated into a proliferation of product-led content, organised around shopping information. This commercial product driven journalism was often contrasted unfavourably with what was perceived as a more creative and artistic past, former newspaper deputy fashion editor Edward was most vociferous in his complaints about this direction 'it's changed from an inspirational art form into something that's much more commercial, more practical, prosaic and I suppose informative now.' He exemplified this change in emphasis by pointing to a shift from elaborate, artistic fashion shoots, to still life fashion pages on which products were laid out like, 'a kind of catalogue'. This shift towards shopping content was evidenced by Sandra's vivid description of the relaunch she undertook on becoming editor of a newspaper supplement:

I could feel the world was changing. If you go through those old magazines, fashion was right at the back of the magazine, it was food, fashion. Fashion was the last thing you came to. And I thought I'm going to bring fashion right up to the front, because suddenly we had a high street with affordable clothes and people were buying and I'd look at the girls out in the office coming back at lunchtime with bags of stuff and I'm thinking hang on a minute ... we're in the middle of a buying frenzy.

Newspaper fashion editor Tina painted an equally dramatic picture of a move toward an industry that, 'is so much about buying', when she spoke of the proliferation of goods on offer over her fifteen year career in fashion journalism:

Suddenly it became about product and fabulous product, whereas before that it was sort of about designers and their identities... When I look back

now to what was in the shops then and the difference today and there is a 100 times, maybe 1000 times more stuff than there ever was. A 1000 times more stuff that you can just buy.

The subfields avowed purpose, escapism and education around a central discourse of consumption, is intrinsically linked to its particular conception of femininity, but also to its political economy and funding model. In the next sections, I will consider how advertising influences the identity, editorial content and working practices of feminine journalism.

6.4 The Commercial Aims of Feminine Journalism

Feminine journalism's commercial aims helps to explain the unassailable position that consumption holds within the subfield. As I detailed in Chapter Three many commentators have defined the relationship between magazines and advertising as central and defining (Ferguson, 1983; McCracken, 1993; Nixon, 1996; Gough Yates, 2003). My research supports this view and extends it to include large sections of newspapers, my participants identified obtaining advertising revenues, along with circulation figures, as the main function of their work. Participants regularly cited attracting female readers and the 'right' kind of glossy advertising as a major aspect of their job and often these two aims were not presented as separate or distinguishable. The field's consistent positioning of its female readers as consumers allowed the desire for women readers and advertising revenues to be expressed as a single goal. As former newspaper editor Georgina revealed:

I think every newspaper wants to get a good cross section (of readers), but because so many purchasing decisions are taken by women in order to keep advertisers happy, it's a purely commercial thing that you want to get women readers... Advertising and circulation, but the two are so interrelated. Newspapers are commercial.

Advertising is the primary source of funding for both magazines and broadsheet newspapers and so all my participants depended on advertising revenues for their livelihoods, but participants did not approach this underlying fact uniformly. In data that echoed their pragmatic attitude to the demarcation of the subfield, magazine journalists were more likely to approach the centrality of advertising as self-evident and unproblematic than those working in newspapers. The editors of women's magazines were unanimous in their prioritisation of advertising revenues and in their willingness to characterise their relationship with advertising as fundamental and defining. As Cleo explained, 'people always say there's so many ads in magazines, well there would be no magazines if there were no ads.' The recognition that advertising revenue enabled all other goals and functions of the magazine meant that pleasing advertisers was identified as one of the key roles of a magazine editor, as Beatrice made clear:

I'm aware of the fact that this particular magazine is funded hugely by advertising. I don't actually have the percentage of advertising vs. circulation revenue in my mind, but advertising is definitely way ahead of circulation and we make a lot of money. I mean we've got the highest page rates in the country and so I have to think about it in terms of making sure that those advertisers want to advertise in (*magazine's title*).

Newspaper journalists were less willing to describe their relationship with advertising in such basic and unvarnished terms, as I detailed in Chapter Two, the prioritisation of commercial advertising goals is frowned upon in professional journalistic discourses and associated with a lack of status and respect. Highest standing is given to non-revenue goals such as foreign reporting and commercial specialisms are placed at the bottom of the pecking order. Newspaper participants' position at the heart of the journalistic field may in part explain their unwillingness to foreground their advertising goals (Chapter Seven), but their position within high circulation portfolio

publications did appear to offer some protection from advertising pressures. However, the positioning of feminine journalism within a newspaper context only served to highlight its interconnection with advertising and throw its associations with consumption into starker relief. My research echoed Harp's findings on the women's pages of American newspapers, I too found that, 'contemporary women's pages had been created as a marketing device to entice and satisfy advertisers' (2007:89). Participants from the top of newspaper's editorial structures made it clear that supplements and fashion were included in newspapers in order to attract women readers and by extension advertising revenue. This instrumental approach to feminine journalism is clear in associate editor Frances' comments about her newspaper's fashion coverage:

It's advertising driven. We did a big interview with (*fashion designer's name*) to launch London Fashion Week and we've been doing a spread every day during fashion week in the features section and that's because we're trying to get (*luxury brand*) to advertise it's that crude.

Georgina and Frances both occupied executive positions outside the subfield and were happy to identify feminine journalism almost entirely with advertising revenues. Newspaper participants placed within the subfield were loath to define their work so completely in commercial terms, but there was a universal recognition that attracting fashion advertising was one of the primary functions of feminine journalism in a newspaper context. Several participants suggested that the supplements for which they worked owed their very existence to a search for advertising revenue. Audrey explained that her newspaper launched the supplement she edited because, 'a lot of glossy advertising is aimed at women and we wanted a vehicle for that'. While fashion editor Tina thought that newspaper executives saw her supplement and its female readership as a 'cash cow':

It's about appealing to the women readers in a huge way and it's about creating a destination point for women readers... Then commercially it pulls in the advertising, so it has an important commercial role to play as well. I think it's definitely a cash cow and that's how they (newspaper executives) look at it, they want to maximise the amount of cash and cow that goes on.

Feminine journalism attracts adverts from fashion and luxury goods conglomerates such as Prada, Gucci and LVMH, and this 'glossy' advertising makes the subfield amongst the most lucrative areas of the newspaper. Participants were aware of this revenue generating capacity, often pointing out that the supplements or sections for which they worked made a great deal of money. Features editor Jenny and supplement editor Trixie were among those to make claims such as, 'we are the biggest grossing product of the whole of (name of newspaper group)' and 'commercially it brings in enormous amounts of money more than any other section because the page rate for the advertising is so big'.

Despite a more ambiguous attitude toward advertising, newspaper participants acknowledged their positioning, within editorial structures, as revenue generators and this role bought their advertising goals close to those of newsstand magazines. On the most basic level, all participants understood that the number of pages they could produce was dependent on the number of advertisers they attracted. So Nancy a newspaper features commissioning editor, whose job was ostensibly removed from commercial pressure, could still explain how advertising impacted her work, 'in as much as it will affect our page count and there's a knock on effect on how much I can commission a writer, when their piece can appear things like that'.

6.5 Brands and Advertising: Identity

While the political economy revealed in my interviews supports the economic determinism that has defined the approach to advertising in previous magazine study, I discovered that the relationship between the subfield and its

advertising brands went far beyond functional economic considerations. Far from merely funding and facilitating content, luxury brands and their advertising provided the subfield with its editorial identity and many of its working practices. Participants did not frame the necessity of attracting advertising in instrumental terms. Instead, certain types of advertising appeared to signal that publications were themselves luxury commodities and so elevated them to a glossy, glamorous and aspirational world. Advertising actually fulfilled many of the subfield's editorial goals around opulence and escapism, as deputy supplement editor Imogen explained, 'the adverts look beautiful that's the thing and that raises the stock of your supplement'. Rather than being a necessary evil, 'glossy' adverts were described as desirable and even essential, the advertising campaigns of luxury conglomerates were a defining feature of the field, conferring status, success and brand identity. Participants suggested that such adverts acted as currency bestowing authority upon a publication and inspiring trust in its readership.

Securing high profile fashion advertising emerged as a key marker of success within the subfield, as former newspaper editor Georgina explained when discussing supplements, 'success in that industry means getting the glossy ads'. Many of my participants repeated this contention, Janice the editor of a weekly magazine, explained that securing luxury fashion advertising was crucial because, 'it's who we are', while Kirsty the fashion editor of a supplement felt such advertising was essential in order 'to look like a fashion magazine'. According to my participants, premium advertising was not merely a financial facilitator, but a primary goal in its own right. The importance of this goal was demonstrated by Mandy's memory of the excitement the advertising 'big spenders' caused at the weekly magazine she had deputy edited, 'they had their first Prada advert and they were so excited about it and then the whole magazine had to be as high-end as possible... because Prada were at the front'.

Adverts were not depicted as universally desirable revenue generators, instead the ranking and selection of appropriate brands formed part of the subfield's professional expertise. Participants deployed their much vaunted aesthetic and taste capital to grade advertising brands in a hierarchy from high-end adverts that 'looked beautiful' to lower quality adverts that according to fashion editor Kirsty, looked 'ghastly' and were 'naff, and embarrassing'. As she explained, 'you don't want TK Max and Matalan all over your pages you'd rather have Louis Vuitton it just brings everything up'. Ex supplement editor, Lola reinforced this view:

I only wanted decent ads because good ads set against good editorial upgrades your whole product. If you've got great editorial and you've got an advert for, I don't know, Sandals 18-30 holiday or something crap like that, you kind of feel a bit upset and actually what you really want is Michael Korrs' perfume.

A class subtext underpinned this hierarchy with words like 'chav' and 'footballer's wives' used to distinguish the unacceptable from the attractive. Participants' attitudes to advertising served to confirm Bourdieu's contention that, 'social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar' (1986:6).

As Cronin (2000a, 2000b) has suggested, advertising constitutes particular markets and so helps to materialise social categories and the targeting of publications within the field of feminine journalism supports this view. Advertising was directed very carefully at particular demographics and participants endeavoured to ensure that everything in their publications was targeted at the correct readership, from editorial to the advertising brands they included. Continued advertising revenue depended on attracting the 'right' kind of reader, magazine editor Janice made this clear when she described her ideal reader, 'she's ABC1 and her average household income is double the national

average'. Fashion magazines are able to maintain fairly low circulations by offering a limited number of very desirable readers to advertisers. Participants often suggested that quality not quantity was the key to their readership as magazine editor Cleo made clear, 'we're around 200,000 I wouldn't want to go higher than that and I wouldn't want to go lower than that. We have to appeal to that core fashion girl.' Through the creation of ideal groups of readers publications and advertisers constitute and generate particular markets, constructing a particular version of femininity as they do so. As Cronin observes, 'advertising agencies consistently attempt to target female consumers using a 'literal' form of address that mobilizes a naturalized relation of images of white middle-class femininity to the agencies' broad category of 'women' (2000b:168).

Mandy made explicit the classed exclusions, that underpin the choices of both magazines and advertising brands, when she contrasted the 'ugly people, ugly, poor, thick people, *Jeremy Kyle*⁴⁰ people', who she suggested read high circulation magazines such as *Take a Break* with the 'niche' ABC1 readers of glossy weeklies. My interview data suggests that while advertisers were keen to obtain the correct readers, publications were equally dedicated to acquiring the right advertising brands. Participants described a virtuous circle in which obtaining good adverts proved that publications were of a certain status and so helped to attract other advertisers. As Trixie explained:

The thing is if your magazine is fashion orientated then you get all the Gucci and the Prada advertising and as soon as you have all the Gucci and the Prada that's where everyone else wants to be because they all want their products to be aspirational.

Gaining high quality advertising also allowed magazines and supplements to raise the price of their page rate to new advertisers, as a supplement's deputy editor Imogen noted, 'the aim is to keep on improving the quality of the

⁴⁰ *Jeremy Kyle* is a day time talk show strongly associated with a working class or 'chavvy' demographic within media discourses.

advertising that you get so you can simply demand more money for the space.’ Advertising is the subfield’s main source of income and as such attracting and retaining advertisers is an economic imperative. However, advertising also plays an integral role in defining the identity of the subfield and fulfilling many of its editorial goals. The relationship between brands, their advertising and feminine journalism works to produce a particular version of consumption oriented femininity, which is then generalised to stand in for all female experience. This process helps to constitute specific feminine subjectivities and in the next sections I will consider how the ritual and practices around brands and advertising contribute to the production of the feminine capital and habitus that defines the subfield.

6.6 Brands and Advertising: Practices

My research suggests that the relationship between the subfield of feminine journalism and luxury and fashion brands is fundamental and defining. Such brands are an integral part of the subfield, woven into its editorial aims, working practices and funding model, therefore advertising does not act upon feminine journalism, but rather helps to constitute and define it. Advertising brands and their public relations representatives play a huge part in determining the editorial content and tone of magazines and supplements, both inclusions and omissions, and in shaping conventions and customs. Although at times my participants portrayed the demands of advertising brands as oppressive, they generally did not characterise the relationship as coercive, but rather as mutually beneficial and constitutive. They talked in terms of relationships and networks and emphasised the importance of being ‘nice’ to and ‘supporting’ brands both in person and in their editorial coverage. In the final sections of this chapter, I will examine the relationship between feminine journalism, advertising and public relations and look at some examples of how these relationships manifest themselves in specific working practices.

The centrality of luxury goods brands and their advertising places them in a powerful position and their influence is felt throughout the subfield. Interview material provided various examples of this influence, which ranged from directly exerted pressure and attempts to control editorial material, through to participants' commonly expressed desire to create an environment and tone that was suitable for high-end fashion advertising. My interview data suggests that this relationship was an amicable one that resulted in conflict only over matters of taste and aesthetics. The subfield's central discourse of consumption went unquestioned by most participants and its editorial goals around glamour, fun and indulgence did not mediate in favour of conflict with advertising brands. I found little appetite among participants to include editorial material that fundamentally questioned the fashion and beauty industries. When discussing pressure from advertisers participants almost unanimously focused on tensions that arose as the result of negative comments or reviews of a particular designer or brand, rather than on wider issues of production or consumption, any battles between brands and the subfield centred on aesthetics rather than wider ethical issues.

Participants expressed resentment towards advertising brands only if they found their products unpalatable. Writing an overtly critical review of a catwalk show appeared to be fraught with difficulty and treated as a last resort if the clothes were felt to be particularly aesthetically offensive. Megan, a newspaper deputy fashion editor gave me an example of an occasion when she had felt no alternative but to write an unfavourable review, but explained that she'd been worried as in the past the brands' PR had responded to criticism by banning people from shows or 'screamed at them'. However, she had gone ahead with the negative coverage because:

It was the most hideous show and everything looked like it had been stitched together in two seconds and my boss was like no you've got to do it. They all looked like prostitutes and I pretty much said that... I thought god

the PR is going to go mad, but you couldn't possibly, no one, no reasonable human being could think it was nice it was the most grim thing.

Participants were sometimes prepared to risk this kind of critical reporting if they felt that their feminine capital could be compromised by 'hideous' products. As I detailed in the previous chapter the possession of 'good taste' was key to the expertise of the subfield and so participants were unwilling to compromise in judgements of taste even if brands threatened punitive action. Megan was relieved to find there was no negative fallout from her damning review, but I was given many instances of advertisers responding to negative editorial copy by withdrawing their advertising from a publication. Supplement editor Trixie recounted several examples of this kind of draconian behaviour from advertising brands:

We have run a few features that have been insulting to advertisers and accordingly those advertisers have dropped their advertising, but if we weren't able to say those things then nobody else would. So famously we ran a piece a few years ago on Dior and how no one cool was wearing it, it was basically just the garb of Russian prostitutes. So Dior which is owned by LVMH, they dropped all the Dior advertising and they dropped all the LVMH advertising from all of the *(Name of newspaper group)* titles so that was quite heavy.

The integrated nature of the fashion industry meant that adverse coverage of one brand had potential impact across the holdings of an entire luxury goods and fashion conglomerate. As Trixie explained, 'if you're rude about one brand the conglomerate dumps advertising for all of its brands. So if you're rude about Dior you lose Louis Vuitton, Moet and Celine'. Conglomerates were also prepared to pull their advertising across a publisher's entire roster of publications so the economic impact of one critical review could be devastating. Despite participants' desire to maintain their 'taste levels', this kind of behaviour from advertisers mediated against critical reporting and participants gave many examples of

occasions when copy was altered or spiked in order to avoid offending an existing or potential advertiser. Newspaper fashion editor Mia recounted such an incident relating to a column she wrote for a weekly glossy:

Once I wrote something a bit rude about a Lariat, a Balenciaga Lariat (a bag). I think I said everyone had one or something or it was pikey. Anyway they had to take it out. They said we're really sorry we're going to have to modify this because we don't want to offend Balenciaga. They don't actually have Balenciaga ads but they'd like to.

This example was typical of many others provided by participants and suggested a high degree of control by advertising brands or as in Mia's example potential advertisers.

While participants took pride in examples of critical reviews and as in the examples above, actions that had led to the withdrawal of advertising, the way in which they recounted such incidents suggested that they were very much the exception. These stories were told with considerable satisfaction in an almost heroic register, suggesting such rebellions fell very much outside the normal structures and routines of fashion journalism. As Tina put it, 'it's really hard for people to say things that are critical because of the power of the advertisers'. The ever-present dangers of offending luxury brands mediated against any kind of critical reporting and in favour of a culture that prioritised being 'nice' and making sure brands, were 'happy'. Indeed many participants explained how they consciously avoided critical reporting, preferring to opt for silence. Megan explained that her negative review had been outside the norm of her reporting behaviour and that usually she tried to be 'sensible' and instead opt for:

A positive criticism, you know so if an advertiser, did do a really awful collection. You'd say it wasn't as fantastic, it wasn't as great as their last collection... just sort of saying it but thinking carefully about how you present your critique.

Magazine fashion features editor Natasha concurred telling me:

There are times when I have to be curbed a little bit, you know I can't slag things off, I have to rather not comment than comment. You ignore them instead of slagging them off, which is actually quite effective, your readership won't notice it but...

