

**Constructions of Social Work:  
The Writing Stories Project**

**Rachel Robbins**

**2013**

# **Constructions of Social Work: The Writing Stories Project**

**Rachel Robbins**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Manchester  
Metropolitan University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care

March 2013

# **Constructions of Social Work: The Writing Stories Project**

## **Abstract**

Social work is a complex phenomenon. At a time when individualistic models of practice dominate the profession, it becomes difficult for students, practitioners and educators to link the problems of the service-users to wider perspectives of gendered, racialised and classed structures. My interest in this comes as a practitioner of social work education. It has grown out of teaching social policy to social work students. Social policy as a discipline tends to take explicit political positions and is concerned with the practicalities of politics. Making sense of the politics of social work is a challenging task (Powell, 2001). The role of social policy within social work education is to enhance the delivery of social justice in part through an understanding of structures and policy upon service-users.

This thesis starts by setting the context for social work and social policy teaching within social work education. It then moves onto discuss the search for a methodology and approach to analysis that could support the central aim of the thesis, bridging the gap between experience and learning to improve the engagement of social work students with social policy. This became the Writing Stories Project in which, following the example of Haug *et. al.*'s (1987) feminist project of Memory Work, social work students on a BA in Social Work were asked to write personal stories expressed as third person accounts to a series of cues relating to social policy within social work. Words such as need, protection, risk, etc. were used to provoke memories which could then be interrogated by the groups and myself for their relevance to social work education. This work took place over the academic year 2008 – 2009 and involved 34 students, who produced 94 stories.

The thesis then examines the stories produced by the student cohort and uncovers the subject(s) of social policy discourse in relation to social work and social welfare. Analysis uncovers a subject who is primarily a consumer, with few mutual bonds, tasked with the surveillance rather than support of others. However, this subject can also resist attempts to be categorised and reduced. Gender and nation in particular are

both policed and resisted within the texts. In concluding my focus is on my practice as an educator in social work and methods and content for social policy teaching.

However, I am also concerned with the epistemological limitations of social policy as a discipline and how the project can add to current debates around methodological approaches and knowledge production and development.

## **Acknowledgements**

This work could not have been completed without the support of a number of people and for that I would like to express my gratitude. First, a huge thanks to all the students who took part in the Writing Stories project; your stories have been intriguing and inspiring. I want to thank supervisors, past and present. Ian Stronach our acquaintance was short-lived but proved fruitful. Heather Piper thank you for your calming words, expertise and exceptionally detailed feedback. Erica Burman thank you for providing me with support, networks and an excellent example of scholarly professionalism. A number of colleagues have been helpful throughout this period of study. In particular, I would like to thank members of the Discourse Unit for a critical and supportive space. I would also like to thank Surya Nayak, Debbie Thackray and Geraldine McCusker for feminism and friendship. I would like to thank my Mum and Dad for letting me know that education gets you out of almost any scrape. I also want to thank my partner, Leigh Waldie for his patience, proof-reading and selfless support and my daughter, Hannah Robbins, who has put up with me thinking, reading and writing about this for most of her life. I love you both.

## **Contents**

Chapter One	Context: A Consideration of Social Policy Within Social Work Education	1
Chapter Two	Methodology: Principles and Ideals	34
Chapter Three	Methods and Collecting Material: Messes and Tangles	50
Chapter Four	Approaches to Analysis	65
Chapter Five	Risk and/or/vs. Protection	84
Chapter Six	Success Stories	109
Chapter Seven	Control and the Travelling Subject	132
Chapter Eight	Need	164
Chapter Nine	Violence and Knowing	191
Chapter Ten	Reflections and Conclusions	226
Reference List		247
List of Appendices		267

## **List of Tables**

Table 3.1	Assignment of Groups	53
Table 4.1	Accounts produced over the course of the Writing Stories Project by cue	65
Table 6.1	Details of “Success” Stories	112

# **Chapter One – Context**

## **A Consideration of Social Policy within Social Work Education**

### **Introduction**

Social work is a complex phenomenon. It has an international aspect as well as being characterised by national, regional and local practices. The subject of this doctoral research is primarily concerned with social work practice in the UK and, where necessary to make the distinction, in England. It can be argued the development of social work is linked to the industrialisation of the global north (Hugman, 2009) and that it is now reaching a fluid and diverse post-modern identity. However, within the UK it has always held an uncertain position and I would argue that there are attempts now in this “post-structuralist” society to impose order on its blurred boundaries. Within the UK, social work has had a convoluted and fragmented journey to its current condition. “Social Worker” is now a legally protected term. It can only be used to describe someone who is professionally qualified and registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC).<sup>1</sup> Qualification is at a minimum of degree level, but is based on a competency-led training model (Gregory and Holloway, 2005a). This is a relatively new development in a “profession” that has historically been closely linked to political movements of both progressive and reactionary forces (Wise, 1990).

My interest in this comes as a practitioner of social work education. It grew out of teaching social policy to undergraduates of social work. The two key aims of this doctoral research are, at a general level, first to explore how to engage social work students with social policy and political thinking and second to consider how the political classes engage with social work. As a social work lecturer, I am aware of some of the many complexities of the teaching of social policy. It is a discipline, like many in the social sciences and/or humanities which borrows across disciplines and is a blend of factual and value-based approaches.

---

<sup>1</sup> When the first draft of this chapter was produced the General Social Care Council (GSCC) was the regulatory body. The GSCC had a short career in terms of social work registration and regulation from 2001 (following the Care Standards Act 2000) to August 2012 when it was abolished under Coalition government cuts and its responsibilities were moved to the Health Professionals Council, renamed the Health and Care Professionals Council to accommodate the move.

At one level, social policy is about problems and policy, about means and ends. A key tenet of the discipline is that in analysing any policy initiative the aim is to understand what were the values underpinning the piece of guidance or legislation. This is done, in part, in recognition of the idea that how we define a problem defines how we solve it. More formally, this is called looking for the “generative mechanism” (Pawson and Tilly, 1997). Yet the central paradox of the discipline is the knowledge that the way into a problem is not necessarily the way out of it. Spicker’s (2008: 11) useful analogy states:

*If you fall down a well, what you know about the principles of gravity will be next to useless and reviewing the process of falling in will probably not help much either.*

It is the aim of the introductory chapter to uncover the role of teaching social policy within social work education. In doing this, I will have to consider the contradictory political forces at play in social work and in particular in social work education.

## **Defining Social Work**

Before considering the role of social work education it might be useful to establish what the training is aiming to achieve. However, this is difficult owing to the multiple definitions of social work that exist, because, simply put “people disagree about what social work is” (Payne, 2006: 1). Because of this, McLaughlin (2008: 17) states that definitions of social work will be “partial and open to dispute”, demonstrating what Hugman (2009) characterises as social workers’ identity issues.

To demonstrate the problems of definition, let’s consider three different statements about social work. They come from a range of sources: a federation of practitioners, an academic/practitioner and a politician.

*The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work*



*intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments.*  
*Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work.*  
(International Federation of Social Workers, 2000: online – currently being reviewed)

*A service and practice using social and psychological sciences in interpersonal interactions with people, especially from deprived social groups and experiencing practical and emotional difficulties in social relationships. Social work balances three objectives: maintaining social order and providing social welfare services effectively, helping people attain personal fulfilment and power over their lives and stimulating social change.*  
(Payne, 2006: 5)

*Social work is a very practical job. It is about protecting people and changing their lives, not about being able to give a fluent and theoretical explanation of why they got into difficulties in the first place. New degree courses must ensure that theory and research directly informs and supports practice... The new degree will require social workers to demonstrate their practical application of skills and knowledge and their ability to solve problems and provide hope for people relying on social services for support.*  
(Jacqui Smith, Department of Health, 2002)

The first two definitions share many similarities with much of the same content if different in emphasis. For example, they both suggest that the profession has a reliance on theory. This for Payne is the starting point whereas for the IFSW the starting point is about social change.

Both definitions cover a range of functions, some of which are shared (or at least similar) such as empowerment and supporting relationships. A key point of departure is the issue of social change. IFSW specifically and emphatically (by placing first) sees the role of social work as promoting social change whilst the academic argues (potentially in self-contradiction) that functions of social work include both the maintenance of social order and the stimulation of social change.

A key criticism of the first statement is that it ignores the social control element of social work – the ability to remove children from families or to pursue detention of users of mental health services, for example. The second statement acknowledges this function and sees it as a “balance” with the more “positive” elements of the social work task – in recognition that social work has potential “to do harm as well as good” (Thompson, 2005: 71).

The third statement is an obvious departure. It lists as functions: protection and personal change. However, it is an appeal to the pragmatic, the common-sense view, an anti-intellectual approach. It could be argued that whilst positing social work as a graduate career, it undermines its theoretical and academic base. This is not unusual within the UK social work context which Jones (1996) characterises as peculiarly anti-intellectual. Another argument about this statement could be that it exemplifies the paradox of social policy. Knowing how people fell down the well, will not help them out. This statement is not a denial of the possibility of social work as an agent of social change, but perhaps more a statement of a politician’s need for a “practical servant” (Payne, 2006: 1) for their change – the provision of hope.

There are of course other sources for definitions. Crucially, the service-user perspective of what social work is and does and media representations of social workers could also be included. However, the problem with defining the task is inherent in the label – social worker. Both parts of the job title are open to interpretation. “The reach of the ‘social’ is perhaps one of the most debated questions amongst the great group of academic disciplines that are usually categorised as ‘social science’ and ‘the humanities’” (Roseneil and Frosh, 2012: 1). The debate about the ‘reach of the social’ is characterised by attempts to distinguish whether its study should relate to the macro, economic structures and/or the role of the familial and intimate. If this is complex for the academic discipline, what does this mean for practice, to be a worker within the ‘reach of the social’? The title social worker also brings into question the role of work. Social workers are often discussed in the context of social welfare or the welfare state. “[A]lthough we tend to conflate welfare with the welfare state and its policies, in fact work and employment are more fundamental producers of individual and societal welfare” (Vickerstaff, 2007: 145). This questioning of social welfare as a provider of

well-being highlights an ongoing concern for those who work within it – who does it benefit?

This dilemma and the divergence of views around social work's *raison d'être* underline the tension within the practice of social work. Hugman (2009) defines the debate about whether the focus of social work should be on “micro” or “macro” issues, relating to explanations of social problems being at the level of individual failures or social structural inequalities. This is the unique claim of social work (Payne, 2006) that it aims to advance social improvements through working with individuals and families. Payne (2006) also argues that the tension is between the micro and macro. He recognises the transformational view of social work's potential, but also argues that this is modified by social work's role as offering therapeutic support and involvement in individualist reformist aspects of social order and control.

Epstein (1999:9) sums up this definition quandary by saying:

*... it is common to state the intentions of social work as helping people to accommodate to the status quo and as challenging the status quo by trying to bring about social change. This dissonance is intrinsic to the nature of social work, to its essence.*

This fragmented, incoherent picture of modern social work is strongly related to its diverse historical roots.

## **Histories of Social Work**

My aim here is not to provide a definitive history of social work and social work education but to review current narratives about the development of the profession. Rose (1996) distinguishes the roles that history can play in the legitimation and boundaries of a discipline. Disciplines are produced through negotiation and territorial claims. These negotiations are concerned with histories, the present and, after Falk, (1988) future time. Indeed, ‘catastrophic future time’ (Falk, *ibid*) is a feature of the discussions of the discipline and practice of social work. My aim then is to consider the

stories the profession tells about itself and to note the compromises and negotiations leading to the current position.

*A story is an attempt to create order and security out of a chaotic world; strong stories have unique power to make sense of issues*  
(Bolton, 2010: 9)

Each story needs a beginning. The beginnings of what we call social work are complex. In discussing the formation of the Welfare State with Access and undergraduate students I have looked at the formation of Elizabethan poor laws and their foundation in medieval feudal systems. As Midwinter says:

*It is more than a passing or antiquated interest which should prompt an appraisal of medieval England. Apart from the discovery there of the origins of some present day welfare mechanisms, it serves the other purpose of demonstrating how societies different in style from our own are faced with basically similar problems*  
(Midwinter, 1994: 11)

It can be useful to highlight the commonalities that bind social political thought across centuries. For example, the debates about the role of institutional care versus community settings, the labelling and categorising of need, the (mis)trust of strangers, the methods of delivery all echo across various legislations.

Foucault states that, “Modern medicine has fixed its own date of birth as being in the last years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century” (1973: xii). Medicine relates the birth of its profession to a perceived golden age of positivity. Social work histories (in the UK) appear to be fixing their date of birth as linked to the rapid industrialisation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a period also marked by a perceived golden age; this time in the “social” sciences. There are a number of competing discourses of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I chose this starting point because it is an era characterised by rapid social change.

*The urbanisation that characterised the emergence of capitalism in the modern world had created a social gulf between classes in the major cities. It was*

*believed that the traditional hierarchies and social bonds of rural life had been fundamentally undermined, creating a social crisis.*

(Powell, 2001: 26)

Jordan (2007) also emphasises the relevance of industrialisation to the role of social work. In arguing that social work is primarily aimed at replacing kin relationships and local support, he states that this became relevant when the traditional systems of relationships were disrupted through “the advent of commercial economic systems and the growth of industrial and urban social organisations” (Jordan, 2007: 31)

Taking this as a starting point, there is a tradition of emphasising two distinct strands in the histories of social work. One strand is an emphasis on the individual and individualist models. The second relates to a collectivist model. Looking at that first strand, Alcock (2003) places the development of social services and their professional arm of social work firmly within the hands of the private philanthropists of the Victorian era. Examples of this work and its continuing influence include Barnardos and the NSPCC. However, most commentators concentrate on the role of the London Charity Organisation Society (COS). Powell (2001) comments that as an organisation it dominated the voluntary sector of the late Victorian period and it established a number of principles for the administration of relief for the poor. Amongst these were the use of recording, investigation and visits – the fore-runners of modern-day case work. Alcock (2003) describes the work of the COS as being a mixture of offering assistance and moral guidance. Hugman (2009) argues the COS approach was concerned with the relationship between individuals and their case-worker. He defines the work of the COS as “concerned with individual functioning and questions of social order and it is often regarded as having been politically conservative” (Hugman, 2009: 1139)

Horner (2009) concurs that the individual case work model with its roots in early charitable visiting dominates contemporary social work. However, alongside the reformist, social Darwinist approaches of the COS (Powell, 2001, Hugman, 2009) were burgeoning movements that wished to move the debate of dealing with the poor from a positivist framework to a more humanist paradigm (Powell, 2001).

Social work it is argued also owes a debt to the burgeoning labour movement, the growth of groups such as The Chartist (McLaughlin, 2008), Fabianism (Powell, 2001) and political thought around the issue of class. In the discussion of a move to this new paradigm both Horner (2009) and Hugman (2009) draw on the example of the United States Settlement Movement. Hugman (2009) describes the key aspect of settlement practice as being those with resources living with communities that lacked such resources in order to share. The difference in approach between the settlement movement and the COS, is characterised as being based on the differing theories of causes of social problems. Horner (2009) cites the Settlement movement as influencing English social political thought through the work of Cannon and Mrs Barnett, founders of the Toynbee settlement in London, with its emphasis on the issues of the district; community rather than individuals.

Hugman (2009) argues that the micro-level individualist model of social work has come to dominate modern practice. This he argues is a consequence primarily of the agency-based nature of social work (as opposed to the more autonomous nature of other professions) dictating a preferred model of social work. Horner (2009: 23) also suggests that micro level social work has come to dominate. “Community based approaches and groupwork remain secondary to the case work principle, now rebranded as ‘care-management’”.

So, to summarise, one of the stories the social work profession tells about itself is that its current complexities arise from a complicated beginning. These beginnings arise at the point of industrialisation and the subsequent upheaval in family/kin networks and extremes of social stratification. One response to the new social order was to pathologise and individualise poverty, but was moved to work with those in its grips using the moralistic tones of the century’s self-help diktats, (“the development of moral character within the poor” Horner, 2009: 22) and supporting “deserving” individuals.

A further response, of which social work also takes ownership, is that of a more structural approach. Examples of the approach can be seen in the burgeoning labour movement and within social work the “settlement movement” which Hugman characterises as “focused on social change; thus it tends to be regarded as having been politically radical” (Hugman, 2009: 1139). Whilst the consensus appears to be that

individual models have won out, Ferguson and Lavalette (2007) are keen to suggest we should not redraw the history of social work without recognition of its radical alternatives and impulses. This is suggested in recognition that history can be used to police the present and shape the future (Rose, 1996).

Besides, such a simplistic approach does a disservice to the commentators (story-tellers) as there is a range of complexities woven into their stories. For example, Jordan (2007) argues that rather than concern ourselves with the differences between the two movements, it is possible to see a range of commonalities. Rather than classifying the COS as working solely within an individualist tradition, he argues that it was a site of discussions across varying models of working with poverty. He goes on to argue that both those who followed the settlement tradition and those who worked within the COS were connected with the British Idealist philosophers, influenced by principles of ethical socialism.

McLaughlin (2008) adds a further dimension into the histories of social work, which rather than defining work with service users as following a tradition of individualism or structuralism, the split could be based on views of humanity. He argues that there are two views of humanity present in social work origins – those that believe in human capacity for sociability and empathy, and those who display a pessimistic fear of human beings. These differences in views are not easily mapped across political approaches. Intellectuals of the left were just as likely to fear the rising numbers of the poor as their right-wing equivalents.

Powell (2001) and Horner (2009) also recognise the key role that gender plays in the emergence of social work. Octavia Hill, Elizabeth Fry and Mary Carpenter all receive prominence in their stories.

*The female social worker became a key figure in this discourse. She emerged as a pioneer in crossing social boundaries to 'naturalise' and 'moralise' the family lives of the poor, simultaneously altering the balance between the public and private spheres of life*

(Powell, 2001: 26)

Horner (2009) also notes that whilst tending the poor was seen as a female function, the management of income was generally overseen by men.

These debates characterise the role of social work within the community. However, alongside the debate of individual and structuralist approaches to poverty and its consequences, social work is concerned with the “age-old tension” (Blakemore and Griggs, 2007: 223) of institutional versus community solutions. Social workers work in many different settings and a further historical strand needs to be considered – that of the role of institutions. Again much of the development is related to the Victorian context.

According to Blakemore and Griggs (2007: 223), the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a time of institutionalisation, with a perceived need to separate “paupers, the destitute and those judged to be either mad or morally wayward”. This forms part of what Foucault terms “the great confinement” as he comments on how the trend for segregation increases in the 1800s – “more than one out of every hundred inhabitants of the city of Paris found themselves confined” (Foucault, 1999: 38)

This becomes relevant for the discipline and practice of social work through its part in developing social care and medicalised specialisms. Means et. al. (2008) chart how the variety of institutions lead to groups designated as older people, people with physical impairments, people with mental health problems and learning difficulties. Horner (2009: 20) discusses how alongside the founding of asylums and hospitals “boarding schools emerged to ‘care for’ unwanted children”.

A number of commentators have striven to address the rise in incarceration. Attention is often paid to the perceived improvement in treatment of people within asylums, which were considered congenial compared to the harsh regimes of the workhouse. This highlights a narrative that suggests a progressive force in play relating to the care of the “insane”, a move from the freak show element of the earlier century to compassion (Mills, 2003). Whereas Walton (1981) asserts that families often institutionalised the aged, because they lacked the resources to maintain them and had no other options. He wanted to challenge the idea that the asylum was simply mopping



up vagrants and that families chose to place people there as a result of family break down and economics.

Foucault, however questions the assumption of the progressive nature of treatment and also decides against the purely economic argument:

*The asylum no longer punished the madman's guilt... but it did more, it organised that guilt. It organised it for the madman as a consciousness of himself*

(Foucault, 1999: 252)

Foucault turns our attention to the growth of the expert and his role in categorising madness, affording diagnosis whilst still ultimately locating insanity as a personal flaw. As Horner, (2008: 20) states:

*The 'professionalisation' of such institutional containment was predicated upon the 'medical model' of treatment, control and restraint, and the creation of specialist roles that separated those in need of care from families, neighbourhoods, communities and societies.*

Whilst the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen a significant reduction in the use of institutional and residential care, it has had a significant role to play in the continued provision of services. As Morris (1991: 127) points out:

*Powerlessness characterises the experiences of residential care and the nature of institutionalisation affects even those of us who are not in residential care. The possibility of institutionalisation hangs over many disabled people*

## **Social Work Training**

It is from this diverse range of interventions into the lives of the poor, disenfranchised and segregated that modern social work derives. From this fragmented position it has attempted to define itself as a unified profession. There have been a number of key developments in social work education from the turn of the last century, (early

programmes at the LSE and Birmingham University, a series of reports by Eileen Younghusband, the oft-cited Seebom report of 1968, the move from CQSW/CSS to DipSW to the current BA/MA, alongside a number of influential social movements that have impacted upon form and content of training). From the beginning of formalised social work training there has been a combination of practice-based learning and an academic component of courses. The development of the discipline is closely linked to the evolution of the discipline of social administration into social policy. This section outlines the key issues of the current arrangements for social work education.

A number of bodies have a stake in the provision of social work education. The key piece of current legislation pertaining to social work education is the Care Standards Act 2000 (CSA). The CSA directed the establishment of the General Social Care Council (GSCC), the regulatory mechanism for the social work and social care workforce. This can be seen as part of the larger modernising project which is concerned with the imposition of new systems of regulation (McInnes and Lawson-Brown, 2007). Initial guidance for the graduate qualification of social workers was set out by the Department of Health (2002:i) stating that “the emphasis must be on the practice and the practical relevance of theory.” The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has a role in the monitoring of provision of social work training. The QAA (2000) subject benchmark statement made it clear that at honours degree level the study of social work involves the integration of subject specific knowledge, skills and values. Further consideration for the provision of social work training can be found in the National Occupational Standards on the Skills for Care website, setting out the key roles that each student must evidence for qualification. For the purposes of training, the HCPC acts as the validating and inspection body for social work courses, following section 63 of the CSA. Inspection reports on the provision of social work are published. The professional press has recently disclosed the perceived failings of two social work courses (Community Care, 2010). It is unclear, yet, what the ramifications of such failures may be for the institutions and their social work education practitioners.

Section 56 of the CSA places a duty on the GSCC to maintain a register of social care workers. From 2003, social work was established as a graduate profession and

mandatory registration of social workers established in 2005. Students are also required to demonstrate they can meet GSCC registration requirements.

To process registration, based on section 58 of the CSA, the GSCC requires satisfaction that the applicant:

1. Is of good character (declaring criminal convictions and providing an employer endorsement)
2. Is physically and mentally fit to perform the whole or part of the work (of a social worker or social care worker)
3. Has successfully completed an approved social work course (for those wishing to be social workers); and
4. Has read, understood and agreed to comply with the *Codes of Practice for Social Care Workers*

The GSCC now acts as the disciplinary body of the profession having the ability to suspend or remove registration. A number of issues have been raised in relation to these powers.

McInnes and Lawson-Brown (2007) draw a comparison with General Practitioner registration and the General Medical Council (GMC). Using an analysis of the power of the two professions they conclude that they are not equitable services. The GSCC has a lay chair and a majority of lay members, some drawn from the service-user population, whereas the underlying philosophy of the GMC is “one of self-scrutiny by fellow professionals” (McInnes and Lawson-Brown, 2007: 343). Using the case of Harold Shipman as an example, they show how the public is reticent to bring forward issues of complaint against their General Practitioner, possibly fearing that they would not be believed. However, in the case of social work service-users, despite being more likely to come from marginalised or excluded groups, “appear to find it easier to make complaints about the quality of care received from a workforce much maligned by the media” (McInnes and Lawson-Brown, 2007: 349).<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Again this chapter was originally drafted in 2010 when the GSCC still had the role of registration and regulation. The move to the HCPC has not yet been subject to the same level of scrutiny.

Concern has also been expressed about the issue of fitness to practice. Reports about the complexities of this in relation to disabled practitioners and students have been reported in the professional press (see for example, Community Care, 2008).

McLaughlin (2007: 1268) also makes the point:

*There is a rather distasteful paradox here in that whilst social work commits itself to user involvement in the provision of training, consultancy and service provision, at the same time it is using a medical framework with which to preclude such users from actually joining the profession.*

### **Current Themes within Social Work Training**

I have chosen to highlight the complex historical constructions of the discipline alongside a critique of the current unstable position of the profession, because I believe it would “be naive to locate these current difficulties as solely the result of a New Right onslaught on welfare professions” (Jones, 96: 191). This is not to underplay the role that the neo-liberal project with its “central emphasis on the market as the organising principles of social life” (Penna and O’Brien, 2009: 107) and mistrust of state welfarism, is playing in the current flux of social work. It is rather to suggest that there are a number of continuities across social work’s history which leaves it vulnerable to political influence. The issues of regulation are indicative of the tensions within the profession and the context in which the current changes to structure of social work education have taken place.

There are four key themes upon which I want to concentrate. These are: professionalisation, managerialism, role of scandal and fragmentation. Underlying these issues is of course a concern for resources.

#### **Professionalisation**

Social work has a long history of trying to establish itself as a profession (as opposed to a trade or a hobby of middle-class female do-gooders). Both Hugman (2009) and Payne (2005a) cite the unfavourable assessment of Abraham Flexner in 1915 of the possibility of the role of social worker being able to achieve professional status as a key

motivator in this. According to Payne (2005a), Flexner's assessment of social work as a para-profession was primarily a result of its role in mediating access to other professions. Hugman (2009: 1140) suggests that this has led to a preoccupation with "finding the combination of skills and knowledge which would make social work 'truly' a profession". Esptein (1996: 8) relates this quest to a positivistic approach to the work and says of social work:

*It has strived to acquire the characteristics of science. Its history and discourse are packed with the language and analytic processes of social science.*

However, by making claim to its more radical strands of thought, social work has also acknowledged the problems with professionalisation. According to Payne (2005a) "professions imply middle-class allegiances, developed through university education allied to systems of knowledge and values". The 'trait' model of Abbot and Meerabeau (1998) provides one way of defining whether or not an occupation is a profession. They argue that for an occupation to be defined as a profession, it must encompass at least some of the following traits: highly skilled work based upon theoretical knowledge; the power to make autonomous decisions; trustworthiness; service orientated philosophy; adherence to a professional code of conduct through a code of ethics; a monopoly over a certain area of work usually through state legislation and state registration and; a professional body which selects, safeguards and controls its members by, for example, disciplinary action and the regulation of training.

Previous discussions on the protection of the title social worker, the establishment of the GSCC, the GSCC Codes of Practice and the move to an all graduate profession highlight how social work aspires to this trait model. This aspiration can be easily understood, especially for a group of workers who have "struggled on the margins of the professional project" (Hatton, 2008: 180). Those who can claim professional status are "rewarded by autonomy, status and sometimes high pay" (Swain and French, 2003: 132)

Hugman (1991), however, highlights that one must not ignore the issue of power in the success of an occupation gaining professional status. He goes on to argue that social work operates in a difficult middle ground of caring about and for its users. Power,

therefore, is a complex phenomenon within social work. Whilst many commentators link social work's power to its control function, Hugman suggests it should also be linked to the caring function and the process of empowerment. He also makes the valid point that there is a gendered distinction between the social work profession and those of the traditional professions, such as medicine, law and architecture. It is a profession which suffers from the lower status of women in a patriarchal society.

This is not to ignore the issue of social work power over clients. The disability rights movement had made this clear in discussions of the professional/client relationship.

*...it is interesting and instructive to reflect on why it is that these people have decided to call us their 'clients'. I mean, they know just as well as disabled people what is usually understood in terms of the professional-client relationship. So why have these workers been so keen to graft their ambitions on to terminology, the Latin root of which lies in patrician-plebian; master-slave; patron-dependant subservience?*

(Davis, 1994:198)

This debate is actioned in the move by the British Association of Social Workers restricting membership to qualified staff only, welcomed by some and seen as elitist by others (Payne, 2005a).

However, generally, the move to a graduate profession is widely welcome. Lavalette (2007), for example, points to the positives of the current moves towards professionalisation. He argues that "qualification and profession are inextricably linked". By citing the strike by Liverpool Social Workers he makes the point that professionalism is not just about a rise in status or money, but skilled and ethical interventions in service-users lives. The strike centred on the local authority's attempt to remove qualification from job descriptions. He argues that, "clients have a right to expect help from social workers who know that they have a professional duty to speak out on their behalf when the agency fails to provide the necessary service" (Lavalette, 2007: 200)

The trend for organisation by the state of the role and status of social work appears set to continue with the recent Social Work Task Force Report (2009) recommending a national college of social work and a new licence to practice.