- Credit Counting

Advertising brands' behaviour around negative reporting was crucial in generating the subfield's positive and celebratory editorial tone, but my research revealed that the power of brands lay not only in vetoing copy but more importantly in determining and shaping the editorial that did appear. This influence came in many guises but the most striking and systematic example was a process known as credit counting. 'Credits' are editorial mentions or photographs of a brand that appear over and above paid for advertising. These credits are highly valued by brands and they expect to see them in exchange for their advertising spends in publications. Beatrice, the editor of a monthly magazine explained the system in some detail:

We're very aware of credits; it's a very competitive market out there. The advertisers now have a system where they literally have this sort of measuring thing in Italy, I don't know how it works, but you know you get one point for a name mention and five points for a cut out picture, ten points for a full page say that's a simplified way, but it's a system. And they will add up and say you've only got 40 points and we've given you ten pages of advertising and we think that you're not justifying those ten pages of advertising, because another magazine has got 80 points.

This system leads publications to 'support' brands that advertise editorially as considerable pressure can be exerted as Wendy, a former magazine editor explains, 'I was always being carpeted in some Italian fashion executive's office and accused of not supporting them, with a sort of gun to my head saying

you will use this. So we did'. A system of credit counting appeared to operate to varying degrees across the field, but it was agreed that magazines had a much more systematic and rigorous approach. Respondents from glossy magazines talked of being given a complicated list that they were forced to follow in their editorial and fashion shoots. Louise a newspaper fashion assistant looked back to her time on a glossy magazine where:

There was the thing with advertising if you're putting ten products on the page I'd say 60% of them had to tick an advertising box. You get your list, I'd say advertising in a magazine is much slicker than it is in a newspaper, they know exactly what they're getting, who's a possibility, who they're trying to get into bed with and you get that list every month and you have to make sure those boxes are ticked.

Participants from magazines outlined a byzantine system, composed of numerous subtle rules. Magazine fashion editor Patricia explained some of these regulations, 'you really couldn't ever put Louis Vuitton with Prada say because they're absolutely competition'. She mapped several levels of influence ranging from important brands that must be featured exactly as they desired, to less crucial designers who could be covered with less rigour.

Some participants accepted credit counting, considering it an inevitable part of their job, magazine editor Debbie displayed this kind of pragmatism, telling me:

Advertising is a big part of our revenue so we do have to focus our attention on the relationships with the brands that advertise with us. Because you know they have a point, you know if we're right to advertise in your magazine then you should be giving us credits and putting our product in and I sort of agree with that. I think that there's so many brands out there it's so competitive, so we do look at things, we have to look after our advertisers as it were.

However, for the most part the practice was viewed with distaste, participants felt that credit counting called into question their professional integrity and jeopardised the operation of their feminine capital. They portrayed the process as stifling and an as an impediment to creativity, Patricia explained how credit counting interfered with her aesthetic and taste judgements:

I think about the advertisers because I have to because it's part of what I do. I get a list of people that we definitely have to keep happy and then I'm allowed to put in things that I'm interested in as well but they'll usually be binned later those images. I might shoot six images with a photographer and the ones that have got the heavy credits in are the ones that are used and the ones that are possibly more my aesthetic and the thing I wanted to shoot, or the thing that held the story together for me as an idea will probably not go in, because it's not an advertiser.

Participants expressed a great deal of resentment at being forced to compromise their 'taste level', by including 'hideous' brands within their work. As Patricia explained, 'you can do this really arty idea and suddenly there's this horrendous watch in the picture'. As I have outlined taste, aesthetics and the ability to 'correctly' edit product forms the capital at work within the subfield and was jealously guarded, the imposition of 'naff' or tasteless products was a source of a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst participants. It was these aesthetic battles, rather than ethical considerations that participants felt compromised their professional integrity and autonomy.

It was universally accepted that an explicit and codified system of credit counting operated in magazines, while newspapers appeared to be shielded from this kind of systematic pressure. Many participants who had worked in both sectors compared magazines unfavourably for precisely this reason. Pressure from advertisers was felt less directly in the newspaper sector as Daisy, the deputy editor of a supplement explained:

I've worked on, what I call proper monthly glossies, the newsstand ones, where it's absolutely integral to everything you do and everything you think about and because we don't sell off the newsstand, because we sell with a paper it is different. You would be naïve to think that it doesn't matter... It's still a consideration, but we're not as beholden to them. We never have to do that thing of credit counting where you're constantly aware how much Calvin Klein you've put in.

However, despite this difference, newspaper fashion editors were still careful not to offend advertisers and to represent them in editorial copy as Audrey, the editor of another supplement acknowledged:

We're very conscious that we have to take part in this weird fashion world of getting a certain number of credits. Thankfully we don't have to do it to the same extent, but if we don't put in enough X and Y, then X and Y aren't going to advertise. So we play the game to that extent.

- Environment

Differences in the relationship newspapers and magazines have with advertising brands appeared to be of degree rather than substance. While journalists expressed relief on moving to newspapers and no longer being subject to the same level of pressure, the presence of advertising in the routines and structures of feminine journalism was defining even within a newspaper context. For beyond the specific and overt editorial interference exerted by systematic credit counting, the subfield's primary advertising goal determined editorial content in far more subtle ways. Many respondents spoke of the importance of creating an appropriate environment for advertising and this environment extended beyond fashion coverage throughout the magazine permeating features and proscribing the look and tone of the entire publication. The provision of the correct environment for advertising was so crucial that it caused Mandy, a former deputy editor of two weekly glossies, to remark in frustration: 'the advertisers would almost edit the magazine sometimes'. The

creation of an atmosphere that is deemed suitable by high-end luxury brands produces a particular type of glossy, luxurious content as Beatrice, the editor of a monthly magazine explained:

It's not just as simple as making sure their product is in (*magazine title*), you have to keep it as a magazine that they feel they have to advertise in, because they're paying a premium to be in there and the reason that they're doing that is, because ... they want the advertising to look good. They want it to be in a context where it looks right, the whole environment looks right, you know if you place a Chanel suit in *Bella* it's going to look completely out of place. I think the whole environment of the magazine is one that appeals to advertisers.

The demands of advertising brands enmesh with desire from within the subfield to fulfil editorial goals organised around luxury and consumption. As I have illustrated within this chapter, both brands and publications are keen to appeal to a particular demographic of feminine consumers and this goal mediates in favour of a consistently glamorous and glossy editorial and visual tone. As Mandy suggests this means publications prioritise, 'making everything look, whatever the topic, pretty and gorgeous and aspirational'. Discourses around femininity interlock with commercial imperatives and produce an almost seamless joint desire, in brands and journalists, for publications that are centred on indulgence, fun and glamour. Economic and cultural factors work together to produce what McRobbie terms, 'the hermetically sealed world of feminine escapist pleasure' (McRobbie, 2009:5). My research reveals a striking similarity between what female readers are deemed to desire and the kind of editorial that luxury goods brands find an appropriate setting for their advertising.

6.7 Brands and Advertising: Public Relations Practices

The relationship I have outlined between advertising brands and feminine journalism is materialised by public relations professionals or PRs who represent the commercial realm of brands within the subfield. Relationships between PRs and journalists help to structure the working routines and practices of the subfield and determine its editorial content. As I have illustrated shopping and consumption dominate the content of feminine journalism and agents demonstrate their feminine capital and expertise through their knowledge, selection and combination of products. PRs control the flow of such products, it is these brand representatives who have the power to confer on journalists within the subfield their status as privileged consumer subjects, and so they occupy a commanding position within the structures and hierarchies of feminine journalism. In his 1971 book *Journalists at Work* Tunstall noted that within areas of a newspaper such as motoring or fashion, focused upon advertising goals, 'news sources also tend to be advertisers' and can therefore withhold advertising or the supply of information. This dual role as source of both news and finance means that, 'in advertising goal fields of journalism, major news sources acquire considerable control over the newsgathering arrangements', (Tunstall, 1971:93) The commercial control of news gathering arrangements identified by Tunstall over thirty years ago is very much in evidence within the contemporary subfield of feminine journalism. Fashion brands provide much of the subfield's advertising and its editorial material and so are placed in a powerful position. As fashion editor Tina made clear, 'there is pressure and we could actually completely ignore it, but the way the industry works so many of the people that you deal with to get the products to shoot, to do stuff, to get the stories, are the same people that advertise'.

As these comments demonstrate, the nature of the field's editorial content places PRs in a commanding position. Tunstall found that within advertising goal fields 'most correspondents agreed that exclusives were either virtually

unknown or rather trivial' (252). While many of my participants did refer to exclusives, these stories were not of the same nature as news exclusives. Rather than being within what Tunstall refers to as a heroic tradition of 'disclosure and revelation' (72), fashion exclusives lie within the commercial realm and are not discovered, but handed out by PRs to chosen journalists, as Megan, a newspaper deputy fashion editor explained, 'if you want to secure an exclusive, a good contact with a PR obviously helps'. In this context exclusive means sole access to new products or advertising campaigns, or crucially to the celebrities who represent brands. Some participants described PRs as a major source of stories, Debbie, a magazine editor, remarked 'we get a lot of stories through fashion and beauty PRs', while Jenny, a newspaper features editor, revealed that a lot of content, 'is PR driven, so the idea comes from a PR'. Others were wary of attributing their story generation to PRs, but were prepared to acknowledge that it was often impossible to execute ideas without their help. Brands were so crucial to the content of the subfield that their PR representatives were an integral part of its practices as Tina explained:

What might happen is somebody might phone up and say look we've got this event or there might be a new range coming out, like the Kate Moss range for Topshop, it's not necessarily that the story is coming from PRs, but we can't do it without them.

- Samples

Processes around samples of designer garments and celebrity endorsements best illustrate the centrality of PRs to story generation and execution. This centrality results in an imbrication of brands, their PRs and journalists in the systems and day-to-day routines of the subfield. This is exemplified by processes around designer samples, samples are the first version of a designer's collection created before the clothes have gone into mass-production, as Alexandra Shulman, the editor of *Vogue*, explained in a recent radio interview, 'the sample sizes, which are the clothes we have to photograph

in the magazine, because we work so far in advance shop stock isn't available' (*Woman's Hour* 2009). Typically, only one or two of these garments exist and PRs exercise their power through control of these samples. One example of the way in which control of samples confers power is the debate around the extreme thinness of models, which dominates perceptions of the subfield. Samples are typically very small, a UK size 6-8, indeed Shulman recently wrote to designers complaining that their 'minuscule' samples were forcing *Vogue* to feature models with 'jutting bones and no breasts or hips' (Pavia, 2009). As Shulman suggests the size of the samples determines the type of models magazines and supplements can use and this was also a source of frustration to many of my interviewees as supplement editor Audrey explained:

At the most basic functional level you can't actually get the clothes in bigger sizes because they don't exist. Secondly because we are in this kind of difficult kind of dance situation with advertisers, assuming you could get the sample sizes, which you can't, if you start putting the clothes on bigger models then A. they won't lend you the clothes and B. they won't advertise. So those sorts of things are very frustrating indeed.

So the control of samples by brands and PRs cements their power to constitute specific versions of femininity, imposing a particular model of feminine beauty on the subfield. As Audrey's words suggest, beyond dictating the type of models used, a good flow of samples is essential for the functioning of large sections of the subfield. Fashion journalists and stylists need to be able to access samples of a designer's collection in order to photograph them for editorial. The PRs decide where the samples go and therefore a good relationship with PRs is essential, as Louise a newspaper fashion assistant explained, 'If I'm not friendly to the PR of Prada I'm not getting my sample. I'll get gazumped by somebody else, there's only one skirt for the whole of the UK, or for the whole of Europe, and so you have to be nice'. Phoebe, a magazine executive fashion editor, agreed:

If your magazine doesn't have a good relationship with the PR from Dolce & Gabbana or whatever, they're not going to want to lend you the samples. They have one collection and all the magazines are fighting to get their hands on the samples.

- Celebrity

As well as controlling the supply of samples into the field brands and their PRs also, control celebrity access. As I have illustrated a heady mixture of escapism, aspiration and consumption permeates feminine journalism and celebrity is the arena in which these defining themes find their most complete expression. Stars provide a medium through which the field's perfect fantasy lifestyle can be materialised and made concrete. Celebrities people the field of feminine journalism dominating both editorial and advertising pages and throughout they are depicted as actually living the dream lifestyle that the subfield promises the reader. The bodies, clothes, homes and leisure activities of famous people, particularly women, are dissected in forensic detail and usually related back to possible consumption choices for the reader. Participants agreed that celebrity dominated the subfield, with a huge rise in editorial content and magazine covers devoted to stars.

Access to these all important celebrities is mediated through luxury brands and the use of celebrity is bound up with advertising and commercial practices. While celebrities have a discursive function within the subfield symbolising the perfect lifestyle to which the reader aspires, the relationship between celebrities and advertising brands is often a formal economic one and this has systematic effects on feminine journalism. Celebrity endorsement of products is now an important part of the fashion industry and is built into its structures and practices, as Tina explained, 'there's a huge industry now that's built up... around celebrity and product, it's about getting your product on a celebrity'.

Celebrities feature in much of the highly prized glossy advertising brands like Louis Vuitton, Prada and Gucci who often use singers and actresses rather than models in their campaigns, while models such as Kate Moss are huge stars in their own right. This commodification of celebrity means that many stars are tied into promotional deals with brands and these deals come with certain publicity duties, so publications can often only gain access to celebrities through the particular brands they're paid to endorse. While film and music stars have traditionally given interviews to promote their own output, these endorsements involve the systematic promotion of products not directly related to the star. As Jenny, the features editor of a supplement explains:

We've had some really good covers lately we've had (*name of celebrity*) ... actually she was representing (*name of brand*) and they came to us with the photos and the idea for the interview...with a celebrity like (*name of celebrity*) we would have never got for any other reason than she was being paid by (*name of brand*) and she had to do a certain amount of interviews... If we'd gone through her agent she wouldn't have done it.

I was given numerous examples of this kind of brand driven celebrity content and most participants agreed that it was extremely unusual to gain access to a star without the involvement of a brand or, as Sadie a magazine features editor put it, 'it is hard to get a celebrity to be in your magazine if they've got nothing to flog.' The subfield's pursuit of aspirational, celebrity driven content cemented the influence of the PRs who determined which celebrities were appropriate and doled out access to favoured publications. Practices around samples and celebrity access illustrate the extent to which the effective provision of the fun, glamour, aspiration and celebrity, which is feminine journalism's *raison d'être*, lies to a large extent in the hands of brands and their PRs.

6.8 Brands and Advertising: Hierarchy of Publications

This control of information, samples and access to celebrities and designers, all reinforced by the ever present possibility of a loss of advertising revenue, places brands and their emissaries in a commanding position. A PR company may represent many brands so the journalist's coverage of one label will impact upon the access that is given to another and the deterioration of a relationship with a PR can have far reaching consequences. Participants revealed that PRs had an unofficial hierarchy of titles, which to a large extent determined who would take priority when samples were lent out and information and exclusives assigned. This hierarchy was referred to throughout my interviews and clearly loomed large in working practices within the subfield, as fashion journalist Olivia explained:

We are to a certain extent reliant on them (PRs). So if we do a piece as a Monday spread all the clothes have to be called in from PRs and it can get to the stage where particularly with very high-end designer pieces where they'll also have a hierarchy. So lets say we want a Gucci dress for the Monday spread if *Vogue* want it at the same time we wouldn't get it.

This hierarchy was determined by the image and profile of the magazine, the size and quality of its readership and by the relationship a publication had with a particular brand and its PRs. Glossy high-end fashion magazines like *Vogue* with its carefully cultivated image as a fashion authority were at the top of this hierarchy, but big circulation newspaper supplements also appeared to rank fairly highly in the pecking order. Magazines with a lower fashion profile and a less fashion conscious or affluent readership were at the bottom of the ladder and struggled to borrow samples or gain access to exclusives. PR hierarchy also determined the level and type of gifts and hospitality a publication's staff could expect as well as seat positioning at fashion shows. Within my interviews this pecking order was usually referred to in the context of PR's perceptions, but it was clearly felt throughout the subfield itself and was used as a marker for

professional success, affording participants' considerable satisfaction or anxiety depending on their positioning. It was evident that many of those working within feminine journalism judged their success or failure through the eyes of luxury brands and their PRs. The PR's stratification of the subfield, with its implications for both a publication's success and the professional standing and reputation of its staff, meant that the cultivation of fashion PRs and the maintenance of relationships with brands formed a major part of the labour that constituted the subfield.

6.9 Brands and Advertising: Public Relationships

PRs ensured that brands had a presence within the subfield, both in the pages of publications and within structures and working practices. Relationships and contacts with PRs act as valuable currency and capital within the subfield as Louise a newspaper fashion assistant makes clear:

When I was an intern I was on the phone, I was emailing people all the time building up my contacts, because that's what you put on your CV... You just say I have a great relationship from high-end to high-street and everything in-between and you have to know these people.

Debbie, a magazine editor endorsed this view, highlighting the amount of time she spent cultivating fashion PRs because, 'you have to be aware if you're going to edit a monthly glossy that those relationships are part of it'. Relationships with PRs often transcend working partnerships and become personal friendships, the field is composed of a network of relationships which extends beyond its journalistic bounds into advertising and PR as Debbie put it, 'people really make friends with their colleagues and their PRs and it's a real environment, it's kind of a world of different friendships and relationships' These friendships feedback into working practices influencing editorial as Olivia explained:

I think what plays a bigger role is if you have loyalty, and it comes down to personal loyalty, to a PR. So if you get on or you're good friends with somebody who works for whichever company, I think, I think, right well you know they're a friend of mine they've been good to me I like their product so I'm more likely to use it.

Despite these friendships many participants found this part of their job onerous and resented the time they were forced to spend 'stroking' advertisers. Indeed several respondents identified maintaining relationships with brands as the least enjoyable element of their work. Former editor Wendy's confession, 'lunches with the advertisers, I absolutely loathed, detested and hated' was typical of many other responses and these remarks suggest that the power and control exercised by brands could be irksome and viewed as an infringement of autonomy. However, despite this resentment attending press-days, presentations and lunches with advertisers and PRs was depicted as an important element of the work of the subfield. Facilitating relationships with brands in this way was perceived as a crucial professional responsibility as Binky a supplement fashion editor explained, 'it's a massive part of my job and I will always make sure that I go to every appointment... because the last thing you want is for it to be our fault if we cost the company money.'

- Executive Fashion Editors

The structuring role of brands and their presence within the subfield is most literally evidenced by the role of executive fashion editor. This job did not exist within newspapers, but it was common for magazines to have one or two executive editors. Executive editors act as a bridge between advertising and editorial and ensure that the brands' interests are represented within her publications. Audrey, a newspaper supplement editor, gave her perception of executive positions, 'It is basically a PR and marketing role... Executive Fashion editors are just there to schmooze advertisers really'. Although the two executive editors I spoke to did not describe their role in quite these terms, they

were clear that part of their role was to represent advertising brands and ensure that they were featured editorially in the magazine. Executive editors were commonly responsible for what are known as ‘shopping’ pages, which typically appear at the front of a magazine. These pages are usually composed of still-life pictures of ‘hot’ products and it was acknowledged that these pages ‘were filled with advertising brands’ as Phoebe an executive fashion editor explained:

You have maybe four pages a month and fill them with brands that you’re maybe having difficulty featuring elsewhere, but they spend potentially a lot of money with us and you want to support them editorially, but sometimes they’re just not doing a collection that’s on trend, or that fits with the stories we’re doing at the moment.

Executives worked to make brands ‘happy’ and facilitated the relationships between journalists and PRs that were so crucial to the field. Executive fashion editor Amelia characterised her position as ‘constantly meeting with developing a strong relationship with the public relations officers of each brand. So the relationship between the brands and the magazine work smoothly’. The need for an executive editor is a formal and systematic acknowledgment of the centrality of brands to feminine journalism and demonstrates the extent to which the commercial realm of fashion and beauty is entangled with this journalistic subfield.

- Gifting

PRs promote their brands with a mixture of coercion and persuasion, exploiting their control of products in their relationship with feminine journalism. As I outlined in Chapter Three, journalists are often depicted as the privileged subjects of feminine consumer culture, with unparalleled access to its products and privileges. Possession and expertise with regard to luxury, fashion and beauty goods bestows feminine capital. However, to a large extent the journalists who work within the subfield depend for their access to these goods on brands and their PRs. The salaries on offer within the subfield were usually

not sufficient to realize the levels of consumption, which its editorial portrayed as essential. In his work on journalistic specialization Marchetti notes that, 'the lifestyle of some journalists, who frequent social worlds to which they do not belong, is often higher than their salary allows' (2005:78) and this applies to many agents within the field of feminine journalism. As the following anecdote, from Lucas a former fashion editor illustrates, relationships with fashion PRs gives journalists access to a quality and style of life far in excess of their earnings.

Versace were good and not just in gifts, but in events and taking you to dinner at her house and she once did a wedding party for Jennifer Lopez at her house and invited us all. She'd just got married flew straight over and it was wedding cake and everything, obviously we're not friends of the family you know and we're all there at J-Lo's wedding party! At the invitation of Donatella for her PR purposes it was just surreal, but how fantastic, of course it's fantastic and all these things they're bribery as well, because you're like oh god I want to keep in with them because she always does fantastic things.

Many participants shared similar stories and spoke of how access to PRs gave them in the words of former editorial assistant Pippa, 'a social life that I don't have to pay for'. In a subfield in which glamour and aspiration are defining norms the importance of this access cannot be underestimated.

My interview data suggested that PRs could offer journalists access to the kind of glamorous aspirational lifestyles that they depicted within their publications. PRs allowed journalists to realize the version of successful consumption-oriented femininity that defined the professional capital at work within the subfield and this acted as a powerful inducement. The PR practice which best illustrates this relationship is present-giving, or as it is termed within the industry 'gifting'. Gifting is the term commonly used to describe the practice whereby companies give journalists presents through the medium of their fashion PRs. Gifting is a touchy subject for the profession, the practice has been

questioned both by fashion journalists and editors (Jones, 2003; Brampton, 2003) and by those outside the profession, with suggestions that corruption and bribery lie behind such gifts. Widespread present-giving is one of the practices within the field which separates it from other forms of journalism and undermines the claims of those working within it to professional norms of autonomy and independence. Journalists often deny that gifting is widespread or claim that its prevalence is waning, as Alexandra Shulman recently told Radio 4's *Woman's Hour*, 'I don't think any of us are flooded with freebies. I think there's been a big cultural change maybe fifteen years ago there was more of that that went on' (2009). This reticence was present in some of my interviews with respondents claiming that the practice was rare or confined to certain sections of the field, as in associate fashion editor, Amelia's claim that, 'there is some gifting but I actually don't think it's as much as you might think it would be'.

However despite these denials the majority of my participants acknowledged extremely high levels of gifting, as Tina said, 'there's a huge gifting culture, it's like freebie central'. Indeed the worth and extent of the gifts received by editors was marvelled at by some more junior journalists, typified by these comments from Olivia, a deputy fashion editor, 'I think in a way when you first come in you realize how much stuff these editors get, it's just like wow you know, you're almost getting a kind of £800 bag every two weeks... and cashmere and all this stuff'. Even much more junior members of staff spoke of receiving a large volume of presents and other perks, as Louise a newspaper supplement fashion assistant explained:

Having things chucked at you all the time. You really can take it for granted, it's like tickets to Kylie Minogue, tickets to go and see Madonna, £1,000 bags, discount cards everywhere, eating at the finest restaurants. I would have to be earning so much money, I would have to be an MD or something to afford the lifestyle that I have, it's quite crazy.

As I outlined in the previous chapter my participants' professional responsibilities extended beyond the production of content, into their personal lives and bodily dispositions. They were expected to demonstrate their expertise by embodying ideals of femininity. This made gifting an important aspect of their work, allowing them to realise such ideals on their often limited budgets. Magazine editor Beatrice explained that she could not condemn the practice of gifting because, 'the juniors are expected to look fashionable and everything and they don't get paid a great deal of money. So if they get given a lovely handbag I don't really see why they shouldn't be allowed to carry it'. In turn brands were keen to bestow gifts on journalists because of their status as professional taste-makers who embodied feminine expertise, or as Trixie put it, 'they want their stuff to be known amongst the cognoscenti and they know that if they've got six fashion editors carrying their bag, being photographed at the shows, that for them is worth so much more publicity than just advertising the bag'.

Participants described a complex and stratified system of gift giving, indeed Paula a newspaper fashion editor, characterized it 'as kind of like an 18th Century code of manners'. Within this system fashion and beauty journalists could expect Christmas presents from all the major labels and high street stores, gifts at press days and after attending fashion shows, flowers or more substantial gifts connected to editorial about a brand and for more senior staff other gifts over and above this. Industry hierarchies were employed within the gifting system with different publications receiving a different amount and standard of gift, as Kirsty a newspaper supplement fashion editor explained regretfully:

Only if you're at *Vogue* do you get gifts from The Pradas and the Louis Vuittons⁴¹. I mean I might get a nice little gift from them at Christmas but I do not get gifted, but when I was at (*newspaper title*) I would find an

⁴¹ This contention was contradicted by other participants, but it was clear that there was a hierarchy of gifting.

Azzedine Alaia had sent me a leather jacket or a Chanel suit in my wardrobe it depends how important you are.

Seniority also played a significant part in the system, with levels of gift reflecting position, so Olivia a fashion writer received a clutch bag while her editor was gifted, 'the it bag of the season'. As with advertising systems, gifting functioned on various levels from direct bribery to a more subtle influence on the environment of the field. Participants acknowledged that it was often gifts that ensured journalists attended events or press-days and some suggested that there was a direct correlation between gifts and editorial, either as a reward for positive editorial or a punishment for negative copy. Former fashion editor Lucas explained that once it was common knowledge that a certain company gifted generously, then there was a powerful inducement to do something for them. He also remembered a 'scathing' review being met with the punitive gift of 'a key ring and everyone else had cashmere jumpers'.

Though some participants were prepared to acknowledge this kind of explicit relationship between gifts and editorial it was more often described in the context of relationship building. So gifts functioned to remind journalists of a brand and ensure that they were well disposed towards it. Fashion writer Olivia described the relationship between her department and a luxury brand that gifted them heavily in these terms:

I think more that we're more familiar with brands like that because we have the contact with them, plus it's a very nice product. But there are definite loyalties, I mean someone like (*luxury goods brand*), I mean she does have really nice bags, but because I think we have the contact I think they're always a name that springs to mind.

Many participants described gifting as a successful and practical way for a brand to build its reputation, a particular luxury accessories brand was used repeatedly as an example. This brand is renowned for the level of its gifting and it

was widely agreed that this policy had made it very successful as Trixie explained:

The people who did superbly with it is (*Luxury goods brand*), I mean they showered, they love bombed fashion journalists, but the bags were so great and they were practical as well you got to use them and if you walk down the street and people come up to you and say that bag is amazing where did you get it then it's a no-brainer that this is a hit bag.

Systems around gifting helped to build relationships and codified the importance of being pleasant and nice, which was so often referred to by my respondents. Paula contrasted feminine journalism's system of manners and thanks to the rest of the newspaper saying: 'I like that you see, newspapers are not about manners and they're quite brutal, difficult environments and there's something quite nice about this incredibly archaic system of thanking'. The imbrication of feminine journalism and PR mediated in favour of this 'niceness' and against robust, critical reporting or investigations into subjects which, might be deemed unpleasant or challenging. Gifting also illustrates the way in which commercial practices are instrumental in the creation of feminine subjectivities. The excited and enthusiastic interview testimony that I received around the proliferation of expensive and glamorous gifts, recalled the orgasmic scenes in the fashion closet in texts such as *The Devil Wears Prada* and *Sex and the City* that I referred to in Chapter Three. My participants' associations with luxury brands enabled them to occupy Radner's 'space of privilege' (1995:2) and to construct their professional and gendered subjectivities around consumption and feminine expertise.

6.10 The Power of the Publication

So far I have outlined the power and control exerted by advertising brands through the structures and routines of the field of feminine journalism. However it would be wrong to depict these forces as operating in only one direction, publications can also exert power in relation to brands. Feminine

journalism delivers readers to brands and this role is vital, as Lorraine Perrin the head of marketing and PR for high street brand French Connection explained to *Woman's Hour*, 'the magazine industry is incredibly influential over both the retail sector and the consumers who read the titles and therefore shop and buy the products' (2009). It was widely accepted amongst my interviewees that editorial copy exerted far more influence on the shopping tastes of readers than advertising itself as Trixie explained, 'if you speak to advertisers they'll say there's a sort of points system where if you get your product mentioned in the pages of editorial its worth two hundred per cent more than if it was just advertised'. Many respondents spoke of their ability to 'shift product' and maintained that their editorial had a direct and quantifiable effect on a brand's sales, as supplement fashion editor Kirsty explained, 'we hear back from the design houses how well the outfits have sold that we've featured so we know that they (readers) do spend, but we also know that if we do M&S or New Look that we'll have a huge spend'. Tina verified this saying, 'When we do endorse a product, when we do a feature on a product and say something's good then it really flies off the shelves and it gives it that extra endorsement that you wouldn't necessarily get from anything else and that's like gold dust'. The PR of high street fashion chain French Connection, Lorraine Perrin, confirmed this view, '*Grazia* sells product from the page it has a direct effect on our sales' (*Woman's Hour*: 2009). During the same interview *Grazia's* editor Jane Bruton cited this influence on readers' shopping habits as the source of a magazine's power:

As a weekly we can wield a lot of influence, because the thing about *Grazia* is we drive footfall into store, everything we feature in the magazine is in store that week, so the power of the magazine to feature one product which will then up sales by 300/400 per-cent is enormous. (2009)

This view was shared by many of my participants who felt that their influence over their readership provided them with leverage over brands. Many respondents claimed that brands were not in a position permanently to

withdraw advertising or allow relationships with publications to deteriorate as this meant losing access to valuable readers. Editors were sometimes prepared to take calculated risks and potentially offend brands, because as supplement editor Trixie explained, 'they'll always come back to you, because they need you, because you're the one who's got the mass-market reach'. Beatrice a glossy magazine editor confirmed this, explaining that she had lost advertisers due to an unwillingness to enter into explicit credit-bargaining, saying, 'I have lost people, but they do come back in the end, because if you're a big brand, you've kind of got to be in (*name of magazine*)'. In my participants' view a publication's power lay not in opposing the discourse of consumption that defined the field, but by realising this discourse most completely. Power emanated from a publication's status within the hierarchy of publications and its ability to influence the consumption choices of its readers.

6.11 Conclusion

- How is the subfield of feminine journalism demarcated and what kinds of capital, practices and professional identities operate within its boundaries?

I have used the last two chapters to answer the first of my two focal research questions. I have revealed a journalistic subfield that is demarcated through an overwhelmingly central discourse of consumption and rooted in the traditional patriarchal concerns of the private, intimate and bodily sphere. This subfield is organised around a highly embodied form of feminine capital, which is accessed through attempts to realise an ideal grounded in the rituals and practices of commercial femininity. This feminine capital is accessed through a particular class, race, age and bodily disposition and is defined through its exclusions, however within the subfield it is generalised and made to stand in for the whole of female experience. I have illustrated the ways in which the cultural and economic work upon one another to produce the feminine subjectivities that dominate and are fostered by the subfield. I have used the example of the women

who work within the subfield of feminine journalism to demonstrate the way in which femininity is produced by the embodied rituals and practices that are promoted by feminine consumer culture. The species of feminine capital that I have identified is produced through consumption and access to the products of commercial femininity. The brands that produce these products are an integral part of feminine journalism, enmeshed with its working practices and identity. Funding models, working practices and editorial goals all work together to produce a version of femininity that is defined by and fosters consumption. Within the subfield I have delineated, femininity undoubtedly operates as valuable capital, offering professional opportunities and advantages within the traditionally masculine journalistic field. In my final analysis chapter I will turn to my second research question:

- How does the subfield of feminine journalism fit into the wider journalistic field and does its growth signal the realignment of professional norms and hierarchies?

I will consider how the subfield is positioned within the wider journalistic field and determine how a central discourse, working practices and capital that are all delineated through consumption, interact with wider journalistic norms defined through the public sphere and objectivity. This analysis will enable me to consider both the opportunities and restrictions offered by women's association with consumption and to determine the limits of feminine capital.

Chapter Seven

The Journalistic Field:

Femininity, Masculinity and Capital

7.1 Introduction: The Feminization of Journalism?

In this final analysis chapter I will examine the place of feminine journalism within its wider professional context. I will consider my research in relation to claims that the journalistic field has been feminized and traditional journalistic divisions, such as hard and soft news and news and features, blurred in the process (Carter *et al.*, 1998). I will attempt to determine if the subfield's colonisation of newspapers represents a fundamental shift in the species of capital that dominates the journalistic field. In considering the place of feminine journalism within the journalistic profession I will also be looking at the way feminine capital operates outside its feminized subfield, within traditionally masculine institutions and structures. Previous feminist explorations (Moi, 1991; McCall, 1992; Skeggs, 1997; Huppertz, 2009) have suggested that feminine capital has limited conversion value and can only operate successfully within narrow boundaries. By contextualising the operation of feminine capital within the wider context of the newspaper I hope to establish its limits. As I have illustrated (Chapter Five) the capital that operates within the subfield is grounded in a realization of the ideals of feminine consumer capitalism, by demarcating the limits of this species of capital, I hope to answer wider questions about the opportunities and restrictions offered by women's association with consumption.

As I outlined in Chapter One, one of the ways in which newspapers have reacted to falling circulation and increasing dependence on advertising has been a move to include more of interest to women readers. As Aldridge noted as early as 1994:

The response of national newspapers, particularly the Sundays but increasingly those on weekdays too, has been to move to more 'comment' in the form of features about current issues and also more material on 'lifestyle': health, food, drink, fashion, personal finance, arts and other forms of consumption. Much of this is directed overtly to women readers and in many ways both content and style of address have become closer to women's magazines. (Aldridge 1994:14)

These commercial changes, coupled with general cultural movements towards more confessional, intimate and aestheticized modes of behaviour, (Featherstone, 2007; Coward, 2009) have led to suggestions that the journalistic boundaries and models that I outlined in Chapter Two are becoming more permeable as 'the divisions between 'hard' ('serious'; 'fact-based') news and 'soft' ('light' or 'human interest'; 'interpretation based') news is slowly being dissolved' (Carter *et al.*, 1998). Such developments have led to suggestions that journalism is fundamentally changing to become 'an area that has the potential to be dominated by women' (Van Zoonen, 1998a:45). These claims are not unreasonable for the traditional boundary between the public and private spheres within journalism is so fundamental and constitutive, that were this division to dissolve, 'it would inevitably be reflected in a fundamental change not only of style but of priorities' (Aldridge, 2001:96).

My research certainly illustrates an expansion of feminine content in the context of the newspaper and my participants were unanimous in suggesting that this expansion brought increased opportunities for women journalists. As I demonstrated in Chapter Six, many of my participants had capitalised on this demand for female targeted content in order to build highly successful careers and even infiltrate masculine dominated editorial structures. However, some commentators (Aldridge, 2001; Gill, 2007a, 2007b) have suggested that rather than dissolving divisions between public and private, masculine and feminine, this feminization has reinforced and sustained divisions, enacting what Gill has

termed the 'reassertion of sexual difference' (2007b:158) and the promotion of 'a completely segregated 'his and hers' universe' (2007a:36). In this chapter I will use my interview data to determine whether the expansion of the feminine subfield which I have documented represents a genuine shift in journalistic values, hierarchies and symbolic capital, or an attempt to sustain and reassert existing gendered divisions.

7.2 Journalistic Categories: Hard and Soft News

One of the most defining divisions in the journalistic field is that between 'hard' and 'soft' news. This constitutive dualism was first outlined by Tuchman (1973) in research based on participant observation in the newsrooms of television stations and newspapers. She found the main distinction her participants used, 'was between hard news and its antithesis soft news' (1973:113). Tuchman's participants defined these categories relationally in various ways, explaining that, 'hard news concerns information people should have to be informed citizens and soft news concerns human foibles and the texture of human life' (114). In summary Tuchman concluded that 'hard news concerns important matters and soft news, interesting matters' (114). Hard news has a pressing temporal nature, 'because it is timely and urgent, hard news demands speed, especially in gathering 'facts' and meeting deadlines' (118), while soft news lacks this urgency and does not necessarily demand immediate reporting. Tuchman acknowledges that these categories are somewhat arbitrary and that, 'the same event may be treated as either a hard news or soft news story' (114), but nevertheless she maintains that this binary structures the work of news organisations.

It is clear that this pivotal categorisation maps on to the defining journalistic binaries I outlined in Chapter Two, such as the objectivity norm and separation of public and private. Hard news is conceptualised as factual and objective whereas soft news is subjective (Whetmore, 1987), hard news deals with politics, economic and social topics while soft news often deals with the

concerns of the private sphere. Feminist critiques have placed this categorisation within a gendered framework (Carter *et al.*, 1998) and suggested that hard news is coded masculine while soft news is feminine and as Lehman-Wilzig and Seletzky note, 'surveys and interviews with female journalists around the world point to a dichotomy between news topics considered to be male (e.g. politics, crime, economics and education) and female topics such as human interest, consumerism, culture and social policy' (2010:39).