### Managerialism

Whilst some would argue that professionalisation is a positive for social work, others have argued that the process of “professionalisation” has led paradoxically to a de-skilling, bureaucratisation of the work and claims of deprofessionalisation (Harrison, 2009). These accusations are placed within the current context of neo-liberal politics and pervading ideologies of “managerialism”. Lavalette (2007: 191) claims that managerialist tendencies “throw into question their [social workers] ability to be ‘professional’”. Similar comments are made by Payne (2005a: 185)

*The emphasis on markets, management and skill-based education has been seen as part of a trend towards deprofessionalisation. This is because it contests the importance of knowledge-based discretion and professional values as the director of decision-making*

Simply put, managerialism is the growth of the generic manager. Hafford-Letchfield (2007) sees it as a movement which represents the view that public services should be more business-like, driven by efficiency and value for money. It is a movement whose beginnings within public service can be traced back to the 1980s where marketisation stressed the consumerist approach and that the public sector would benefit from “private sector expertise”. These ideas continued to be key to policy implementation as part of the New Labour project (Barton, 2008). Tsui and Cheung (2004) in a critical article give managerialism’s main characteristics as:

1. The client is a customer (not service consumer)
2. The manager (not the front line staff) as key
3. The staff are employees (not professionals)
4. Management knowledge (not common sense or professional knowledge) are the dominant model of knowledge
5. The market (not society or the community) as the environment

6. Efficiency (not effectiveness) as the yardstick
7. Cash and contracts (not care and concern) are the foundation of the relationships
8. Quality is equated with standardisation and documentation

The choice of listing the characteristics is relevant here as it reads as a series of commandments, a check list for practice. It is the reduction of the personal autonomy and emphasis on counting and documentation that is often objected to. Many have argued that managerialism has had an unwelcome impact within human services and the definition of the human service professional (see for example, Barton (2008) and Leachwood (2005)).

In 1998, New Labour as part of its wider modernisation agenda produced “Modernising Social Services”. The paper declared that:

*One big trouble social services have suffered from is that up to now no Government has spelled out exactly what people can expect or what staff are expected to do. Nor have any clear standards of performance been laid down. This Government is to change all that. We propose to set new standards of performance and will publish annual reports on all council's performance.*  
(Department of Health, 1998: foreword)

This statement situated the delivery of social care and social work within a positivist framework, highlighting New Labour’s “belief that rationality is the key to success in many policy areas” (Baldwin, 2002:185)

This emphasis on positivism is not entirely problematic. As previous discussions have shown, many practitioners have also sought to produce an evidence base for social work that echoes scientific discourses. However, what it does undermine is the space for professional autonomy. A positive reframing of this would read: “There is still a space – although it is shrinking – for the practitioner to act in ways that benefit the service-user” (Lavalette, 2007: 197). Social Work is particularly vulnerable to this loss of space for reflective practice because of its weaknesses in establishing itself as a profession. Ruskin (2004: 15) says:



*In strong professions, such as medicine, or most academic disciplines, those in management positions retain their commitment to a community of values shared at all levels. In weak professions, like social work, there are continuing pressures for senior staff to redefine their role in generic “management terms”, weakening their grasp of and influence over the professional culture of the knowledge-base and professional culture of their field.*

This is reflected in the Laming Inquiry (2003) into the case of Victoria Climbié, which discusses in depth the managerial context of the social workers involved in the case, but not the health service personnel (Parton, 2004).

### Role of Scandal/Moral Panics

If we take Spicker’s (2008) premise that social policy is about problems, then this will occasionally force it and the allied professions into a reactive position. At the same time, as social work has sought a move to a more sure-footed professional status, there have been a number of scandals exposing short-comings in social work practice, some receiving more coverage than others: the killing of Phillip Ellison a social care worker by a mental health service-user; institutional abuse of older people; social workers as “baby-snatchers” from people with learning difficulties; abuse by staff at the Wintervourne View care home; Victoria Climbié and the case of Baby Peter. Even the false start of the Jersey Care Home underlined an appetite for the grotesque failings within social care. These issues have all had an impact on the practice and education of social workers.

It would be easy to write off the reaction to these incidents as overblown. However, Cohen (2004: viii) cautions against this:

*Calling something a ‘moral panic’ does not imply that this something does not exist or happened at all and that reaction is based on fantasy, hysteria, delusion and illusion or being duped by the powerful.*

Child abuse happens. It is emotionally charged. Serious reactions are to be expected and judgement cannot be easily passed on their proportionality. The subject of ‘moral panic’ is most closely associated with Stanley Cohen (2004) who has outlined seven key emerging themes in the area. These are: young working class violent males; school violence – bullying and shootouts; wrong drugs used by the wrong people at the wrong places; child abuse, satanic rituals and paedophile registers; sex, violence and blaming the media; welfare cheats and single mothers; refugees and asylum seekers – flooding our country, swamping our services.

Social workers work across many of these fields – indeed many of them have become social work specialisms. Taking an example from the above list of social work failings, from which it is possible to trace the direct impact of the case to the current structuring of social work and the delivery of social work training, I will consider the response to the torture and murder of Victoria Climbié.

The Victoria Climbié Inquiry (2003) was chaired and the report authored by Lord Laming. The key purpose of the report was to “allocate blame” and therefore the structure of the Inquiry followed judicial processes. This form of response is critical to its eventual outcomes. That being said, there were a number of positive and welcomed aspects of the process and report. First, most clearly being that it called attention to the life and death of a vulnerable girl and gave her circumstances due weight and emphasis. Laming himself is praised in much of the literature reflecting on the case as a worthy champion for Victoria and the social work profession, having worked in probation, psychiatric social work and been the former Chief Inspector of the Social Services Inspectorate. Lord Laming came from a position that could acknowledge the complexities of social work practice, supervision and management and “responded with deep seriousness” (Rustin, 2004: 9). The report itself was welcomed for pointing to a number of systemic failures that highlighted the lack of confidence in and among social workers and how this impacted on multi-agency working. Its recommendations to improve and lengthen training hastened the previously stated idea of extending training to graduate level.

However, alongside this, there were a number of concerns about the shortcomings of the report. Because of the model of the review, whilst wide statements may have been

made about context, its concerns were ultimately with the failings of individuals. The apportioning of blame meant that those involved could not be expected to admit mistakes or be allowed space to reflect on their actions. Recommendations could only be related to procedural issues.

*The predominantly procedural focus of its numerous recommendations reflects the bureaucratic approach which now prevails in the management and regulation of British public services*

(Rustin, 2004: 9)

The tension between the enormity of the emotional intensity of the case and procedural recommendations is present in the report itself. The report acknowledges the horror of Victoria's life and starts with a statement from a witness that says, "Victoria has the most beautiful smile that lit up the room" (Patrick Cameron quoted in Laming, 2003: 1). As Cooper (2005: 5) says:

*There is a kind of restrained passion informing the opening pages of the report... Yet by the end of the report, we are offered the same kind of terse, lifeless, abstract series of recommendations that has flowed from every other similar exercise*

Policy and policy documents in particular often belie the humanity of their production. (Just writing the words torture and a child's name in the same sentence evoked powerful, painful emotions for me. I would expect the same to be true for the authors of any serious case review). Whilst formal numbered paragraphs and bullet-pointed lists of recommendations can be experienced as empty there is an emotional aspect to the document, reflecting the collective element of the writing and Inquiry process (Parton, 2004). As Hunter (2008: 508) says:

*Policy documents move us, we move them, they constitute points for collective investment and they connect us to others. Once we understand them in this way we can begin to understand their important role in both sustaining and disrupting social relations.*

Laming, however, was only one response to Victoria's case. If Victoria's plight can be seen as part of a "moral panic" (and the case cuts across many of Cohen's categories) where are the folk devils – "the visual reminders of what we should not be"? (Cohen, 2004: 2)

The fall out of the Victoria Climbié case was that one inexperienced, black, female social worker was found culpable, lost her job, her right to practice and initially was to be placed on the child offenders register alongside Victoria's murderers. Following Climbié, the case of Baby Peter was a further reminder of social work's role in child welfare. In reference to the iconic Daily Mail front-page of the Stephen Lawrence case where 5 pictures of the prime suspects appeared under the words "Murderers", several papers pictured five or six "guilty" people with the Sun insisting that social workers ("this disgusting lot") were responsible. "The allocation of blame is intrinsic to moral panics" (Cohen, 2002: xxvi)

However, this does not automatically equate to the construction of a folk devil.

There are further parallels between Baby Peter and Stephen Lawrence beyond the visual iconography. Cohen (2004) points to the problems for allocating a folk devil to the Stephen Lawrence case. After the McPherson inquiry into the police handling of his murder the focus shifted from the perpetrators of the crime and their culture of violence and racism to the role of the police. This did not bring with it a unified media response, with some papers deploring the perceived "political correctness" of the McPherson report (see for example, the Sunday Telegraph, 28 February 1999). The police according to Cohen (2004: xi) could not be a folk devil because they are not a "suitable enemy", as they hold "power to deny, down-play or bypass any awkward claims of culpability". Furthermore, the call to recognise that institutional racism and its wider societal manifestations casts blame too wide. (Nor it should be added was a young inner-city black male a suitable victim). The intertextual nature of the two headlines highlights a difference between the cases. The original "Murderers" headline was used to underline that it was not the police that were guilty, whereas the inadequacies of a feminised workforce were to be found culpable in the case of Baby Peter.

There are also problems allocating a folk devil to the moral panic of child abuse and murder. It would be a naive polemic to suggest that social workers alone are the figures of blame. A quick search around press coverage around the cases of Victoria and Peter shows that those vilified included: social workers, local authority managers, doctors, the abusers, the breakdown of marriage, “Broken Britain”, police officers – almost everyone except news editors.

That being said, it cannot be ignored that the press coverage of social work is traditionally viewed as hostile (Galilee, 2006). A Community Care (2000) poll of social workers found that nine out of 10 respondents felt that negative reporting created hostility from the general public. Due to its complex and protracted nature social work is usually of little interest to the media (Gallilee, 2006). However, the emphasis on child welfare and abuse within the media has contributed to the fragmentary nature of current social work practices.

### Fragmentation

The Seebohm Report (1968) is often cited as a unifying force for the provision of social work (see for example Payne, 2005a and Powell, 2001). It was focussed on co-ordinating the work of the social care sector under one Local Authority department. In the dying days of a Labour administration the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 became the tool to implement the Seebohm recommendations. The emphasis of Seebohm was on universal access and holistic assessment and services for family care and community work (Powell, 2001). With an appeal to providing an evidence base it also recommended the establishment of research sections in the new Social Services Departments (Everett, 1998: 111). These moves were strongly supported by social workers (Payne, 2005a).

Whilst remaining a unified department with local authorities, the holistic, generic nature of social work decreased in subsequent years, especially through key legislation of the Children Act 1989 and the NHS and Community Care Act (1990) which helped to establish specialisms between adults and children work and enshrined individual case-work and care-management approaches. The Children Act 2004 has continued this trend establishing the position of a Children’s Commissioner and leading many local

authorities to reorganise social work services into separate Children and Adults Departments.

However, the split in children and adults provision is only one line of fissure. There has always been a tension about where social work is best situated within the economy. Whilst Seebohm positioned social work within local authorities as a means of co-ordinating and providing holistic therapeutic services, this was not always a popular decision for those who were served. For many, it could be perceived as becoming overly bureaucratic and paternalistic (Hatton, 2008).

*Arguably, it was precisely this disenchantment with the welfare state that allowed the Conservative government elected in 1979 to introduce neo-liberal policies aimed at rolling back the state*  
(Hatton, 2008: 25)

Social work takes place in a variety of agencies that incorporate the public, private and voluntary sectors. Moreover, social work is now less and less likely to take place within a social work team, moving to inter-professional and inter-disciplinary modes of working. This is part of a top-down approach within the New Labour modernising Agenda (Hudson, 2002) which some commentators suggest puts social workers at a distinct disadvantage with its emphasis on clinical skills and the medicalised approach on social concerns (Kearney et.al, 2003 and Hudson, 2002)

Social worker identity then faces fragmentation along the lines of adult and children services. Within the UK, specialist practice is largely determined by age (Shardlow and Doel, 2005). The role of the local authority social worker has, in the main, come to mean assessment and case-management with social workers and social care workers from other agencies engaged in direct care and therapeutic services. However, local authority social workers are also distinguished by expertise, for example in the designation of Advanced Practitioner or Approved Mental Health Practitioner. Interestingly, social workers are less likely than other human service groups to be distinguished along the lines of method, possibly reflecting the scepticism of the workers towards models and theories (Shardlow and Doel, 2005) and/or the stripping of theoretical input from the curriculum (Jones, 1996).

To summarise, whilst social work is undergoing a process of professionalisation, this has not resulted in a clear statement of the role of social work. It remains difficult to define and vulnerable to political ideology. Whilst social workers can exert some power and control over the lives of the marginalised and neglected, it cannot claim the elitism of other professional groups. It holds an uncomfortable position in relation to its own and external political power.

### **Social Policy Teaching within Social Work**

Simply put:

*Social policy is the study of human wellbeing ... More specifically, social policy is the study of the social relations necessary for human wellbeing and the systems by which well being may be promoted.*

(Dean, 2006: 1)

Choosing a definition of social policy is as contentious as defining social work, which itself has been defined as “applied social policy” (Lorenz, 2005: 97). I chose Dean’s definition because it offers a broad approach to a blurred discipline. Social policy is not, for example, political science, history, organisational psychology or law, but it does overlap with each and is also often taught as a branch of sociology. Social policy as a discipline tends to take explicit political positions and is concerned with the practicalities of politics. Making sense of the politics of social work is a challenging task (Powell, 2001).

In 2000, the QAA benchmark statement for social work was under the same cover as social policy and administration. In 2008, they appeared as separate subjects.

However, the content of the 2008 document highlights the continued role for social policy teaching within social work education and the case can be made for the inclusion of social policy teaching in the five core areas of study identified by the QAA (social work services, service-users and carers; the service-delivery context; values and ethics; social work theory, the nature of social work practice).

Social work education within the benchmark statement is imagined as encompassing the three realms of knowledge, skills and values (QAA 2008). Social policy is at the intersection of these three areas. Yet interest in the study of social policy and in particular the engagement in politics has been found to be modest amongst social work students (Weiss et. al, 2003, Gregory and Holloway, 2005a). Therefore, it can become too easy to focus on imparting knowledge, whether theoretical or factual (systems of political governance, content of legislation and political documents and statistical data). Teaching my subject, I have always tried to encourage a wider social, theoretical and historical appreciation of social policy, believing that a narrow focus on current policy “produces a practitioner with the knowledge to follow procedure, but not the critical awareness that sees when the service outcomes are at odds with political objectives or who fails to infuse the policy framework with professional values” (Gregory and Holloway, 2005a: 618 – 619). Skills and values have an equal footing with knowledge.

In reviewing the curriculum and the literature it is possible to see social policy within social work as being concerned with five inter-related areas. The first of these could be the global perspective which recognises the pervasive, trans-national neo-liberal project and its impact on “what is encouraged; how things might be done” (Penna, 2003: 2). Second, social policy within social work encompasses ideological perspectives (particularly in relation to poverty). Third is the study of policy analysis and evaluation. Fourth, it should be concerned with organisational practices and finally, it should engage students with their individual practices and developing some social workers into “policy practitioners” (Weiss et. al., 2006) directly involved in the development of policy.

Let’s return to the statement that social work is applied social policy and to the original context of the origins of social work as the point of industrialisation where “social relations and social solidarity had to be deliberately organised” (Lorenz, 2005: 94). Social work then played a part in “the social arrangements and institutions which had to continuously expand to hold society together in a constant effort against the threat of fragmentation, of insurrection, of a total breakdown of order” (Lorenz, 2005: 94).

The role of social policy teaching then is to allow students this historical reflection and to make choices about how they can continue to see a role for social work under current



contexts. In particular, I would argue that social policy within the curriculum has a key role in raising awareness around the issue of poverty and inequality. Taking definitions of social work as a starting point, all definitions support the social work role as promoting change in the lives of the disadvantaged. “Social justice is a primary goal of social work” (Weis, et. al, 2006). The role of social policy within social work education is to enhance the delivery of social justice in part through an understanding of structures and policy upon service-users.

At a time when individualist models of practice dominate the profession (Horner, 2009), it becomes more difficult for students and practitioners to link the problems and needs of the service-users to wider perspectives. Krumer-Nevo et. al. (2006) found that there was a disconnect between how service users and social workers viewed the causes of their distress, with social workers citing psychological and behavioural difficulties over the economic reasons given by the service-users.

*It is too easy for social workers, the majority of whose service-users are poor to focus on the differing abilities of individuals to manage and cope with the constraints of their personal circumstances, rather than to compare their circumstances with those enjoyed by the wider population*  
(Walker and Walker, 1998: 44)

Whilst it is important that social work education stresses the role of structures, wider politics and the law in determining who service-users will be and how “the poor” are constructed, it is also important that it can stress that “they” are, or could be, “us”. Social work students of social policy should see that they (we) are objects of the discipline alongside service-users.

### **Reflections on my own position**

This leads me then to consider my own position within the complex shifting paradigm of social work education. I am employed in the education of social workers because of my experience of working with social workers and service-users and within social services departments, but not as a qualified social worker. I have worked with adults with learning disabilities as a carer (at the time a post which was designated as a

Residential Social Worker – a term which under current legislation could no longer be used). My master's research was concerned with the provision of services to women with learning disabilities. I have also worked for a Social Services department within research, policy and strategic management. My previous work experience as a policy officer for a local authority has shown me that engaging critically with social policy can have great benefits for service-users. However, as a teacher, I feel that I have often failed to help students see that relevance.

I have a keen interest in issues of inequality and poverty and see social work as a part of the support that those marginalised by such issues should have redress to. I am also aware that social work itself faces marginalisation through marketisation, medicalisation and punitive managerialism. I recognise Hatton's (2008: 146) assertion that he is often told by students "that it is not possible to practice in any way other than through an instrumentalist, managerialist perspective within the statutory sector... as if empowerment is something which happens to others but not something to which we can aspire".

Therefore, I see part of my role as acting as a critical advocate for a beleaguered profession, in recognition that those who can advocate for others are not always best placed to advocate for themselves (Bateman, 2000). This is a difficult position to take. My credibility is too easily questioned, nor do I offer undivided loyalty.

So a key part of my position is that of outsider and critical friend. However, within social work teaching this is only a part of my identity. I also inhabit a feminist position. I owe a debt to feminism. It has liberated and empowered me by ameliorating the feelings of threat and isolation that can come with a gendered identity. Ann Mulvey wrote when reflecting on her feminism:

*It affirmed my being in the world in emotional and embodied ways. It also offered tools to demystify and challenge sexist systems and created alternative settings, where I was welcome as the person I was, not in spite of her.*  
(Mulvey et. al., 2002: 560)

This is a useful quote for me because it sums up the warmth and integrity which feminism has given me. It also points to the benefit of feminism for the academic, through the process of deconstruction and demystification of what Audre Lorde (1984) calls “the masters tools”. Feminism offers a space to challenge this through the forging of alternative spaces usually through group processes. However, in needing to earn money, pay my mortgage, feed my family those alternative settings have to run alongside the mainstream settings, the settings that require energetic challenge to survive. The problems with a feminist position within the academy are well documented.

*A violent academic situation is not so much an experience of fisticuffs and flying chairs as one of diminishing other human beings with the use of sarcasm, raised voices, jokes, veiled insults or the patronising put-down*  
(Ramazanoglu, 1987: 64)

The tensions experienced by feminist academics were also explored by Lawthom and Burman (1999: 152) who presented a narrative of resistance in which they argued that feminists can find a place in academic institutions but their challenge is “not to emulate men in their survival ‘success’ strategies of removal and mystique nor lend oneself vulnerable to exploitation by remaining uninvolved”. Sadly, these experiences were not left behind in the last century and writing more recently, Reay (2004: 31) remarked “Academia in Britain remains a territory ruled by men; a masculine cultural economy where the vast majority of women if they count at all count for less”.

What is significant for me is that these writers write from the relatively elite educational space of universities. At the time of undertaking the field work of this research, I was not long back from maternity leave and was working part-time for a further Education college, a space often referred to as a Cinderella service. Simmons and Thompson (2008) paint a depressing picture of the Further Education sector as a demoralised, over-managed workforce that is misunderstood and de-valued. This makes Further Education a further step way from Reay’s (2004) cultural capitalists of the academic elite.

Feminism, then, offers me tools for my self-affirmation, but there are times when my knowledge of processes of marginalisation throws into too sharp a relief my own position. Following the field research I tendered my resignation. I am still working on the narrative of that transition – empowering resignation or semi-constructed dismissal. I teach social policy. I know that as a woman with a child I am more likely to face poverty through reduced working hours, leading to longer term reductions in income through reduced promotions and pensions. I am not here pleading poverty, but I have an increased vulnerability to poverty, following recent decisions in which my agency was questionable. To return to Spicker's (2008) metaphor, knowing how I fell down the well doesn't get me out. I am the subject and object of my teaching and study.

Haug (1998: 117) suggests:

*The accumulation of data on such topics as unemployment, income, marital status, on the share of housework, on the percentage of high-school graduates, etc., has indeed the strange effect that the living women themselves remain external to it even when they are directly affected*

This has a resonance with me and if this is the case with me, this must also be the case for my students, the vast majority of whom are women. The aim of my research then is to make those processes of marginalisation more explicit for my students (and myself), by examining the stories we tell about ourselves and those that politicians tell about social workers and their service-users.

### **Structure of the Thesis**

*One of the tasks of the social scientist is to bring out how concepts tend to be the creatures of the arbitrary exercises of power; and to look beyond them to a more democratic representation of interests in the meanings they are given...*  
(Townsend, 1981: 477)

This is the noble intent behind this research. My particular concern is with story-telling about social political concepts and their impact on social work practice, students, practitioners and service-users. My interest lies in considering how power forms the

subject of the story and the story-teller. However, political power is a diffuse activity and so analysis must also consider practices of power, grounded in policy, management and expert knowledge – Foucault's governmentality (1991).

In the following chapter, I will discuss my search for a methodological approach that could support my research aims which could be articulated as:

1. To demonstrate how public policy intersects with personal lives through the use of personal experiential narratives of social work students
2. To investigate constructions of social work, social workers and service users, aiming at understanding the role of social policy and social policy teaching within social work education
3. To analyse the contemporary definitions of social workers produced by the public and political sphere with an emphasis on the intersection of gender, 'race' and class.

Chapter Three is concerned with the messiness of data collection and is a critical reflection on the practice of educational action research. It follows the progress of what became the Writing Stories Project and charts its difficulties and its joys.

Chapter Four moves from a discussion of method to analysis and considers how the data generated provided for particular approaches to analysis. It looks at the role of narrative analysis and provides a discussion about the complexities of trying to foreground issues of gender, 'race' and class against neo-liberal discourses.

Because of the breadth of the study there will not be a separate chapter reviewing the literature. Instead, each analytical chapter reviews the literature as a part of the contextualising for the analysis. Chapters, Five, Six, Seven and Eight are examples of the analytical process. Each chapter looks at selected stories produced by the students generated by particular 'cues' for writing. Chapter Five looks at the inter-related concepts of risk/protection and considers the subjects of policies aimed at reducing risk/enhancing protection. Chapter Six looks at the concept of success, with particular emphasis on the debate around evaluating (measuring) success in social work. Chapter Seven looks at the issue of control in social practice and its role in the "construction and regulation of populations of people racialised as ethnic minorities" (Lewis, 2000: 1).

Chapter Eight looks at the concept of need, and highlights the role of position in relation to understandings of need.

Chapter Nine is also an analytical discussion. However, in contrast to the previous chapters it looks at the theme of violence. This was not a ‘cue’ that any students chose to write to, but a theme which occurred and reoccurred in the writings. In particular, the chapter will consider the epistemological challenges that the stories presented for the discipline of social policy.

The final chapter is a reflective consideration. It is both inward looking in terms of my own educational practice and outward looking to consider how this research can support the role of social policy teaching for social work students and practitioners.

Finally, it is worth establishing the audience this thesis wishes to address. In many ways, this is a personal quest and the narrative that can be traced through the chapters is my story of the research. However, the purpose of writing up research is to share the work so that others can learn from it both in terms of the process and the enquiry. This research may appeal to a number of potential practice audiences. The first of these audiences is other researchers. This project has been undertaken as part of a part-time PhD. No doctoral route is easy and this thesis is obliquely littered with the unique trials of full-time work and part-time study. Therefore, for the research practice community it offers a story of possibility and potential, alongside the exploration of a particular method and project.

As an Educational Action Research project, it also should find an audience with other educators primarily, but not exclusively those engaged with social policy. The stories produced by the students for this project offer examples and means of examining the social policy concepts that prompted them. The stories have influenced and have become a resource for my own teaching and they are offered here alongside my explication as a resource for others.

However, this research was started as an acknowledgement of a gap; the gap between teaching, learning and knowing. This a gap that is understood by those engaged as what Weiss et. al. (2006) call “policy practitioners”. A potential audience for this work

is those people who are involved with the introduction of policy changes within their organisations or communities and are seeking ways of engaging others. This thesis highlights the potential of the role of story in this quest. The advantages of the use of story, in particular experiential accounts, for the policy practitioner are at least three-fold. First, it provides an alternative to the current prevailing discourse of “inevitability” (Davies, 2008) and the natural order of inequality. Second, it can foster empathy and offer a way of knowing that bridges the impersonal world of the bullet points, jargon and passive voice of the policy document and the private individual lost in the crowd in which “the masses are always the others” (Williams, 1960: 299). Third, it can act to validate experience as a form of knowledge.

## **Chapter Two – Methodology: Principles and Ideals**

### **Finding and Exploring Memory Work**

#### **Introduction**

*A book on methodology is not a book on philosophy, but methodology is framed by philosophical ideas, problems, traps and disputes*  
(Ramazanoglu, 2002: 24)

To parody, my chapter on methodology is not a chapter on philosophy, but its planning and writing has led me to consider the methodological choices I have made in light of my own philosophical stance on issues such as gender, language and the role of experience in knowledge production. The aim of this chapter is to discuss my methodological decisions in relation to wider debates about what knowledge is and how knowledge is produced and can be used or is useful. I show how these debates informed the approach taken to design and conduct my research. I have taken the decision to write about the process and conducting of my research under another chapter heading. This has been done to ease the writing (and reading) process, but the undertaking of the research should not be understood as a separate enterprise from methodological decision-making.

Ramazanoglu (2002: 2) contends that “decisions about methodology are particularly powerful in politics and practices of knowledge production”. Therefore, this chapter sets out my decision-making to undertake a research project that stretches the memory-work method. It will do this in three ways. First, it will present a narrative of the journey leading to this research investigation. Second, it will provide an overview of the memory-work method; its “pure” and “traditional” form and the development of other varieties. Third, it will offer a discussion of the benefits and tensions in the use of experience within knowledge production.



## **The Journey to Memory Work**

As stated in the previous chapter, my experience of local authority social services has given me understanding of how engaging critically with social policy can be advantageous for marginalised service-users (for example, the introduction of Direct Payments or Carers Assessments), yet I have not always been able to pass on this enthusiasm to my students. Lishman (2009) described how as a student she felt bored by social policy and it was not until fully engaging with practice that she could see its relevance. Her experience, in this respect, is not unique. In 2005, whilst on maternity leave from the college, I undertook some quantitative research with the new BA level 1 student cohort which reported that over one third of students did not read a national paper on a regular basis and one fifth did not watch a news programme on a regular basis. In April 2005, six out of 10 people told a MORI poll for the Observer that they were “very” or “fairly” interested in politics (Worcester, 2005: 3). Only 19 out of 58 (32.7%) of the first year social work students said the same thing.

Following this research, the teaching team engaged in efforts to improve students’ understanding of current political issues. First year portfolios were required to include critical commentaries of newspaper articles and Personal Development Groups were used to discuss topical issues. My concern with these interventions was that while subject knowledge was being improved, skills and values were still being over-looked.

On return from maternity leave, I was expected to complete my PGCE (Post-Compulsory), which was to include an action research project. My intervention was to introduce a formal debate, following Gregory and Holloway (2005a), within a social policy module for first year undergraduates on the BA in Social Work. I wanted to engage students with the skills and values of policy work. This, then, is my introduction to my methodology narrative. I chose to present this as a narrative because as Walker (2007: 295) argues stories “are quite simply fundamental to the process of action research, such that it is hard to imagine how we might write about action research in a non-storied way.” This is not to say the forms of action research and the narrative are a neat and tidy partnership. Story suggests a structure of beginnings and endings (Bolton, 2006), whereas action research is consistently described as either cyclical or spiracle (see for example: Carr and Kemiss, 1986; McNiff and Whitehead, 2006), suggesting no

end or delayed endings, disrupting neat attempts at simple structures. Weiner (2004) further argues that beyond the spirals of activity are more creative research configurations, within which I see a role for the writing and re-writing of the stories.