These gendered hard and soft news categories have not been deemed of equal weight or importance, the areas of journalism that receive the highest status within the profession and academic analysis invariably fall within the hard news category (Chapter Two). Journalism is largely defined through hard news, producing 'a unitary model of journalism – one which assumes that an elevated form of news works in prescribed ways to better the public good' (Zelizer, 2009b:1). However, regardless of journalism's self characterisation, it is soft feminized news which has proliferated in recent years. Areas such as foreign news that are grounded in the hard news category and have traditionally been of the highest prestige are 'high cost and low return' (Davies, 2008:99) and in the context of declining readership and commercial pressures, have been 'cut to the bone and beyond' (99), while lower cost higher return areas such as features and fashion have flourished.

Hartley's distinction between the 'smiling professions' and a journalistic culture founded on violence is useful to the current research. Hartley maintains that journalism's, 'basic thesis is truth is violence, reality is war, news is conflict' (2000:40). Hartley contends that journalism's professional mythologies, hierarchies and hard news category are structured around this culture of conflict and violence. He contrasts this with the 'smiling professions', which in a journalistic context are rooted in soft news and are 'the practices associated with TV presenters, lifestyle and consumer journalism, PR and advertising' (40). Hartley sees these 'smiling professions'

as at the bottom of journalistic hierarchies and maintains that despite their popularity and commercial reach, 'they are routinely despised by serious journalists' (40). However, in Hartley's analysis, despite the encroachment of the 'smiling professions' into journalism, 'some professions continue their disciplinary, classical, clubby and institutional maleness, as bastions of older notions of power... as protectors of binary opposition and clear boundaries between authority access, truth and their opposites' (1992:135). Hartley suggests that, despite the pressures of commercialization and feminization, journalism's symbolic capital and real power still resides within its culture of violence, suggesting that areas such as foreign news are still the most prestigious and important.

My participants are undoubtedly part of Hartley's smiling professions, 'where knowledge is niceness and education is entertainment' (135) and their interviews testify to the expansion of these professions within the journalistic field. However my interview data did not suggest any change to either the organisation of journalism through hard and soft divisions or a significant shift in status between these two categories. Despite identifying distinct sets of capital and knowledge operating within their subfield, my participants did not use their discrete species of capital to challenge journalistic hierarchies or to suggest any blurring of categories between hard and soft or public and private. This reversion to existing hierarchies and binaries mirrors Deuze's research on gossip journalists, which also found that despite their marginal position, 'these journalists use the same discourse of journalism's professional ideology as their colleagues elsewhere' (2005b:878) and that 'there does seem to exist a shared perception of professional hierarchy in journalism' (872). Participants agreed that, as fashion editor Tina explained, 'news is dominant' and that news journalists, or as fashion assistant Louise put it, 'the serious political economics types, the men in grey suits', were the papers most important employees.

Participants were unanimous that hard news was the main currency of newspapers and therefore their dominant discourse. They did not question this position or reference the declining funding of areas such as foreign, instead they used the same gendered categories of hard and soft to define their own role and areas of expertise. Participants echoed Hartley's characterisation and delineated hard news almost entirely through war, conflict and violence, rarely mentioning areas such as human interest, political gossip or celebrity, which in reality constitute a large part of news work. Rather than a blurring of divisions my interview data reveals a polarization that enabled participants to place news and feminine journalism into separate gendered spheres and so reinforce their subfield's unique purpose, finding their *raison d'être* in their seemingly oppositional practices. This dichotomization was one of the defining discourses of my interview data and produced testimony striking in its reversion to traditional, patriarchal divisions and concerns. In this respect my research supports Gill's contention that, 'a key feature of the postfeminist sensibility has been the resurgence of ideas of natural sexual difference across all media from newspapers to advertising' (2007b:158).

As I detailed in Chapter Six my participants were rigid in their definition of the feminine subfield through the private sphere and determination that content relating to politics, civic life and the affairs of the public sphere should be dealt with elsewhere. This strict bifurcation was deployed when characterising their position within the wider journalistic field and they defined their subfield relationally as necessary 'light-relief'. They described the editorial goal of their field as the provision of a fun, more frivolous element, or in fashion journalist Edward's words 'a fluffy kind of visual lift to the newspaper'. Fashion and supplement employees contrasted their editorial content with that of the news pages and suggested that feminine journalism provided a break from what they perceived as the unremitting gloom of the rest of the paper. These comments from Megan, a fashion editor, suggest that those outside the subfield shared this view:

It provides a kind of antidote sometimes, to the much more serious topics of the newspaper... When I started every time we went away there was a war or 9/11 happened and we thought oh god now we've got to write about high heels. But actually it was during these periods that they (the news desk) really wanted fashion because it was light relief really. I think there will always be a need for that you don't want to read 64 pages of slit your wrists news.

Supplement editor Sandra echoed this position, explicitly defining the sections of the newspaper in terms of a masculine public sphere and feminine private sphere. Recalling her paper's coverage of the Iraq war she said:

The newspaper did its job of reporting the news very, very well and I thought well actually this is brilliant for (*supplement title*) because it throws us back onto our strengths, we can't change the whole world, we can't stop this war happening, but we can look after our little world... it's about making the best of your relationships, looking after your family, cooking nice food, keeping the garden looking nice and the house. That little bit you have control over and you can create.

Sandra went on to characterise her supplement as 'the comfort zone' and to suggest that it only made sense in relation to the hard news, violence and conflict of the rest of the newspaper. The banishment of the concerns of the public sphere and the overwhelming dominance of consumption that I detailed in Chapter Six meant that feminine journalism's role was defined entirely through the private and personal realm.

This kind of testimony confirms Aldridge's analysis of the feminization of newspapers (2001) she concluded that the turn towards intimate, confessional writing did not threaten the traditional binaries that define journalistic discourses. Citing the continued structural dominance of news and the regressive, conservative message of feminized publications such as *The Daily Mail*, she contended that the confessional, intimate culture of journalistic

femininity, 'is not about the *erosion* of the public/private and rational/emotional dualities of modernity, but a yet further manifestation of attempts to *sustain* them' (2001:96). Far from attempting to dissolve gendered binaries, my participants relied upon them to provide their professional expertise, feminine capital and role within the wider journalistic field.

7.3 Hard and Soft Working Practices

The definition of journalistic practice that structures the field is organised around a discourse of hard news. Professionals share what Deuze terms 'a consensual occupational ideology' (2009:91), which constructs what it means to be a journalist. These values coalesce around the objectivity norm, ideas of public service, autonomy and speed and immediacy (Marchetti 2005, Deuze 2005a, 2009). Deuze has suggested that these professional norms permeate the entire field and that, 'journalists across genres and media types invoke more or less the same ideal-typical value system when discussing and reflecting on their work' (2009:91). My research suggests that this is indeed the case and my participants constantly referred to these standards. Despite having their own definition of practice (Chapter Six) which placed them at some considerable distance from journalistic ideals, they also evoked wider professional orthodoxies to describe their work. Participants continuously defined their subfield against such journalistic conventions or deployed them to defend their professionalism.

Feminine journalism's working practices placed it firmly within 'soft' categories and participants cited this inability to conform to the norms of 'hard' news when discussing their perceived lack of status. They identified lack of autonomy and critical reporting as well as issues around speed and immediacy when reflecting upon their position within hierarchies. This theme was very evident in the testimony of Paula, a fashion editor, who focused on the conflict caused by her dependence on her sources. She described her relationship with the 'hard' news routines of the news desk as characterised

by dispute, explaining 'there is an antipathy because they don't think fashion journalists tell the truth, they think that we're all bribed and in cahoots with the designers'. She described an antagonistic relationship between news and fashion, which saw the news desk demand more objectivity and critical reporting from her than she was prepared to give. While the news desk insisted that she follow journalistic codes and act like 'a hard news journalist'. These calls conflicted with the culture of feminine journalism, which as I have demonstrated in previous chapters prioritised being 'nice' and keeping sources happy. In line with this culture Paula felt a great deal of loyalty to her sources, explaining, 'I have always protected the designers from the media, because I actually think they're my bread and butter'. She placed a premium on being 'respectful' to designers in order to maintain the 'access' that provided professional capital within her subfield and this 'respect' resulted in copy that was '80% endorsement'. This attitude put her at odds with journalism's defining norms and led to a 'stressful' pressurised relationship with the news desk and 'some scary arguments'.

While Paula was prepared to defend her working model against the demands of 'hard' news, interview data that relates to the speed of news processes displayed a more ambivalent attitude to journalistic norms. The speed and immediacy that Tuchman identified as a key component of 'hard news' appeared to be a defining feature of professional identity within a newspaper context and participants were keen to claim this discourse for themselves. Fashion editor Mia was typical in this regard, using speed to justify her professionalism against what she saw as widespread perceptions that fashion journalists were 'really stupid and fluffy':

If you can do your job and you can always turn your copy in on time and you can always file quickly, say you've got a Chanel show at ten in the morning and you've got to file at 10.30, they can't deny that you're good at your job.

In a similar vein Megan maintained that the demands of her job as deputy fashion editor of a daily newspaper were such that she saw no reason, other than a lack of interest, why she could not transfer to the news department. She justified this position by describing her workload during fashion week:

It is really tough you're running around all over Paris, Milan or wherever you are, you're filing 700 words a day, 45 minutes to turn it round. I'm sure a lot of news writing is very formulaic and it's good training. I don't feel that we couldn't do that should anyone want to go and do that.

Interview data reflected the defining nature of 'hard' news suggesting that associations with speed and immediacy were imperative if one wished to identify as a 'real' journalist. Participants who worked on newspapers tended to glorify their ability to work very fast and contrast this with the slower pace of magazine journalism. As in this example from former newspaper supplement editor, Lola:

When (Princess) Diana died and it was a Sunday night and I was on the beach and was called back and we had to turn around a whole supplement of 'Diana Fashion Goddess' or whatever in about 12 mins and it's amazing what you can do. It's absolutely the antithesis of (magazine title) where you had ages to think about an adjective an entire day could go by and you'd be wondering whether to call a colour cranberry or cherry red, whereas this was the real thing.

Lola's contention that fast-paced newspaper deadlines constituted 'the real thing' was repeated by many other participants. It was clear that participants considered the working practices of their subfield a bar to status and prestige and this kind of data represented an attempt to claim journalism's defining professional norms. Many participants felt that feminine journalism was regarded as the 'soft option'. The predictability of routines, regular working hours, and longer lead times contributed to features and supplement work being perceived as softer and easier by other members of

newspaper staff. Participants realised that their working conditions did not place them within the 'heroic' traditions of 'hard' news, as evidenced by supplement editor Audrey's comments, 'I've never done that kind of reporter up on an oil rig at three in the morning working out why someone's fallen off or whatever, thank god!'. Another supplement editor Sandra acknowledged that the working practices on her magazine contributed to a feeling that it was less challenging work:

I think among journalists I think they do probably think that (*name of supplement*) is easier than their jobs, but it's different, it's a different way of working... I think they look at us and think oh they work Monday to Friday and it's true that we never have to work late.

Demanding, unpredictable hours form a key part of professional mythologies, separating journalists from more mundane nine to five routines. News journalism is often presented as an all-consuming obsession as Aldridge notes, 'being a journalist is held to be a vocation, to which practitioners have a passionate, almost compulsive – even if ambivalent – attachment' (1998:111). The predictability of feminine journalism's working patterns closed off these defining heroic discourses and the professional prestige that comes with them.

Hartley observes that his 'smiling professions' are 'jobs where work, preparation, skill and talent are all necessarily hidden' (1992:135) and the feminine subfield conforms to this rule. The particular skills and capital that define the feminine subfield are rendered invisible and unintelligible within the wider journalistic field. The aesthetics, taste, relationships and embodied skills of feminine journalism are antithetical to professional norms built around ethics, objectivity, autonomy and individualism. However, my participants did not challenge notions of what it meant to be a journalist or suggest that the expansion of the subfield had altered professional orthodoxies, instead they were inclined to fall back upon discourses associated with 'hard news'. This finding mirrors Deuze's research on gossip journalists,

which also found that despite their marginal position, ‘these journalists use the same discourse of journalism’s professional ideology as their colleagues elsewhere’ (2005b:878) and suggests that the codes of ‘hard’ news still work to structure the professional identity across the entire journalistic field.

7.4 Feminine Professional Identities: Soft, Fluffy and Frivolous?

Their determination entirely to identify their subfield with the ‘soft’ categories of the private sphere and to define it through discourses of glamour, fun and frivolity placed my participants in a difficult position when attempting to position themselves in the wider journalistic field as professionals in charge of a significant subfield. As I have explained, my participants were highly educated, intelligent and successful women, but their identification with the playful, and as they repeatedly characterised it, the ‘fluffy’, undermined their claims to professional expertise and skill once they moved beyond the gendered boundaries of feminine journalism. This dilemma echoes the question Radner poses of *Vogue* associate editor Kathleen Madden in her textual analysis of Madden’s columns for the magazine, ‘what position can she take that will reconcile her desire for frills and ribbons with the economic and social autonomy that she claims as her right in her function as an authorial voice, an adult?’ (1995:176).

This was a question that could have been designed for my research and seemed to haunt my interview testimony. Participants were keen to emphasise the importance of their role to the editorial mix of the newspaper, which they saw as to provide a glamorous, escapist, counterpoint to the publications’ more ‘serious’ elements. As deputy supplement editor Imogen explained ‘it’s a really, really important part of making the reader feel good and our supplement fulfils that vitally and I think people realise that on the newspaper perhaps grudgingly at times’. However, despite their confidence in the key role their subfield played, participants’ reversion to traditional gendered binaries left them in an undesirable position when attempting to defend their standing within

journalistic hierarchies. They were forced them to contrast the frivolity of their subject matter with the emblematic wars of the news pages, as in Megan's acknowledgment, 'I mean there's always going to be fashion news and there's always going to be news, news and obviously people don't die in fashion news and people die daily in Iraq'.

In the main the newspapers' professional pecking orders were not questioned and there was a universal recognition that the feminine subfield was not a part of journalism's defining discourse. Participants held news in high regard, deeming it more important and crucially more 'serious' than their own subfield. As Imogen explained:

I think it would be very silly for me to start trying to say that fashion was in fact really, really serious and really important to people's lives, because the Home News section and the Foreign News Section, the Money section could probably have more of a right to say they were serious.

Participants were painfully aware that while they ranked news very highly, valuing its contribution to the paper, this feeling was often not reciprocated as supplement features editor Julia explained:

It feels like we're a totally different breed of journalist and I'm sure a lot of the news journalists on the newspaper think (supplement name) is just really silly and probably never read it. Whereas we will regard news quite highly, so we'll read the news but it won't necessarily be the other way round I don't think.

These feelings were echoed by features commissioning editor Nancy who had more direct personal experience of the attitudes of news journalists towards feminine journalism. Before joining features Nancy had worked in the newsroom for several years and her boyfriend was a senior news reporter she explained that before she moved to features she had accepted the paper's internal hierarchy:

The newsroom was god it was the number one, it was the crème de la crème and features was just this fluffy, fluffy little thing on the side and I believed that, because that's what they think in the newsroom, like they don't even look at features.

She went on to explain that several years working in features had changed her view and she had realised, 'that we've got great writers; it's a very strong section'. However, she remained unable to convince her news reporter boyfriend who remained adamant that the features section was 'a piece of fluff'.

Participants were almost universal in their conviction that their subfield was not taken seriously by the rest of their various news organisations. When explaining how they felt feminine journalism was perceived by other members of newspaper staff they used terms such as, 'soft', 'frilly', 'fluffy' and 'silly'. There was a defensive quality to interview data around this subject, a constant resentment that their subfield was dismissed as a 'fluffy', coupled with a determination to characterise their own work in just such terms. This peculiarly contradictory attitude is largely explained by the commercial practices and editorial goals that I detailed in the previous chapter. Editorial aims organised around entertainment and consumption coupled with the key role of advertising within the subfield, and the attendant desire to furnish the correct 'environment', ensured that the subfield be defined through escapist pleasure. Any attempts to cover other areas, or even to consider fashion and beauty as huge and important industries rather than merely providers of glamour and fun, were discouraged. In a situation which recalled their relationships with advertising brands, the authority that my participants held in relation to the rest of the journalistic subfield was firmly rooted in their commercial importance. Their defence of their area of expertise was mainly conducted, not through an emphasis of its intrinsic value or interest, but on the grounds of its economic importance. Once again status and power

were conferred not by questioning consumption, but by realizing its discourses most completely and successfully.

Participants displayed an ambiguous attitude to their commercial status, they were aware that, as I explained in Chapter Two commercial revenue goals did not equate to high status within the journalistic field, but their revenue generating capacity was also treated as crucial and a source of pride. Interviewees explained their low status in part by highlighting stark disparities in subject matter as in ex-supplement editor Lola's explanation, 'at the end of the day I wasn't writing about Bosnia, I wasn't writing about famine in Eritrea, I was writing about Christian Lacroix'. However, they also drew attention to journalism's structuring divisions, identifying their commercial role and advertising goals as a key element in their low status. Advertising revenues were presented simultaneously, as an explanation for feminine journalism's lack of standing and as its primary reason for existence, rendering it crucial to the newspaper's economic survival.

Participants reflected Marchetti's contention that, 'certain specialities that are relatively low with respect to professional reputation...can be strategic because they contribute strongly to the revenue... of the media outlet, or because they reach a large or targeted public' (2005:69). This discourse was most strongly expressed by Wendy, an ex-newspaper fashion editor now columnist, who identified:

A rather sort of sneering attitude to the commercial side of newspapers in other words the people who did the work that brought in the money. So that would be the fashion department and the beauty department as opposed to news and foreign which was proper journalism.

However, at the same time Wendy maintained that, 'fashion journalists on papers are regarded as valuable members of staff...there's an absolute understanding that papers would not survive unless they have A. women reading them and B. some kind of advertising investment.

This dual discourse of denigration and dependence was repeated by many participants, fashion editor Paula explained that newspapers had ‘a funny relationship’ with feminine journalism:

Because they know they have to have it, and they’ve got an advertising department. They know they have to have fashion because they’re moving with the times and everyone’s trying to get the so-called female *Daily Mail* readership, but actually they think they’re above it.