My findings from this research project, as written up for the assessed report, concentrated on the themes of role of emotions, critical thinking, team work and assessment. However, on further reflection I would add that debate, whilst opening up the students' minds to the potential of political rhetoric and advocacy through argument, was not entirely successful in developing a view of social policy which could engage with the students' own choices. In other words, students began to acknowledge the role that wider structures might play in the lives of the service-users, but their own positions were less problematised and uncritically accepted. Service users were still the subjects of debate, "the debated" and not "the debaters" – still positioned as "other".

However, this study opened up for me the possibility of Educational Action Research, whilst also making me aware of some of its potential pitfalls. According to my reflective journal of the time, I felt "ambivalent" at the beginning of the project. On reflection, I think this was a response to the way the work was being presented to me. On the one hand, I was being told by colleagues/management that I had to acquire the qualification as a requirement of the job and that "passing" was all I had to do. Within this, there was a cynicism about the value of the work, that it was a hoop to be jumped through, rather than an opportunity for personal and professional development. However, from an enthusiastic tutor, I was being made aware of the potential of action research to enhance my professional life. I was motivated by the ideal of "social intent" at the core of the process. "The intention is that one person improves their work for their own benefits and the benefits of others" (McNiff, 2002: online).

Whilst "social intent" was a motivating factor for me, the final report of the project stressed that the key benefit of undertaking the action research project had been its contribution to my personal, professional development. I stated: "Although I have evaluated a particular teaching strategy, what I have learnt is the process for further development" (Robbins, 2008: 207). I do not wish to undermine the importance of that statement. However, the aim of the research had had a much wider political and social

intent, which was to improve students' engagement with politics, policy work and political values.

Kurt Lewin is generally considered as the founder of the term "action research":

*The research needed for social practice can best be characterised as research for social management or social engineering. It is a type of **action research**, a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action. Research that produces nothing but books will not suffice.*

(Lewin, 1948, cited in Smith, 2001: online)

From this, many writers have gone on to emphasise the roles of values in action research. McNiff (2002) describes it as research with "social intent". Critical action research emphasises participation, democracy and social critique (Weiner, 2004: 23). Esposito and Evans-Winter also ask for a definition that includes the context of those involved and a "critical lens that forthrightly examines the intersection of race, class and gender" (2007: 226). They also add that critical research requires some risk. Feldman (2007) also emphasises political values and change and that the presentation of change should affect the political context of schooling. Critical action research requires a great deal from its practitioners.

This project left a sense of dissatisfaction. There was a lack of congruence between the issue of my personal, professional development and the political engagement of the students, a loss of the radical impulse. Reflexivity had been subverted from its principle of "guiding diverse accounts of feminist research" (Burman, 2006: 324). In order to meet all the assessment criteria for the project and in writing for a particular audience the activism was lost. This was possibly an example of how "in institutional settings, feminist activism is replaced by the less confrontational policy of gender mainstreaming" (Braidotti, 2005: 171). As Weiner (2004) makes clear critical action research should have considerable potential for feminist scholarship and action, yet much action research is still gender-blind. Although within the report of this project I made reference to my feminism and used feminist sources, gender played little part in my analysis. Whilst feminism might suggest "certain approaches in respect of method

and process” (Watts, 2006: 385) the analysis of power, whether based in profession, gender, “race”, ability or class was not explored in any depth. Further consideration was almost certainly due to the issue of consent within a classroom setting.

A further reflection was the issue of authorship. Heikkinen et. al. (2007) noted there are multiple stories that can be told from the same data and experiences. Practitioner action research cannot just be the story of one person. This led me to consider ways of improving my future research in order to foreground the women’s movements more “egalitarian principles of interconnection, solidarity and teamwork” (Braidotti, 2005: 172).

I was looking for a method that could support my intention of blurring the dichotomous boundaries of service-user and social worker and also foregrounding the construction of those boundaries for myself and the students. This collapsing of one boundary has led me to consider other methodological territories. In particular, I wanted to problematise the conceptions of subject and object of research as two distinct entities. There was also a desire to trouble theory, method and experience as distinct, separate and hierarchical positions (Crawford et. al. 1992).

My ‘discovery’ of Memory Work was facilitated by choosing to place my doctoral studies within a multi-disciplinary approach and the mysterious territory of a Psychology Department. It was here that I was offered a reading of Haug’s (2000) work on anxiety by my Director of Studies (Erica Burman). It would be disingenuous to claim that this discovery of memory work forged a possible solution (as part of a conventional narrative structure). It is rather through experimentation with a method that I have begun to be able to unpack why it appealed in the first place.

### **Memory work – the evolution of a method**

In this section I outline the memory work method by giving its original context, its processes and uses, which have also contributed to further developments. An inherent problem of describing the development of memory work is that it “was never intended to be a fixed, unchanging set of practices” (Stephenson and Kippax, 2008: 131), more a collective approach to social research problems. In writing directly about the method, I

do not want to minimise the complexities of the practice and seek some recognition that memory work is not “simply another method of data collection” (Farrar, 2001: 2). From a review of the memory work literature, many of the characteristics of the memory work approach become apparent. However, in many of Haug’s earlier writings there is little emphasis on the process and issues of practice are not fully explored. Therefore, the later texts of Crawford et. al. (1992) and Stephenson and Kippax (2008) are often used to explain the phases of investigation. That being said, it is important to give some chronological definition to memory work in order to establish its original purposes and values. It was a project considering the historical location of women’s lives and within this, recognition of time and space is essential.

Memory work began as an overtly political project. It was forged from the work of the women’s editorial board of *Das Argument*, a West German Marxist Journal. The work was first published in the 1980s under the title of “Frauenformen” and was concerned with women’s lives and how they “learned to behave in ‘feminine’ ways” (Haug et. al., 1987: 24). It was a project that was designed to put women’s experience at the centre of that discussion because of a “fundamental unease with all the theories of socialization previously developed within psychology and sociology” (Haug et. al., 1987: 24). The basis of this “unease” was the issue of women’s agency in the process of growing up. It was concerned to show women as active in the constructions that were produced rather than passive recipients of a role. Key to this was to ensure that theory was not marked in binary opposition to women’s experience.

*Our reference point has been and remains Marxism; our stated aim is to inscribe feminism into the Marxist framework*  
(Haug et. al., 1987: 23)

*Female Sexualisation: A Collective Work of Memory* was published in translation in the UK in 1987. Within this text key elements of the method are discussed. The analysis is based primarily upon a set of written memories, produced in the third person, by a women’s collective, but it also draws upon other popular culture, classical texts and journalistic sources. However, a more precise prescription of the method is given in the work of Crawford et. al. (1992) an Australian women’s collective (named SPUJJ after the initials of their first names) inspired following a visit by Haug. Like the West

German collective they are also interested in the socialisation of women, concentrating on the gendered nature of emotions. They were impressed by Haug's method of memory-work, because "it allows the investigation of processes which involves the social construction of ourselves and is not individualistic" (Crawford et. al., 1992: 4). Like Haug, their work combines an analysis of written memories with theoretical writings, primarily from their discipline of psychology. Unlike Haug they write explicitly about method and describe the "rules" they used as coming in three phases.

In phase one, memories are written. The rules of writing are based on Haug's injunctions. The rules of memory writing for the SPUJJ collective (Crawford et.al, 1992: 45) were:

1. Write a memory
2. Of a particular episode
3. In the third person
4. In as much detail as possible
5. But without imparting interpretation, explanation or biography
6. Write one of your earliest memories

Writing personal accounts from an impersonal third person position was considered to be a key aspect of the process. Haug (1987:46) says, "Writing about past events is almost impossible, unless we have some way of distancing ourselves". It was also a part of the basis for its appeal for a social work education research intervention. Social workers are often engaged with writing about others, but this technique allows them the opportunity "to observe aspects of themselves" (Stephenson and Kippax, 2008: 132). By making the students the observation of their own writing, it would act as a point of reflection on the power of language. "Language gains power over us when it is spoken by others or when we have no control over the language at our disposal" (Haug, 1987: 62). (It also supported ethical considerations around anonymity. Students writing in the third person would assign their own pseudonyms).

An important group decision prior to writing memories is to decide a relevant cue or trigger for the writing. Both Haug et. al. (1987) and Crawford et. al. (1992) caution against the use of the obvious, for providing too well-rehearsed narratives or aligning

memory with a too neat unified biography. In a later work Onyx and Small (2001: 776) suggest that the ‘trick’ of choosing a cue “is to produce the more jagged stuff of personal lived experience”.

Phase two involves the analysis of memories in group discussion, leading to a re-writing of selected texts, (although Crawford et. al. (1992: 50) in their adherence to the rules found the rewriting of memories “unproductive”).

Phase 3 is a further analysis of the memories and transcripts of group discussion, which should result in the group identifying points for intervening in their experiences of subjection. Onyx and Small (2001: 777) state that Phase 3 is usually done by one of the co-researchers as an individual (academic) exercise “though with drafts of this process subject to further discussion by other members of the collective”

However, as Stephenson and Kippax (2008) point out all phases should be preceded by the formation of a group with a common interest in researching a topic with a commitment to meet regularly over a period of weeks, months or years. Stephenson and Kippax are also keen to point out that rather than rules these should be guidelines and go as far as to call them “a point of departure” (ibid., 131).

This is a key detail to understanding the evolution of the method. As Kaufman et. al. (2008: 11) observe, only “two of what might be called traditional uses of memory-work have been published since Haug” in that they have been initiated by a group, who have met regularly and interrogated their own memories as a collective. It has, however, faced a number of developments. Gillies et. al. (2004: 102) state that memory-work has been “primarily concerned with women’s, and more recently about men’s, relationships with their bodies with emotions and with sexual practices.” It has found a place in a number of disciplinary or professional fields (for example: education (Kokko, 2009), psychology (Crawford et. al., 1992), sociology (Koutroulis, 2008), marketing (Fitzpatrick et. al., 2008) and social work (Poso, 2009)). Its inter-disciplinary appeal comes from its search to become “better at reading the world and more capable of reading it for multiple meanings (Kaufman et. al, 2008). However, each rendering of memory-work practice uncovers tensions within the process and also allows for recognition of the plasticity of its tools.

*The diversity of our methods, the numerous objections raised in the course of our work with the stories, and the varied nature of our attempts at resolution, seemed to suggest that there might well be no single “true” method that is alone appropriate to this kind of work. What we need is imagination. We can perhaps, say quite decisively that the very heterogeneity of everyday life demands similarly heterogeneous methods if it is to be understood.*  
(Haug. et. al., 1987: 70)

This passage from *Female Sexualisation* acknowledges that memory work is not one simple set of practices; rather it is a collective (but diverse) response to methodological issues which could and should be developed further. Some of the developments and discussions around memory work relate to the tensions of collective working and values and this will be explored more fully in the following chapter under ethical considerations of my own memory work practice. However, some adaptations to the method have been made for pragmatic reasons and others still have arisen out of a need to align methods more closely with research aims or researchers’ strengths and flexibilities. This experimentation with the method of memory work is in line with its conception as an experimental way of uncovering a socialisation process and has always been a feature of its practice. For example, Crawford et. al. (1992) who most closely followed a “traditional” pattern highlighted their concerns about the rewriting of memories.

On a practical basis it is not always possible to achieve the ideal of a fully-formed committed collective. If memory work is to be seen as an example of participatory research McDonald’s (2003: 85) statement that: “Participatory research calls for leadership” is important here. Stephenson and Kippax (2008: 135) discuss work undertaken with HIV positive men. “It was not initiated by a collective, but by the researchers who recruited people to participate (as one might for focus groups)”. This is a deliberate adaptation of memory work, which was seen as offering participants more control than the analysis of focus group data would.

Other researchers have used memory work in conjunction with other methods. Harden and Willig (1998) used both focus group and memory work activities to explore young



adults' discussions around the use of contraception. The researchers' experience points to the different qualities of the data the different methods produced. Kokko (2009: 24) alongside memories produced for the collective, asked her participants to produce individual auto-biographies, to "broaden the analysis" adding variation in form and content of stories. Pease (2008) in his investigation of the subjectivities of pro-feminist men chose to use memory work alongside other group methods (consciousness-raising and social movement sociological intervention following Alain Touraine). This combination, he felt would complement the individual biography of the men and offer a forum for collective strategising about challenging patriarchy. The advantage of allowing the methods to complement each other meant that, whilst not necessarily following any methodology strictly, the group "used each methodology as it became relevant to our collective project as we proceeded" (Pease, 2008: 147). Many of the disadvantages of Pease's work are framed within the frustration of producing doctoral research (for example, appropriate proposal and writing for assessment).

Kivel and Johnson (2009) approach their subject (men's use of leisure in the construction of masculinity) by forming facilitated groups of students to discuss their written memories, but stretch the method to include evaluative interviews of the memory-work experience for their participants, highlighting two advantages of the method. First, that it allows participants to think about their experience differently, but also allows them to find a voice through the research process:

*I've participated in a couple of projects in the psychology department and it's nothing like that. I felt I had more of a say in what was going on*  
(Brian quoted in Kivel and Johnson, 2009: 128).

Memory work is usually seen as challenging the theory and empirical data as the key sources for understanding processes. However, Poso (2009) uses memory work in the light of a paucity of other data in an exploration of inter-country adoptions from Finland. This was an historically specific practice, which left little documentation. Whilst Poso's research is not in the strict tradition of Haug's pioneering work (memories are produced by interview rather than written) it does rely on group work and collective analysis and was led "by what the participants together regard as the important issues to be discussed" (Poso, 2009: 56). In common with other memory

work studies it highlights agency of individuals within a socially constructed process, in this case child-protection case work within a national context. However, it also provides key data on that historical practice.

Other experiments within the method have been led by finding the limits of memory-work practice. Gillies et. al. (2004) used memory work to consider constructions of embodied practices – sweating and pain. However, the process highlighted that “language often fell short in conveying our experience of embodied existence” (Gillies et. al., 2004: 111). As the use of language is central to the memory work project the collective were keen to move towards more experimental representative modes of expression leading to a further study of non-linguistic data (Gillies et. al. 2005).

Davies (2008) has conversely stretched the linguistic process of memory work in her use of collective biography:

*The term collective biography is chosen to highlight the possibility of opening up a different relation between the individual and the collective, both theoretically and in practice*  
(Davies, 2008: 45)

It builds on memory work but differs in some significant ways. First the group work is intensive and over a short period. The process is then more intense and in the reading, writing and listening to memories there is the “explicit intention of entering into the experience” (Davies, 2008: 52) to create a level of empathy. Memories are considered to be collective because, through negotiation and questioning, the level of detail reaches the point “where all the participants ‘know it’ in their bodies and have, in effect, been there” (Davies, 2008: 53). Davies’ aim within this practice is again political – a call to acknowledge that the world could be otherwise, “through a set of practices in which we afford each other a profound recognition in the shared moments of being that are encapsulated in our stories, through a practice of making visible the common threads of being that come from the power of normative discourses to shape the ways things are, and through a shared commitment to the belief that the world can be otherwise” (2008: 60). Her approach is also to align the method fully with post-structuralist thinking and “to think beyond the male-female dualism as inevitable” (Davies, 1989: xi).

Gannon (2008: 63) stretches this further in what she calls “messing with memories to produce texts”. Memory work has been used to produce drama and poetry and is a response to Haug’s call for the use of imagination. Gannon (2008: 74) argues:

*In messing further with the memory text that have been produced during some of the workshops I have convened, I aim to keep textual forms in play and to keep memories more open than more conventional scholarly forms allow.*

The ways in which the student co-researchers stretched their memory work will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Memory work then is a complex set of practices, that engages with a range of techniques aimed at considering the processes that produce gendered and/or marginalised identities. It does this primarily by engaging with written accounts of experience. It uses imagination and creativity to relate these accounts to wider discourses about identity. However, what a review of the literature around Memory Work implies, by the use of people’s accounts of memories and events, is that there is a link between experience and knowledge. This is a link that should not just be uncritically accepted, but further explored.

### **Using Accounts of Experience in Knowledge Production**

Understanding why Memory Work appealed began with its use of experience. The role of experience within social work education and practice is often championed for its role in providing insight. This is evidenced by Lewis’s (2000: 190) observation when interviewing black, female social workers.

*Experience was seen as giving rise to an internal strength, an ability to empathise with clients, a methodical and unhesitant approach to the work.*

Likewise, feminism is a practice which continually negotiates the relationship between experience, its accounts, theory and knowledge production.

Ramazanoglu (2002) argues that there are three inter-connected areas about which methodological decisions need to be made: ideas, experience and material/social realities. She acknowledges that this is a “neat” taxonomy which does not readily address the complexities of the categories, the inter-linkings of any Venn diagram. Simmonds (1997) exemplifies this issue in her discussion of the female, black body within sociology and the academy. Her representation of her experience is bound with Bourdieu’s (1992) theorising about academic habitus. However, her statement that she is a “fish out of water” does not just come from her understanding of a theoretical position, nor her reasoning, nor any statistical data relating to the diversity of university academic staff. It is experienced. It is her attempts to have this experience validated through theoretical, reasoned and empirical writing that forces her readers to see the gaps between these spheres and how she (her experience and her reasoning) can fall between them.

Simmonds’ presentation of this dilemma is a part of a larger discussion on the position of women in knowledge production, as knowledge producers and the tensions of an insider/outsider position. It brings to the forefront the issues of who is allowed to theorise and how this relates to experience. Ramazanoglu (2002: 24) positions these tensions as inherent within the Western feminist tradition and its relationship with the academy and science:

*Feminism in the West was substantially shaped by the concerns of the Enlightenment but also developed in conflict with it.*

The issue for feminism within the Enlightenment project is the primacy and privilege given to specific modes of knowledge production, in particular the scientific method. Dorothy Smith (2004) characterises this as being concerned with the “ethic of objectivity”, which she suggests seeks to divorce the researcher from his experience and restricts the concerns of the research to those of the discipline.

Burman (1994) outlines one approach (among many) that women have taken to address the perceived inadequacies of the scientific method. She calls this a feminist empiricist approach concerned with amending contemporary knowledge to include women. This has been found to be a problematic approach for many. Oakley (1998: 709 – 10)

suggests that there are three problems with this approach for feminist researchers: the three ‘p’s of positivism, power and p values (the use of statistical techniques as a means of establishing the validity of research findings). Letherby (2003: 28) argues that this approach fails to acknowledge the full force of the Enlightenment rationality project. Using the development of medicine and the decline of women healers as an example, she states:

*They have not only been excluded from the academy, but from any claim to full subjecthood: they are not only excluded from rationality but rationality itself has been defined as against the feminine and traditional female roles.*

Hooks, (1989) takes this argument further. In seeking to establish feminist theory, another hierarchy has come into play, which sees white feminism as theory, but the work of working class women and/or “women of colour” as experiential. Feminism in this case falls into the positivist trap of privileging theory over experience. Feminism’s role instead could be seen as troubling relationships between experience, theory and language. I bring in language here because Memory Work does not claim to work solely with experience, but rather on articulation and expression of experience. Subjects may be constituted through experience, but experience is itself constituted through discourse (Segal, 2012). Language is a key site for the constitution of experience.

As Talbot (2010: 16) says:

*Feminist interest in language and gender resides in the complex part language plays, alongside other social practices and institutions, in reflecting, creating and sustaining gender divisions in society.*

Expressions of experience require a consideration of the language that is accessible to their narrator, and a theoretical consideration of the role that language plays within society and in relation to gender. Talbot (2010:15) expresses the position of theories on the relationship between language and gender as along a continuum from the ‘weak’ relationship whereby language simply reflects society to a ‘strong’ relationship which does not just reflect gender divisions, “it actually creates them.” This coincides with

Danziger's (1997: 410) categories of social constructionism as "light" or "dark" in which on the dark side social constructionism is "embedded in relations to power".

Feminism, then, should be wary of providing a claim to knowledge simply on the basis of experience. Instead, experience should be considered alongside theory and analytical frameworks that allow for the probing of power relations. In Scott's (1991) account of the use of experience she questions the process by which 'experience' has come to be seen as foundational. She (1991: 797) says:

*Given the ubiquity of the term [experience], it seems to me more useful to work with it, to analyse its operations and to redefine its meanings. This entails focussing on processes of identity production, insisting on the discursive nature of 'experience' and on the politics of its construction.*

A similar call can be found in the work of Mohanty (2003: 107) who argues against the work of experience within political movements being used to flatten out differences to provide commonalities for mobilisation.

*Through this theorization of experience, I suggest that historicizing and locating political agency is a necessary alternative to formulations of the "universality" of gendered oppressions and struggles.*

Returning to my aim of unpacking the appeal of Memory Work in relation to my research aims; its central appeal is its use of experience. This is an accepted practice within social work education and practice, with the acceptance that the use of experience and self is key to relationship based practices. This resonates with the feminist impulse driving the research. Feminism has also made appeals to the role of experience within knowledge production. However, this continues to be troubled. As Ramazanoglu (2002: 125) states any one person's experience will be "limited, partial and socially located and so cannot be taken as general knowledge". Memory Work, however, is concerned to understand how people (particularly women) have constructed, through language, their social realities; experience is viewed as a discursive concept. It works with accounts of experience, and in this way...

*Experience is at once always already an interpretation and something that needs to be interpreted.*

(Scott, 1991: 797)

The key to working with experience, then, is not to see it as simply representing the truth, but to historicise the accounts of experience and interrogate them for potential truths about people's lives and the context in which they are lived. How this has been approached is more fully explored in Chapter Four.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter has been to reflect on methodological choices made for this project. Choices have been situated within a research biography; a discussion of method and an exploration of the use of experience within knowledge production. Within this project I wish to explore feminist concerns with the use of experience and promote reflexivity among the participants (including myself). Weiner (2004) suggests a list of (not exclusively feminist) principles for feminist, educational action research which include: participation, democracy, that it should be derived from experience, rooted in practice, reflexive and self-reflexive, non-exploitative, illuminate women's multiple and different material realities and provide a safe space. Burman (1994: 123) suggests:

*Feminist research, then, is a 'praxis', a theory that connects experience and action.*

My next chapter will explore the praxis by recounting the experience of the Writing Stories Project.

## **Chapter Three – Methods and Collection of Material: Messes and Tangles**

### **The Processes of the Writing Stories Project**

*There is often a divergence between how research has actually been done and what is reported in research accounts and text books. The result is that methodological accounts do not prepare researchers for the problems and satisfactions they are likely to encounter.*  
(Letherby, 2003: 160)

### **Introduction**

A key ethical consideration for any research is the writing up, not just of the theoretical framework and the analysis, but the process of the research. As Spender (1981:188) says, “Research that is not in print, does not exist.” So writing brings into existence the findings, and makes sure that some of the stories of participants can be accessed. However, as Letherby (above) suggests the writing of research should also attempt to uncover the tangled, messy reality of the process, to support further work and researchers. So, this is my aim in this chapter: to give some description and detail of the processes of the Writing Stories project. However, there is a second aim which is to discuss the ethical issues of engaging in this kind of project, taking the position that ethics is not just a one-off discussion that frames the beginnings of the research and issues of consent, but an on-going reflexive process.

The Writing Stories Project was based in Educational Action Research and therefore followed good practice in terms of educational practice. Therefore, when I say it was messy, I would also want to clarify that it was a well-organised project. The primary appeal of Memory Work was its use of experience. However, further fertile ground for its use with social work students was the role of group work within the method. Group work forms a part of the social work curriculum, and although over-shadowed in practice by individual case work methods, it still holds an “appeal to workers who prefer a more democratic, empowering and participatory approach to their work”



(Lindsay and Orton, 2008: 8). As any text on group work will make clear, planning is the key to its success.

### **The Planning**

I knew I wanted to work with Social Work students to reflect on the political aspects of their chosen career. I also wanted to build on the work of Haug's memory work. However, I made the decision early in the planning to replace the words Memory Work with Writing Stories. I felt it was important to remove 'memory' from the title. Whilst Memory Work is envisaged as a "performative act of remembering, an active engagement for social change" (Zavirsek, 2002: 267), it could easily be misinterpreted as a site of psychological intervention. "Memory in modern discourse is a psychological concept" (Smith, 2005: 81). My aim was to avoid pathologizing the student's personal stories and stressing the individual nature of their problems (Zavirsek, 2002) but to afford them context and see them as part of wider truths.

I was also aware that I would not be adhering to the guidelines of Memory Work in their entirety. Students would be offered the space to analyse their stories. However, it is the stories that would form the basis of my analysis rather than a combination of written memory and discussion. It felt too intrusive to record and transcribe students' discussions given my relation to them.

This was the key reason for the shift in emphasis. I was a tutor and the research participants were my tutees. The moving away from Memory Work as prescribed by Haug *et. al.* (1987) was, in part, motivated by the recognition that there were very different power relations in play between the two projects. A collective of women activists could be seen as subject to hierarchical power and ascribed roles as any other group. "Groups are seen as vulnerable to sub-groups and to domination and opposition by more powerful individuals" (Preston-Shoot, 2007: 11). However, there would at least be some attempt to move away from this and to come to the project as equals. This could not be so easily achieved within an educational setting with power relations between teacher and student having to be constantly acknowledged and reinforced through processes such as assessment.

Having decided on a focus for the project, the first step was to find a space within the curriculum and timetable for the project. Through negotiation with course management, it was agreed that I be given the under-used slot of Wednesday mornings, which had been designated as Professional Development Groups (PDGs). (Negotiation is a high powered verb to be using in this context. I asked and it was agreed with relief from the team manager. The institution showed little interest in the research, but did agree to fund it on the basis that I could prove it met objectives within my Professional Development Review.)

Before meeting formally with the students, I had mentioned the project at induction and given each student an information leaflet about the project (Leaflet in appendices). The formal beginning of the project was an information session on 5 November 2008. At this session, students were to find out which groups they were in, be given the opportunity to discuss the project and set guidelines and ground rules for their groups. The information session was considered key to the process in ensuring that students were engaged and understood what was to be expected of them. It was also a key moment of ethical tension about my role as teacher and researcher. The process of this research took place within a particular educational context – Higher Education within the Further Education Sector – and a particular relationship – student/teacher. The reciprocal nature of feminist research and of participatory action research is such that I have to be mindful of what both I and the students stand to gain. This challenge is heightened by the organisational culture and requires reflexivity.

*Reflection means interpreting one's own interpretations, looking at one's own perspectives from other perspectives and turning a self-critical eye onto one's own authority as interpreter and author.*

(Alveson and Skoldberg, 2000: vii)

I have chosen this quote to illustrate my concerns about the project at this point as being related to *authority* or power. Haug's original work began as a collective of co-researchers and the method was a statement of feminist values of collaboration over competition. Using memory work as a piece of participatory action research brings in the tension of the collective ideal versus the need for a leader. McDonald (2003: 85) states, "Participatory research calls for leadership." But then goes on to add, "the

challenge is to break down the hierarchy implicit in the researcher/participant relationship” (ibid: 87). My challenge was that the leadership I had to take was in part governed by the anti-feminist, anti-scholarly managerialism currently pervading the Further Education culture.

This began with the assignment of students to groups. This had to be done by me to meet registration and attendance requirements for the college. I chose to have four groups so that they could be manageable in size and could meet at least once a month. I gave each group a colour. The assignment of groups is as shown in Table 3.1

Table 3.1 Assignment of Groups

<b>Colour</b>	<b>Female Students</b>	<b>Male Students</b>	<b>Total</b>
Pink	6	3	9
Blue	9	0	9
Yellow	6	2	8
Lilac	8	0	8

Classroom politics came into play in my assignment of students. With only five male students there were too few to have a men-only group. I did not want to place them in one group where they could dominate, nor did I want to distribute them so that they would be isolated. Just under two thirds of the students were white and it was also important to ensure that Black female and male students were also not isolated within groups, without assuming an homogeneity of their identities. Furthermore, consideration had to be given to age and relationship conflicts that had already become apparent within the larger group. As I had to assign groups, rather than allowing collectives to form, I did my best to find a strategic, ‘random’ approach.

A further consideration within the planning was the use of “cues” within the Memory Work process. I decided, to ease group processes, that for the first session I would produce a list of cues that students could choice from. The list comprised of: protection, risk, control, justice, deserving, help, politics, crisis and need. I wanted to include words that are closely linked to social work, but would not necessarily provide students with a neat tale of why they had chosen this career. For this reason, I did not include the words “care” or “support”.