Several participants implied that feminine journalism was only accepted into the newspaper on sufferance and that this acceptance was entirely due to financial considerations. While news, comment and foreign formed the core of the newspaper, with an unquestioned right to space and prestige, feminine journalism was peripheral and its position was only guaranteed by the revenues it produced. Fashion editor Mia subscribed to this view when explaining the growth of feminine journalism in newspapers:

Basically it’s all about money, people have cottoned on to the fact that women have a lot of disposable income and that’s why they’re being served in newspapers, it’s as simple as that. I don’t think it’s anything altruistic on their part it’s always, always down to money.

This kind of interview data suggested that the expansion of the feminine subfield did not represent a thorough going realignment of journalistic capital and hierarchies, but rather a commercial compromise, which left structures and divisions essentially untouched. As Conboy suggests when he describes this kind of female targeted material as a, ‘commodified settlement within the predominantly patriarchal discourses which still structure women’s contribution to that mainstream’ (2004:148)

The perception that feminine journalism was only tolerated due to commercial considerations, left participants in an invidious position, forced to defend their importance on the very ground that guaranteed their low status.

Fashion assistant Louise's conflicted views about the standing of her department reflected the difficulty of this position. She began by telling me, 'I think we're quite important', but qualified this with her suspicion that other members of the newspaper's staff thought that the fashion team were, 'silly girls'. However, she finished her answer on a defiant note maintaining:

But then we're successful silly girls, because our (advertising) sales have increased and we're getting a really good response from the (fashion) industry ... I think we're belittled, but I'd like to think we're important within the newspaper as a whole, because we pull in a lot of money through advertising.

Newspaper fashion editor Binky echoed these sentiments, she too thought the rest of the newspaper considered the fashion department to be 'silly' and described how the routines and practices of feminine journalism added to this perception. She cited the example of calling in products for fashion shoots, explaining that as she worked in an open plan office members of staff from other departments would overhear her telephone conversations:

There's that moment when someone from the news desk will walk past when you've just gone "I love that pink dress", even though you're doing it for work and you think a page of advertising costs £10,000, Prada are one of our advertisers, it's a really important thing that we get the product to shoot.

For Binky the 'pink dress' was part of a commercial transaction, which would ultimately contribute to the paper's profits, but in her mind it reinforced the news journalist's reading of the fashion department as 'silly'. The discourses around glamour, fun and escapism that structured the subfield, and which Binky herself subscribed to, made it hard for others within the paper to see her work as an important economic exchange, which the newspaper depended upon. The veneer of gloss and glamour, which everyone in the subfield highlighted, served

to disguise its commercial transactions and left participants like Binky imagining they were perceived by other members of staff through a haze of frills, ribbons and pink dresses. Binky characterised these interactions with the wider journalistic field as, 'one of the elements of my job that I find quite difficult'. However, like Louise she reassured herself of the importance of her subfield by reflecting upon advertising revenues, explaining that, 'sometimes you want to say 'do you know what? It's our advertising revenue that is paying your wages''.

The overwhelming impression given by my participants was that they were granted a space within the public sphere of the newspaper because of their ability to gain significant advertising revenues. The relationship that exists between femininity and consumption, coupled with the financing model of contemporary newspapers, provided an opening and 'space of privilege' for a particular type of middle-class femininity. However, it appears that this space does not threaten existing structures or institutions, as Radner suggests, the 'space of privilege' offered to women through commercial femininity is an economic discourse that reinforces women's position as the 'prototypical consumer'. This only serves to reinforce the constitutive divisions between public/private, masculine/feminine and hard/soft which organise the newspaper. Indeed as Radner suggests, feminization amounts to 'the inscription of this position of privilege within an institutional structure that remains largely patriarchal and the representation of this position as the capacity to act as a consumer' (1995:3). Despite its obvious economic importance, this positioning left the feminine subfield in a vulnerable position with regard to the rest of the journalistic field and ensured that the power that was gained through feminine capital remained bounded and contingent. The feminine space within newspapers did not appear to be guaranteed, it was not defining and intrinsic, but was reliant on newspapers' continued dependence on advertising (Chapter Eight). Newspaper columnist Thea commented on the conditional nature of the authority that was granted to feminine journalism through advertising and consumption reflecting:

It does give you more power, but I think that's not the holy-grail, it gives you the wrong kind of power. .. I think consumer power is a very meaningless, unengaged, alienating kind of power. So you know a lot of the advances, so called advances for women in the media I think are chimera really. They're basically as long as you keep buying then you'll have the purse strings kind of thing.

7.5 Journalistic Symbolic Capital: Masculinity vs. Femininity

The explanation for the qualified nature of feminine journalism's position within the wider journalistic field can be found in the relative status held by masculinity and femininity. Despite the implicitly gendered codes and structures that organise the journalistic field a consideration of the sexed exclusions that they produce is often missing from explorations of the profession. Bourdieu's work on journalism is typical in this respect, remaining silent on the sexual politics of the profession, whilst implicitly reproducing sexed dualities. As I have illustrated (Chapter Two) the structuring division he draws between autonomy and heteronomy serves to re-inscribe a Habermasian dichotomy between public and private, with all its gendered exclusions. Despite Bourdieu's neglect of gender issues within a journalistic context, *Masculine Domination* does acknowledge the fact that each field is structured by gendered divisions and is alive to the ways in which professional practices can be implicitly sexed:

All the calls to order inscribed in the order of things, all the silent injunctions or muted threats inherent in the normal course of the world are of course, specified according to the particular fields, and the difference between the sexes presents itself to women, in each field, in specific forms, through for example the dominant definition of practice that prevails within it and which no one would think of as seeing as sexed and therefore open to question (Bourdieu 2001:62)

Although Bourdieu himself never applied this kind of thinking to the journalistic field, it could in fact be a description of structuring divisions between

hard/soft and public/private that organise the journalistic field. As I have illustrated, the 'dominant definition' of practice to be found within journalism works to marginalise women. While my participants accepted the defining discourses of news journalism and judged their own claim to the title journalist by these standards they also drew attention to the way that the structures of power within their profession were highly gendered. When describing the status of their field within journalistic structures, only a few participants referred explicitly to gender, although the descriptors of frilly, fluffy and soft used by the majority were implicitly feminine. Edward, an ex-newspaper fashion deputy editor now freelance, was unusual in ascribing the low status of feminine journalism directly to its female readership and staff:

I think in hard terms, fashion journalists are probably paid slightly less so historically it's always been regarded as a much lower status part of the newspaper, because of being women's kind of territory and women's issues and also women who mainly actually work in that department.

However, many other participants did draw attention to the ways in which 'men had already defined journalism in male terms' (Steiner, 1998:158). Freelance journalist Alice suggested that newspaper's power structures were inherently masculine, saying, 'maybe it's as simple as the fact that so many senior editors are male and the women who are senior editors have to divorce themselves from that degree of femininity'. While Lola, a former newspaper supplement editor, explained that she felt intrinsically disadvantaged as a female journalist and that this was compounded by her subject area:

If you're a female journalist you come into the game on the back foot necessarily, because it's a bloke's profession, it's all set up in that way print workers and whatever, it was all kind of hot steel and blah. If you're a woman in that scene you've got to work, not doubly hard, but certainly as hard, but if you're a woman writing about lifestyle stuff, which is perceived

to be a filler by the big boys, then it's really hard to be perceived as a serious journalist.

Crucial to the disparate status of masculinity and femininity within the journalistic field is Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital, 'which is the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognised as legitimate' (Bourdieu 1989a:17). Both Moi and Skeggs have suggested that it is here, around the legitimising of the different forms of capital, that the power of femininity finds its boundary. Moi claims that we can begin with an assumption that, 'under current social conditions and in most contexts maleness functions as positive and femaleness as negative symbolic capital' (1991:1036). While in Skeggs' analysis it is the lack of legitimating symbolic capital that explains the relative insignificance of feminine capital and its lack of conversion, for as she points out, 'gender carries different amounts of symbolic capital in different contexts' (1997:8). Skeggs suggests that feminine capital's limitations lie in its lack of legitimacy and so distance from power, for it is agents endowed with symbolic capital, prestige and honour who determine what will gain recognition within a field. Bourdieu himself supports this position maintaining that an agent's weight within a field 'depends on their symbolic capital, i.e. on the recognition...that they receive' (1991:72). Symbolic capital represents the legitimating of other forms of capital and allows these forms, 'to obtain a special symbolic effect when they gain symbolic recognition that masks their material and interested basis' (Swartz, 1997:92). Within the journalistic profession symbolic recognition is given to the objectivity norm and to the prestige categories related to hard news. The feminine capital legitimised within the subfield of feminine journalism does not gain the same symbolic recognition within the broader profession. Masculinity's privileged status within the field is masked by seemingly gender-blind structures which actually inscribe it as the norm.

Several participants attributed feminine journalism's low status to the relative value accorded masculinity and femininity within the journalistic field. They suggested that their subfield was denigrated precisely because it was concerned with women. These participants contrasted the treatment of feminine journalism with sports reporting in order to highlight the ways in which masculinity and femininity fared differently within newspaper hierarchies. Participants' comments about the prioritising of male values in the newspaper echoed Virginia Woolf's 1928 complaint about subject hierarchies within fiction. Woolf observed that, 'it is the masculine values that prevail. Speaking crudely, football and sport are 'important', the worship of fashion, the buying of clothes 'trivial' (1928:85). Participants shared Woolf's frustration, maintaining that though sport and fashion were similar types of content, this was not reflected in their treatment. Neither sport nor feminine journalism conform to the codes and practices of hard news, both are predominantly concerned with audience and advertising rather than prestige goals. However, the treatment accorded the two areas is strikingly different and my participants suggested this was due to the relative symbolic status of masculinity and femininity.

Supplement editor Audrey maintained that both specialisms were about 'pulling in the punters' and neither featured serious subject matter, 'you know sports it's a bunch of guys kicking around a ball, the people watching are all drinking beer it's completely banal'. However, she contended that despite what she saw as the 'equivalent' aims and concerns of the two subfields they were 'not seen as an equivalent within a hierarchy'. While feminine journalism was 'seen as quite sort of dilettante' sports journalism was 'taken very, very seriously'. Audrey supported this view by citing the practice of 'ex-news editors, some of the most powerful men in Fleet St' ending their careers as sports editors. She finished by saying that although her magazine was valued for its female readership it was this same gendered address that stood between it and status and prestige:

Yes the bosses know that women are going to buy the magazine, but it's never going to be seen in the same way as sports journalism and yet it's another version of the same thing it's just slanted towards a different gender.

This relative value of femininity and masculinity in a newspaper context was most fully-explored by freelance journalist Alice, who also used sports journalism as a point of comparison. Alice had begun her career in journalism in news and comment before taking on a column which placed her firmly in the territory of feminine journalism. She explained that this move had raised her profile, making her far more visible and popular with readers, but had lowered her status within internal hierarchies. She told me that she had been unprepared for this outcome having not considered that there was any 'stigma' attached to writing about fashion, she had simply 'viewed it as like doing a food column or like writing about sport'. However she found that, 'it was definitely stigmatised and I don't know if it's because it was overtly feminine, or that they could see it as silly, trivial, embarrassing, not clever... It was like I was really lowering myself intellectually'.

Her suspicion that it might be her increased associations with femininity that led to a loss of respect was supported by her reflections on the parallel experience of a male colleague, also working in comment who wrote a football column. This column met with a very different reaction and was 'somehow seen as respectable, it was all to the good and this big male bonding thing, brilliant'. Alice described the way that his football column had enabled her colleague socially, and done 'his career so much good, because he's been able to bond with people around the paper, both with people "below" him and above him... It's definitely had a kind of homosocial effect'. She felt that 'the associations with masculinity' conferred by the football column had been positive and enabling and contrasted this with very negative effects she felt had ensued from her own associations with femininity:

I had slightly the opposite experience, because I was feminized, I don't mean this to sound paranoid, but it's my experience of it, it feminized me in a way that could be perceived as trivial and stupid and however much I've tried to counter that it's always been a losing battle.

Alice's experiences were mirrored by Lucy who had followed a similar career trajectory moving from arts and comment to writing a column within the subfield of feminine journalism. She too felt that her associations with femininity had changed the way she was viewed within the paper, telling me, 'before ... I was taken a lot more seriously and now I'm just asked to write jokes the whole time'. Lucy felt that associations with femininity were dangerous and potentially damaging explaining, 'it's not a cul-de-sac you want to go down for that long. It's quite dangerous I think from a career point of view.'

The potential danger of associations with femininity was confirmed by participants who had successfully negotiated a career in newspapers outside the subfield. I interviewed two women who had experience of working within the overall editorial structures of a newspaper and both had disassociated themselves from overtly feminine content. Deputy newspaper editor Frances felt that the decision to engage with feminine content such as beauty or fashion was compromising explaining, 'you can get away with doing a few silly things, but you have to keep... I think the fact that you accept it in the first place means that maybe you don't take yourself that seriously.' Ex-newspaper editor Georgina was equally wary of feminine subject matter, particularly the overtly personal nature of the subfield, she told me, 'I was brought up to keep the first person way out of it. I very rarely wrote I in pieces and I think it's a trait that really needs to be watched quite carefully'. There appeared to be a fear that associations with femininity could leave careers at an impasse, trapped within a ghetto of femininity.

This danger was highlighted by Zoe Heller, one of the most famous and successful exponents of the 'girl' column, who commented, 'if your shtick is the

‘female perspective’, you are required to pretend that your femaleness is all – that everyone of your opinions is refracted through the lens of gender. This, your editor is apt to remind you, is what you’re being paid for’ (Heller 1999:15). She suggested that this position contained limited career potential explaining, ‘on the paper’s bleakly masculine terrain, the woman columnist must be allowed to pitch her cosy tent of ‘alternative’ woman-centric thinking setting aside little spaces for women to purvey their *awfully-important* woman-stuff is not an antidote to anything’ (16). This distancing from femininity and rejection of highly gendered writing styles by very successful female journalists was noticed by participants from within the subfield. As Alice observed, ‘women who are senior editors have to divorce themselves from femininity’. It seems that for those who sought success outside the subfield associations with femininity operated as negative capital and so must be avoided at all costs.

This kind of interview testimony suggests that while feminine capital operates successfully within the subfield it is of limited value beyond its boundaries. This finding resonates with previous feminist readings of gendered capital, which have contended that femininity’s lack of legitimacy renders it a risky and ambiguous species of capital and so cannot be relied upon to offer predictable or straightforward results as McCall explains:

Rarely if ever is femininity exclusively profitable for women as implied in Bourdieu’s description of the public redefinition of femininity in terms of beauty and charm. Women, who have feminine-sexual cultural capital, in a culture dominated by heterosexuality, cannot escape the consequences of such capital when compared to other types of cultural capital, such as educational qualifications (feminine beauty = no brains). (McCall 1992:845)

The few empirical studies into feminine capital have reinforced its ambiguous nature, Huppertz’s work within the paid caring field is of particular relevance to my study, for she too found that ‘feminine skills and aptitudes’ were a form of cultural capital which enabled her participants to ‘play ‘the game’ of the field and

play it well' (Huppatz 2009:61). However, she was careful to demarcate the specific parameters within which feminine capital operated, suggesting that its effects did not extend into the management of the caring professions. In Huppatz's study feminine capital proved to be particularly bounded and contained within 'highly feminized fields', she found 'limited conversion' (59) when agents moved into management or adjoining fields. I would suggest that a similar situation exists when journalists move beyond the feminine subfield into the wider structures of the journalistic field. Both my project and Huppatz's work suggest that feminine capital is contingent and conditional, functioning only in specific feminine spaces and lacking the institutional support and power held by more masculine forms of capital.

7.6 Symbolic Capital: Masculine and Feminine Bodies in the Newspaper

Despite attempts by some women journalists to distance themselves from femininity and so avoid the limitations of the feminine subfield, the symbolic value of masculinity and femininity within the journalistic field are constantly reasserted at the level of the body and so are almost impossible to escape. Within journalism a female body is a problematic, potentially unruly and undermining body. This is most graphically illustrated by attitudes to what Trethewey terms the 'reproducing body' (1999:438). Childbirth and success within the journalistic fields richest in symbolic capital appeared to be antithetical. Many participants viewed the all encompassing nature of hard news journalism as prohibitive to many women, supplement editor Audrey summed up this position:

There's very few women at the top in news... I think that's partly because women aren't prepared to make the lifestyle choices that being a news editor entails, because it's so demanding now. Much more demanding than it ever was before with all the 24 hour pressures and I think most women aren't prepared to get in at 8am and leave at 9pm

These problems were described as particularly heightened for women with children, as former editor Georgina explained, 'if women do want to

combine having children with a career, news is certainly not the easiest option, because of the hours and the demands and the travel'. Several participants identified children as the deciding factor in women's under representation in the newsroom. Commissioning editor Nancy remembered how when she worked in the newsroom, 'women that would have babies would just disappear, just wouldn't come back'. While executive editor Frances characterised women's seeming inability to excel on the news-desk as, 'totally about children, the only ones that go on are women who don't have children... or people so young...' She went on to explain why women with families were drawn to the more predictable working conditions in features and feminine journalism:

If you can start at 10 and leave at 6 and do a challenging job, unless you're an absolute news junkie, why on earth would you want to do a job in which you probably don't have as much control over the holiday you take, there's a big rota, there's crazy hours.

These findings are consistent with a 1998 report which found that having children 'blighted' women's journalists' careers, with just 12% of mothers calling themselves editors or deputy editors compared with 32% of fathers. While 'mothers are more likely to be features writers on newspapers' (Women in Journalism: 1998).

Women's reproductive bodies appeared to push them towards the feminine subfield regardless of their initial desires. Former newspaper editor Amanda Platell highlighted the forces that propel women towards the features departments of feminine journalism in an article on institutional sexism in newspapers. She suggested that women's desire to have a life, 'a partner, probably a husband and maybe children' (1999:146) meant that they usually ended up writing or commissioning features. Participants such as fashion editor Megan supported this contention, contrasting the inflexible attitude of the newsroom with the more family friendly situation in features departments. She observed:

There's not that culture of presenteeism here. You know it's almost like you're the saddo that didn't get their work done in time... no one is here until nine in the evening, everyone's got a family. You know the senior editors here ...they've got children, and they've got carol concerts to go to and open days I think they're really understanding.

While the desire for a life and family was not confined to female journalists it was perceived as a particularly feminine and feminising concern. This was illustrated by Nancy's account of a male journalist's decision to switch from his position as a senior foreign correspondent to a career in features journalism when he became a father. Nancy recounted how her colleague's new role in features had impacted upon his professional status and reputation in the eyes of his former associates in news, 'when I talk to people from the newsroom there's always "phhh yeah how is he, how's he handling it there phhh yeah mmm" and he's as happy as Larry he loves his job. But they view it as being such a step down "oooh poor guy oooh'. Alice confirmed this view describing how the journalist in question had been 'feminized' and been 'co-opted into a girly aesthetic that goes with features'. My interview data suggests that the dominant definition of journalistic practice means that men who demonstrate a concern for family life are regarded as odd and immediately feminized. As Djerf-Pierre has noted 'reproductive support' (2005:277) is an important asset for those wishing to reach the top in journalism and men currently hold more of this capital than women. Fertility and motherhood are aspects of feminine capital that function as a clear negative in the wider journalistic field, while garnering currency and support within feminine journalism.

However, the negative symbolic capital carried by femininity could not be overcome simply by avoiding childbirth the inequities that came with the possession of a female body expressed themselves at a deeper level, separating women from the profession's ideal figure and excluding them from its central work spaces. The newsroom was often described as an intimidating

environment and this was partly explained by its masculinity, as Nancy explained, 'It was hard to be a girl, because you walk in and it's all guys'. Some participants, such as fashion editor Paula, characterised the atmosphere in the newsroom, 'as very, very hostile and very male'. An impression was created of a testosterone fuelled, macho working environment, which Alice characterised pithily as 'big swinging dickness'. This macho environment has been noted by scholars (Skidmore, 1998) and is underpinned by the heroic tradition of rugged individualism that characterises journalistic mythologies. This tradition is implicitly male and is composed of not just commercial disinterest, autonomy and objectivity, but also alcohol, violence and an excess of testosterone. As Aldridge points out, within a UK tradition, the journalist of occupational legend indulges in behaviour which is, 'is quintessentially macho, involving any permutation of drinking too much, smoking too much, turbulent personal relationships and bodily excess: in violence of temper, in capacity for sustained shouting, in profanity of language' (1998:116).

Within a contemporary newspaper environment this swashbuckling figure is little more than a chimera, but his shadow looms large in journalistic professional discourse. Anyone who has worked in British newspapers will be only too aware of a vanished journalistic heyday set mainly in the drinking establishments of a long lost Fleet Street. Steiner characterises this mythical golden age as 'the bohemian "pub culture" long seen as inherent to journalism and much romanticized by male journalists' (2009:123). In my own experience this alcohol-sodden prelapsarian idyll is constantly evoked by older male journalists and favourably contrasted with the sterile mineral-water quaffing environs of contemporary journalism, this decline is often either implicitly or explicitly placed at the door of feminization.

These tropes were invoked by my participants, Alice noted that, 'men might have reputations for being drunks, but somehow that's a badge of pride, almost part of the job description, like having shorthand'. One option for women

is to try and embrace these professional mythologies, trail blazing editor Sue Douglas recounted her attempts to match the hard-drinking macho reporters of legend in Dougary's 1994 book on women journalists, 'I can't tell you how many times I used to get pissed in the right Fleet Street pubs, roll up my sleeves and say 'I can take 14 gin and tonics like the rest of them' (1994:137). This kind of experience was also present in my interview data, most notably represented by magazine editor Beatrice who recalled her initiation into journalistic practices while working on a Sunday newspaper. Beatrice had started as women's editor of the paper, before being promoted to deputy editor of a new magazine. This role involved working under a male news journalist who had 'been nothing but awful to me, in that he'd walk past the women's desk and kind of go 'women's ghetto, women's ghetto' every time he came back after lunch'. Beatrice described how in order to make this relationship work she decided she would have to prove that she could 'drink too' and so:

We went out for this long lunch that sort of went on all day, bottle after bottle after bottle of red wine, which was kind of regular at that time for the journalists on the Sunday who didn't have to do any work till the Friday... Anyway so I went through this rite of initiation and basically we became firm friends.

While Beatrice was able to navigate the macho culture of the newsroom and find a grudging acceptance the majority of my participants were adamant that the newsroom environment would not suit them. This antipathy was not couched in gendered terms but was presented as a matter of disposition and personality. Supplement features editor Julia was typical in explaining that, 'I'm not the kind of personality that would thrive in a news environment to put it mildly'. She clarified this by characterising a 'news' personality as 'someone not like me, someone really pushy'.

The lack of a male body and the access it provides to the rites and rituals of a macho newsroom culture was characterised as a disadvantage by my

participants, but the possession of a female body emerged as equally problematic in its own right. Indeed my research suggests the female body can be a liability in the journalistic field. The embodied and aesthetic labour, valorised within the subfield of feminine journalism, met with a more complex and problematic reception in the wider journalistic field. The personification of feminine skills, which acts as capital in the subfield, serves to render participants conspicuous in the newsroom, an experience which was variously described as advantageous and uncomfortable. Organisational research (Trethewey, 1999) and studies of journalistic culture (Steiner, 1998; North, 2009) have both noted the ways in which occupational and gendered discourses intersect to produce complex sites of negotiation for female employees. The bodies of women in the workplace are subject to particular scrutiny and a delicate balance must be struck between the 'proper' maintenance of femininity and a slide into 'unprofessional' female sexuality.

The difficulty of finding an acceptable embodied identity in a male dominated profession has often been highlighted by women journalists. A preponderance of uniformly dressed men, in the newsroom means that the physical appearance and sartorial choices of female journalists are thrown into sharp relief. Pioneering woman journalist Eve Pollard noted this gendered visibility in a 1994 interview about her career, remarking, 'they can always have a go at you as a woman, on account of the way you look' (cited in Dougary, 1994:148). Pollard contrasts her own embodied physicality, 'they don't think, "Good business brain. They think 38-D cup" (146), with male journalists' ability to transcend the physical. Her heartfelt, 'it's so enviable that men just buy a suit. As they get more successful they buy more expensive suits to hide a multitude of sins. And it's just a navy suit or a grey suit' (149), attests to the more complex and difficult relationship female journalists have with their bodies and self-presentation. This relationship was particularly heightened for my participants whose professional expertise and capital was rooted in displays of embodied

femininity, but whose working lives were conducted in the masculine environment of the newspaper.

Participants were aware of their visibility in a profession populated by, in fashion assistant Louise's words, 'men in grey suits' and this physical prominence was greeted with a complex set of reactions. At times participants' investment in their feminine capital produced this visibility as empowerment and opportunity, but it was also expressed as a source of anxiety and stress. The occupants of the newsroom were depicted as lacking the taste and embodied capital of the subfield of feminine journalism, this was encapsulated by former fashion editor Lucas remarks about news journalists 'they don't care about fashion, look at what they wear'. The effect of participants' spectacular appearance on the more drab occupants of the newsroom was often a source of pleasure, as in former supplement editor Lola's description, 'I would stroll through the newsroom in my new Christian Louboutin shoes and everybody would look up'. Lola used this memory of walking through the newsroom in extravagant designer shoes to illustrate the 'fun' and 'power' she had experienced as a fashion journalist working at a newspaper. Lola's experience was retold, from the point of view of the spectator, by features commissioning editor Nancy, who remembered the effect members of the fashion team had in the newsroom:

When I was in the newsroom if someone from the fashion desk walked downstairs people would just go silent. They had this air of mystery about them. It's because they were on a different level (based on a different floor of the building), you hardly ever saw them and they were dressed in this very distinctive way.

This superlative description was typical of Nancy's interview which contained a particularly striking narrative around embodiment and aesthetic labour. She traced a path from obscurity and discomfort in the newsroom, to feelings of power and confidence. This movement was partly explained by her changing role within the paper, she moved from a traineeship to a diary

correspondent, but she also placed great emphasis on her appearance and the role clothes played in her transformation. She explained that when she moved to the diary she felt she should 'dress up a bit' as socialising was part of her new role and so, 'I got this wardrobe where it was all four inch heels and pencil skirts and shiny fabrics'. She felt that along with this new wardrobe, came a new found respect amongst her colleagues:

I realised that the rest of the office were in awe of me, not that people would bow down in front of me, but that they had more respect for me and I was someone and I had a purpose and how I dressed was a part of that.

Nancy was convinced that her appearance and that of other women in the newsroom was a crucial element in success or failure, she maintained that, 'as a woman in the newsroom you need to project dress and power dressing or dressing confidently projects strength'. She illustrated this contention with an anecdote about a female colleague who had been 'one of the guys' and while Nancy perceived this position to have its advantages she also felt that it had meant her colleague, 'didn't really stand out, she was just like another bean counter another reporter among the sea of reporters'. However, in Nancy's view this position was reversed through feminine capital, as she explained, 'she started really dressing and she started to stand out and at the same time she was dressing in Prada dresses and Versace heels she was on the front page. So cause and effect who knows?' In Nancy's interview the visibility and embodiment that is associated with the female body was presented as a valuable opportunity to 'stand out' and catch the attention of those in power. Her experience suggests that 'in some contexts, 'femaleness may even be converted from a liability to an advantage' (Moi, 1991:1038), or at the very least that a female body can be experienced as an advantage.

However, other participants were more cautious about the effects of their physical appearance, linking their lack of professional status to their embodied occupational identities. Deputy fashion editor Megan expressed some of this

anxiety, she felt that an overly glamorous or flamboyant persona would mediate against acceptance in the newspaper. Megan explained that it was important not to alienate other members of staff by being too obviously 'fashion'. She contrasted her own approach with that of former colleagues:

Some of my colleagues in the past were a lot more fashion stereotypes, glamour. I mean they were bonkers, I mean like enormously wealthy and never wore the same outfit twice and so I think that kind of gets people's backs up.

While fashion editor Binky felt that the embodied, physical nature of her work meant that she wasn't taken seriously in the paper. She explained that she would often try on the clothes that she had called in for shoots, 'maybe at four o'clock in the afternoon I might have a dip and I might put something on my head, like a hat or a head band or whatever has come in'. She felt that this habit led to other members of staff to think she was, 'playing dressing up box'. Binky graphically described the feelings of disempowerment that her embodied femininity produced, complaining that 'sometimes I feel like I'm a piece of fluff that's got caught on the back of an office chair'. These experiences were replicated in other interviews, ex magazine editor and newspaper fashion editor Wendy, linked her appearance to the 'patronising' attitude she experienced in her time on newspapers 'I was blonde, I was female, I was fashion, I had to be stupid. I mean there really was that fluffy airhead thing about it'.

The most arresting example of the divergent physical demands of feminine journalism and the newsroom was provided by former fashion editor Lola. She recalled how the sudden and violent death of designer Gianni Versace had thrust her into the centre of the newsroom, as she put it 'I went from being the fashion editor to the person who was responsible for the entire newspaper that day'. As the agendas of fashion and news briefly collided, she was suddenly responsible for a front page news story, 'the news editor said to me 'ok we want 700 words front page splash on Gianni Versace'. Lola described how as she desperately

sought to meet this brief she was sabotaged by the very feminine capital, which ensured her success as fashion editor:

I'd just been to have acrylic nails put on, because they were very fashionable at that time and my nails were double the length. So I had these nails on and I was typing like mad, trying to meet this deadline and I looked down and my acrylic had tapped the key above the key I wanted, so it was total gobbledygook.

Lola managed to salvage the situation and finish the story within the deadline, but this example serves to illustrate the potential unmanageability and excessiveness of the hyper-feminine body, which her career in fashion demanded.

Freelance journalist Alice's recollection of being a trainee in the newsroom also highlighted the potential unmanageability of discourses around the 'excessively sexual or undisciplined' (Tretheway, 1999:437) female body. She had joined the paper in a year in which all the new trainees were women and this had, 'attracted a certain amount of attention'. This attention seemed to have focused on the bodies and sexuality of these new female members of staff, Alice remembered that, 'one of my peers had a very visible panty-line and that was like an enormous topic'. Alice herself had attracted unwanted gossip focused on her sexuality, as she explained, 'there were people who I hadn't even met that I was supposed to have slept with'. This experience led her to question the sexual reputations of other female journalists, 'I'd hear rumours about other women in the office and I'd sort of think well I'm supposed to have slept with 14 people so I wonder'. This gossip was not limited to allegations of promiscuity, one of Alice's colleagues, 'had a reputation for being frigid'. While Alice characterised the newsroom as a robust environment in which any physical or personality quirk might result in teasing for men and women alike, she felt that sexual slurs were specifically aimed at female journalists.

Such interview data reveals that while participants' attitudes to their embodied workplace identities might differ, a heightened awareness of their physicality when within the newsroom environment was a common experience. While a feminine body was variously positioned as an asset or a disadvantage it was never described as neutral, something that could be ignored or transcended. Instead it was something that needed to be navigated through a complex set of potential pitfalls or in Trethewey's words 'precarious in-betweens (e.g. masculinity/femininity, revealing/hiding one's body, conservative/fashionable dress, social conformity/individual creativity, and sexuality/asexuality)' (1999:425). My participants often depicted a situation in which the capital valued in their subfield demanded one half of this in-between, while that of the wider field required its diametrical opposite.

7.7 Feminine Journalism: A Women's Ghetto?

As I have illustrated in this chapter the journalistic field is largely hostile to women the binaries that structure its working practices and dominant notion of practice create a situation in which masculinity is the standard. As Ross observes, 'the kinds of 'naturalistic' culture that pervades many newsrooms is one that masquerades as a neutral 'professional journalism ethos' but is actually organised around a man-as-norm and woman-as-other structure' (2004:147). Women's positioning on the wrong side of this system of dualisms means that they are consistently identified with the embodied consumption of the feminine culture and so pushed towards careers within this subfield. My research suggests that for many women journalists the answer to this dilemma is not to question this gendered dichotomy, but instead to use it to define their own area of power and expertise within the journalistic field. This echoes Melin-Higgins' observations about fashion journalists, within the Scottish newspaper context of her research, she found that such journalists largely ignored the structures and inequalities of the wider newspaper for 'they had created a place for themselves, a place in which they had power' (2004:212). My participants depicted their

feminine field as their own territory which operated completely differently from the often hostile environment of the rest of the newspaper. Features editor Julia's picture of how her supplement differed from the news room was typical:

It's a lot more female, I just think it's a completely different ball game. Nobody shouts at each other, everyone's terribly nice to each other, genuinely nice. No one really seems to do much backbiting people don't have huge egos, which I know that a lot of news journalists do... It's a really nice place to work

This comparison between a macho, intimidating newsroom and a pleasant polite feminized environment was reproduced in many interviews, Louise compared the 'white middle aged men' of the rest of the newspaper with the 'lovely team' who worked on her supplement, while Alice felt that the newspaper magazine she had worked on compared favourably to the newspaper because its 'feminized atmosphere' meant 'in a meeting no one was really showing off so much'. Fashion editor Binky found working in a large open plan office alongside news journalists particularly difficult, she felt that the divergent demands of the two types of journalism and the sterile environment produced by news, mediated against her working successfully, as she explained, 'it is a job that's about aesthetics and opinions and looking at things and touching things and I think to do that in a grey quiet environment can feel quite draining.'

This pleasure in a female working environment was reproduced across my whole research cohort, with women in both magazines and newspapers highlighting the gender ratios of their offices. They spoke of an almost exclusively female environment and all worked in offices that were dominated by women. These comments from glossy magazine editor Beatrice are typical, 'I would say it is 99% women. Our publishing director is a man, we have a few, our creative director is a man... 5 men to a 150 women. So it's a very female environment'. This gender ratio was not confined to magazines, but extended to the features departments of newspapers and newspaper supplements. Participants from

newspapers described the working environment within their departments or supplements using phrases such as 'very feminine' or as Louise explained, 'it's great we're in our own little bubble'. The majority of my participants described this female dominated environment in very positive terms, often characterising it as supportive and collaborative, as magazine executive fashion editor Amelia told me, 'it is a really supportive environment for women and it does promote talent and it does promote women with interesting ideas... it has a very female perspective which I like working in'. Many participants contrasted the reality of their working lives with stereotypes about all-women offices, particularly fictional representations of fashion magazines. Features editor Sadie, who came to women's magazines from a career in male oriented publications, told me that she had been concerned at entering an all female environment because everyone had told her, 'oh my god they're going to be really bitchy'. However she was pleasantly surprised saying:

I actually think men are worse in my experience, the guys I used to work with, there's not that sisterly sense. Certainly on our desk people are very supportive, we're kind of competitive with each other, but I found working with men it was literally every man for himself...whereas I think in my experience women are better at being collaborative and it's a supportive environment.

The decision to operate within this highly feminized context produced a high level of job satisfaction in all of my participants and translated into a great deal of success for some of them. The increasing importance of advertising revenues and women readers meant that operating on the feminine side of a journalistic field polarised by gender, could lead to promotion and power. Two of the supplement editors I interviewed were willing to place themselves near the top of internal hierarchies. Audrey told me:

Well my status is high because (*supplement title*) is successful and because I really get on very well with my boss and recently I was made number three on the paper so I actually have a formalised position which is really good.

While Sandra, although initially demurring was prepared to acknowledge that her status was, 'probably quite high' and that she too had a formal position as 'a fairly senior executive, I'm on the board'.

My interview data suggests that structuring discourses, working conditions and sexual politics of the journalistic profession all combined to disadvantage women within the wider field. While within the feminine subfield these same problematic qualities, skills and bodily attributes acted as capital offering success and power.

7.8 Conclusion

My research suggests that despite the expansion of feminine journalism and the undoubted opportunities it offers for women journalists, the apparent feminization that this process represents does not amount to a fundamental alteration of the hierarchies and structures of the journalistic field. The feminine subfield does not challenge the patriarchal dualisms that structure the journalistic field, but rather embraces and reinforces them. The subfield is at once a site of opportunity and limitation, which conforms to Radner's wider depiction of feminine consumer culture as:

An arena in which feminine identity is both empowered, accorded a position of relative autonomy, of relative domination, and circumscribed within a social structure that in the final analysis maintains masculinity as the top in a relationship in which the feminine continues to define the bottom.

(1995:5)

My participants were determined to demarcate their territory almost entirely through the discourses of consumption, the body and the private sphere. This attachment to discourses that have defined feminine journalism since the final

decades of the 19th Century, means that expansion of the feminine subfield represents a continuation of existing structures rather than a realignment or break.