The information session was well-planned. The room was set up before students arrived into four group tables with students names and hand-outs (PowerPoint, group exercise and consent forms, examples of which can be found in the appendix) printed in the colour of their groups. I had taken time to frame the aims of the research to be appropriate and relevant for the student cohort. In particular, I used the session to stress that as social workers, the students will assess the ‘stories’ that service users tell them, but what about the stories they tell about themselves. My reflective diary entry of the day is generally upbeat. However, tensions were apparent.

*I was aware that I was there as a researcher and facilitator and did not comment on lateness and waited for a few ‘stragglers’ to join before beginning the session.*

(Reflective journal entry)

Tensions between the different roles required of me within the process – facilitator, researcher, tutor and organisational representative – were apparent from the first session. Punctuality was considered important both by the organisation and the social work teaching team as part of a discourse of professionalism and employability. Not tackling this issue was complex for me. A further issue was the composition of the yellow group, which was the least well attended for the information session.

*C<sup>3</sup>. raised concerns (on behalf of the group) about an absent member. She did not name them, but they were concerned what sanctions they could insist upon for a breach of ground rules – in particular breaches of confidentiality – the group wanted to expel this person if found wanting. I agreed to take a strong leadership role for their first group so that this could be further discussed and if necessary endorsed when all were present.*

This group was problematic throughout the process and a line of fissure along generational lines eventually cracked. By the end of the session, all present had agreed ground rules for their groups and had completed consent forms. The remainder of the consent forms were collected at the first meetings of the groups. ‘Cues’ had also been

---

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, random initials have been assigned to students to ensure anonymity

chosen for the first story (some by consensus, some by picking lots) from the list generated by me. In following sessions, students were encouraged to produce their own cues. Although most chose to stick to cues from the original list, the cue “Success” was generated by one group and then picked up by all the other participating groups.

My mood after the first session was buoyant, quickly followed by a collapse in confidence. A diary entry on 10 November 2008 states:

*I am lacking in confidence that all I can do is teach, rather than the management of the project and analysis. I think this is linked to my general feeling that I am trapped in a mediocre organisation.*

Re-reading that I was shocked by the snobbery implicit in the phrase “mediocre organisation”, but I was also flung back to the unhappy circumstances of this period of the research. I was not long returned from maternity leave and the team I returned to was very different to that I had left, both in terms of personnel and values. I was working part-time and one of only two women in a predominantly male teaching team, with whom I did not have strong working relationships. Within the wider organisation there was a slashing of middle-management positions which simultaneously reduced career possibilities and provided further distance between teaching and managerial staff. As with all redundancies, it also created an atmosphere of insecurity and mourning. That I sensed I was unwelcomed and unvalued at the time, was experienced as very personal. In retrospect I see it as a result of centralised organisational processes that could not acknowledge the loss they had produced. Gabriel (2012: 1140) recounts this as organisational miasma in which “many came to view themselves as objects of no intrinsic value but merely as resources adding or failing to add value to the organisations.”

I share this because it was relevant to the workings of the group work processes of the Writing Stories Project. “All groups take place within a broader context, and it is important that links are made between the inside and the outside of the group... There is a continual ‘trade’ between experiences inside and outside the group” (Doel, 2006: 65). In many ways, the groups provided a safe haven for me and the students as a space to

reflect. This hope for the groups may also have impacted on my ability to locate and deal with conflict appropriately.

### **The Process**

My original hope for the research was that my role and presence within each group would be negotiated. However, it became clear from management that I was expected to attend each session, take a register of attendance and that this would be monitored. My role as co-researcher was constantly tugged at by other roles I was expected to undertake within the organisation – an organisation which is located as masculinist (Lawthom and Burman, 1999). This reluctance from the organisation to allow student-led working is a possible expression of the idea that “groups have a life of their own and may pose problems for their agencies” (Preston-Shoot, 2007: 6 – 7). So, my attempt to provide a reflective space was undermined by my compulsory and uninvited attendance. That being said, for the most part the work was a positive experience. I felt privileged to have been allowed to conduct the process and to have shared so many of the students’ stories and conversations.

As the project progressed, a number of minor ethical concerns arose. First, I was concerned by the construction of some of the stories; writing was unclear; spelling and grammar mistakes were frequent. I did not want to expose students to any further scrutiny around these issues as the course was already highly assessed. Yet, also I felt that the level of literacy was significant. I had chosen a research process that relied on the written word, as social work often has to do. The inability to express on paper the needs of service-users could be used to increase their marginalisation as illiteracy and subordination are linked (Letherby, 2003). However, many of these mistakes were picked up by students within the groups and corrections made to texts as part of the discussion – an unexpected advantage of the process. Second, questions also arose about the use of memory for a student who had suffered a stroke and had continuing problems with accessing her memory. Again the group were sympathetic around this and although she did not produce many coherent stories for discussion, she could contribute to the discussion of others’ accounts. Third, I was concerned about the content of some stories. Many were of traumatic events or difficult periods. The original intent of the Memory Work collective was to work with the mundane, the everyday. At the centre of Haug’s original project, the assumption was, there were

subordinated, but agentic, untraumatised subjects. However, in performative texts by social work students, the issues of crisis, violence and trauma came to the fore. Farrar (2001: 5) recalls the Memory Work was not a means to uncovering responses to losing a child to adoption, it “was too painful to continue.” Students had been briefed to consider their own well-being in terms of disclosure and the offer of student support services was made available. Despite this, the stories kept coming and this is further explored in the chapter on Violence. However, the key site for ethical consideration for the purposes of this chapter was the behaviour within the groups.

The complexity of working with groups needs to be acknowledged. Groups are always subject to change and development. There are a number of theories available to support group workers. Theories about group development often suggest a linear progression. Tuckman (1965 cited in Lindsay and Orton, 2008) is probably the most renowned. Tuckman’s five stage model of forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning is regularly used to structure discussions of approaches to group work. Schiller (2003: 16) however, offers an alternative formulation in relation to women’s group which she observes “frequently appear to develop differently than the traditional models of group development” and works within the Boston model in which storming is positioned after forming. This disruption of a traditional linear model is important for highlighting the potential for stages of development to produce normative behaviours. Having an awareness of these “discernible patterns of behaviour that tend to emerge in groups over time” (Douglas, 2000: 36) can be useful.

However, as Doel (2006: 64) makes clear, “the purpose of a group is usually more complex than a linear ‘now we are here and we aim to be there then’ approach”. Therefore, development approaches can be limited. It can be more useful to consider the forces at play within and outside of the group. Benson’s (2001:76) formulation of love and will “urge to be attached and the urge to separate” was found more useful when conflict arose within one group. Acknowledging that, for some group members, the need to assert their difference rather than any commonalities, to be separate rather than attached, would guide behaviour in the group was important in seeking resolutions.

Not all groups were problematic. The blue group, in particular, formed strong bonds and were a prime example of good group working. I noted in diary entries that they

were able to move between “counselling mode” and language analysis. They were not without conflict and there were heated discussions, in particular about motherhood and the maternal. Yet, such discussions were respectful. By the end of the academic year, friendships had formed and they planned an outing together (as part of the adjourning phase). One of the features that bound the group were the stories the women produced which covered a number of deeply personal issues. One woman produced a continuing narrative on her experience of a witness protection programme. The stories would still centre on the cues chosen by the wider group, but it allowed her to repackage different elements of her experience as “protection”, “crisis”, “trust”, “success” and “positive”. This was the first time she had told the story and it was both fascinating and horrifying. Women would attend the group to hear the next instalment. (It is also unavailable for further discussion, as it could identify her in very difficult circumstances, which from further contact I know are ongoing).

The pink group was also exemplary and in terms of attendance and production of stories they were very strong. The lilac group’s attendance was a little more haphazard and no-one attended their final session. They contributed the lowest level of stories to the project. However, they were good natured, occasionally raucous and fun to be a part of. They highlighted the role of play or playfulness which group work can produce (Doel, 2006).

However, the initial tensions found in the yellow group were to continue. The first meeting was well-attended, but uncomfortable. The second meeting took place in the New Year, where I had noted “the snow was an issue”. Four stories were produced. Five students attended. The session was followed by a group discussion led by C. the oldest member of the group. Concerns were raised about commitment to the group and attendance. In particular, C. was concerned that she was giving to the group, but not necessarily reaping any benefits. She felt herself to be separate from the group in terms of age, but also expressed concerns about the wider cohort in relation to commitment and professionalism. She questioned how she could benefit from the project.

My journal reads:



*I did not feel I handled the situation well. My explanation for the project and group working was unclear and this may be because I have temporarily lost sight of the groups' focus. All the other groups are enjoying the process and have forged out their own meanings for it based on friendship (blue), exploring diversity of experiences (pink) or just having fun (lilac). The groups have become a catch-all for all areas of personal, professional and critical development. I need to develop a more coherent script around this for myself, staff and students.*

The next meeting of the yellow group, I found myself chairing a form of conflict resolution. One of the advantages that group work can offer is “opportunities in which differences can be safely expressed” (Doel, 2006: 115). However, some of the behaviour was confrontational. L. (the object of C.’s concern) “I don’t get anything out of it, do you? Do you?” finger jabbing at each member of the group in turn. This was challenged by the student group. Three members (including C. and L.) decided to leave the group. The remaining members of the group chose to continue to meet, with at least one expressing regret. “I feel like, we’ve missed out. Everyone else talks about the groups as such good fun.”

### **Ethical Reflections**

It is not unusual for research participants to withdraw and I felt that this was the appropriate decision. However, this episode raised a number of ethical challenges for me as researcher and teacher. It encouraged me to consider the ethical values with which I wanted to imbue the work. Paradis (2000) asks feminist researchers to recognise the traditional concepts of consent, privacy, harm and bias as ethical constructs that in the case of participatory research need re-defining. Therefore, I have considered the ethical work of the project under additional headings which include the avoidance of exploitation (a more radical reframing of harm), empowerment and working with vulnerability. Whilst I may separate out these headings, it is obvious that they overlap.

### Avoidance of Exploitation

*Research is exploitative if the researcher's interests alone shape every step of the research process... On the other hand, transforming exploitative aspects of the traditional model can yield research that promotes the interests of marginalised people.*

(Paradis, 2000: 840)

This asks a great deal of the practitioner researcher and I would add Letherby's (2003: 120) caveat that we should "have a realistic view of the limits of research and not claim it as a feminist politics", but I also believe in the need to "adopt a political approach to our research practice" (ibid). This political approach is to consider power and potential for exploitation.

In Haug's (1987) original work little attention is paid in her writing to the group dynamics of the collective. Yet, as social work and education literature has made me aware, there are potential pitfalls to group working.

*Group pressure can be oppressive as well as liberating, and a commitment to group work can spring from an ideology of radicalisation or social conformity.*

(Doel, 2006: 31)

What became apparent during the process was that the assumption that teachers hold all the power within the teacher/student relationship does not hold true and that exploitation could come from within the group with issues of commitment coming to the fore. C. expressed this as she was giving without getting and the point needs to be made "that what constitutes significant gain for one population, sub-population or individual might not be relevant to others" (Whitaker, 2001: 165). There are several recognised dilemmas that can be a result of working with experience and disclosure, including leaving a student feeling exposed or regretful (Burman, 2003). In these circumstances, as a researcher, I had no right to insist on attendance as a teacher would, could and within the constraining attendance procedures of the institution, should. To avoid the possibility of exploitation and to meet the demands of the organisation it was

important to find a way of ensuring the student's attendance could be registered or excused. Organisational rules increased the possible exploitation of the student and had to be bent. No student who chose to leave the groups was subject to any disciplinary procedures about attendance in relation to the groups.

### Empowerment

Payne (2005b: 296) defines empowerment within social work as a process that "seeks to help clients to gain power of decision and action over their own lives by reducing the effect of social or personal blocks to exercising existing power". He also notes that it is an easily co-opted term that can be used to absolve responsibility from managers or policy-makers and reducing problems to individual responsibilities. To empower in its truest sense requires the giving of resources to those who are without. It is in this sense that it is often found as a guiding principle for feminist research or practice (see for example, Paradis, 2000 and Dominelli, 2006). However, here caution is also advised. "There is an assumption that the researcher is always in control of the research situation and is the one who holds the balance of power, but it is often more complicated in reality" (Letherby, 2003: 114). This is also true of the educational context, where empowerment is a disputed term. Ellesworth (1989:27) states:

*Strategies such as student empowerment and dialogue give the illusion of equality while in fact leaving the authoritarian nature of the student/teacher relationship intact.*

One aim of this project was to give students a reflective space, a resource to empower them. However, as a teacher/researcher I should not start from the assumption that the students require empowering. My role in chairing the fractious meeting which led to the yellow group splitting was, in effect, minimal. What was gratifying for me in this situation, was that the challenges to any provocative behaviour came from within the student group, that they were reasoned and appropriate and that all decisions were taken by the students. My role was to allow for those decisions to be acted upon.

However, it is also important to note that "researchers often have the objective balance of power throughout the research process" (Letherby, 2003: 114). This is also true in

the presentation of this event. As the story becomes a part of the writing up of the research it is important that I undertake a critical reflection of my own presence in the text and demonstrate some “awareness that a process of persuasion is underway” (Ramazanoglu, 2006: 163). This research process involved a number of inter-linking stories and at this point, mine has become the dominant one. This story could be told in other ways by different members of the project. Stanley and Wise (1993) have argued that, within the recounting of the story of research and its analysis, researchers should attempt to make themselves vulnerable to equalise relationships with participants.

### The Uses of Vulnerability

The whole process of the research, including the analysis, presentations and discussions, has been a lesson in the uses of vulnerability in learning. However, this has been particularly true of the group work processes, where the “ethical considerations are particularly transparent for group workers because of the semi-public nature of a group” (Doel, 2006: 32). In the course of the group work, I have read disclosures about sexuality, about an armed robbery, sexual assault, domestic violence, childhood sexual abuse, child neglect and rape. I was not entirely surprised by this level of disclosure. As a female member of a predominantly male teaching team, I had experienced this level of disclosure before. I am also well versed in the arguments of the politics of emotional labour that female staff encounter in the academy. However, the new dimension to consider within this process was the impact on other students. Louise Morley had similar findings:

*It would be misleading to suggest that only teachers undertake emotional labour. Several students in my study commented on how demanding they found groupwork. Giving support and attention, listening to others, working through differences were often experienced as painful and difficult.*

(Morley, 1998: 24)

Further consideration is given to these issues in the Chapter on Violence and the power relations which produced the stories. However, what I was hearing from the students was that they saw this as an essential component of their social work training, a realisation that they would have to deal with painful and difficult emotions. However,

the links between this work and social work training should go further than developing what we currently term “emotional resilience”. It should also support our understanding of vulnerability, about acknowledging our vulnerability and reformulating it as a strength. ‘Vulnerable’ is now a label given to UK service-users and often attached to previous labels such as ‘learning disability’ or ‘mental health issue’, suggesting, therefore, that vulnerability is a permanent, essential state. It does not place vulnerability in relation to the subject’s other circumstances and suggests that it is something only service-users can be labelled as. This undercuts the recognition that at times we are all vulnerable. “Without the insulation of a network of interpersonal relations, the individual stands exposed to the pressure of the world and experiences the condition of the self as indeed that of vulnerability” (Furedi, 2004: 105). Butler (2004: 30) writes when discussing violence and our response to it:

*To foreclose that vulnerability, to banish it, to make ourselves secure at the expense of every other human consideration is to eradicate one of the most important resources from which we must take our bearings and find our way.*

This quote is about acknowledging that those who fall prey to violence are us, not “them”. The closeness of “them” and “us” boundaries has echoes within social policy teaching for social work – the continuums along which we work. This aligns the methodology and the method with the original research aims to explore constructions of service-users. Memory work is a methodology which draws on experience as both common and individual. The group work method exposes our vulnerabilities because of its semi-public format. Group work, however, brings to the fore the possibilities of vulnerability. With its contradictory forces of love and will, the “urge to be attached and the urge to separate” (Benson, 2001: 76) it provides a resource for ethical consideration (Hunter, 2012).

## **Conclusion**

The group work processes, although embroiled with ethical issues, were central to the research. The groups were a source of tension, playfulness and productivity. The semi-transparent nature of group work produced particular forms of story-writing. At the end of the year working with the students, I had collected 94 stories and had resigned my position. However, the ethical considerations of research remained as I had to consider

how best to analyse the stories. The framework for analysis is discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter Four – Approaches to Analysis

*The search for a valid interpretive frame is perhaps the research stage that causes most argument and concern.*

(Squire, 2008: 50)

*Producing knowledge through empirical research is not the same as acting as a conduit for the voices of others, or assuming that experience can speak for itself. Interpretation is a key process in the exercise of power.*

(Ramazanoglu, 2002: 116)

### Introduction

At the end of the 2008 – 09 academic year, I had a file containing 94 documents produced by students as part of the Writing Stories project. This was overwhelming and required a number of decisions to be made, including which writing to subject to analysis, under which headings and how to attempt analysis. As Squire (above) makes clear the approach to analysis is always a contentious decision. The task appeared vast. Table 4.1 shows the cues chosen by students and the number of written accounts provided against each one.

Table 4.1 – Accounts produced over the course of the Writing Stories Project by cue

Cue	Number	Comments
Protection	16	
Success	16	All groups wrote to this cue
Risk	15	
Control	12	
Help	9	
Crisis	7	
Trust	7	
Positive	7	Chosen by blue group as a good note on which to finish the project
Need	4	
Fear	1	Written by mistake – student had forgotten chosen cue. Rest of the group wrote to Risk

Not only was the number of stories large and the range of cues varied, students had written in a variety of formats. Students had chosen to stretch the original remit and played with forms of writing. For example, when writing to the cue “success” the

writings included a commentary on the various meanings of success and did not attempt to relate this to personal experience. Likewise, another student had written about how control was linked to notions of being a “control freak”. There were two continuing narratives, one about sexuality and another about experiences as a witness under police protection. The cue ‘help’ had prompted a written discussion of the politics of Zimbabwe and portrayals of the country in need of ‘help’ rather than one systematically subjecting its citizens to poverty. One student provided stories of people he had known rather than his own life. Most students had written in the third person as requested, but a few stories appeared in the first person.

However, the decision of moving the emphasis away from the ‘memory’ of Memory Work towards “Writing Stories” produced a particular shift in the students’ writing. Rather than producing fragments of an event, some unexpected Proustian moment, many of the students produced carefully crafted narratives, giving characterisation, motivations and plot. The aim of this chapter is to provide a rationale for the approaches taken in regards of analysis and sampling within this thesis. It will do this by considering the role of narrative in social policy, outlining the toolkit of approaches to analysis and discussing how stories were chosen for analysis.

### Narrative in Social Policy

Social policy is described by Blakemore and Griggs (2007: 3) as a “magpie subject”. This reference to the thief of birds is in recognition of the way the discipline borrows from across other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Its links to disciplines including economics, philosophy, politics and sociology could lead social policy to have an identity crisis. However, instead it makes a virtue of this whilst trying to retain a sense of its own identity. This identity according to Spicker (2008) is to be found in its applied nature, its desire to act on the world as well as describe it and its problems. In doing this, it draws on the “full range of approaches, research designs and methods that are used in the social sciences” (Becker, 2008: 13). Therefore, it cannot be immune to the turn to the narrative and discursive within social science and humanities thinking. As Franzosi (1998: 517) observes, “narrative texts are packed with sociological information”. Indeed, Denzin (2001) has proclaimed the turn to the narrative is now *a fait accompli*, the argument being that to see social life as an enacted



narrative can provide a rich source of insight, as stories are both a means of communication and a form of knowledge (Czarniawska, 2004).

Certainly sources of ‘experiential’ knowledge from service-users or welfare providers are gaining in recognition as a basis for research inquiry (Becker, 2008). This coincides with concerns raised about the more traditional forms of social science research, which rely on the application of generalisations. Spicker (2011), in reasserting the applied nature of the specificity of social policy, has made a plea to return to notions of phronesis – practitioner wisdom. According to Spicker (2011) borrowing arguments from Flyvberg (2001) phronesis is a process of gaining knowledge through case studies. Narrative collection and analysis must have a role in this. Much as Walker (2007) makes the case that practitioner research must be storied, it is hard to see how working with case studies can avoid the narrative. The Writing Stories project was an attempt to allow students to use their own lives as case studies of social policy concepts. To see that policy does intersect with real lives. In other words, it was a phronetic initiative.

Defining narrative can be complex. A common definition for the social sciences is:

*Narrative (stories) in the human sciences should be defined provisionally as discourses with a clear sequential order that connects events in a meaningful way for a definite audience, and thus offers insights about the world and/or people’s experiences of it.*

(Hinchman and Hinchman, 1997: xvi)

This is a useful starting point. It stresses the part of sequencing and chronology in a narrative. The sequencing of events produces a narrative’s plot and is linked to issues of cause and effect, either implied or explicit. The result of looking for causality is to give the narrative meaning. Finally, it also stresses the role of audience. This is expanded in Curries (2010:1) definition:

*Narratives are the product of agency; they are the means by which someone communicates a story to someone else.*

In other words, narratives are an interpretative step in telling a story. Narrative analysis, therefore, is concerned with revealing how narrators have understood their experience and want to be understood. It can be applied to the grand narratives of history and personal experiential accounts. A recent article in the Journal of Social Policy has also attempted to show how the discursive turn can be used to investigate policy stories (Prior et. al., 2012). The article focuses on issues of validity and reliability within discursive and narrative interpretations and is written defensively against charges of “over reliance on subjective interpretation” (ibid: 272). However, in searching to increase its methodological range, social policy needs to acknowledge that the turn to the narrative has spurned a number of approaches to analysis. Czarniawska (2004: 89) lists structural, linguistic, semiotic, literary approaches and mixtures of the above and states that, “fashion, authority, aesthetic responses all play a role in the choice of an approach”. This echoes Squire’s (2005: 103) statement that narrative analysis is characterised by an “eclectic pragmatism” which is justified through a consideration of politicising “voice” through research.

*Narrative approaches tend to adopt eclectic approaches that are fairly unconcerned about such theoretical and methodological connections. The perspectives are, however, loosely associated by a kind of pragmatic politics. For there is, across all the different stakeholders in narrative, a preoccupation with a politics of ‘voice’ that brings them into loose association.*

And it is with that justification in mind that I have developed my own analytical toolkit for this project that builds on tools, methods and theories from across disciplines.

### The Analytical Toolkit

These stories could be approached and interpreted in a number of ways. “There is never a single message uniquely encoded in a text; there are several messages” (Franzosi, 1998:545). This is a key aspect of narrative analysis. It is not to arrive at a single truth from the story, but to consider the ways in which truths are established and for what purposes. My analysis is concerned with how the stories can support social policy teaching within social work education. In particular, I am concerned to investigate how they can support the recognition that political discourses shape the role

of social workers and their service-users. Butler's (1997: 32) reading of Foucault suggests "that the point of modern politics is no longer to liberate the subject, but rather to interrogate the mechanism through which subjects are produced or maintained." This idea points to the challenge of the Writing Stories project: how to open a space to allow a critical reflection on the role students are to undertake; how to allow opportunities to take personal stories and recast them within public debates so that they can see how they, and those they are about to work with, have been constructed. This suggests that the analytical framework for the stories would take a social constructionist ontological position in asserting that "social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors" (Bryman, 2008: 19). In particular, it is a perspective which places an emphasis on language and interaction (Burr, 2003). This is relevant for my approach to the texts and there is an emphasis on language choice throughout the analytical chapters.

*The significance of language runs right through the formal caring enterprise. From the designations used to describe the workers, to the characterisations of what is done, to the terms used to refer to recipients, the language chosen is as significant as the embodiment of both concepts and values.*  
(Gregory and Holloway, 2005b: 38)

It is also noted, following Foucault (1978: 101), that discourse and power are connected, "whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power." In other words whilst the powerful may have the ability to control dominant discourse, practices of language can be both a site of oppression and resistance. However, whilst this may be my starting point the analytical tools have evolved from a relationship with the texts.

That relationship with the texts has been subject to a number of processes. First, I was party to the students' discussions of the texts. Second, I have taken some of these texts to a Discourse Unit session and they have been subject to a group discussion there. Third, I have consulted extensively with my supervisor. Fourth, I have received feedback on written work from my supervisory team. Fifth, I have spent a number of hours sitting in my small office space at home staring at these stories, reading and re-

reading, getting to know them, knowing they have something to tell me. I have attended to the texts.

Through these processes, I came to see the texts as narratives with “a complex articulation of signifying structures that not only structure the content, but how we cognise that content” (Rappaport, 2011: 67). This has meant that alongside the disciplinary comfort of content or thematic analysis, I have also had to consider literary analytical tools and discuss “genre” and “plot”. It is unlikely that any approach to such a wide range of texts can avoid a general thematic analysis. However, whilst this may aid reading across texts, I was also keen to look at texts as whole. As Reismann (1993: 4) says:

*... precisely because they are essential meaning-making structures, narratives must be preserved, not fractured, by investigators, who must respect respondents' ways of constructing meaning and analyze how it is accomplished.*

Finally, mindful of Squire (2005: 93) politics of ‘voice’ I have attended to “the real and assumed audiences” of the texts and drawn on the concepts of ‘role’ and ‘performance’.

### Role and Performance

Role and performance are distinct, but inter-linked concepts. The link comes from the acknowledgement of the audience; the realisation that observation and engagement with the subject inflects a subject’s actions. Whilst it could be argued that a writer may not chose to write for an imagined audience, it is more likely that s/he may have in mind a reader and that the writing “intimates in every gesture the kind of ‘addressee’ it anticipates” (Eagleton, 2008: 73). The issue of audience was particularly pertinent to the stories that the students engaged in this project produced. It would be fair to say that the students would have been aware of their role as students throughout the process. And more importantly, they would have been able to distinguish their role as social work students, trainees in a career open to public and service-user accountability and surveillance. This would be clear to them from the external context of media scrutiny, and from the organisational recruitment procedures which included individual interviews, fitness to practice questionnaires and Criminal Records Bureau checks. At

the time of writing, they would have been subject to GSCC (2002) Codes of Practice which included that social care workers and students should not, “Behave in a way in work or outside of work which would call into question your suitability to work in social care services” (GSCC, 2002: 10, my emphasis). The performance of the role of social work was expected to be on-going and permanent.

Therefore, the role of social work student was specific to the research participants. Goffman focussed on understanding individual behaviour through an extended dramaturgical metaphor. Role theory, as ascribed to Goffmann (1961 and 1974), suggests that we respond to human situations by acting out roles that are appropriate to the situation and to the others involved.

*There is a relation between persons and role. But the relationship answers to the interactive system – to the frame – in which the role is performed and the self of the performer is glimpsed. Self, then is not an entity half-concealed behind the events, but a changeable formula for managing oneself during them.*  
(Goffman, 1974: 573)

This asks us to acknowledge that “different social circumstances require us to perform different selves” (Lock and Strong, 2010: 204). Therefore, engaging with the subject/self presented in the stories means to acknowledge the role they inhabit. Narrative analysis in this sense is not about “a window into an essential self” (Reissman, 2008:3) but an acknowledgement of the wider context that shapes that self. To ignore the context of the production of these student texts would be to ignore their understanding of the role they are about to undertake. The context provided a particular audience for the texts, which included myself, a lecturer in social work with authority to assess students’ academic performance, and their peers. “The response of the listener (and ultimately reader) is implicated in the art of story-telling” (Reismann, 2008: 106). The words the students produced are as a part of their role of social work trainee and in that production they become performative. For Goffman, “how we perform our roles is a measure of our adaptability to a setting evident in the way we resourcefully draw on conventional (or at least acceptable) ways of interacting with others” (Lock and Strong, 2010: 205). For Foucault this performance is linked to power, but also resistance. He

suggests that “there are ways of subversively using these positions, which have been mapped out for us by others” (Mills, 2003: 92).

Here, my thinking takes a turn from the sociological account of Goffman to the philosophical discussions of Austin (1975) and Derrida (1978). Austin addresses the purpose (or role) of words and he argues against their being simply to state truths or falsehoods, but that there is a different kind of utterance, that which he calls performative:

*The name is derived of course from ‘perform’, the usual verb with the noun action; it indicates the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action.*  
(Austin, 1975: 6)

A performative utterance goes beyond the saying and becomes the doing, as with threats, apologies and promises. Austin then explores what can be “infelicitous” or “false” in relation to performatives. Derrida plays with this idea further, and considers the gap between what a text says and what it does.