Women's position within the journalistic field, as journalist and reader, remains inextricably linked to consumption. Feminine journalism is not accorded space within journalism's defining discourse, but rather tolerated in the guise of economic facilitator. As Conboy has observed, this situation 'has all the characteristics of a hegemonic compromise, allowing female voices into the discourse of journalism, while doing so only on the terms of the dominant male perspective particularly when they have the potential to improve profitability' (2004:148). Despite its expansion and commercial importance, the feminine subfield is still not accorded the same status and position as 'hard' news masculine areas of the newspaper, which remain endowed with the profession's symbolic capital. My research suggests that feminine journalism's place within the newspaper remains provisional and is granted not through recognition of intrinsic worth or importance, but from a desire to attract advertising revenues.

I would argue that cultural changes have increased the value of femininity on the employment market, producing a situation in which the qualities and skills associated with a feminine habitus, can act as capital. However, this capital is bounded and contained within certain feminized areas and does not operate in a predictable or reliable manner once outside these confines. Feminine capital lacks the legitimacy of older more established forms of power and its deployment is risky and fraught with danger. My participants illustrated the ways in which identification with femininity could simultaneously provide access to privilege and limit opportunities. They described a situation in which the very capital that provided their power also circumscribed their actions and helped to entrench a discursive regime that ensured they could not reach the highest levels of their professional field.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions and Implications:

The Limits of Feminine Journalism

8.1 Introduction: Commerce, Femininity and Journalism

My research represents the most detailed empirical analysis of feminine journalism since Ferguson's 1983 study. In the intervening years the production of this journalistic subfield has gone largely undocumented, leaving a hole in both theories of news production and feminist media studies. This gap has impacted upon both branches of scholarship, leading to incomplete models of journalistic production and a lack of understanding of the imbrication of the cultural and economic in the production of commercial femininity. My research straddles these two areas of study and has implications for both postfeminist accounts of the media and wider conceptualisations of journalism and the role of the journalist. Over the course of this thesis I have answered important questions about the impact of the feminization of journalism on the role and status of contemporary feminine journalism and provided a much needed insight into the relative power of gendered journalistic capital, clarifying the position of masculinity and femininity within professional structures. Through a detailed account of this journalistic subfield I have also come to wider conclusions about the utility and limitations of the power that some women are able to access through the deployment of feminine capital and the relationship between gendered structures and the agency of actors within them. In this concluding chapter I will consider the empirical, theoretical and methodological implications of my project. However, before I turn to my conclusions I will briefly consider the future of feminine journalism and the effects of economic and technological changes that have occurred, or accelerated, since my research began.

8.2 Crisis and Uncertainty: The Future of Feminine Journalism?

While my work represents a full and systematic account of contemporary feminine journalism within a print context, print journalism's current state of crisis and flux leads to an unstable and unpredictable situation. Feminine journalism's place within this shifting field is potentially a precarious one. The complexity of the entanglements between feminine journalism and the adjacent fields of fashion and beauty brands, their advertising revenues and PR emissaries is one of the major findings of this research. As I illustrated in the previous chapter it is the advertising opportunities offered by these attachments and investments that at once secures feminine journalism's place within the wider journalistic field and sets the limits of its territory. Feminine journalism's position within the journalistic profession is a contingent, commercial compromise offered on financial terms. Despite the much vaunted feminization of newspapers, the feminine subfield still lies outside journalism's defining discourses and the feminine capital which produces it has not been legitimized and offered symbolic value within the wider field.

However, this commercial arrangement is one that offers the feminine subfield considerable power within the terms of the funding model that has characterised print journalism for the last century or more. For as Picard notes:

From a business model rather than a journalistic standpoint, the primary function of the newspaper is an advertising delivery system. Advertising accounts for about two-thirds of the content and 75-85 per cent of the income for the average newspaper in the United States and similar situations are found in many European nations. (2010:704)

If we consider print journalism as an 'advertising delivery system', then it is easy to place the feminine subfield, with its access to the lucrative advertising of luxury conglomerates, at its heart. Indeed almost all of my participants defined the power and influence of their subfield in exactly these terms. Only newspaper columnist Thea struck a cautionary note, calling the advances

women had made within newspapers a 'chimera' and drawing attention to the implicit settlement which underpinned feminization, 'as long as you keep buying then you'll have the purse strings'. Most of my interviews, including Thea's, were conducted before the full impact of the credit crunch had become clear, but as the recession began to bite into the advertising revenues of both newspapers and magazines her words began to look increasingly prescient.

Feminine journalism's position within the journalistic field is secured on the terms of print journalism's existing funding model, but in recent years a global recession, coupled with the migration of both readers and advertisers to the Internet, has begun to threaten that model. For the last century print journalism has been 'a stable, comfortable and highly profitable industry' and the last half of the 20th Century saw a heavy growth in advertising expenditure and rise in profits (Picard, 2010:705). However, a recent OECD report into the evolution of news and the internet suggests that the industry is now facing leaner times, 'after very profitable years, OECD newspaper publishers face increased competition (free dailies, Internet) and often declining advertising revenues, titles circulation and declining readership. The economic crisis has compounded this downward development' (OECD 2010:22). The UK fared particularly badly in this report with projected falls in print advertising revenues for 2009 of 26%, the steepest in Europe (32). These adverse conditions saw a huge decline in the profits of newspapers and magazines⁴² as advertising budgets were slashed.

While a portion of this downturn can be attributed to the recession and so is potentially reversible, print journalism's traditional funding model also faces structural problems. The growth of the Internet has provoked what James Curran terms a 'pronounced redistribution of advertising' pointing out that 'after a slow beginning the Internet's share of total media advertising soared in western countries between 1999 and 2009, while that of television and the press fell

⁴² News Corporation, the parent company of The Times, reported a 97% decline in profits at its newspaper division in May 2009 (Sabbagh 2009). While magazine publishers Conde Nast saw advertising revenues fall by 20% in 2009 as luxury goods houses and fashion houses dramatically curtailed their spending (Robinson 2009).

precipitately' (2010:5). The movement of advertising on to the Internet, often to sites with no connection to news or journalism, leads Curran to suggest that advertising, 'is beginning to be decoupled from news production: the total subsidy for journalism, both online and offline is declining' (5).

My research suggests that a fundamental shift in the nature and importance of the relationship between journalism and advertising would have dire consequences for feminine journalism. A diminution of advertising revenues would undermine the commercial settlement which offers the subfield its current privileged position within the wider field. A foretaste of what a breakdown of the advertising funding model could mean for feminine journalism is provided by the closure of the *Observer Woman* supplement in November 2009. The fashion and beauty dominated supplement, which launched in January 2006, was a casualty of the recession⁴³. *The Observer* was hard hit by the credit crunch with falls in advertising revenues of £33million and the title even faced closure as losses reached £100,000 a day (Pritchard, 2009). However, a slimmed down version of the paper re-launched, jettisoning its four monthly consumer titles including *Observer Woman* and reverting to 'its former self: a single magazine wrapped inside News, Sport and Review' (Pritchard, 2009:34). The discourse around this crisis is particularly relevant to the current research, the decision to scale the paper down was couched in commercial terms and explained thus, 'advertising – the lifeblood of all media organisations – boomed for more than a decade but will probably never return to newspapers in such abundance' (34). *Observer Woman* which was launched to capitalise on the advertising revenues associated with feminine journalism did not make sense in a world in which such revenues could no longer be relied upon. Here we see a stark illustration of the interlinking of the fortunes of feminine journalism with those of consumer capitalism, *Observer Woman* was in turn a product and then casualty of consumption.

⁴³ Despite early attempts to position *Observer Woman* outside the mainstream of feminine journalism by foregrounding its alleged appeal to men, from the first the supplement was dominated by consumption and the body. The launch issue contained features on IVF, women's 'obsession' with body hair and Elizabeth Hurley as well as *Shop!* 'a fabulous monthly shopping guide' which exhorted the reader to 'restock your wardrobe, kitchen, sitting room and home office' (Jeal 2006:3)

This conclusion is further evidenced by comments made by John Mulholland, *The Observer's* editor, about the closure of *Observer Woman* and the relaunch of the paper. He cited the discourses and binaries that have defined the journalistic profession for centuries, placing his publication firmly in a Habermasian public sphere, declaring that, '*The Observer* was born during the age of enlightenment' and associating the paper with 'freedom, democracy and reason' (Mulholland 2010:4). He was keen to assert his paper's position at the heart of journalism's defining discourses of news and current affairs and relegate what he termed, 'the sundry other diversions that we all expect from a Sunday newspaper' to the background. As he says, 'we like fashion and food and football, for instance, but what distinguishes *The Observer* are its values' (4). Mulholland's concentration on 'liberal and social democratic values' and determination to 'provide news and a context for news' (4), clearly marginalise the concentration on consumption, celebrity and frivolity which characterised *Observer Woman*. This distancing was reinforced by Stephen Pritchard, the paper's comment editor who described the consumer supplements as 'always controversial' (Pritchard, 2009:34) and appeared to be only too keen to abandon them. This willingness to discard feminine journalism and eagerness to disassociate the newspaper from its vales, highlights the precariousness of the subfield and demonstrates how far it remains from the symbolic core of the journalistic field.

Despite these kinds of threats to feminine journalism's future I did not find that the global economic downturn had provoked any appetite amongst my participants for a reevaluation of the dominance of consumption within their subfield. Indeed it is clear from my interview data that the determined coupling of femininity and consumption within the subfield will outlive the recession. The few participants who reflected upon recessionary trends did so firmly within the existing terms of the subfield. They did not deviate from their discourse of consumption. So fashion editor Binky saw the downturn in terms of a change of shopping style:

I think it's beginning to change economically it's very interesting to see what will happen in the next stage and judging from the response we've had from our readers, because a lot of people call us and a lot of people buy from the page as well, there already seems to be a shift to more expensive things.

This view was supported by another newspaper fashion editor Kirsty who characterised the credit crunch in purely aesthetic terms, convinced it would signal a return to a classic style, 'things like loafers and long pleated skirts and tartans and tweeds and all these very traditional sloaney things'. For my participants a looming recession only appeared to consolidate the subfield's traditional concerns and tie it ever closer to the scripts of its advertising brands as fashion assistant Louise suggested:

With the current economic climate it's all about pleasing the advertisers. Luxury brands, jewellery brands and watch brands aren't affected by these things, because they're so high end. So that's why magazines are devoting much more space to a watch page or a jewellery shoot or something like that, because they know that they're going to get that advertising.

Participants suggested a move away from the democratising impulses of the fast fashion movement and towards a more exclusionary focus on the kind of reader who remained untouched by the credit crunch, as Louise put it, 'recession doesn't affect those people's spending, because they'll be able to buy a £20,000 ring til the day they die, they've got money'. As far as my participants were concerned the recession may influence aesthetics or shopping styles, but the centrality of consumption to femininity, and hence the subfield, remained unquestioned.

The seemingly inextricable connection between femininity and consumption leaves its future dependent on the continuing importance of advertising to print journalism. It is currently impossible to forecast the durability of this relationship, as Curran points out, 'it is difficult to predict media advertising trends because the 2008-9 crash makes it especially difficult to distinguish between structural and cyclical shifts of expenditure' (2010:5).

Similarly, foretelling the subfield's place within journalism's digital future remains difficult. Participants did not foreground the impact of the Internet on their journalistic subfield and when they did touch upon this theme, it was normally in a register of fear or resistance. Fashion editor Tina's comments on her future were typical:

I don't know really you sort of look and think god can you keep doing this. In ten years time what will I be doing? Especially because you don't really know how things are going to change with the whole Internet thing as well.

Few of my participants enthusiastically embraced a future for the subfield on the Internet and their discussions remained within a print model of journalism. The wariness and uncertainty which typified interview data around journalism's digital challenges appeared to be representative of the wider industry. A recent report by the *Columbia Journalism Review* (Navasky and Lerner, 2010) which considered 665 American consumer magazines, found a patchy and inconsistent attitude to magazines' online presence with more than a third of magazines surveyed not sure if their websites made a profit. The newspaper industry's future on the internet remains difficult to anticipate and the funding methods that will dominate the future of digital journalism are unclear. As the OECD report concluded, 'the search of newspapers for profitable business models and new relationships with other news and Internet actors is far from concluded' (2010:56). The newspaper market is entering a period of flux with some newspaper groups claiming that advertising will not lead to profitable newspapers on the Internet, while others remain loyal to print journalism's traditional model of financing. This is evidenced in the UK by News Corp's decision to begin charging for their online newspaper content amid claims from Rupert Murdoch, 'that the current business model is malfunctioning' (cited in Sabbagh 2009:2). While other UK titles, such as *The Daily Mail*, remain wedded to old funding solutions, adamant that the *MailOnline*, 'is now big enough to make the advertising model pay' (Andrews 2010:45).

Whilst the funding of journalism on the Internet remains unpredictable it is hard to anticipate feminine journalism's position within a digital future. Some projections suggest a move away from advertising and a return to journalism's core values (Curran 2010), which would surely undo the commercial settlement that offers the feminine subfield its power and influence. However, other commentators forecast an increased dependence on advertising and an attendant, 'tendency towards cheaper and softer news with entertainment value and appeal to advertisers' (OECD 2010:60), suggesting that 'the success of a story as a product is judged by advertising revenues and hence the views and clicks it generates' (60)⁴⁴. Such scenarios continue to place the feminine subfield and its focus on entertainment, celebrity and consumption, at the heart of journalism as it migrates onto the web. This inherent uncertainty, coupled with the timing of my research makes it impossible for me accurately to predict the future of feminine journalism. However, it is clear that for as long as journalism's fortunes remained wedded to advertising, the female reader will continue to be conceptualised as a consumer and therefore it is unlikely that we shall see a significant shift in the parameters or concerns of the subfield. Further research into the transfer of journalism onto the web and the relative importance and status of feminine journalism within this new setting would be an interesting and important adjunct to the current study.

8.3 The Subfield of Feminine Journalism: The Limits of Power

The limits and potential of the power offered to women through consumption and femininity are fully explicated through my exploration of the structure and hierarchies of the journalistic profession. I position feminine journalism as a subfield within the wider journalistic field. This Bourdieusian theoretical framework necessitates a consideration of journalism as a site of struggle and contestation in which agents hold dominant and subordinate

⁴⁴ The success of *The Daily Mail's* website currently recording more traffic than any other British newspaper website would seem to support this contention. *The Mail* has achieved this position with web content produced from the heart of the feminine subfield, celebrity gossip, fashion and features from the paper's Femail section dominate the website and have proved popular with an international audience.

positions based on the types and amount of capital that they hold. My research illustrates the extent to which this struggle and contestation is rooted in gendered processes and norms. Bourdieu's own work lacks any consideration of the gendered nature of the power at work within the journalistic field. This amounts to a major theoretical and methodological flaw for as I have demonstrated gender divisions and binaries play a central role in underpinning and facilitating models of journalism both in the academy and the profession. This highlights the more general problem caused by Bourdieu's inconsistent approach to gender. At times, most notably in *Masculine Domination*, sexual difference is conceptualised as a major social division and organising principle, while at other points in his work gender is treated as a secondary category. As Swartz notes, 'there in fact seems to be two different roles for gender at work in different portions of Bourdieu's work and their interrelation remains unclear' (1997:156). So while Bourdieu foregrounds and dissects such binaries in *Masculine Domination*, he fails to integrate or apply these findings to his wider work or allow them to fully inform his class analysis. Within a journalistic context this leaves him blind to the gendered implications of his analysis. As Benson suggests, 'Bourdieu favours a more autonomous journalistic field, that is a space in which journalistic excellence is defined according to purely journalistic criteria, not by profit maximising or political criteria' (2009:185). However, as my research illustrates, notions of journalistic autonomy and attempts to distance journalism from the commercial field are highly gendered, with direct effects upon the status and positioning of women within the field. The importance of these journalistic ideals and hierarchies and their exclusionary outcomes are ignored, both by Bourdieu himself and those who have taken up his theoretical model (Benson and Neveu, 2005).

My research begins to rectify these omissions and oversights. I have used my study of the feminine subfield to illuminate the ways in which gender intersects with the internal logic of the journalistic field to produce hierarchies, which offer women journalists a particular type of cultural authority, while

simultaneously limiting their power and relegating them to secondary positions. To understand the way in which gender acts as an organising principle within the journalistic field, I have widened my analysis beyond the field theory model which dominates media studies, reintegrating the habitus/field pairing, in order to consider the implications of Bourdieu's work on taste and distinction, for journalism studies. I have drawn on feminist extensions of Bourdieu's notion of capital, which include gendered and specifically feminine forms of power. I have used this notion of feminine capital to consider the strategies adopted by women journalists in their struggle for position and prestige within the journalistic field. While theorists such as Lovell and Skeggs have suggested that women's position as capital bearing objects might be translated to one of capital-accumulating subjects as they move into social spaces of employment, there has been very little empirical testing of this thesis in specific work-place environments. My project is a significant contribution to this body of work, representing as it does a wholesale exploration of the use-value of feminine capital within the journalistic field.

I have revealed a complex situation in which women working within feminine journalism are a privileged group endowed with cultural power, but at the same time are placed in a subordinate position within the struggles of the wider journalistic field. Both these professional advantages and restrictions come as a result of the relationship between the subfield and consumption. As I have demonstrated, my participants access and deploy rewarding discourses of taste and cultural authority in order to establish their professional position. This power and authority, both within the journalistic field and in regard to their wider audience of women, is a direct consequence of the subfield's proximity to the commercial pole. The branded femininity that I have identified offers agents a form of symbolic power, which is organised and structured by consumption. My interview data exposes a journalistic subfield which is inextricably enmeshed with adjacent commercial fields. As I detailed in Chapter Six, the requirements of advertising brands determine the environment of publications and play a large

part in setting editorial aims. Through their PR practices, most notably credit counting and the control of samples and celebrity access, brands shape the specifics of editorial content. Beyond these systematic controls I discovered that the foundational definition of femininity that moulded feminine journalism was in part constituted through these brands and the routines and rituals their centrality imposed upon the subfield. What is striking about the valorising of luxury brands within feminine journalism and their inscription within editorial aims and routines, is the totemic character of these products and the way in which they inform a whole series of beliefs about the nature of femininity.