*Derrida is not primarily interested, indeed, in the successes or triumphs of doing things with words as such. His interest in speech act theory has rather to do with experiences of failure, weakness, the improper or supposedly excluded or ‘inappropriate’.*  
(Royle, 2003: 29)

This becomes a focus for my analysis. Analysis, then, is to see how social work students, aware that they are occupying a role of trainee in human services relating to care and control, use words to perform their lives and understanding in relation to key concepts and ideas in social political thought. With Derrida, I might find myself concerned with where the performative elements of the writing fall down or produce dissonance. In discussing the words of Maurice Merleau-Ponty who claims that writing can take him by surprise, Derrida suggests that:

*It is because writing is inaugural, in the fresh sense of that word, that it is dangerous and anguishing. It does not know where it is going.*

*(Derrida, 1978: 11)*

So, whilst the students' writings were performative and conscious of an audience, there will have been elements of their writing of which they may not have had complete control, consequences that were unforeseeable. The reason for looking at this is not to sneer at their attempts to 'play' social work. As Derrida suggests, deconstruction "never proceeds without love" (1995 cited in Royle, 2003: 136). It is, instead, to attend to the texts and to search "below the confidently raised voice of the 'message' that the author wishes to convey" (Freshwater and Rolfe, 2004: 53).

My hope is to find the places where social work students can engage critically with the current political discourse and framing of concepts by use of self and blurring the political line between practitioner and user.

*Social work can be seen as a performance, in which we do things that represent something of ourselves as individuals, and our role as social worker, and this interacts with other people acting out their roles as troubled or sick people, parents, spouses, members of a community. This troubled role is not the whole of them, as the helping role is not the whole of us.*

*(Payne, 2006: 57)*

The role of social work is prescribed through legislation, codes of practice and agency procedures. My aim is to enable a nuanced performance by opening up different spaces for reflecting on how that role can be constituted.

The roles of social worker and student social worker can only be used in part to explain the actions of the performer. As Shepherd (2006: 46 – 47) states:

*Social workers... are not able to simply hide behind the label, rights and duties of practice, especially in some bureaucratised form. A key part of social work is its essential human nature – there needs to be a "real" person there in order for social work to take place.*

Making clearer the route of obtaining the role and the performances required by social policies could support the “real” person to respond to their context.

## Genre

In keeping with considering the stories as whole packages rather than the combination of constituent parts, issues of commonalities in presentation became apparent. For example, when looking at stories about ‘success’, not only did they share similar constituent parts, there was also a common narrative arc. This form of story-telling gives testament to the importance of genre. “Any communication has to use shared conventions not only of language itself but also the more complex expectations of ‘genre’ of the forms within a given context and type of communication” (Chamberlain and Thompson, 1998: 1). Genre offers readers a “specific format or formula or set of conventions” (Cranny-Francis, 1990: 16). However, it is more than just a means of categorising a story. “... a genre is much less of a pigeon-hole, than a pigeon...” (Fowler, 1982: 37). In other words, a genre is not just the packaging of the message; it is the means of transporting meaning.

In the analysis of the student’s stories, genre matters. “It matters because of the role it assumes in sense-making” (Monin and Monin, 2005: 511). Monin and Monin (ibid.) argue that attention to genre brings nuance to a reading in that it allows readers to become more fully aware of authorial intent. However, it also matters because in an investigation into power the acknowledgement of genre leads to identifying the “ideological significance of textual conventions and aligning them with the ideological discourses they encode” (Cranny-Francis, 1990: 16). Genre offers insight into the way that stories about problems and issues are not “straight-forward, but invariably mediated and regulated by controlling vocabularies” (Reissman, 2008: 3). Acknowledging structural similarities is one means of interrogating issues of power, especially as generic writing is often conservative (Cranny-Francis, 1990).

However, there were also examples when the students’ stories broke away from generic expectations or failed to maintain a generic form of writing. In trying to get to the “more jagged stuff of personal lived experience” (Onyx and Small, 2001: 76), it is unlikely that students could produce a seamless generic construct. “Genres are always



mixed up and imperfect” (Squire, 2008: 56). These moments of disruption of form also give rise to analysis about motivation, about reader expectation or the constraints of accepted narrative forms in dealing with imperfect, complicated lives.

### Plot

Story is all the elements of a tale. The plot on the other hand is concerned with the order and development of events (Rappaport, 2011). Aristotle’s definition of narrative is that it is a story with a beginning, middle and end (Elliot, 2005). Plot is related to choices made by the writer. The choice of where to begin and end the action is important. Todorov (1990: 111) proposes the following definition of a minimal plot:

*[it] consists in the passage from one equilibrium to another. An ‘ideal’ narrative begins with a stable situation which is disturbed by some power or force. There results a state of disequilibrium, by the action of a force directed in the opposite direction, the equilibrium is re-established; the second equilibrium is similar to the first, but the two are never identical.*

So, the middle must be the process of change. Labov (1997) argues that story-telling is important, not just to describe events, but to explain them. This is where plot matters; choices made about beginning, middles and ends are designed to give meanings to events. However, the explanation is always open to creativity and interpretation: “What is considered a vice in science – openness to competing interpretations – is a virtue in narrative. The openness means that the same set of events can be organised around different plots” (Czarniawska, 2004: 7). There is a tension in story-telling between its credibility, its needs to show causality and its being worth telling. In producing stories, rather than fragments of an event, students have made choices about which facts matter and attempted to demonstrate a relationship between these facts.

### Intertextuality

Derrida (2004:69) once stated that writing or the text is a “fabric of traces”. This is suggested by the role of genre and plot in understanding. They are conventions easily recognisable by a familiar audience. In any writing or re-writing of an event there are

traces of previous accounts. Intertextual analysis is concerned with those traces. “Intertextuality in its most general sense refers to a complex interaction of texts, an inter-play of textual cross-referencing that reflects and inscribes meanings”. A complex and contested concept, intertextuality is a means of acknowledging that how we read a text is reliant on its relationship with other texts. “We can make meanings through the relation between two texts, meaning that cannot be made within any single texts” (Lemke, 2004: 3).

Looking inwards at the text, analysis looks to see how other texts have helped to form it. There are examples of references not only to other forms and plots in the students’ stories, but also to the literary, the televisual, the cinematic, the political and the commercial. However, intertextual analysis is also an outward looking analytical frame. It allows a dialogue not just inside of the text, but also outside of the text. Therefore, I have attempted to let the stories talk to each other. This became important when considering texts written to the cues ‘risk’ and ‘protection’. Despite being products of different groups or at different sessions, the two concepts are currently constructed as inter-linked and dependent. The stories reflected this and commented on each other. They articulated how risk and protection, rather than being objective categories, are relative concepts which can be used to produce a particular kind of subject. Outside of the stories, I have also looked at them in relation to other texts such as social policy documents and texts of social work education. Social work education is “crucial vehicle for encouraging reflection on the profession, its identity, role and task” and its texts “transfer the distilled wisdom and prevalent discourses about the activity of social work” (Gregory and Holloway, 2005b: 39). Reading stories together allows the complexity of subjecthood and the potential multiple identities to emerge.

Policy and text books also provide a useful contrast to the experiential writing of the students.

*The language of a legal document or scientific text book may impress or even intimidate us because we do not see how the language got there in the first place. The text does not allow us to see how the facts it contains were selected, what was excluded, why these facts were organised in this particular way, what*

*assumptions governed this process, what forms of work went into the making of the text and how all this might have been different.*

(Eagleton, 2008: 147 – 148)

Placing such texts alongside the ‘real’ lives with which they intersect allows a questioning of their determined factuality. Therefore, intertextuality is a means of attending to the social intent of the Writing Stories Project. This is an important facet of the Memory Work project, in recognising how subjects have created their subjectivity in relation to the material, systems and structures that surrounds them. As Haug (1987: 49) says:

*...in making conscious the material out of which we have made ourselves, ... we are creating conditions for a more resilient fabric for our lives.*

It is for this reason, I have also chosen to consider the role of social identifiers within the production and performances of the stories.

### Gender, “Race” and Class

There was a disappointment when I read first drafts of my analytical chapters. I was struck by the lack of attention within the analysis to gender, ‘race’ and class. For example, in the first draft of my first analytical chapter on Risk and/or/versus Protection, gender was barely mentioned, despite the stories including discussions of maternal responsibility and an abortion. This was uncomfortable and I did not want to ignore the role that these identifiers and constructions had played in the production of stories and the role of social worker. It felt all the more surprising when the issue of performance had been so significant within the analytical framework. Performativity has been particularly important within feminist thought since Butler’s (1990, 2006) *Gender Trouble*, in which gender and a gendered identity or self is deconstructed to be considered a “performative accomplishment” (Butler, 2006: 179). It was through a discussion in supervision that I could explore this issue. My analysis sought to place the stories alongside current social political texts and relate them to current political discourse – a discourse entrenched in a neo-liberalism which strives for ‘gender neutrality’. Philips (1987: 15) writes:

*Liberalism pretends we can be equal in the public sphere when our differences are overwhelming in the private: it exhorts women to apply for good jobs while treating their babies as their private affair; it offers them equality with one hand and takes it away with the other.*

In other words, traditionally liberalism has exhorted the values of tolerance as a part of the pursuit of individual interest (Goodwin, 1987) without offering a structure to support difference. Neo-liberalism holds similar gendered constructions in its distrust of the state and in the consequent shift of social responsibilities from the public sphere to the private it has drawn on an informal pool of carers (predominantly taken from female, older male and migrant sectors of the society).

*The conception of infinitely plastic female labour continues to underpin such privatisation even in the face of substantial change in the patterns of women's employment*  
(Clark, 2004: 33).

However, I chose to use the Philips quote to illustrate this argument, because this is not a new lesson for me, but a remembered one. I first cited Philips' discussion of liberalism in 1995 for an assessment on an MA in Women's Studies, entitled "Is Liberalism irredeemably gendered?" The process of remembering and writing that memory allows exploration of the theme, in much the same way the methodology hoped to open a critical space for the students. Therefore, as I approached the end of writing chapters I would return and ask, "what about gender?" I would look to see how it was performed or essentialised through the writings. I would wilfully reinsert gender in resistance to the dominant discourse.

Alongside the gender neutrality of the current political dominant discourse, there is also a particular position taken in relation to 'race'. This is given particular attention in the chapter on control, where the issue of visibility is considered. "Race is fundamentally a regime of looking that establishes a structure of relations" (Seshardri-Cooks, 2000: 4). Some of the writings in other chapters have also placed the issues of migration and

colonialism centre-stage. The production of racialised subjects through these processes is also given due attention.

Finally, class also has proved difficult to access in some of the texts. Class is a notoriously slippery concept. Even Marx, where most discussions on class start, does not precisely and coherently define the concept (Crompton, 2008). The project of defining class becomes more difficult in current times. Bauman's writings suggest that "today most of us live in-between lives – between classes, between cultures, between communities" (Blackshaw, 2005: 22). Bourdieu (1987: 13) suggests that, in a post-modern society, class boundaries are like "a flame whose edges are in constant movement, oscillating through a line or surface". However, the blurring of those edges of class boundaries is less likely for some groups than others. Whilst politicians might evoke ideas of a 'classless society', material inequality persists and is increasing. Social work processes can be fundamental to providing boundaries or facilitating movement across them. Class, however, is difficult to pinpoint as an economic variable within the students' stories. It is, instead, found in performances of status.

Given my interest in social justice and seeing social policy as a means to support that endeavour, there has been a need to write these issues (gender, 'race' and class) into the analysis. However, this is a complex process and is supported by an appreciation of their intersectionality.

### Intersectionality

*The concept of intersectionality developed out of feminist concerns to understand inequalities as multiple and overlapping. Its analytical focus is the lived complexity of these multiple inequalities.*

(Hunter, 2012: 6)

In other words, gender, 'race' and class alongside other identifiers of subjecthood need to be examined together, not separately. They are lived simultaneously and the experiences of racism, sexism, heterosexism, disabilism and economic inequality inform each other. This is an important consideration within social work education, where a central concern of training is to promote anti-discriminatory processes. A

common tool for approaching this is to use Thompson's (1997) PCS model. Many students will be familiar with this and are expected to engage with this theoretical model to explore issues of oppression and discrimination. It is not without merit. It offers a theoretical perspective on the levels and means of discrimination and discriminatory practices. However, at the centre of it, it is hard to see the person and the complexities of lives lived. Therefore, I find this quote more useful in my teaching.

*I wish to raise a Black man who will not be destroyed by, nor settle for, those corruptions called power by the white fathers who mean his destruction as surely as they mean mine. I wish to raise a Black man who will recognise that the legitimate objects of his hostility are not women, but the particulars of a structure that programs him to fear and despise women as well as his own Black self.*

(Lorde, 1984: 74)

This quote captures much of the complexity of a life lived. Yet it is specific to an American black lesbian in a 'mixed-race' relationship bringing up a teenage boy. Circumstances far removed from my own, yet it teaches me something about the practices of racism and sexism. It highlights the value of a phronetic approach.

*Phronesis draws on experience, but it does not have to depend exclusively on the personal experience or character of the person who is using it. It might be shared, for example, in a community of practice, it might be communicated – and it follows that it can be generalised.*

(Spicker, 2011: 14)

Subjecting the lives as expressed within students' stories to an intersectional analysis can support an understanding of how subjects are formed within the context of a discriminatory society.

*Simply counting the different types of oppression will not tell us anything. Notions of 'double disadvantage' or 'triple jeopardy' do nothing to facilitate understanding of multiple and simultaneous oppression.*

(Begum, 1994: 17 – 18)

More importantly within practice, an understanding of intersectionality can help to uncover the differences between women's lives as service-users and social workers. Appeals to commonalities between women can actually exacerbate the tensions within the role of social work around issues of control. Featherstone (1997), in discussing the uncomfortable ambiguities of being a woman and/or feminist social worker, makes the point that in cases of potential abuse and within a relationship of suspicion of state power, not all differences can be incorporated or transcended. She goes on to warn that "difficulties will remain if the relationship between women workers and the clients continues to be as one which can be constructed rationally and consciously within the context of feminist guidelines on sisterhood" (Featherstone, 1997: 178).

### Which Texts

Having established a framework for analysis, the next ethical consideration was which texts would be considered within the writing up of the research. At the beginning of each analytical chapter there is a rationale for the choice of texts. However, it is worth stating a few key principles that lay behind those choices. These principles relate to two distinct research traditions: purposive sampling and the case-study approach.

Purposive sampling is concerned with producing a sample that is "relevant to the research question being produced" (Bryman, 2008: 415). Within this the "researcher needs to be clear in his or her mind what the criteria are that will be relevant to the inclusion or exclusion" from the research (ibid). Some general principles for inclusion that were considered were that the account was a personal story (rather than some of the other forms proffered by students); its use would maintain student's anonymity and that it could be useful for teaching purposes. This final principle is less easy to justify or draw boundaries around. It hints at the underlying reliance on intuition and creativity. Rapaport (2011) suggests should underline any textual interpretations, but it also smacks of the accusation of 'cherry-picking' of material often laid at the feet of an interpretive approach.

However, these choices became clearer once I was able to couch them in terms of case-study research, rather than seeing them as "sampling" from within a positivist paradigm. This meant that rather justifying a purposive sample from which

generalisations could be made, I was looking for “critical cases” (Yin, 2003) around which understanding could be deepened. Furthermore, the intuition implicit in identifying cases is less problematised. “Those intuitive decisions are accountable in the sense of being sensible to other practitioners or often explicable if not immediately sensible” (Flyvberg, 2006: 233). This does not mean that bias or weak subjectivity should be permissible in the choice of cases. What is required is that the choice is supported by an appropriate analytical framework that acknowledges and keeps open the possibility of other potential readings. Flyvberg’s (2006: 238) solution to this is to “avoid linking the case with any one academic specialism” but instead “to relate the case to broader philosophical positions that cut across specialisms”. This can also be seen in Roseneil’s (2006: 851) work where the use of an in depth study of a particular case is to “provide a rich analysis of the complexity and locatedness of individual experience of social and cultural processes and practices, rather than to straightforwardly suggest generalizability across a larger population.” This is also a part of my justification for the eclecticism of my approach, to draw from a number of sources in order to keep adding nuance to the readings/interpretations of the material.

## Summary

There are a number of ways to analyse texts. The material this research generated is rich and ripe for multiple interpretations (for which I am grateful to my students). All analysis should aim to be rigorous and thorough. Therefore, researchers should arm themselves with a series of critical tools and questions. Social policy researchers should be aware of the “magpie” nature of their discipline and look outside of traditional disciplinary boundaries to consider creative ways of engaging with material. The turn to the narrative and discursive can support this task by allowing a porous border between disciplines “seeping into each other to weaken boundaries and broaden understanding” (Plummer, 2000). Narrative can also support attempts to straddle the individualist-collective tension of humanities studies. The use of narrative analysis should not champion “looking at the wonderful, solitary human being” but should recognise that one “cannot divorce them from the social, collective, cultural, historical moment” (Plummer, 2001: 7). This requires the analyst to remain aware of the structures and methods of power which can impact on subjectivities.



The following five chapters provide interpretations of the students' stories. Finding a structure for the presentation of the analysis and stories has been an important element of the project. All the analytical chapters are presented slightly differently, but there are key common elements. All of the chapters contain a review of the literature around the topic; chosen stories are presented in full in the chapter (although a further sample of stories around the topic of success can also be found in the appendices); interpretations of the separate stories are followed by a discussion linking common themes, highlighting difference and drawing conclusions about the subject of social policy.

## Chapter Five – Risk and/or/vs. Protection

*Life without risk would be sterile.*

(Dickinson, 1981 cited in Fenge, 2001: 19)

*Just as we are confronted by risk at every corner, so we have come to expect that we should be protected from risk as never before.*

(Cree and Wallace, 2009: 42)

### Introduction

Both ‘risk’ and ‘protection’ were cues suggested by me at the initial briefing to all groups. My reason for putting them forward as cues, came from my teaching and my attempts to relay the issue of social policy’s relation to these concepts, as continually evolving, rather than them being static categories of intervention or person. Risk and protection are often perceived as relating to procedures and protocols and need to be considered more broadly. In particular social policy tries to address the tension between positioning family as a private matter and as a space for public intervention. For this reason, they are also key concepts for social work practice. They are also key terms within the lexicon of social work. Parton et. al. (1997) have demonstrated the dominance of the language of risk within social work practice and child protection in particular. This dominance as Parton (2006: 3) points out is pivotal to the tension inherent in social work practice:

*Social work played a vital role in mediating the sometimes ambiguous relationship between the privacy of the family and public responsibilities of the state to ensure that children did not suffer.*

This balance that social work attempts to mediate is prey to political forces. At social work’s inception (19<sup>th</sup> century benevolence and voluntary work) most social work provision in relation to the family came from the voluntary sector, continuing well into the post-war period. However, from this point the role of the state has steadily

increased, but concentrated on households where there has been some “conspicuous failure in relation to child welfare to be addressed” (Lewis, 2007: 64).

This dilemma of when and if to intervene in family life is often characterised in the social work literature as the risk vs. protection debate (see for example, Cree and Wallace, 2009). Whilst this could position the two terms in binary opposition – risk, bad: protection, good – there are a number of shades and nuances to this debate, which recognise that the definitions of both terms can be expanded or narrowed (Daniel, 2010).

The aim of this chapter is to interrogate six stories written to the cues risk or protection. In particular, I aim to locate the subject(s) of the stories in relation to risk and/or/ vs. protection and consider how this relates to the concepts in social political thought.

‘Risk’ and/or ‘protection’ were cues chosen by all groups (albeit from the list suggested by me at the beginning of the project). They were concepts which framed the project, with the first 2 sessions being about ‘protection’, the third session being about ‘risk’ and the final two sessions both focussing on ‘risk’. In all there were 16 stories (17% of all stories) written to the cue ‘protection’ by 2 groups and 15 (16% of all stories) written to the cue ‘risk’ by 3 groups. The stories covered a range of issues: being followed, domestic abuse and violence, lone-working, parental protection experienced as a child and a parent, abortion, driving, illness, leaving home, choosing a partner, migration and travelling.

From these 31 stories, I have chosen six (three written to each cue representing some kind of balance between the two concepts) which I felt had something to say about the stance taken towards morality by the author and the complexity of moral decision making. They suggest a variety of approaches to the concepts of risk and protection, some of which are evident in current political discourses and some of which run contrary or problematise mainstream thought. They all have something to say about the person at risk, taking a risk, and/or needing or providing protection. They constitute their subject in a number of ways, but all strike at some point in their narrative a moralising tone. By this I mean that the stories are “about choosing the right action, or being a good person” (Nutall, 2002: 173). Of course, this is fraught with difficulties

about judgement, objectivity, relativism and subjectivity and each story reveals something about the nature of moral decision-making.

For analysis, it is worth separating out both terms before bringing them back into partnership and charting the links.

## **Risk**

This section will consider three stories written to the cue 'risk'. The titles of each story have been given by me, rather than by participants who did not title their stories.

### **Risk #1 – The Railway Lines**

When I was younger, I took unnecessary risks, one of which was to put pennies on the railway tracks and wait for trains to come past and squash them together. We would call at the shop to buy some sweets and ask for the change to be in one and two pence pieces. As we walked to the train tracks, we made sure that there were no cars coming past that would see us because we were worried that we would get into trouble. To get to the train tracks we had to run across a farmer's field making sure nobody could see us, and then we would have to climb up a steep hill to get to the tracks at the top.

We would put a one pence piece on top of a two pence piece and then the train would come past and squash them together like the pennies from Blackpool Tower. As the train came past we would have to jump down the hill and there were many times when we fell down it. This was a risk on its own, never mind the train. When the train had past [sic] we had to climb back up the hill and look under the stones to find our pennies, we didn't even keep the pennies because we didn't want to get into trouble if our parents found them.

One time, I remember jumping down the hill with my friend and slipping and being dragged down further. I went home that day with my white vest top black from slipping down the hill. I had scratches all over my belly. When my Mum asked me what had happened I told her I had fallen, but didn't mention the train tracks because

she would have gone mad.

One day at school, we watched a film about the dangers of playing on the tracks and getting trapped on the tracks and about the electrical currents, me and my friend just looked at each other sheepishly, others giggling because that's what we did.

There were times when the train drivers would see us and sound their horn to warn us and to encourage us to move away from the tracks, we were worried when this happened because we thought they might tell the police so we went home. We would joke about being on Crime Watch and our parents would see us, but there was more chance of us getting hurt. At the time we did not see the danger we were putting ourselves in and we understood what could happen to us, but never thought it would happen to us. We had just found something different and interesting to do. We only stopped doing it because it became boring – not because we were in danger.

The first comment is that this story is written in the first person, rather than the requested third person. A key argument for third person writing is that it allows distance between the narrator and the event (Haug et. al., 1987). However, distance is achieved here through temporal positions. The primary location of this story is childhood, which is being judged from the position of later maturity. This is a story which makes a moral intervention. From the beginning a judgement is made about the nature of the risk being discussed as “unnecessary”. Whilst the story is full of the exuberance of risk-taking, of the physical thrill of running, jumping or avoiding the adult gaze, it is also written with an adult awareness:

*At the time we did not see the danger we were putting ourselves in and we understood what could happen to us, but never thought it would happen to us.*

Throughout there is a tension between the voice of maturity and the younger self of the piece indicated by the narrative voice assuming a distance and offering a temporal qualification. Risk from the adult's perception is injury and harm. However, adopting the perspective of the younger participant, risk is portrayed as the issue of being found out. That the activity is dangerous is made clear throughout. There is the crossing of fields, the running down hills, the scratched belly as well as the danger of the trains.

However, the other danger is surveillance. Surveillance is characterised by Foucault (1977: 198) as the “utopia of the perfectly governed city.” However, following Foucault, where there are practices of power, there is also resistance: “making sure nobody could see”, sheepish looks and dodging the questions of a potentially enraged mother. Despite these apparent dangers that require the vigilance of adults, there is no reported harm beyond a scratched belly and a dirty vest top.

Whilst the piece is written to the cue of risk, it makes clear links to the concept of protection, in particular, the failures of adult intervention to protect (the parental enquiry, the drivers’ horn or the police video). Protection is cast as avoidance of thrill, as castigation of wrong doing. This is a part of the tension to be found in the risk discourse within social work. It is cast not only opposite protection, but also possibly impacts on the social worker’s rhetoric around empowerment and that services could be used to enable service-users to take risks and to see the taking of risks as a right and/or a developmental issue (Hatton, 2008). “We only stopped doing it because it became boring – not because we were in danger.” In other words, the protagonists grew out of it. It then takes further maturation to see the risk not only as thrill but as danger.

### **Risk #2 – The Bus Journey**

She was a gold medal holder, could run with the wind and challenged the world to a race. Running at this stage was her life. From the bus-stop across the dark secluded field, through the cemetery (at night). She wasn’t scared and didn’t really care. She knew she would be there in no time. At one point her boyfriend asked her:

“Stop running and I will walk you home.”

“Nah,” she replied.

“It’ll be quicker if I just run.”

And off she ran. This particular winter’s night she didn’t run. She had to catch the bus from her local shopping centre. Again the setting outside was dark, dull and the rain

added that extra chill to the atmosphere. She huddled in the corner of the bus stop, desperately waiting for the bus. The bus roared around the corner, full of life. She released a sigh.

“At last,” she thought, I’m finally on the way home. “I could have run as fast as this bus.”

As she huddled on the top of the bus and scampered to the back, there she sat gazing out of the window until the bus began its journey. Due to the time the bus was rather empty, with just a few people on random seats.

Mesmerised by the city life full of people, lights and life, her attention was drawn to a bus opposite her with a group of young girls, pointing, shouting and making laughter gestures at her. She looked and looked again and realised that they were pointing directly at her. She frowned towards them, with an evil pout and looked towards the back of her, where a man sat alone. Within an instant he jumped up and ran towards the exit of the bus and ran down the stairs. Within seconds she could hear deep voices of men and blue flashing lights. She noticed that the mimicking girls on the opposite bus had jumped off the bus and were heading towards the bus that she was on. Shocked and unaware she ran to the front of the bus and looked out of the window to see the man that was sat behind her being bundled in to the back of a police van and the police entering the bus.

“Are you O.K., love?” he asked.

She just looked frozen with no reply.

“Would you like to come downstairs while we ask you a few questions?”

Her face still with the same expression she stood up and went downstairs. At the entrance to the bus was the intimidating girls of the opposite bus, stood talking to another policeman, the bus driver and around three other police cars all with flashing lights.

“OK darling, I’m sorry to tell you this, but the man we have just arrested had been caught masturbating on the bus behind you, he has been arrested for public indecency. Has he said anything or touched you?”

“No,” she said in utter shock and disbelief.

“These girls on the opposite bus noticed him and called the police. Well, I’m going to take a few details from you and because of your age, I’m going to have to take you home and explain to your parents what has happened. If you would like to get into the car, wait till we have finished our enquiries and we will get you home.”

In the back of the car she thought to herself:

“All the risks that she used to take, while she was running across unlit fields and climbing over dangerous building sites; the last place she would ever expect to be harmed, she was violated. She was always at risk, wherever she was.”

This story makes use of the genre of fable (a short tale with a moral), but with a difficult moral to swallow – we are always at risk wherever we are. From the beginning of the fable within the narrative structure, we are presented with a heroine who is strong and competent, issuing a challenge to the perceived wisdom by suggesting that she was stronger, safer running home alone rather than accompanied. The spurning of a protective gesture from a male is suggestive of the pride that precedes a fall. In common with the previous story, risk is initially presented as pleasure and physical thrill – the running fast across fields. However, the story darkens when the gold medal runner is taken from the context of space to enclosure, a night bus home. We are unsure of where the risk is coming from. Girls on an opposite bus appear to pose a threat; protection is an evil pout. By the end of the story, the gold medal runner is positioned as vulnerable. She describes herself as ‘violated’. However, the genre is subverted or complicated by the fact that the fall is not of her own making and possibly could have been averted had she kept up her previous risk-taking behaviour (although the author does not overtly suggest this herself).



Whilst a man may have been guilty of sexual exposure or indecent behaviour, the character at the centre has not been directly assaulted or even consciously insulted/offended. She was largely unaware of the man's behaviour. However, she is constituted as being at risk by others and in her final soliloquy takes on the identity as vulnerable, in direct contrast to where the story began. This is uncomfortable to read as a central, agentic character becomes decentred – “the notion of a structure lacking a centre represents the unthinkable itself” (Derrida, 1978: 279). It could be argued that state protection in the form of the police performs this decentring/destabilising of our risk-taking subject. Or, if not the police themselves, it could be seen as a product of the internalisation of the victim role in relation to police intervention. Risk within this story is negotiated by the protagonist. Is she at risk because she is informed of danger, or is the danger real? This is resolved when risk becomes a state of victimhood that is imposed.

This story highlights the limits of generic writing. Choosing to begin with a proud individual and then following her need to learn a lesson actually produces confusion, or dissonance between form and content. For what has she actually learnt? – that danger cannot be avoided, that she is safer trusting her own strength? However, there are traces of other genres encoded in the writing. The story also has echoes of fairy-tale elements and “fairy tales continue to be a powerful way of knowing” (Monin and Monin, 2005: 515 – 516) particularly in relation to gender. The boyfriend attempts to play Prince Charming who will provide protection. This is rejected and the result is isolation “huddled in the corner” and then on a bus looking at a city “full of people, lights and life”. This suggests a desire to be rescued, but she fails to recognise her rescuers, labelling them “mimicking girls”. The police in the end provide the carriage, not to the ball but to her parents and home. This is not a she “lived happily ever after” scene. Rather, it is that she gained an unwelcome knowledge about the constraints placed on her freedom.

### **Risk 3 – Moving Out?**

Jenny had always been an independent person. She had always paid her parents rent since having her first job and had never missed a payment. She paid for her own car

and insurance and had always bought her own clothes since having her own wage. However, recently she felt she wanted to be more independent.

Jenny had two brothers, who she considered to be mummy's boys. They had their clothes washed and ironed, their teas were made every night and even now they had both moved out they still brought their washing round every week to be washed and ironed. Jenny had always found this frustrating not only because she listened to her mother complain about it even though she wouldn't stop doing it, but because she couldn't understand why they didn't want to be independent and self-sufficient.

For a long time, Jenny had been feeling suffocated living at home especially since her brothers had moved out all of the attention was on her. Where she was going who she was with and what time would she be back. She found this quite funny as out of all three children she was the one who always seemed to be sorting out her brothers problems. She lent them money, sorted out job interviews for them and even organised one's driving lessons. In many ways she was worse than her mother!

Jenny had recently been asked if she would want to move out into an apartment with a close friend. At the age of 24 and feeling frustrated at home this sounded like heaven to her.

They have been pricing up how much it would cost between them and although sacrifices would have to be made it was a possibility. However, as Jenny was still at university, she was faced with conflicting thoughts. One part of her said, "It was a waste of money that could be better spent or saved for the future" and the other half said, "You will never know unless you try and you may have the time of your life living away from home."

Her parents' thoughts were all negative, but she expected that and all she could think was they had been negative when she applied to university. It wasn't a question of how she would get in but more a question of how would she manage financially, but she did it and sorted it all out on her own as well.

Moving out is a risk both financially and emotionally. It could be a disaster or the best thing she did. She still hasn't decided on whether she will take the risk or not.

In this story, risk is presented as decision-making, and produces a clearly performative text, acting as an advice-seeking piece. The reader is cast as agony aunt. This draws on the genre of agony column where the writer attempts to clearly lay out their dilemma for a rational but kind other to make judgements and decisions for them. 'Jenny' (not her real name but pseudonym chosen by the writer) is clearly conflicted. She seeks to present herself as independent using the word three times in the first two paragraphs alongside "self-sufficient". This sense of independence appears to be linked to mainstream notions of feminism, which do not challenge traditional divisions of labour but support the notion of choice (Bryson, 2003) as it is placed in a discussion of gender roles within the family ("mummy's boys", "sorting out her brothers problems"). It is positioned in opposition to her brothers "dependence" and Jenny's "protective" role towards them. However, this conception of independence is undercut by the fact that she still lives at home and is not expected to move out.

Whilst Jenny is clear to state that the decision is based on the "emotional" and "financial", her discussion and elevation of the notion of independence also imposes a moral dimension on the decision. Pejoratives such as "mummy's boys" suggest that the risk is relevant to developing maturity. However, this is complicated by other pressing ethical issues. A Kantian perspective suggests that a moral act is one "performed out of a sense of duty" (Warbuton, 2004: 43). However, where does the duty lie in this case? It could lie with complying with parental wishes or it could coincide with aspiring to an independent ideal.

Gilligan's critique (1987) of moral decision-making processes highlights the complexity of the dilemma. Jenny, like Gilligan is suggesting that there is a role for "care" in decision-making, a need to consider the maintenance of social relations as well as individual rights. Whilst the readers may urge in one direction or the other, they are also aware of the "limitations of any particular resolution and ... the conflicts that remain" (Gilligan, 1987: 71).

The context of the dilemma is clearly presented as gendered. “The view that gender is performative sought to show that what we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylisation of the body” (Butler, 2006: xv). There are a number of performances of gender, presented and re-presented across the generations. Both mother and daughter express frustration but continue with domestic duties along gendered lines. However, the context is also a reflection of historical specificity. Adult children living at home is considered to be a feature of contemporary life, because of a combination of rising participation in Higher Education, lack of affordable housing and burdens of student debt (ONS, 2009). This experience can be historicised to consider the implications of student fees. Whereby in the past Higher Education was a route out of the parental home, it can become a factor for staying within it. Policy shapes the nature of the risk.

Risk in all three stories is a question of negotiation. Beck (1992) coined the phrase “risk society” to underline a different relation in late modern society to ideas of risk. The phrase is used to highlight the current emphasis in discourses on risk on a heightened sense of what could go wrong and how we should work towards avoiding this, preventing the worst. It turns attention to the supposed rationalist position on risk which refuses disaster as being at the hands of a God, but within the domain of humankind’s possibilities of security and aversion. Beck’s work demonstrates how risk is currently not a neutral, objective term, but a way of thinking and relating to others (McLaughlin, 2008).

Social work engages with risk in a number of areas: risk of harm to children, with adults at risk of committing acts of harm, with older people and/or people with disabilities and the risk of self-neglect or abuse from others (Coulshed and Orme, 2006). In recognition of the role of risk and risk assessment in social work currently at Manchester Metropolitan University the BA3 includes a module on risk where students must write to the saying: “Damned if you do, damned if you don’t”. This is in recognition of the complex relationship social work has with the concept of risk and the poor public image of social workers around this issue.

Whilst it could be argued that life without risk would be sterile (Dickinson, 1981 cited in Fenge, 2001) and that the role of social work is more than risk avoidance and should

be about maximising welfare (Cree and Wallace, 2009), social work is an ideal site to observe the current debates about risk and its involvement in how people think and relate to others. For example, within social work, the concept has moved from one with essentially neutral connotations to one where it is associated with negative outcomes (Munro, 2007). For example, in child protection, social workers would rarely talk about the “risk” of a good outcome for a child.

McLaughlin (2006) has tracked the role of social worker with the concept of risk and argues that risk has come to dominate current social political thought, leading to the adoption of the precautionary principle – the better safe than sorry approach.

According to McLaughlin conceptions of risk intersect with social workers role and duties in three main ways. First the social worker role has traditionally been used to assess risk, using professional skills to determine the best course of action for the individual or society. Second, social workers are often seen as being at risk – stress and burnout and coping with these are placed on the curricula, giving rise to the emphasis on emotional resilience. As well, the people social workers work with and for are cited as posing a risk; as being violent or abusive.

However, McLaughlin points to a third and important area of risk within social work – where social workers are seen as a risk. This is not a new idea to some users of services who have long associated social work involvement with loss, stigma and threat.

However, this has become more formalised and can be demonstrated by the requirement to register with the GSCC (at the time of the production of the stories) to protect service-users and the community from the risk that ‘rogue’ social workers may pose. The social worker as risk can also be detected in the processes that govern their work, “the myriad of bureaucratic procedures that are enforcing their adherence” (Gregory and Holloway, 2005b: 48) to centralised control.

There are a number of problems with this approach. As McLaughlin argues the current conception of risk is based on a poor view of human potential and this will damage social work. Webb (2006: 1) also shows concern about the emphasis on risk avoidance claiming that it reduces social work to a set of ever more defined procedures. He states:

*In effect social work is under threat of becoming a de-skilled profession.*

So, we have at the centre of social work an “at risk” individual, an individual “who is viewed as more object than subject, as someone powerless in the face of overwhelming dangers” (McLaughlin, 2008:82). This is clearly the object at the end of *Risk 2*.

However, the subjects of the other two stories resist this. They act as active risk-taking subjects. Risk in these stories is both celebrated as thrill-seeking or as a developmental issue, but the celebration is tempered by further assessment. They are testament to there being “too many variables for risk assessment to ever be an exact science” (Mass-Lowitt and Hothersall, 2010: 49).

## **Protection**

Protection is a word that could suggest security and warmth, but for many social work students it is related to professional practices around the regulation of childhood and Child Protection (appropriately capitalised as significant within social work practice.) It has instead prompted stories of trauma.

### **Protection #1 – Theatre**

As she lay in bed wide awake she could hear the sounds of the other girls. Some had already been to theatre and some were waiting. She remembers thinking how insensitive and inappropriate it was that all the girls were put in one room together, almost as if they were on a conveyor belt. As one girl came back from theatre the other was taken down allowing the girls who were waiting to see the state some girls were waking up in.

She thought back on just before she was put to sleep and how the doctors was saying to the nurses that if they worked through dinner they would get to go home early, and later when she woke up was no better as the nurse quickly reminded her she would have to live with the decision she had made for the rest of her life. That soon shut her up from crying.

As she looked up at the other girls, they all looked terrified and it was at that point that

she got out of bed and started to get dressed. The nurse said as long as she drank her tea and ate a biscuit she could go and she couldn't wait to get out of that horrible place.

As she saw her friend pull up in the car, she quickly ran out past the protesters that had gathered outside and instantly felt relieved to be away from that place. She would never forget the look of that building or the way she felt when she was there.

She knew she had made a big mistake, but she couldn't understand why she didn't feel any pain. She didn't feel particularly sad or happy, only an empty feeling. It wasn't until at least a week after that the emotions came flooding in and the guilt hit hard.

No matter how hard she tried to keep reminding herself of the reasons why she had chosen to take that path in the first place (for example, her age, her career, the effect it would have on her family and mostly the effect it would have on every aspect of her life.) She couldn't help feeling the way she did. Her head said one thing; her heart said another.

She felt that in her efforts to protect her job, her career, her family, her partner and many other things she had lost sight of what needed protecting the most. The life she had created, and just like the nurse had said she would have to live with that decision for the rest of her life.

I chose to title this story the obtuse *Theatre* so that readers could be faced with the same disorientation that the writer intended. The writer has taken a risk in presenting this story. Abortion remains a contentious issue and 'admission' of having chosen to terminate a pregnancy leaves women vulnerable to possible castigation. She knows she has taken a risk and attempts to minimise it by not mentioning key words that would explicitly betray the content. Pregnancy, termination or abortion are never mentioned. The reader is disorientated by these omissions and the slow reveal. The story might start with an unwanted or unplanned pregnancy, but the plot starts with the consequences of the next decision. In this case, the cue 'protection' has revealed a story about moral crisis. For the trainee social worker, protection is linked to the statutory role of child protection and her implied failures at this. By the end of the story there is a moralising tone directed at herself:

*She felt that in her efforts to protect her job, her career, her family, her partner and many other things she had lost sight of what needed protecting the most.*

However, in parts of the text, this moralising gaze is also turned on the professionals and the system (compared to a “conveyor belt”) involved in her care and emphasised by the use of professional vocabulary: “insensitive”, “inappropriate”.

This is a story that demands a gendered interpretation as the experience and responsibility for protection is placed within an embodied experience. It is not a unique process; there are “other girls”, but within this story this does not offer opportunity for collective action. All “girls” are placed in one room, but the outcome of this is to induce fear at the “state some girls were waking up in”. The collective action present is the protestors she must run past. It points to the complexity of moral decision-making. The site of moral decision-making is also the woman’s body, whether by protestors or the writer’s head or heart. “Her head said one thing; her heart said another.” It is implied that head means logic, whereas heart stands in for emotion and care. However, this separation of two resources for ethical consideration does not appear useful.

*It might seem evident that nothing is more intensely individual and private than what we call our “inner” lives. In fact, though, our emotional lives and the course of our individual emotions surge through a dynamic field between us which is inescapably structured by objective realities of social power and difference and by the expressive exchanges in which we acknowledge and resist them.*

(Walker, 2007: 112)

Her isolation is such that she talks about the “life she has created” without reference to anyone else, or their responsibility towards her.

## **Protection #2 – Domestic Violence**

Heidi’s earliest memories of incidents happened around the age of 5, she was the



youngest of 6 siblings and a twin. Heidi distinctively remembered sitting huddled together at the top of the stair case on the first step, with her three youngest siblings. She recalls how frightening and panicky she always felt, and the uncomfortable feeling in her stomach; she would tremble and shake with fear as though she was really cold. There was a deathly silence between them all as they all listened. Nobody said a word. The air was very cool, the atmosphere felt tense. Heidi had no idea how her other siblings felt and found it hard to focus on them. Heidi could only remember the physical and emotional feelings of how she felt. From down the stairs there were echoes of screaming and banging as though somebody was being thrown around the room. The noises came from the front room which was usually used only on special occasions. Heidi and her siblings were very rarely allowed to go in this room which contained antiques, a leather settee and a phone. Heidi recalls this was the only room downstairs that had a lock on it. The incidents of domestic violence were a common thing in Heidi's family household.

Heidi wished for this to stop. All would often witness their mother with stitches on various parts of her body, and bruises to her face the following day. As Heidi reflected back on one occasion she felt powerless to do anything; she longed for the screaming to stop; she felt scared and physically sick. Heidi ran quickly to the next door neighbour's house and recalled frantically banging on the door until someone opened it. Heidi explained the best she could what the problem was and pleaded with the neighbour to help. The neighbour said she could not get involved and reassured her things would be o.k. This made Heidi feel disheartened, sad and let down, as she felt she should have been able to rely upon another adult for help.

As she ran back in the house the banging and screaming continued. It was something that Heidi and her siblings had to get used to and accept, until her parents divorced some time later. Heidi felt the damaging effects will always stay with her.

Today, Heidi works for the local authority on the child protection team working with children and their families, she feels her experiences have given her a good understanding and insight into what some of the influential factors are that contribute to family dynamics and dysfunctional families. Domestic violence is a common factor

and very often service-users do not realize the damaging effects this can have on their children. Children who witness domestic violence suffer emotional abuse which can be very damaging and more often than not, children are removed. I believe all children have the right to protection.

Again the cue invited a story about crisis, directly linked in the final moral of the tale to child protection. This particular text struggles to maintain a consistent tone. ‘Heidi’ at the beginning of the text, reads as the subject of a case study. This is a genre of social work writing which seeks to present the facts that will be important for the next worker, or the court. “Genres create ‘horizons of expectations’ for readers and ‘models of writing’ for authors” (Reismann, 2008: 78). Heidi is placed in order of age within her sibling group. However, as the drama unfolds, her experience is individualised as emotional and physical sensations are described; and just as we start to glimpse the child we are drawn back to the professional language of the “incidents of domestic violence”. The “model of writing” is re-established.

Within the narrative two worlds are depicted: the children sitting on the stairs and a closed locked world of the adults in the front room. The adult world is so mysterious that the father is never even mentioned, he is just a terrifying presence. The attempt to find help from the adult world fails (the neighbour being used to represent all adults and their failings). The telling of the story is reminiscent of many public accounts of child abuse, in that while they may attempt to tell the story with “passion, urgency and a sense of shock” (Cooper, 2004: 5) it ends up doing something quite different. Cooper made his comments in relation to the Laming Inquiry into the murder of Victoria Climbié and one of Cooper’s conclusions is that the “perspectives presented in this report do not quite join up” (ibid: 5). This also rings true for this story. There are two voices – the child who is seeking help and the adult who believe “all children have the right to protection”, marked out by the use of third and first person. Whilst the author attempts to make a causal link between the abuse she witnessed and her current work, the disconnect between the portrayal of the child’s “intensity of emotional and intellectual pain and turmoil” and the narrative voice of the adult’s “measured thoughts, analysis and judgement” (ibid: 5) is jarring. It appears to be privileging the latter (by giving them the final say) over the former, rather than acknowledging the role of both.

At the heart of the narrator's analysis for her current work is an appeal of experience as knowledge. "She feels her experiences have given her a good understanding and insight into what some of the influential factors are that contribute to family dynamics and dysfunctional families." However, what is interesting to interrogate is how the frightened, panicky child learns to adopt the professional discourse of the final paragraph and what problems there may be in extrapolating from one case. From the perspective of the story domestic violence is an emotionally damaging experience for children and the blame for failure to protect lies with the parents. However, what is missing are the other aspects that could impact on a child's welfare: crime, poverty, racism, poor schools, disability, etc. Munro (2004) warns against the conflation of a child's welfare difficulties with poor parenting, leading to greater surveillance of parents.

### **Protection #3 – Son goes missing**

It was a Thursday afternoon, when my son's friend came round and asked if he could play with my son outside the house. I normally refuse to let him play outside because of all the stories you hear in the news and the papers. On this occasion, it was sunny and I thought alright you can play at the front of the house. Knowing my son, he always comes in and out of the house every ten minutes for a drink or something to eat.

They left the house at about half three and it was four o'clock when I thought he hadn't come into the house for a drink or anything to eat. So, I went outside to see what he was doing and where he was playing. To my dismay, they were not in front of the house where they were supposed to be playing. My heart started racing as to where he could be. I went up to the boy's Mum's house which was about four streets away from where we lived. I ran as fast as I could. As I got near to the door I saw the boy's mum who was just on her way to my house to tell him that his tea was ready.

We both started panicking and we searched everywhere. We went to the park that was next to their house where we asked two men if they had seen any children playing around the park. They just confirmed our fears and said no, and that they had been there for two hours and they had not seen any kids playing in the park.

In the rush to find these kids, both of us had left our mobile phones at home and we started to ask all the neighbours if they had seen the kids. They all kept saying they had not seen them. We started to rush to my house to get a phone to ring the police to say we can't find our children, when we saw them strolling down the road towards my house. I was so angry and happy to see them that we started to have a go at them and telling them that they should tell us where they were.

They told that they had gone to their friends, who lived across the road from my house. We told them that they should always tell us where they are next time because we were worried about them. This was just because we wanted to give them the protection that they deserve. I gave him a huge hug and told him that if he wants to play out he should tell me where he is at all times. This just made me think that I was right not letting my son play out if I am not there to keep an eye on him and his friends.

Here again, protection is framed as an adult responsibility towards a child. The child at the supposed centre of this story is decentred by the mother's panic. In this story, protection is first formulated as risk taking. "On this occasion, it was sunny and I thought alright you can play at the front of the house." This is despite a background of the mother's usual refusals and un-nerving media stories. However, second and more dominantly within the story, protection is seen as surveillance. Ostensibly, the role of surveillance is to ensure that no harm can be done. However, it turns into an issue of control. Invisibility is a matter of discipline. First, for the child who is told they must report their location at all times. "Full lighting and the eye of the supervisor capture better than darkness which ultimately protected. Visibility is a trap" (Foucault, 1977: 200). But not only is it a trap for the child. Ensuring visibility is a key role for the parent. The mother attempted to find others to help – adults in the park, the other mother, but they failed. Therefore, despite no harm coming to the child, the moral runs, "that I was right not letting my son play out if I am not there to keep an eye on him and his friends." Parenting has become a defensive practice (Munro, 2004).

Yet, ironically within this story the child, even when physically visible is strangely invisible in the text. What the child has been doing, his "adventure" is not recorded; his

decisions not explored or even recounted. The protected subject becomes passive object.

In the previous story (*Protection #2*), children are designated as having a **right** to protection, whereas in this story children are presented as **deserving** of protection. Both phrases have social policy implications. Rights are seen as universal. Designating protection as a right sets protection as a demanding, minimum standard that may “impose significant constraints on legislation, policy-making and official behaviours” (Nickel, 2007: 10). However, the debate around the deserving/undeserving has echoes of nineteenth century philanthropy, where claims to welfare “are typically linked to functional or reciprocal arguments or are part and parcel of a normative system” (Taylor-Gooby, 2008: 36). The distinction between the two speaks of the construction of the subject of protection.

“Protection”, a word that could suggest security and warmth, has prompted stories of insecurity and worry often foregrounded against mundanity (conversations about lunch in *Protection #1* and layouts of rooms and family composition in *Protection #2*). Protection has particular significance within social work practice and discourse. Parton (2006) charts the evolution of child protection work and its vocabulary through ‘battered babies’, non-accidental injury, to child abuse and protection to the current terminology of ‘safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children’. The word protection is now seldom used in policy documents and in the foreword to *Every Child Matters* (2003) Paul Boateng ensures that the new vocabulary is firmly established:

*They [children] are entitled not just to the sentiment of adults, but a strategy that safeguards them as children and realises their potential.*

(Chief Secretary to the Treasury, 2003: 4, my emphasis)

Whilst Local Authority Children and Family teams are still often called Child Protection teams, policy emphasises ‘safeguarding’. In setting up the Writing Stories project I know it would not have been possible to ask students to write to the cue ‘safeguarding’. In normal parlance it means very little. It is an invention of social policy. Therefore, one could ask of the term is it Orwellian double-speak, professional

jargon, or a necessary technical term for working with vulnerable people (another fashionable label for social work service-users)?

Parton (2006:5) suggests the emphasis on safeguarding is to move focus from the identification of child abuse and the risk of harm to children to “the identification of a child’s needs and possible impairment in the context of development”. This shift may be justified as a recognition that child protection systems have traditionally been set up to deal with one-off incidences of serious abuse, while failing to recognise and deal with issues of long-term emotional and/or physical neglect, a potentially more common occurrence impacting on children’s lives and opportunities (Department of Health, 1995).

What this shift has meant in policy terms is that:

*State intervention in respect of the family has changed dramatically in the UK since 1997 with more explicit intervention affecting all families with children, not just those ‘at risk’.*

(Lewis, 2007: 60)

In practice this has meant an intensification of Child Protection approaches for social workers in local authority children and family teams. Meanwhile the introduction of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) has shifted the welfare of ‘children in need’ (as opposed to ‘children at risk’ or ‘looked after children’) work to a broader group of professionals. “[T]he issue of protection has increasingly become the business of everyone from governments to professionals to private individuals” (Maas-Lowitt and Hothersall, 2010: 50). This could be applauded as a good thing, as the broadening of the responsibility for child welfare or it could be seen as problematic, leaving only the ‘risky’ cases for local authority teams with their professionalism and expertise undermined by an increased expectation that all children can be protected (Munro, 2004).

A further criticism of current thinking is that, although purportedly based in research which highlighted that children are at risk from harm from a number of social and economic factors other than only abusive parents (Department of Health, 1995), the

response has led to a proliferation of data on children and attempts to increase ‘management information’ about potentially vulnerable children. This is an individualised response, reliant on surveillance of parents which minimises other social structural forms of abuse (Munro, 2004).

All of this speaks to the role of the adult professional or parent in child protection and safeguarding, but what of the child? Parton (2006) acknowledges two contradictory strands in political discourse in relation to children. The first acknowledges through the discourse of children rights that children are people in their own rights and therefore should be a focus of policy and practice. “It is in this sense that the focus of policies and practices can be said to be ‘child-centred’ rather than ‘family-centred’ as before” (Parton, 2006: 7). However, under New Labour childhood has also been identified “as a key site for overcoming current and future problems” (Parton, 2006:83) and therefore children are often defined as a future rather than a present, reducing their agency in that present. Relating this back to *Protection #2* the child aims to be heard and assert her rights, but it is her future that is afforded the final words.

### **Key Findings – Protection and Risk**

In comparing key discourses from social political thought on risk and protection with the students’ stories, it is possible to see where elements of the two tally. In the above discussion, I have hoped to have shown that both risk and protection rather than being objective categories are relative concepts which can be used to produce a particular kind of subject. Whilst McLaughlin (2006 and 2008) argues that the subject of current risk discourses is based on a poor atavistic concept of humanity. Parton (2006) argues that the child at the heart of current protection discourses is imbued with rights, but little agency. These positions are present in both *Risk #2* and *Protection #3*. The policies and practices related to these ‘uncertain’ subjects have become defensive. “For some following rules and being compliant can appear less risky than carrying the personal responsibility for exercising judgement” (Munro, 2010: 16). However, these stories also point to the gendered, embodied experiences of the risk-taking subjects and those endowed with responsibility for protection.

Within policy, the move from protection to safeguarding is an attempt to broaden responsibility for protective welfare of children and a narrowing role for social work practitioners (especially those in statutory settings). This notion that protection is everyone's responsibility chimes with the appeal to the neighbour in *Protection #2*. However, the failure of the neighbour to support the at risk child, and the lack of information from other adults in *Protection #3* also suggest the dilemmatic elements of child protection should be concentrated on few people with genuine concern or expertise (the decision to become a professional in *Protection #2* and the role of the parent in *Protection #3*). Not that all professionals perform this role well. (*Protection #1* is critical of professionals expending their duty of care.)

The reduction of risk is linked in political discourse to increased protection and it becomes difficult to separate out the two concepts. "The issue of protection is intimately connected to need, vulnerability and risk" (Maas-Lowitt and Hothersall, 2010: 50). This is also reflected in the stories. All those that write to the cue of risk have something to say about protection and vice versa.

Overall there is a desire to reduce risk and increase protection. Risk becomes a site of intervention, as in *Risk #1*, where the narrator makes an intervention in her own story, alongside other adults. "At the time we did not see the danger we were putting ourselves in". A key means of risk-reduction and increased protection is through surveillance and management information. Surveillance as a key technique of protection is echoed in *Protection #3*.

However, the attempts to minimise risk becomes problematic for the social worker. Risk assessment "seems to require a degree of certainty that is not consistent with the dialogic constructionist approach to social work" (Coulshed and Orme, 2006: 39). This is most evident in *Risk #3* which clearly presents risk as a dilemma.

In relation to risk and protection, the issue for social work continues to be when to intervene in family-life.

*The scope and nature of intervention by liberal democratic states is a delicate matter and subject to fierce debate*



*(Lewis, 2007: 59)*

However, the balance is not simply between public and private. It can also be a consideration of the balance and tension between the emotional, painful and shocking with the dispassion and reason of professional language. Balancing these issues is not always an objective act, evidenced by the way that Child Protection orders increase in the fall-out of scandals such as the Baby Peter case. The balance is also closely linked within social work to the setting. It could be argued that within statutory settings the issue of control will outweigh therapeutic or change views of social work (Davies, 1994), whilst voluntary organisations are positioned in documents such as the current Coalition Compact Agreement (Cabinet Office, 2010) as providing more therapeutic services and to support the representation of specific, disadvantaged and under-represented groups. Again the issue of location of practice is to be found in the students' stories. How can we avoid the autonomous gold-medal runner of the fields becoming the object of statutory intervention on a late night bus?

In terms of the story of the research and my position in relation to the stories, these were the first stories subject to analysis and helped to develop the analytical frame. Key to this was the recognition that the texts were produced within the context of an educational relationship of which the authors appear to be aware. This awareness has provided carefully crafted narratives which could be characterised as performative. In particular, the stories provide performances in relation to morality about "choosing the right action or being a good person" (Nuttall, 2002: 173). Story is a long established means of delivering and fixing morality. "The chief means of moral education in pre-modern societies was the telling of stories, in a genre fitting the kind of society where the story was being told" (Czarniawska, 2004: 5).

However, the stories also point to particular constructions by social policy of the subjects of social work (both service-users and workers). So, the problem becomes can one act in a moral fashion, that is make choices about actions and do the right thing, within a process of subject production? Is there a possibility of exercising free choice within constraints around the expectations of the role of social worker? The stories do not attempt to answer this long-term conundrum often termed within social sciences as the dilemma of structure versus agency. Instead, they help to highlight the tension.

Therefore from a pedagogical perspective these stories can be used to highlight the tensions inherent in the debate of structure versus agency. They also point to an understanding of the issue from within the student body. This knowledge may not be articulated within the vocabulary of social sciences academia, but it is still demonstrated. As Jenny in *Risk #3* says: “She still hasn’t decided to take the risk or not”. This difficulty in making the decision is laid out in terms of personal, economic and structural (particularly gendered structures) considerations. The story is an example of a lived knowledge of the structure versus agency dilemma.