My research illustrates the extent to which brands are entrenched and embedded in gendered discourses and the ways in which they work to constitute and create particular forms of femininity in both the producers and readers of feminine journalism. The influence of brands manifests itself in work routines and practices and even in the subjectivities of the subfield's agents. The investments my participants made in commercial forms of femininity, as represented by the 'correct' fashion and beauty brands, constituted their professional identities, defining the skills and knowledge that formed their distinct species of feminine capital. These investments also structured their working lives expressing themselves in rituals and practices which privileged commercial femininity and gave brands their currency and importance within the subfield. It was these same relationships with brands and consumption, which allowed my participants to become agents of power in their own right. Access to sites of privilege, the metaphorical fashion cupboard, placed my participants in a position of economic and cultural authority, able to influence the consumption choices of the wider constituency of women they purported to represent. This influence provided them with the command they exerted, both in relation to the commercial fields of luxury brands and their advertisers and the journalistic field. The power that my participants enjoyed, both professionally within journalism and culturally as the ideal subjects of branded femininity, was rooted in their relationship with consumption.

However, as I have suggested throughout this thesis power that is granted through consumption is accessed from a very particular position and is not available to all women, it is feminine rather than female capital. My participants shared a very specific middle class feminine habitus that was inculcated and reinforced through the rites of commercial femininity. This feminine capital was organised around notions of taste and self-expression and the cultivation and perfectibility of the body. My participants were agents of power to the extent to which they were able to realise and perform discourses of femininity and consumption. As my interview data demonstrates, this realisation was contingent upon possession of an acceptably feminine body and habitus, which could be compromised by an incorrect class, race or gender identity. The feminine capital that I have described was constantly recreated and reinscribed through judgments of taste and aesthetics and depended upon participants' ability to make the 'correct' choices. The endless judgements and ranking of everything from celebrities to advertising brands, which formed a large part of the subfield's professional expertise, served to foreground another set of potential 'wrong' decisions and bad taste against which the subfield's version of feminine expertise is defined. The 'naff' and the 'hideous' world of the, 'ugly people, ugly, poor, thick people', which magazine deputy editor Mandy contrasted with her own readership, haunts my interview data, rarely referred to, but crucial to the aesthetic and consumption regimes that characterise the subfield. For as Bourdieu suggests, 'tastes are the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference' (1986:56) and it is often the disgust that the 'bad' taste of others provokes which defines 'good' taste. My participants were keen to differentiate themselves from these distasteful others, displaying the violent 'aesthetic intolerance' that Bourdieu speaks of. As I have suggested, my participants were a privileged group who were able to utilise cultural knowledge accessed through a particular class or educational position in order to gain distinction. While they characterised feminine expertise and capital as a medium for movement, empowerment and self-improvement, it was clear that this strategy was not

equally available to all women. Indeed the taste capital my participants depended upon was given currency only through the assumption that they occupied a space of privilege, meaning, in Tina's words 'they knew more' than the mass of women.

In one sense my participants were highly privileged agents of power, in another they were subordinated and marginalised, for the species of capital that I have identified only operates within narrow constraints and does not translate successfully into the wider journalistic field. Therefore, while deployment of feminine capital is a route which allows women journalists clear pathways to success within a male-dominated profession, it also limits this success and does not facilitate access to journalism's upper echelons. The agency that my participants could access through feminine capital was curtailed by the structures and symbolic regimes that define the journalistic profession. As this project makes clear the journalistic field is constituted through a series of foundational divisions between male/female, public/private and civic/commercial. These dualisms structure definitions of journalism both within the profession and the academy. The expansion and increasing commercial importance of feminine journalism, or the feminization of journalism, has done nothing to disturb these constitutive binaries. Indeed I would argue feminization has been conducted through the medium of these gendered dualisms and so has only served to reinforce and deepen them. My participants defined their professional identities and areas of expertise relationally, using journalism's dominant masculine, public and civic discourse to demarcate their own oppositional feminine, private and commercial area of expertise. The current problems in the funding of print journalism may have produced the feelings of uncertainty and crisis that I observed amongst the news and foreign correspondents in *The Times* newsroom (Chapter One). However, my research suggests that despite their fears such reporters remain journalism's privileged legitimised agents and holders of the field's symbolic capital.

Journalism's constitutive dualisms remained unchallenged, because as Bourdieu contends they are, 'deeply rooted in things (structures) and in bodies' (2001:103). My participants' interview data illustrates the way in which personal and professional subjectivities are created through these very divisions. The power and privileges offered by the feminine subfield are offered through the capital and expertise of commercial femininity and so upon the terms of these structuring binaries. It is here that I hope my work begins to answer some of the questions I raised in Chapter Three, specifically the inquiry provoked by Judith Butler's re-examination of Althusser's ideology, 'under what conditions does a law monopolize the terms of existence in so thorough a way?' (Butler 1997:130) The foundational dualisms which structure the journalistic field also underpin the practices and rituals of commercial femininity and so the production of the professional feminine subjectivities I have described. My participants did not question or challenge these dualisms precisely because their professional expertise and power were constituted through them, such binaries did indeed monopolize the terms of their professional existence.

My research suggests that while feminine capital does offer *some* women power, this power is not granted the symbolic capital bestowed upon other more legitimated forms of cultural knowledge and expertise which are more easily accessed by men. My work explores the utility of a particular model of middle-class femininity as a cultural resource and concludes that while it undoubtedly provides privilege and advantage to those women who are able to access it, its value is constrained by its position within a symbolic order which still privileges masculinity. This conclusion has wider implications for the intersection of femininity and consumption in contemporary postfeminist media cultures. My research illustrates the ways in which such media spaces offer the possibility of an empowered feminine identity that grants autonomy and control to some fortunate female subjects. However, this identity is constrained by a narrow discursive regime which demands adherence to a limiting set of concerns located entirely within the private sphere of consumption and a disciplinary set of

aesthetic and bodily codes. The space of privilege offered by this feminine identity is offered within a wider social, symbolic and institutional structure that ultimately privileges masculinity and denigrates femininity. The occupation of this privileged space and utilisation of feminine capital within a journalistic context reinscribes these structures and so offers privilege to some women by reinforcing a situation which denies it to the majority.

Therefore, the same feminine capital that endows certain women with power, also limits and circumscribes women, constraining feminism and feminist progression. As I have demonstrated within a journalistic context, the relative status of masculinity and femininity is greatly determined by the gendering of consumption. The offer of power on the ground of consumption only serves to reinscribe this position and reinforce women's associations with the private, the intimate and the bodily. This situation supports Bourdieu's contention that, 'masculine domination is thus founded upon the logic of the economics of symbolic exchange' (1992:174). A study of feminine journalism suggests that despite women's movement into the public sphere of the newspaper and successful utilisation of feminine capital, their position, simultaneously as both objects and subjects within the symbolic order, means that they can accrue only limited forms of power and influence. My research supports Bourdieu's conclusion that 'the dialectic of pretension and distinction which is at the root of the production and consumption of cultural goods' (174), stands between women and their liberation. However, unlike Bourdieu's account of this phenomenon in *Masculine Domination*, my research details and specifies the extent to which individual actors are limited in their ability to challenge a situation, which defines professional structures and norms.

8.4 The Production of Feminine Journalism: Methodological Implications and Future Research Directions

I have taken up the themes of the early Althusserian work on women's magazines to explore the way in which feminine journalism helps to produce a normative version of femininity rooted in consumption and the concerns of the personal and private sphere. Like McRobbie (1978) and Winship (1987) I found a limiting version of femininity at work within the subfield, but my attention to the production of feminine journalism and its position within a wider commercial realm produces an analysis which extends beyond the page and into the practices and rituals of commercial femininity. By shifting the focus of analysis away from the text or the reader and towards the lived experience of producers, I have been able to flesh out the empty subject of the Althusserian work and explore the way in which the discourses of the commercial realm work to constitute feminine subjectivities.

I have painted a more nuanced and detailed picture of the producers of women's magazines than those that have gone before. Rather than relegating these women to a shadowy symbolic status as the handmaidens of capitalism or the enemies of women I have illustrated how they themselves are caught within the very discursive regimes that they help to produce. I would suggest that my research sheds more light on the consumption of the products of commercial femininity than the reader-oriented studies of magazines that went before it. My participants' status as both producers and consumers of femininity has allowed me fully to demonstrate the constitutive power of commercial femininity, without falling into the trap of suggesting that the consumption of such products produces witless cultural dupes. I would argue that the sections of my research which deal with my participants as cultural consumers, reveal active, creative and empowered readers and shoppers, but at the same time expose the disciplinary power and limiting nature of these cultural products. My participants' movement from consumer to producer suggests the circularity and

conservatism of the discourses around femininity and the ways in which they are endlessly reproduced.

Much of the work on postfeminist media cultures concentrates on textual analysis of particular female genres such as women's magazines, romantic comedies and female-centred sitcoms (Tasker and Negra 2005). The merits of the versions of femininity on offer within these texts are considered in isolation rather than as part of wider media industries and discourses. The current project departs from this norm by contextualising women's magazines within the journalistic profession and exploring feminine journalism's position within the masculine spaces of the newspaper, as well as the feminized realm of the magazine. This placement provides a wider perspective on postfeminist media cultures, against the background of the newspaper; outside the purely female niche of the women's magazine, postfeminism is no longer a discrete entity but is forced to compete with other powerful discourses. The same neo-liberal script of female independence and empowerment through consumption is evident in the newspaper versions of feminine journalism, but here it exists alongside powerful competing ideas and journalistic specialisms. These conflicts and how they are played out within the journalistic field, serve to illustrate the opportunities, contradictions and limitations of postfeminism in a way that genre specific textual analysis cannot.

My research also helps to expand the parameters of journalism studies. As I outlined in Chapter Two, 'most scholarly work on journalism is reduced to studies of institutional and mainstream 'hard' news' (Deuze, 2009:91). This partial mode of analysis leads to a focus on journalism's role in the education of politically and socially aware citizens, whilst marginalising its institutional links with advertising and entertainment and the part journalism plays in the production of consumers. Much of the work on journalism is centred on an ideal version of the profession, journalism as we would want it to be rather than the messy and less appealing reality. As Zelizer maintains, 'journalism scholarship

has not sufficiently navigated the various pathways between the journalism we imagine and the journalism we have' (2009b:3). I have tried to create a model of analysis which considers the journalistic field as it really is, demarcating the realities of the feminine subfield, attending to its limitations, numerous drawbacks and problems, but at the same time alive to the opportunities it offers for women journalists within a masculine field. Such thinking is necessary in order to fully understand the forces of commercialization, tabloidization and feminization, which inform contemporary journalism. The kind of thorough and systematic exploration of the links between lifestyle journalism and the commercial realm I have conducted, both expand and increase our understanding of what journalism is in a contemporary context.

This study also informs the work around journalistic field theory. This growing body of work has remained gender-blind and has depended on a model of Bourdieu's thinking which pays disproportionate attention to the field at the expense of its theoretical pair the habitus. This privileging of the structural and objectivist element of Bourdieu's paradigm and neglect of its subjectivist correlate has produced work which focuses on journalism's structures and organisation, but largely ignores the internalisation of these structures within agents. This represents a missed opportunity fully to utilise Bourdieu's thinking to illuminate the hugely significant operation of discourses such as gender and class within the journalistic profession. I have tried fully to integrate habitus/field in my research, considering the effects of objective structures such as the funding of print journalism through advertising, but also the internalisation of these structures in the subjectivities of my participants. I would contend that this application of Bourdieu's thinking produces a fuller account, which avoids the reproduction of normative analytical structures to be found in many applications of field theory to journalism.

More research on the gendering of the journalistic field is necessary, the extent and implications of women's associations with consumption would be

further elucidated by an investigation of the attitudes of male journalists, working in prestige categories and within editorial structures, to feminine journalism. Equally, the relationship of women journalists working away from the subfield, in areas such as news, sport and business, to journalistic hierarchies and structures, deserves further investigation. This work is an important step in the consideration of the neglected area of lifestyle journalism, however far more research is needed in this area, the mechanics and consequences of the commercialization of journalism can only be fully explicated by the kind of detailed explanation of a subfield that I have undertaken. Further examination of the transfer of journalism onto the web and the relative importance and status of feminine journalism within this new setting is also crucial. An exploration of the stability of the relationship between women readers and consumption in a digital environment is required in order to predict the future of the feminine subfield with any confidence.

Situated accounts of the production of specific sites of commercial femininity, such as the current study, work to illuminate the connections between femininity and consumption. I have mapped the seemingly unbreakable association between women and consumption within a journalistic context, tracing the ways in which the cultural and economic work together to produce feminine subjectivities. The gendering of consumption, and the implications that this has for women, is an area which deserves far more analysis. Closer examination of the fields which lie adjacent to my study would be helpful in this respect. While this project does not delve into an exploration of the internal workings of luxury fashion, beauty brands and public relations, it offers findings relevant to the gendering of these fields and provides leverage for further research in these areas.

8.5 Concluding Remarks

One of the major impetuses of this project was my own attraction to the subfield of feminine journalism and the wider products of commercial femininity. The enjoyment and pleasures offered by the subfield have often been overlooked, or discounted in previous studies. However, I would suggest that the appeal of feminine journalism, far from amounting to false consciousness, is rooted in rational and material considerations. My research suggests that the attraction many women feel for women's magazines and supplements, both as readers and professionals, stems from the offer of a specifically feminine form of power and cultural authority that such publications hold out. The subfield's version of female experience is attractive and enticing because of the power and pleasure it offers, the access to Radner's 'space of privilege' (1995:3), which it promises. My study of the journalistic field illustrates the way in which professional and symbolic discourses direct women journalists towards the feminine subfield. I have illuminated the power of the journalistic discursive regimes that make this specialism an attractive option for women in the profession. The benefits of building a feminized area of power, influence and prestige within the male-dominated and often hostile world of journalism should not be underestimated. I hope I have developed a model of analysis which does justice to the attractions and pleasures of postfeminist media culture and the opportunities which it offers.

However, I have tried not to let my understanding of my participants' position blind me to the exclusions and limitations that the continued centrality of feminine journalism to the conception of female readers and journalists reproduces. I have also documented the boundaries of this model of power, detailing the limited version of female experience on offer and the glaring exclusions which the subfield's gloss and glamour barely mask. However, despite feminine journalism's limitations and negative consequences it is clear that while print journalism is defined by its dependence on advertising, women readers will

continue to be positioned as consumers and female journalists will be offered power and prestige upon this basis. Criticism of the subfield and the agents within it all too often falls within the same binaries which define and constitute the journalistic field and feminine journalism itself, leading to the all too familiar concentration on women's role within stereotypically 'macho' areas of journalism and the fetishization of the totemic female war reporter. I do not want my research to fall into this trap and would argue that what is needed is not a concentration on women working within journalism's central discourse, but rather a wholesale reevaluation of the discourse itself and so our conceptions of journalism.

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Appendix

List of Interview Participants

Participants are referred to via their pseudonyms and limited information is provided in order to protect their anonymity. Titles provided were accurate at the time of interview.

Alice – Is a freelance journalist who contributes articles to both newspapers and magazines. She was previously employed on a permanent basis as features writer on a daily newspaper.

Amelia – Is the Executive Fashion Editor of a women’s monthly magazine. Her career history lies solely within the magazine sector.

Audrey – Is the Editor of a Sunday newspaper supplement, with previous experience in newspaper news and features departments.

Beatrice – Is the Editor of a women’s monthly magazine, with a career history which spans magazines and newspapers.

Binky – Is a stylist and Fashion Editor of a Sunday newspaper supplement.

Celia – Is the Deputy Fashion Editor of a daily paper.

Charlotte – Is a columnist on a daily newspaper, she also writes for women’s magazines.

Cleo – Is the editor of a monthly women’s magazine. Her career history includes numerous high profile roles in newspapers and magazines.

Daisy – Is Deputy Editor of a Sunday newspaper supplement. She has previously worked in the women’s magazine sector.

Debbie – Is the Editor of a monthly women’s magazine. She has edited several other magazine titles.

Edward – Is a freelance fashion journalist who has held editorial positions in both newspapers and magazines.

Ella – Is a freelance journalist who works primarily for magazines. She has previously held editorial positions within the sector.

Estelle – Is the Deputy Editor of a weekly women's magazines. Her career began in newspapers.

Frances – Is the Associate Editor of a daily newspaper.

Georgina – Was formerly the Editor of a Sunday Newspaper.

Imogen – Is the Deputy Editor of a Sunday newspaper supplement. Before taking up her current position she worked for a women's magazine.

Janice – Is the editor of a women's weekly magazine.

Jenny – Is the Commissioning Editor of a Sunday newspaper supplement.

Julia – Is the Features Editor of a Sunday newspaper supplement.

Kirsty – Is the Fashion Director of a Sunday newspaper supplement. Her career has spanned magazines and newspapers.

Lola – Is a freelance journalist who writes for both newspapers and magazines. She has previously been a Fashion Editor and the Editor of a weekly newspaper supplement.

Louise – Is a fashion assistant on a Sunday newspaper supplement.

Lucas – Was formerly the Fashion Editor of a weekend newspaper supplement.

Lucy – Is a features writer and columnist on a daily newspaper.

Mandy – Is the Deputy Editor of a weekly women's magazine. She has also worked for a daily newspaper.

Megan – Is the Deputy Fashion Editor of a daily newspaper.

Mia – Is the Fashion Editor of a daily newspaper. She has previously worked in the magazine sector.

Nancy – Is the Commissioning Features Editor of a daily newspaper.

Natasha – Is the Fashion Editor of a weekly women's magazine. Her career history includes newspapers and magazines.

Olivia – Is a Fashion Writer on a daily newspaper.

Patricia – Is a consultant stylist and the Fashion Editor of a monthly fashion magazine.

Paula – Is the Fashion Editor of a daily newspaper. She has also worked in the magazine sector.

Phoebe – Is the Executive Fashion Editor of a monthly women's magazine.

Pippa – Was formerly an Editorial Assistant on a weekly women's magazine.

Sadie – Is the Features Editor of a monthly women's magazine.

Sandra – Is the editor of a Sunday newspaper supplement.

Thea – Is a feature writer and columnist on a daily newspaper. She also writes for women's magazines.

Tina – Is the Fashion Director of a newspaper Sunday supplement.

Trixie – Is the Editor of a Sunday newspaper supplement.

Wendy – Is a columnist for a Sunday newspaper. She has previously edited several women's magazines.