### **Summary**

In performative narratives produced by social work trainees, it is possible to trace aspects of the production of the subject of social policy. In relation to the intertwined concepts of risk and protection, the interpretation offered here suggests the central role of surveillance in the governing of that subject. Foucault (1977: 201) suggests that the major effect of surveillance as a form of governmentality (using the metaphor of the Panopticon) is “to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power”. In other words, the disciplinary gaze is internalised and brought to bear on the telling of stories, which provide a moralising tone towards risk-taking and protecting children. The next chapter, in considering success, continues to consider the role of surveillance within social policy, particularly in relation to the social worker (rather than the service-user).

## Chapter Six – Success Stories

*Please don't tell anyone, La Inca begged, but of course she whispered it to her friend Dorca, who put it out on the street. Success after all, loves a witness, but failure can't live without one.*

(Diaz, 2008: 136)

*One big trouble social services have suffered from is that up to now no government has spelled out exactly what people can expect or what staff are expected to do. Nor have any clear standards of performance been laid down. This government is to change all that. We propose to set new standards of performance and will publish annual reports on all council's performance...*

(Frank Dobson in the foreword to Modernising Social Services, Department of Health, 1998)

*[W]ith whom does the adherent of historicism actually empathise? The answer is inevitable: with the victor. And all the rulers are the heirs of those who conquered before them... Whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those lying prostrate.*

(Benjamin, (1942) 1999: 248)

### Introduction

Success, as Benjamin (above) so articulately evokes, is in the eye of the triumphant; the powerful. For this reason “success is an elusive idea” (Gamson, 1994: 414) for the many who cannot claim victory. This ability to name success has become a modern day political and organisational obsession. It is especially pertinent for the profession of social work where failures are judged harshly and successes go unnoticed. The power to label a social work intervention as a success is unlikely to lie with a social worker and even less so with their service-user. This is not to say that either is powerless, but the elision of social worker and/or service-user success by organisational or political priorities is all too easy.

Social policy has always been a discipline interested in measurement and qualitative evaluation. In other words, it is keen to discover what is successful. From early social science research such as Rowntree's 1901 study of poverty in York, the aim has been to produce a benchmark against which to measure policy implementation success. Whilst at its roots is the impulse to alleviate individual suffering, social policy chooses to do this primarily (but not exclusively) through evaluating the success of policies. For the discipline (not necessarily the practitioners of that discipline) measurement of poverty is more important than the experience of it.

This has become particularly evident in recent years, when New Labour came to power on a platform of pledges and targets, including the ambitious aim of elimination of child poverty. The laudable ambition perhaps signalled a break with the previous administration by stressing social justice and equality, but actually built on means of policy implementation and evaluation pioneered under the previous Conservative government. As Barton (2008:266) points out "by the time New Labour came to power in 1997, audit, evaluation and joined-up working were more than just a fad, they had become the orthodoxy as far as welfare professions and working practices were concerned."

The early 1990s was seen as a transition period for the field of social work with the emergence of the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990. The white paper which preceded the act emphasised the development of an independent sector alongside a diminished public sector and the clarification of responsibilities of agencies to make it easier to hold them to account for performance (Department of Health, 1989). According to Hafford-Letchfield (2007) this provided a powerful incentive for introducing more sophisticated methods of quality and performance management. This can be detected in the changing discourses around success in social work. Gregory and Holloway (2005b) link the emergence of 'quality talk' with the changes in community care.

Modernising Social Services (Department of Health, 1998) – the crucial white paper for social work under New Labour – re-emphasised the issue of agencies responsibilities, of "exactly what people can expect, or what staff are expected to do"

(Department of Health, 1998: foreword). The idea of setting out of what a social worker is supposed to do and then measuring it so as to ascertain whether it has been achieved is central to much of social work as it is experienced today. This was in answer to criticisms of Old Labour as being ideologically driven and attempts to demonstrate that pragmatism was at the heart of New Labour's approach to welfare provision (Barton, 2008).

The aim of this chapter is to explore the concept of "Success" as it appears in students' stories and social policy. In particular, it will consider how success is framed within social work by a particular positivist framework through centralised and organisational practices which have reduced the possibilities of a more discursive relationship with social workers and service-users successes.

All four groups chose to write to the cue 'success', generating 16 stories. One group also chose to write to the cue 'positive', generating a further seven stories. I have chosen to concentrate my analysis on two stories (which are produced in full in this chapter), as they offer key points for comparison. However, I will make comments on a selection of other stories, which appear in the appendices.

The pink group was the first group to write to the cue success. They had written about 'control' in their first session. This produced a range of stories, many about immigration. There was also a story of a cancer diagnosis and another about rape. Although the group had been good natured and supportive, it had been a difficult first session and they wanted to write about something more uplifting. I had also recently been teaching another cohort about Performance Management in a module on organisational theory. It had been a difficult teaching session with an inexperienced group of students that appeared to be uninterested in engaging with (or at least that I was struggling to engender interest in) the complexities that managerialism can bring to social work practice, and the nuance of "measuring" inter-personal work. I suggested success as a way of exploring the concept in a field that was vulnerable to public castigation over failure and crude use of 'evidence-based' practices to address this. The group went with my suggestion. Subsequently, other groups came to me with the suggestion of 'success' as a cue for the same reason: they wanted to write about something positive. This suggests a flow of communication between groups and that

the project was discussed as part of the curriculum and experiences of the course. The blue group returned to this idea when coming to their final session and chose the cue of ‘positive’ for themselves, justifying it by saying that they had come into social work to make a positive contribution to people’s lives.

Social work can be as bound up in the jargon of SMART (an acronym borrowed from management science standing for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely) objectives, quality assurance, performance indicators, etc. as it can with person-centred practice and personalisation. My argument, in teaching this aspect of social policy within social work, is that students need to engage with and understand these ideas as either part of resistance to them or (strategic) compliance to ensure resources for service-users and avoidance of punitive measures. So, whilst ‘success’ was chosen by me to help consider the social political question of how do we measure success it was also a strategy adopted by the groups as a means of writing about something positive in their lives.

### **Success Stories – Some General Points**

In total, the project produced 16 stories written to the cue ‘success’ and seven stories written to the cue ‘positive’. There are eight “success” stories in the appendices: six written to the cue ‘success’ and two written to the cue ‘positive’, with examples from across all of the groups. This section outlines a structural approach to their analysis. Table 6.1 outlines the details of the stories.

Table 6.1 Details of “Success” Stories

<b>Story</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Plot Details</b>
Success #1	The University Interview	Lilac	This account is about the second attempt at getting into university. The opening of the action is the nerves about the interview. The details of the interview are sketchy. It finishes with her being offered a university place through the post. “This would be the start of her success”.
Success #2	Karaoke	Lilac	This deals with a talent contest. Action starts with the mini-bus ride to a hotel for the competition with a bunch of friends. The action centres on the nerves involved in

			getting ready for the performance and getting up on stage. After the performance she hears that she has made it through to the final.
Success #3	Judo	Yellow	Mel wakes up tired on the day of a Judo Competition. Although she has been competing for a number of years, this is different because she has gone up a weight and age category and it is with the British Judo Squad. She wins a silver medal and is happy to be second. “However, my dad is still to this day convinced the referee got it wrong”
Success #4	Academic Grade	Yellow	Starts with the nerves about receiving the first major assessment grade on the course. She had failed it the previous year and decided to take a year out. She receives a mark of 79% and the first thing she does is phone her mother to tell her.
Success #5	Driving Test	Blue	Account starts with “She was shaking”. There is a slow reveal that it is because she has just completed her driving test. This matters because she needs to be able to drive to attend university as the bus journey would take too long and her Dad would not be able to taxi her there. She still feels a sense of pride a year later after passing her test.
Success #6	Studying	Pink	Account begins “Pam has a great success in her life since coming to the UK”. It then follows the difficulties that Pam has encountered owing to a poor family background, lack of confidence in academic matters, financial issues impacting on study and being widowed. However, it finishes with her applying for university and successfully gaining a place.
Positive #1	Writing for the Group	Blue	“Positive, well that doesn’t bring many memories rushing into her head”. This account is written as a train of thought about how to fulfil writing to the groups chosen cue of “positive”. It highlights how she wanted to write for the group because she liked them and didn’t want to let them down. She then recounts successes, such as her children, running for Manchester’s cross-country team and being a part of a successful netball team.
Positive #2	Getting a University Place	Blue	Starts with the problems of her home life and the support given by support workers to find her accommodation and being reunited with her son. This prompted her to improve her educational and career possibilities and now

			she is at university doing her social work degree.
--	--	--	--

As before, the titles were given by me to distinguish them by their central concern. These stories were chosen as they were typical of the kind of story generated by the cues, in which there were a number of repeated themes. The stories written to ‘success’, although each unique in detail and emphasis, followed a particular narrative arc, with key common structural elements of the story. In trying to understand and compare the stories it was useful to attempt to categorise these elements. An adaptation of Labov’s analytical schema proved useful. Labov’s (1972) developed categories of clauses within narrative consisting of: abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, result and coda. However, it was not possible to take these categories wholesale and apply to the student’s stories. Labov’s primary research interest was narrative as it appeared in naturally occurring conversation. Therefore, his findings are not directly applicable to a written text. It is difficult to stretch his use of categories to fit all elements of a written story. For example, the abstract – the opener – is considered optional in conversation, its main function to introduce a story, moving quickly to the orientation clauses that provide the listener/audience with a setting. In written text the abstract is more easily manipulated, drawing out tension around questions of who, what and where which may be less tolerable in conversation. This can be seen in one story (*Success #5*) where the cause of the nervous shaking of the author is not made explicit until the final few sentences. Up to that point, the reader is simply drip fed snippets of information. This is a literary (and literate) device designed to increase curiosity.

Therefore, because the context of production is different, for the analysis of these stories, a related but slightly different schema from that of Labov’s was allowed to evolve from the analyst’s relationship with the texts. Key elements present, to some extent in all stories, were: an isolated individual, the over-coming of difficulties, embodied experiences of nerves, triumph and a reflective coda. The occurrence of these elements will be considered in turn.

At the centre of each story is an isolated individual. Whilst other characters are involved, the protagonist is removed from their concerns. “Someone called her name – you’re next she heard a voice say” (*Success #1*). The voice is disembodied, the action



is in the hearing not the saying. “She glanced at the others, so relaxed, so at ease” (*Success #2*). The protagonist is not one of the others.

Each story is also concerned to show that success is hard earned. It is achieved at a second interview (*Success #1*) or at a second time at college (*Success #4*). Judo students have a training regime which, for a potential champion, involves training with men when a 16 year old girl (*Success #5*). It comes against a background of hardship and personal tragedy (*Success #6*). If it is not hard-earned, it is at least unavailable to everyone else. “She contemplated stepping down, what would they do then?” (*Success #2*). These details demonstrate some ‘complicating action’ that add depth to the telling (Labov, 1972). They become a part of the narrator’s theorising of the event.

Each writer is keen to demonstrate that success is also preceded by anxiety. The stories are full of evocative embodied and emotional language: “knot in the stomach”, “she could barely breathe” (*Success #2*), “exhausted”, “this feeling was different” (*Success #3*), “her stomach would do a flip” (*Success #4*), “shaking” (*Success #5*) and the colloquial “bricking it” (*Success #1*). This anxiety highlights two aspects of success. First, it requires a performance of humility. The stressing of physical impacts communicates that the writers have not taken success for granted. The heightened awareness of bodily reactions is also related to the issue of risk. Risk comes in two forms. First, there is the risk of failure – “I can’t afford this again” (*Success #5*). Second, there is a sense of risk-taking bravery – “qualified in arm locks and strangle holds” (*Success #3*).

Ultimately, however, there is resolution (Labov, 1972) – they meet their goal. They get through the interview, they get to a final, they receive a medal, high grade, university place or driving licence. Then there is the coda that returns the story to the present which is often an expression of moderated pride: “This would be the start of my success” (*Success #1*). “My dad is still to this day convinced that the referee got it wrong” (*Success #3*).

Success in these stories is recounted as in the moment, tied into emotional and embodied expression. Stories written to the cue ‘positive’, however, whilst discussing successes have a more reflective, less immediate tone. Whilst others impinge on the

focus on self in stories about success, in ‘positive’ stories the presence or thoughts of others prompt thinking about success:

*As she thought about the group and what she was going to write about, her thoughts were interrupted by her children, the sound of the older two arguing filled the air, as did her younger one singing, her heart filled with pride.*

(Positive #1)

*Support workers who helped to re-house her and helped her with applications supported her throughout the process until her son joined her in the UK.*

(Positive #2)

That aside, the two stories written to the cue ‘positive’ are still focussed on success and many of the structural elements of the success stories remain: that success is hard-earned (“She realised she was a strong person who had overcome a lot of hurdles” *Positive #1*), that the protagonists are ultimately triumphant (“She is now at university doing her social work degree” *Positive #2*) and a coda of moderated pride (“She was very sporty and gave it her all. She just wished she had learned to be a good swimmer, as the doggy paddle is not a good look” *Positive #1*). These common elements give testament to the importance of genre. Genre offers insight into the way that stories about problems and issues are not “straight-forward, but invariably mediated and regulated by controlling vocabularies” (Reisman, 2008: 33).

Acknowledging structural similarities is one means of interrogating issues of power. It becomes apparent that for the student social worker, it is important when writing about success that it must be related to adversity. Students are showing their cultural knowledge by using a generic device borrowed from the ‘rags to riches’ story which emphasises individual effort against external hurdles. Furedi (2004: 36) suggests that there is a “relentless pressure to experience a tragic event according to a pre-given emotional script [that] ensure the public internalises help-seeking behaviour.” This is linked to Foucault’s (1978:60) notion of the confessional in a therapeutic society, in which the need for disclosure is inscribed in power relations – “the obligation to confess is now relayed through so many different points that we no longer perceive it as the effect of a power that constrains us”. However, these students are not relaying tragedy,

nor are they disclosing fault or blame to their audience, but success. Yet, they still feel obliged to show they can overcome difficulties – to demonstrate that success must be borne out of problems.

When prompted by the cue ‘success’ students produced stories that centred on personal triumphs. The cue invites this triumphal tone, a history as the story of winners (Benjamin, 1999) that is hard-earned and related to individual skills. Even in stories where success is framed by an acknowledgement of others’ support, there remains this central positivist idea that success is earned by working towards a stated objective – “because people set themselves a goal and fail to meet them, she thinks she’s done well in a positive way” (*Positive #2*).

Labovian structural analysis has supported an insight into how power operates in defining success in these narratives. However, the structural approach is also limited, in that it concentrates on event rather than experience (Patterson, 2008). Furthermore, this kind of analysis relegates a crafted whole into a series of clauses. It does not allow a reading of what happens between the gaps; what of the clauses that do not meet categorical criteria?

*In analysing ‘respondents stories’ sociologists cut up individual stories and recompose the pieces into new stories, with the coherence and context of each original narrative lost and forgotten.*

(Franzosi, 1998: 548)

Therefore, the following section will look at a story that exemplifies the themes of this analysis, but demonstrates the advantages of the consideration of a story that is whole. *The Office* can be seen as an exemplar of the structural type presented above, whilst also highlighting organisational practices and their role in shaping discourses and concepts of success.

### **Success – The Office**

It was Monday morning, she was sat in the sales office, and she had just submitted three sales
--

and was finishing off some paperwork before her weekly meeting with Geoff, her manager. The office was busy there were about fifteen consultants at the desks. She was feeling quite confident, well on the way to her months target and no problems she was aware of.

Geoff came out of his office and walked over to the desk where she was sitting, he was looking quite stern not his usual smiley self. Are you ready he said to her? She nodded and followed him into his office, feeling as if she was missing something.

“And just where did you think you would be in four weeks time?” he said. The look on his face made her feel very uneasy. “Here, I hope,” she said. Her mind was racing, it was only a couple of weeks ago she had passed her probationary period. What cases had she got in the pipeline? She had heard nothing from compliance about problems.

“Well, with what I have found out this morning, I think it is very unlikely you will be here then,” he said, his face remaining expressionless. She felt her heart start to race, and could not think of anything she had done wrong. “Why? What have I done?” she asked obviously starting to panic. His voice remained cold, “You have won the incentive to the Bahamas, and you will be lying on the beach knowing you.” Then and only then did he start to laugh. Her mouth fell open and she stared at him in disbelief, then she looked round her and all the girls who worked in the office were stood looking in the office window laughing. That’s when it finally dawned on her what he was saying and she started to jump up and down. She had only been working there for eight months and on Thursday she was going to New York to stay at the Waldorf Astoria, an incentive she won for sales, then in four weeks she would be jetting to the Bahamas having won an incentive for average transaction value. She could get used to this, but best of all she would finally get to see the places her Granddad used to tell her about, where he was stationed in the war.

The common structural elements of the success story are present here. At the centre is an isolated individual. However, the protagonist has become isolated through the machinations of others. To announce success the manager must take her to one side, build tension. “His voice remained cold.” Others are in on the joke. “All the girls in the office were stood looking in the window laughing”. She is hard-working and merits success – “well on the way to her month’s target and no problems she was aware of”. Yet at the point prior to the announcement of success, she was “starting to panic”.

There is an element of risk – of being in trouble through failing with sanctions such as probationary periods and a compliance department. The story highlights the punitive potential of some forms of managerial authority – the possibility that one could have done wrong without even knowing it. The surveillance of the worker is such that “it is possible to intervene at any moment and because the constant pressure acts even before the offences, mistakes or crimes have been committed” (Foucault, 1977: 206). Finally, she is triumphant and exuberance is embodied through jumping up and down. The coda returns her to the present with thoughts of her Grandfather which could be seen to function to temper any apparent aggrandising or her pride.

What singles this story out is that the goal of the success has not been decreed by the writer, but by organisational practices. Whereas the previous stories, it could be argued, are performing a particular function, an appeal to their audience which says, “See, I can overcome problems/ nerves/ previous failures and succeed”, this story offers a different performance. “See, I was good at my previous job. See, I can work to targets.” This is a presentation of skills for a trainee social worker, which may be seen as equally important or relevant as the experience of problems and difficulties being overcome.

This can be related back to some of the organisational issues for social work. In considering the failings of New Labour, Jordan (2010: 18) cites the pervasive role of business processes in public service.

*Everything from schools, universities and hospitals to village halls and allotment associations were to be run as if they were businesses with business objectives, strategies and roles.*

Social work has found itself particularly vulnerable to this form of managerialism, through a raft of statutory performance indicators and targets, for two reasons. First, success in social work is uninteresting, but failures are very public and media-worthy. “Success after all, loves a witness, but failure can’t live without one” (Diaz, 2008: 136). Enforcing punitive measures on those who are seen not to protect children or fail vulnerable adults through naming, shaming and removing responsibilities is a keen response of some politicians. It has formed a part of New Labour’s modernising

armoury to “monitor and publicise the success and failures of the programme, to publish league tables (health and education), to ‘name and shame’ failing units and authorities (health and social care) and to hold staff to account for their work through new regulatory bodies” (Jordan, 2000: 69). Second, some aspects of social work itself would like to claim an evidence base for its practice, where the collection of data and research findings can be translated into “prescriptions for practice” (Jordan, 2000: 38).

This story appears accepting of this auditing and surveillance role within managerial authority. It contains no malice or judgement about behaviour which could be seen as cruel or at least teasing, when the writer is not in on the joke with her colleagues. There is no resistance to the disciplinary power of the manager or the crude motivation techniques of rewards (incentives), surveillance (compliance departments) and punishment (probationary periods, why is she scared?). There is no questioning of the targets, even though the story does not include what was being sold and more importantly to whom. The product is unimportant. The customer is invisible. This story demonstrates the benefits of compliance but leaves a hollow, a lack of connection that allows for subjectivity only in terms of consideration and reflection on past and familial relationships.

### **Success – Jazz**

Just as the previous story exemplifies the role of organisational practices in shaping a story, this story resists the notion of measurable, individual success. If the last story is an exemplar, this story offers a comparative case.

#### **Chasura Arts Theatre**

Bra JB (short for Jabulani) was his trade name in the world of show business, professional musician and leader of a jazz ensemble. He used to tell us (his children) that the roots of his talents were honed by his father and mother who were virtuoso entertainers in the rural village, and who performed at rain, harvest and wedding festivals, in the process earning valuable wealth like cattle and the best musical instruments. Story telling around a fire, roasting maize cobs was the norm after a day’s work and intense impromptu jam sessions

would follow late into the night; a curtain of serenity closing the night.

The push and call of the urban world did not escape JB. The urban attraction was like the relationship between bees and flowers. JB was in town and it did not take long for the town and its folks to be tapping, humming, clapping, twist and shouting to the sounds of JB. When a professional performs, one can only pay strict attention. His audiences were across the colour divide line though the country was still under colonial rule. I remember him mentioning that when Louis Armstrong visited Southern Africa they graced the same stage. The nice trappings of urban town-life did not make JB haywire. He ventured into town while still very young without the support of parents who he had left behind in the serene rural village. He did not forget his roots and neither did he forsake his new life. The past gave him professional skills to live in a cut-throat society (survival of the fittest). The urban setting blossomed and made rich his musical career that he was able to look after his parents and the extended family. Members of the family migrating from the rural areas into town were assisted by JB to settle. His name travelled and was greeted with warmth in every corner of the country. You only had to mention his name, that I am JB's child and any youthful anti-social behaviours would be abandoned forthwith.

JB was able to construct a modern planned dwelling for his parents in the villages and he used to talk about it long into the night that he was the first to accomplish such an investment the breadth of South Africa. What a yawn! Peace be with you.

This story can offer a range of varying perspectives on the concept of success and acts in sharp contrast to previous texts. It is a disclosure of a previous life that on one level could be seen as performing, "See, I am not just a social work student. I have an interesting past." However, it is doing more than this.

Post-colonialism is a disputed term that can evoke a critical repertoire used to interrogate "the power to name, the problems of translation and the role of language in producing subjectivities" (Ali, 2007: 192). Yet, it is also a term which can be criticised for having "displaced the category of the third world and erased the history of oppositional movements" (Martinez-San Miguel, 2009: 189). So, I use the term post-colonial tentatively to describe the subject of this writing. First, it can be used in its simple temporal meaning. This is written post-colonisation and is reflecting on a

colonised time. However, this is too simple and suggests (as critics of the term would hold) that colonisation is completed. Instead, I intend to use the term to evoke a process of resistance “to transcend the effects of colonialism through an engaged and situated practice” (Quayson, 2000: 25).

The writing offers a challenge to the reader to consider their cultural position. “The theoretical value of post-colonial theories lies in its refusal to engage in the binary oppositions and of creating differences, of ‘here’ and ‘there’, ‘then’ and ‘now’ ‘home and abroad’” (Khan et al., 2007: 230). This is written by someone who has migrated ‘left home’ and yet does not specify a home. Rather it recounts travel within that home. “The push and call of the urban world did not escape JB.” This travel and relocation opens up a vast repertoire around the concept of success. Success is discussed as being related to talent. That talent is recognised by others, and leads to being at the top of a profession (gracing the stage with Louis Armstrong). It is a talent that can break colonial boundaries. Success is also recounted as an accumulation of wealth that affords security (a modern, well-planned dwelling). Success is not only about the individual; it owes a debt to a previous generation who honed the talent and confers respect on those associated with it. There is even the allusion to the biological, Darwinian concept of success (survival of the fittest). Amidst respect, success is also gently (and affectionately) mocked for bringing with it verbosity and boasting. “[H]e used to talk about it long into the night... What a yawn!”

As opposed to other stories, this is a recounting of a successful life, rather than a moment from within it. That jazz is at the centre of that life offers a further point of comparison. The art form Jazz was borne out of resistance (Achebe, 1974). Biographies of US jazz musicians performing at the point of colour bars and racialised segregation are rarely so complete. Instead they are often characterised by the prevalence of violence, victimisation, drug-taking and early deaths. However, this story does not exclude those possibilities. It is not simply that that was ‘there’ and this is ‘here’. The potential for a similar fate is recognised. “The nice trappings of urban town-life did not make JB haywire”. What adds to the success is the protagonist’s ability to straddle the serenity of the rural and the adventure of the urban. Success is about negotiating different locations.



## Key Findings

Measuring success was at the heart of the New Labour project. The lack of standards for Social Services was seen as its “one big trouble” (Department of Health, 1998: foreword). A key document for children’s services *Every Child Matters* (Chief Secretary to the Treasury, 2003) starts by evoking the failings in the Victoria Climbié case, and then goes on to discuss success and failures in children’s lives in the UK. Success is framed in numerical terms – higher educational results, improved incomes, reduced reconviction rates for young offenders, reduced numbers of teenage conceptions, etc. The paper represents a shift in social policy away from targeted intervention to a universal set of targets.

Williams (2004) in response to the paper notes that these targets are limited in scope by a lack of underpinning values. That whilst *Every Child Matters* discusses the need to involve children in developing services (paragraph 5.74), the paper only refers twice to children’s consultation in drawing up recommendations and there is little on parental participation. Williams (2004: 417) argues that this oversight on parental consultation is because “this partnership seems to weigh heavily in terms of statutory intervention which reinforces and monitors parental responsibilities and far less in terms of providing parental participation and support.” The role for parents, as envisaged by *Every Child Matters* is to find work and reduce failings linked to poverty, low incomes and reliance on the state. Success, then, is narrowly defined in terms of achievement (primarily educational, but also as a reduction in risk-taking behaviour) and parental economic responsibilities.

A similar set of targets can also be found for those working with adults where independence is stressed as a key objective – “promote and enhance people’s independence with better prevention and rehabilitation services” (Department of Health, 1998: 5). Success as an individualistic venture is highly relevant to the majority of the stories the students produced. It is only in the more reflective cue of ‘positive’ that the role of others is given a higher profile.

Jordan (2000) argues that the implementation of New Labour's measures of success relies on targeting resources, focusing on education and the introduction of new scrutiny bodies. It is an implementation programme that had its roots in Benthamite utilitarianism, which Jordan (2000:67) characterises as having a "high degree of regulation and punishment to achieve this goal." Bentham is also the inspiration behind Foucault's (1977) metaphor of the Panopticon, which stresses the role of surveillance in producing governable subjects.

However, implementation of this kind is problematic as it fails to encourage a dialogue between those seen as failing and those offering success. "Mechanistic or heavy-handed approaches tend to strengthen the resistance of sub-cultures. Coerced co-operation is based on feigned compliance, strategic shows of need and helplessness, but covert deviance and non-disclosure" (Jordan, 2000: 5) and is cited by Jordan in later work as one of the reasons for the failure of the New Labour project (Jordan, 2010). Yet, this resistance is not immediately present in the students' success stories. In most cases it could be argued that this is because the success has been defined by the authors rather than by some top-down enterprise seeking to classify success in pre-defined policy outcomes. This lack of resistance to positivist individualist notions of success could provide some testament to the importance of results, as something that can be built on. "Although her journey for success is by no means complete she feels as though she has proved to the world that she is both capable and determined enough to succeed" (Success #5).

Commentators on the role of targets and measures in social policy are at their most critical when it comes to the impact of centralised policy in skewing local priorities. Marshall (2007: 32) highlights how performance indicators on unit costs have led within one local authority area to an homogenised meals on wheels service that cannot cater to those who make ethical choices or follow religious dietary requirements. The need to perform well within one set of criteria affects "outcomes for service-users and creates exclusion". As Barton (2008: 275) puts it 'good work' "becomes that which is covered by the PI (performance indicator), can be externally evaluated in a qualitative manner and can supply hard data."

This links to Marshall's (2007:32) criticism of the current performance framework that it "can fail to recognise work achieved that is entirely congruent with the purpose of social work". Therefore, work that is related to the inter-personal or the referral onto other more appropriate services is lost in the counting. This is reflected in *Success – The Office*. The protagonist is a good worker. She reaches targets, she responds to stimulus to do so. However, the quality of that work goes unremarked. How does she sell? Does she build rapport with her customer? Is what she is selling compatible to the customers' needs? The customer is never referred to. It is a relationship that has become unnecessary to assess.

This lack of qualitative analysis is problematic within human services. Hafford-Letchfield (2007: 39) points to the problems for staff who may perceive such Quality Assurance systems as a "means of controlling and ... strictly regulating the way services are delivered and the professional activities within them." Success measured in competitive terms means managerial processes become focussed on data collection rather than analysis. "As departments get wiser, the statistics improve, because the methods of compiling them improve. Without analysis 'awareness' begins to amount to 'improvement'" (Marshall, 2007: 33).

The scandal of avoidable deaths at the Mid Staffs Hospital whilst receiving the prestigious foundation status illustrates this problem:

*It was clear from the minutes of the trust's board that it became focussed on promoting itself as an organisation, with considerable attention given to marketing and public relations. It lost sight of its responsibilities to deliver acceptable standards of care to all patients admitted to its facilities.*

(Healthcare Commission, 2009: 10)

How does this relate the student's stories? Success in their stories is the result of focussing on a goal. Therefore, the wider context of that incidence of success is little considered. For example, what do we learn of the other applicants, "the lambs to the slaughter" at the recruitment interview (Success #1)? Were their fears and needs as great as the story-tellers? Now, that she is successful what view does she hold of those who didn't make it?

Shaw (1996) highlights two forms of evaluation in social work. The first of which is seen by social workers as being experienced as scrutiny from above. Social workers do not see themselves engaging in this form of evaluation. This form of evaluation is about judgement and is a common theme in the students' stories. Success is linked to a formal evaluation and the student must meet criteria (to pass a driving test, or win a place in a final). The power to name success lies with someone else. This may explain the extent of the nervous reactions described by the students.

However, Shaw's (1996: 38) second kind of evaluation is of the social worker's own making and is the "informal system of measurement to see whether I'm doing what I see as being a good job". This might well draw on formal evaluation methods but is not seen as part of the formal social work job. Hill (2010: 165) suggests that this model of evaluation of success "seems to be particularly relevant in statutory contexts where the rewards of a job well done may be difficult to find and outcomes may be of the 'least bad' variety". This form of evaluation is present in the stories written to the cue 'positive'. 'Pam' in *Positive #1* reaches the realisation of success through a series of associations. 'Alice' in *Positive #2* sees success as something to offer the next generation.

However, *Success - Jazz*, offers something further. Whilst on one level it offers a story of contentment, a life lived, it is also a text of resistance to simplistic notions of success, with a number of tensions running through it. The grandparent's success is low-key, confined to their rural village. The father's success at the centre of the tale is made from a mixture of the urban and the rural. It displays a competitive edge and a site of resistance to colonial power. Yet, what are we to make of the author's own success, the child of JB? His success is hinted as being success through association. "You only had to mention his name, that I am JB's child and any youthful anti-social behaviour would be abandoned forthwith."

Yet the insertion of a current social policy phrase – anti-social behaviour – hints at another success. In a carefully crafted story, it suggests the ability to work within another culture, just as the father straddled the urban and the rural. Success is not to be

judged in a one-off event (although there may be some stellar moments), but as a continual process and a negotiation of transitions.

These stories, therefore, point to potentially contrasting views of success. These could be seen in opposition. On the one hand there is the notion of a measurable success as outlined in *The Office*. This has become the dominant discourse, with its emphasis on the individual and scientific measurement. On the other hand, there is the more holistic, inter-generational, negotiated concept within *Jazz* being an example of the post-modern interpretive, artistic approach. Both stories illustrate the strengths and deficits of the prevailing models. If *The Office* is to be seen as representing the scientific side of the equation, it demonstrates how the appeal of setting targets which can be achieved and rewarded is undercut by the sense of lack at the centre of the story (invisible customer, product and processes). Satisfaction about a prize is not the same as satisfaction with a job well done and had to be compensated with thoughts of family history. Whereas the fuzzy contentment of negotiated success in *Jazz* cannot be easily translated into results and is open to interpretation which could as easily dismiss success as acknowledge it. Whilst contrasting approaches they do point to a key feature of success – that is, that success is something to be built on. The trip to the Bahamas is hard-earned and follows completing a probationary period and winning a previous incentive to New York. *Jazz* is about learning from a previous generation.

Of course there is another area of contrast – that of gender. In relating these stories to current political discourse, the analysis has drawn attention to some aspects of the working of power, but it has also left other aspects (patriarchy, for example) less examined. Neo-liberalism has been critiqued for its attempts at gender-neutrality. However, the desired gender neutrality of organisations and organisational theory has also been critiqued along similar lines (see for example, Acker, 1991 or Wilson, 2003). Both stories have at their centre a gendered subject operating within gendered spheres. On a simplistic level, it is no accident that it is a female worker among other “girls” that is called into the office of a male manager. Nor is it coincidental that *Jazz* is a story of a father and son rather than mother and daughter.

Nicolson (1996:3) points to three discriminatory processes in the work place: the overt structural barriers, the covert barriers and the unconscious psychological impact of

patriarchal structures on women's "reflexive relationship between biographical context and knowledge". An acknowledgement of the gendered organisation uncovers this third process at play in *The Office*. Exuberance at rewards is tempered by the worker through the remembrance of familial ties and duties. This is articulated in the feminised space of social work training, but not within the bureaucratic workplace of the story.

## Conclusion

Gamson (1990: 414) writes, "Success is an elusive idea". He writes this in the context of social movements where issues of who names success, where success can be attributed and the role of the individual and the collective muddy difficult terrain. The students' stories point to obvious issues around this concept, most notably who makes the judgement of success is usually from a position of power, and the relative nature of the concept. The perspective chosen in relation to success is paramount. Passing a driving test is an every (working) day occurrence. Yet when it opens up the possibility of attending university it takes on greater significance.

Measuring success on the one hand has come to mean adopting a manager's perspective, a meeting of targets, a controlling imposed agenda. It can be a disheartening experience of surveillance and judgement leading to high anxiety, highlighted in the students' stories by their use of emotional, embodied language. It is experienced as punitive and controlling. It displays a lack of confidence in its practitioners. As Toynbee and Walker (2001: 28) point out "carping [about public service] came easier to Blairite lips than praise." On the other hand, it has also meant reflection and contemplation on practice measured against a social workers own judgements. The uniqueness of social work is displayed as much in how work is carried out as in what is actually done. It is at this point of interaction that there is space to transfer control back to individual practitioners:

*While managers can regulate the formal aspects of work, and the climate within which it is undertaken, they have more difficulty in governing what social workers actually do in direct contact with service-users... In summary, therefore, it can be seen that there are numerous ways in which managerialist*

*dominance can be challenged by social workers. The development of empowering, reflective social practice cannot be achieved by the imposition of such structures, and it is vital for social workers to identify ways in which they can be combated.*

(Lymbery, 2004: 55 – 56).

*Success Jazz* offers us a story of challenge to the dominant discourse of managerial control. While couched in terms of reminiscence and nostalgia, it is also defiant. A current position within sociology concerned with the process of individualisation argues that it is a process that wrenches individuals from their past, expunging the dead (Roseneil, 2009). For example, Bauman (2009: 9) argues:

*The distinctive feature of the stories told in our times is that they articulate individual lives in a way that excludes or suppresses (prevent from articulation) the possibility of tracing down the links connecting individual fate to the ways and means by which society as a whole operates; more to the point, it precludes the questioning of such ways and means by relegating them to the unexamined background of individual life pursuits and casting them as ‘brute facts’ which the story-tellers can neither challenge nor negotiate, whether singly, separately or collectively*

The process of individualisation results in stories that can only discuss individual effort, denying links and structures a place in the foreground. Many of the students’ stories coincide with this view. *Success – The Office* clearly demonstrates that the need to question managerial control is unnecessary; it remains unexamined. *Success – Jazz*, however, runs counter to this trend. It tells a story that highlights the role of links (such as family) and structures (such as governing regimes and economics). Rather than an individual wrenched from the past, the past is present. The writer just like his father “did not forget his roots and neither did he forsake his new life”.

Success is a cue which was driven by my wish to articulate to my students the role of evaluation within social policy and organisational practices. I began this chapter by citing the groundbreaking work of Rowntree (1901) in trying to establish a baseline for poverty. This work still holds a relevance today as poverty remains a feature of society.

Through attempting to establish a baseline to measure improvement or success of policy, it drew attention to a serious social failing. This work is not above criticism. A poverty line as Jones and Novak (1999) would argue suggests that poverty is something that only affects a minority rather than acknowledging the threat it poses to the majority. It also encourages those higher up the continuum to see themselves as something different. However, this simplistic notion of success can be resisted. Most notably it can be resisted by foregrounding the processes that shape success: history, economics and relationships. This task falls both to the story-teller and their audience/the analyst. It is easy to get caught up in critiquing the obvious strategies of organisations and governmentality, but there needs to be an acknowledgement of how power relations have been structured along gendered and racialised lines.

Within the story of this research these stories have played a particular role and have remained important in further teaching practice. That the students chose the cue themselves was a key point in the process. It showed that the students were not simply being “done to” in research terms, but were active within the process and determining their own contributions.

Within the introductory chapter, I point to the importance of story because of its role in validating experience. In particular, these stories have offered the students a chance to validate positive experiences, to have those heard and acknowledged by peers and a tutor. It is no accident that within a project such as this (one exploring constructions of social work through experiential accounts) that the majority of stories are fraught with difficulties and occasionally trauma. Social work is a profession that deals with crisis and problems. Yet what these stories remind us of, is that crisis and problems are not the whole of any service-user or worker’s life story.

These were stories that the students wanted to tell. They show that success matters to them and that it craves acknowledgement. From a pedagogical perspective the acknowledgement of stories of success matter, because it is a reminder that within assessment processes it is easy to focus on areas for improvement and forget that successes can be built upon.



These stories have proved useful beyond the project in teaching. As a tutor on the Management and Leadership elective and post-qualifying modules, I am still expected to engage students with the performance management agenda. In the classroom, these stories help to bring that debate alive. Using *The Office* as an example, students can relate to the issue of performance and reward to the workplace and can see its advantages, but can also easily deconstruct the difficulties in transferring a business model to social work practice. *Jazz* tends to be slightly unwieldy for some students but for others it plays the role of comparator. It provides an alternative approach to the tendency of measuring success and allows for an exploration of the ability to negotiate meanings.

Students wanted to write about something positive and in writing to this cue brought something serious to my attention. If this cue had not been used, I would not know of the high-flying sales woman, the teenage cross-country runner, the karaoke talent show winner or the British judo team member amongst my students, alongside the joy many felt at academic achievement, passing driving tests or childbirth. Key to my understanding of the stories was that the reason success in social work matters is because it is something that can be built on. It is therefore the acknowledgement of success that matters, whether this is through measured outcomes or interpretive approaches. That being said, success as a concept remains elusive, relational, complex and disputed. “What a yawn! Peace be with you.”

However, success also matters as a means of controlling the unruly, “untrustworthy professions” (Barton, 2008) engaged in implementing government policy. The issue of control is further explored in the following chapter.

## Chapter Seven – Control and the Travelling Subject

*I want to say at the outset that this is difficult territory for us all.*

(Beverley Hughes, 2004 former Minister for Citizenship and Immigration cited in Giner, 2007)

*Today, our immigration system is out of control. I know it, you know it: everyone knows it, including the terrorists and people smugglers who make a mockery of Britain's hospitality.*

(Michael Howard, 2005, Former Leader of the Opposition (Conservative Party))

*All migration is courageous. Whether through coercion, persecution, war or indeed poverty, the past and present movement of people around the globe is littered with scores of painful stories, many too awful to recount.*

(Hayes, 2004: 12)

*This is the very first opening of my relation to the Other: to open my space, my home – my house, my language, my culture, my nation, my state and myself. I have to keep it open unconditionally.*

(Derrida, 1997 cited in Worth, 2006: 223)

### Introduction

The word “control” can open up a wide repertoire within social work discourses. The Benchmark Statement for Social Work (QAA, 2008: 7) states that social work education should support the trainee to “help people to gain, regain or maintain control of their own affairs, insofar as this is compatible with their own or others’ safety, well-being and rights”. This statement underlines the complex relationship between justice, care and control within social welfare. It hints at some of the practical and ethical considerations for a profession that is charged with statutory duties regarding assessment and allocation of resources, upholding the law and professional values in respect to discrimination and advocating for the needs and rights of marginalised people. Indeed, what separates social work from the rest of the social care sector is a qualification which supports the control elements of practice.

However, it is often argued that the care and control functions are one and the same. “Controlling is related in many instances to caring activities” (Payne, 2006: 127). Attempting to separate out care from control refuses the central “‘dilemma’ of social work itself, being situated between the powers of statutory intervention and enforcement and the historic struggles of an oppressed group in the face of state control” (Horner, 2009: 62). Furthermore, social work’s control functions are justified by public policy (Payne, 2006). The power/control social workers have over their service-users is performed with consent from the wider society to promote conformity (Payne, 2005b). This echoes Szaz’s (1991: 127) argument about the paternalism of the psychiatric profession used to “justify their coercive control over the uncooperative patient”. And as with the psychiatry profession, social work control expands beyond those who are directly subject to the service to include those who could fall subject to a social work assessment.

It is for this reason that control appeared on my list of cues for students to write to. As Payne (2005b) makes clear, to accept the social work function of control without critical questioning, fails the service-users and the groups to which they belong. The study of social policy is a key part of that questioning process.

Control, however, is unevenly distributed across the social work spectrum, with some service-users being subject to more punitive or coercive practices than others. Obvious examples of this are Child Protection and Mental Health. Scourfield and Welsh (2003) discuss the emphasis on gendered control in child protection, whilst Lewis (2007) establishes how the role of the expert within child protection and state intervention has increased. Within Mental Health, Yianni (2009) and McLaughlin (2010) make the point that social workers have control over service-users’ lives, but also that more control is being exercised over social worker’s professional decision-making and careers. The emergence of Compulsory Treatment Orders (CTOs) and an increase in hospital admissions is used by McLaughlin (2010) to evidence the increase in power and control in practice, whilst he also points to the establishment of the GSCC and the omnipresent CRB check as the controls in social workers’ lives. Parrott (2010: 2) argues that this is a continuation of the managerial and political processes beginning with the NHS and Community Care Act 1990, which amongst other motivations, sought

to reduce social work to a rational and technical activity and which “has as its goal the control of professional judgement and discretion”.

However, a particular area of expansion of state control that impacts on the delivery of welfare and social work is that of immigration and asylum. Article 13 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states:

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Definitions of social work (see context chapter) are strongly linked to the concept of human rights. Key to international human rights standards, however is the issue of national/local control and legislation. As Nickel (2007: 10) points out:

*...human rights set minimum standards they do not attempt to describe an ideal social and political world. They leave most political decisions in the hands of national leaders and electorates.*

This particular right is subject to high levels of control from nation states.

Immigration controls within the UK are usually cited as starting with the 1905 Alien Act (Sales, 2007). This act heralded a new kind of official – the immigration officer. Their task was to police borders to determine the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ in terms of entry. This was predicated on racialised notions of criminality and disease linked to the migrant subject (Hayes, 2002). Whilst challenged at the time on the grounds of freedom of movement, immigration control is now an accepted part of political discourse across the party political spectrum. Since the inception of immigration controls, through various legislations, their remit has continued and broadened, regardless of which party is in power. Immigration is no longer concerned with just policing borders but has moved outside the nation-state to begin policing at the stage of visa application (Sales, 2007). More importantly, for providers of welfare services, control has moved inside the borders. For example, there are sanctions for employers of those not ‘entitled’ to work. However, the theme of controlling access to welfare by immigration status has its roots in the earliest legislation with its depiction of the migrant as economically unviable (Hayes, 2002). This link was cemented by the

Immigration and Asylum Act (1999) which established a separate and secondary system of welfare for those subject to immigration control. The linking of immigration control with access to services has implications for the population beyond the migrant, may be for all, but most notably for black citizens. Gordon (1985: 2) makes this clear:

*The overall effect is the questioning, restricting and controlling of rights, not just of those who are immigrants, but those who are commonly assumed to be, because they are black.*

The issue of welfare involvement in the policing of citizenship has produced an uneasy alliance between state and service-providers. For the student of social policy it is important to acknowledge that the outcome of policy – “state enforced destitution and the threat of separation, was not inadvertent” (Cunningham and Cunningham, 2007: 278). Imposed destitution and isolation through dispersal schemes has meant that social work intervention is inevitable, but also social workers could be charged with the role of state agents who threaten and practice family separation. This has produced a range of responses that could be broadly categorised as: resignation, depoliticisation and resistance.

Resignation, for the individual, is captured in the phrase “This is not what I became a social worker for” (Collett, 2004: 93). On an organisational level it can be seen in the voluntary sector response to the enforcement agenda. The Refugee Council (cited in Cohen, 2004) – an organisation set up to support the needs and rights of refugees – stated in written evidence to the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee on Asylum Removals:

*... the Refugee Council recognise there is a role within immigration policy for a strategy of returns... We accept that enforced returns will be necessary.*

This resignation is engineered by policy and resource allocation meaning many voluntary agencies have a financial stake in supporting internal controls (Hayes and Humphries, 2004).

Humphries (2004) points to the depoliticised position within social work in her critique of Liz Timms' open letter to members of the government in celebration of European Social Work Action Day 2002, in which Humphries censures the individualised and depoliticised depiction of the asylum seeker and the support given. McLaughlin (2010) adds to this discussion by arguing that work with detained asylum seekers is depicted as a psychological and therapeutic intervention with the 'vulnerable', rather than a discussion around justice and process.

However, Humphries (2004: 39) also points to the potential for social work to reclaim its radical roots and offer resistance – "voices of resistance have never been silenced." Cohen (2002) gives examples of such resistance, such as the closure of Refugee Action in Liverpool in order to withdraw from supporting an under-funded and under-resourced state system. Giner (2007) cites the 'No Place for a Child' campaign launched by Save the Children UK, the Refugee Council and Bail for Immigration Detainees which made a strong case against the detention of asylum-seeking children. Unfortunately, though, such examples are scarce.

It could be argued that this attempt to categorise the various social work responses to its role in asylum and immigration legislation belies the complexity. Resignation to a current position is not the same as resignation to a future possibility. De-politicised statements can be a politicised strategy to draw attention to a contentious issue. However, most worrying is the curtailment of the ability to resist by the controls imposed on the profession by its professional body. Whilst many writers draw attention to the incompatibility of the Asylum legislation with legislation surrounding children's welfare and human rights, alongside the demands of a professional code of practice (see for example, Cunningham and Tomlinson, 2005 and Morris, 2007), the GSCC, author of those codes of practice, appear less concerned with these issues. The recent case of Abayomi Olatunji (reported in *Community Care*, July 2011), struck off from the social work register by the GSCC showed an uncritical acceptance of the narrative of deception to achieve citizenship.

It is for these reasons that I have chosen to look at the travelling subject when considering the concept of control.

Two groups wrote to the cue ‘control’ producing 12 stories (13% of all stories). For this chapter, I have chosen to look at four stories which are concerned with travelling. A high proportion of stories written to the cue Control were about travel. Whilst travel might bring with it a repertoire for some of freedom, vacation and the care-free, it is apparent that for others it is closely linked to surveillance and control. The first three look at the journeys the travellers make – the physical movement across borders. The final story is concerned with the settlement of the travelled subject.

### **Travelling**

As stated, the first three stories are concerned with travelling. They depict three different kinds of journeys: the act of migration; travelling as experience and a return visit. Whilst written in different contexts, they all situate control as external to themselves and within figures at entry/exit points.

#### **Control #1 – Caribbean to UK**

Alex is a woman who has left her country of birth at the age of 27 years to come to the United Kingdom, a new country where she did not know anyone.

From about the age of sixteen and into her adult life Alex has always wanted to travel to different countries. At the age of twenty she travelled to another Caribbean island where she spent three weeks then returned to her country. However, Alex has always wanted to travel to thick winter clothing and having the ground, trees and the roof of the houses all white with snow. Seeing this made her want to fulfil her dreams, but not knowing anyone in the country, would make her dream a distant reality.

Alex has had no contact with her mother from about the age of 16, until she was 23 years old. When Alex got back in touch with her mum, it was like they were getting to know each other all over again. Alex’s mum told her about an aunt of hers that was living in the UK and that she would ask the aunt to sponsor Alex to travel to the UK. Alex’s mum aunt said this was fine.

Due to the fact that Alex wanted so much to come to the UK, she wasted no time in

getting things going. She started saving some money each week out of her wages so that she could buy her airline ticket and also started to have regular correspondence with her aunt, through telephone calls and letters to get to know a bit about her. Alex was about to fly halfway around the world to another country and go to live with a total stranger. That did not seem to bother Alex as within six months she was on her way to the airport.

Alex was very nervous as she did not know what was going to happen to her when she reached the other end of the world, things would be out of control and that was a worry for her. Alex has heard of people that have been returned back to the country without even leaving the airport, they have been refused entry and returned on the next flight out of the country.

As Alex walked towards the immigration desk for people with non-British passports, she was becoming increasingly nervous and in fear of being sent back to her country. When Alex approached the immigration officer she handed her her passport and said a polite greeting.

After answering the questions that were asked of her by the officer, Alex was asked to accompany another female officer to another room. Without knowing what was going on Alex followed the officer who was asking her some questions as they were walking, such as how long she was planning on staying in the country.

Alex was now in a room with other people of various nationalities and who spoke different languages. This made Alex very worried as she did not know what was going on or what was happening, everything was all out of her control. All she can do was to sit and wait. Alex sat in the room for over four hours with officers offering her a drink on two occasions which she refused because she was too nervous to eat or drink anything.

Alex was called to another room where she underwent another one to one interview with an officer. After about 10 minutes into the interview a woman entered the room. As Alex's eyes made contact with the woman, she recognised her from a picture that



her aunt has sent her in one of her letters. Smiles came over Alex's face and she stood up and gave her aunt a big hug. When Alex returned to the chair the immigration officer politely said, "Welcome to the United Kingdom and enjoy your stay". He then handed Alex her passport and she said "thank you" and left the room with her aunt. At that point, Alex regained the control of her fate and what will happen next.

This is an incomplete story, with many gaps. It spans 11 years (ages 16 to 27 are mentioned), but it is concentrated on the point of arrival in the UK. While the text deals with "the temporal character of human experience" (Ricoeur, 1984 cited in Franzosi, 1998: 528), in that it takes the reader through a change in situation, it does this through a series of contractions of time and with scant detail. In response to the cue of control, the author relates a concentrated period within a much larger story of a romanticised notion of a different climate and country and the ambition and strategy to reach that country. This follows Franzosi's observation (1998: 530) that "different periods of history are characterised by different densities of dates", and the encounter with immigration control could be characterised as a "hot chronology". Omissions such as the reason for losing contact with her mother and contractions of time in saving and making contact with a sponsor serve to emphasise the importance of the airport encounter. Despite taking control in following a long-held ambition, it is the possibility of losing control over her destiny that is the focus of the story.

This then is a story of an individual quest to gain "control of her fate". It speaks of the courage inherent in migration (Hayes, 2004) whilst highlighting many of the characteristics of an individualising era (Roseneil, 2009), such as relationship breakdown, transnational relationships and isolation – "a new country where she did not know anyone". In many ways, the story is wrenched from the grand narratives of migration. There is no discussion of 'push' and 'pull' factors. Instead the writing is characterised by individual ambition. "Alex has always wanted to travel to different countries." However, it does not escape the historical forces that shaped that ambition. There is little reference to the country Alex is leaving except that it is "another Caribbean Island". The relationship between this Caribbean island and the UK can only be made available through background knowledge (Franzosi, 1998) that acknowledges the colonising relationship between the UK and many parts of the Caribbean, which

could have influenced the romantic notions of “thick winter clothing and having the ground, trees and the roof of the houses all white with snow.” As Kincaid (1995: 94) asserts of her Caribbean childhood:

*Have I given you the impression that the Antigua I grew up in revolved almost completely around England? Well that was so. I met the world through England and if the world wanted to meet me it would to do so through England.*

This is not the only influence of history. “Alex has heard of people that have been returned back to the country without even leaving the airport, they have been refused entry and returned on the next flight out of the country.” These nameless others heighten the anxiety of immigration control. They shape the muted response and lack of curiosity to the oppressive nature of her treatment in the hands of officials.

#### **Control #2 – Zambia to Tanzania**

H. walked out of Zambia and towards Tanzania, along the dusty road that served as the no-man’s land between the two countries. He was dirty, hot and sweaty. It was the middle of the day and the sun beat down on him mercilessly as he trudged towards the border post, wearing just a pair of mucky shorts and carrying what few possessions he still had in a small shoulder bag. Not a very pretty sight.

He aimed for the small hut marked Immigration and Customs where a number of dishevelled soldiers in green uniforms lounged. Inside behind a small desk sat the immigration officer; neater and cleaner than those outside and wearing a military cap.

“Welcome to Tanzania” he said in a deep voice.

H. foraged out his passport from his money belt and laid it on the table. The officer flicked through it and glanced back at him.

“Do you have another passport?” he asked.

Once again H. reached into his money belt and pulled out another passport; the one without the Israeli immigration stamp.

The official frowned and disappeared into an office at the rear.

Still unperturbed, H. glanced up at a large framed picture of Nyerere, the president, smiling down at him.

The officer returned with another uniformed official. "The main man, the person in control," thought H.

"Do you have any more passports?" he asked.

For the third time H. reached into his money belt and pulled out yet another passport, a cancelled one, and laid it next to the others. Both men took turns to flick through it as they spoke to each other in Swahili. For the first time he became worried. Three passports was a little unusual.

"Why are you travelling with three passports?" asked the main man.

H. explained how one had expired, another had an Israeli stamp, and the third had been issued in Egypt so that he could cross into Sudan. More murmured conversation between the two officials.

"It is not possible to enter Tanzania with more than one passport."

A whole host of profanities went through his head. He was completely at their mercy.

"Look," he said, "Just let me leave two of the passports here. I don't need them."

"No. Go back to Zambia."

"I'll burn them," he said.

“Just go” the top man replied.

He began to plead. “All my things were stolen and I’ve hardly got any money left. If I can’t go north into Tanzania, I’ll be trapped in Zambia.”

“Not our problem. Goodbye.”

He felt completely out of control and helpless. He was desperate. He reached into his money belt and laid a \$10 bill on the table. Not much. But then again he didn’t have much. The officials looked at him, picked up the passports, not the money and went into the back office.

A thousand thoughts seemed to go through his head at the same time. “Now, I’m f...d good and proper. I’m going to jail for bribery. What a stupid thing to do. Nobody even knows where I am.”

They returned with the passports. Access denied. Stamp! Stamp! On each. You have 10 minutes to be on the road back to Zambia said the accompanying note. A wave of relief swept through him. They were not arresting him. He gathered up his belongings and slouched back utterly defeated and helpless. “Now, what am I going to do?”

Whilst also concerned with travelling and immigration control, there are a number of points of contrast between this and the previous story. This story offers a much more detailed account of an encounter with immigration officials. Also, there is less exposition. The reader is plunged straight into the dusty roads of Central Africa, without reference to motive, the immediate or distant past. It is through the story-telling that the reader can build a chronology of events – previous travel through Israel, Egypt and Sudan and theft in Zambia.

A further contrast can be drawn with the location of the control. For Alex, immigration control was situated at an airport. Alex was among a number of other travellers, made to sit “in a room with other people of various nationalities and who spoke different

languages.” H., however, is a lone traveller on foot. He does not meet officialdom at a busy airport, but in the low tech environment of a “small hut”.

However, the biggest contrast is the response to officialdom. Alex becomes nervous before meeting officials; she is fearful of their power despite having correct documents and a sponsor in the UK. H. does not become nervous until he hands over a third passport. It is this contrast which may hint at different racialised constructions of the protagonists. Neither writer mentions their ‘race’ or that of others. Difference has to be detected in the texts. It is not until Immigration officials converse in Swahili, the details of which are not (cannot be?) recounted by the narrator that his foreignness may be observed. The switch to Swahili from English could be read as a deliberate attempt to exclude H.

Alex’s response to officialdom is mute, with no overt reaction. H.’s on the other hand is negotiation, pleading and attempted bribery. “But whether social actors chose one form of reaction or another in their encounters with unjust authority ultimately depends upon the availability of resources” (Franzosi, 1998: 537). H. states the \$10 bill was “Not much. But then again he didn’t have much,” highlighting the link between resources and resistance. However, it is an overt form of resistance, as opposed to Alex’s refusal of drinks. He had some resources to command.

### **Control #3 – Gatwick to Ghana**

It was a lovely summer’s day in July. She was about to travel to Ghana to attend her cousin’s wedding. She was very happy and excited as she had not seen her cousin for five years. At the Gatwick airport there was a long queue where people were checking their luggage. Finally, it got to her turn. She was flustered having travelled a long journey to Gatwick airport with no intention of missing her flight, long queues to check in took away her excitement for a few moments. She needed to get her luggage checked in so that she could relax without having to worry about the safety of all the gifts, which were for her family and friends. The queue was moving at a very slow pace.

Lost in her thoughts, she was startled by a voice shouting “next please”. She quickly put her luggage on the scale, fatigued by the heaviness of her luggage which could only be seen with the frown on her face as she lifted her bags one by one onto the scale. Passengers were only allowed a maximum of 30kg... and at least 10 kgs hand luggage.

The other option was to leave behind some of her items. She could not determine how much her luggage weighed, but knew she had taken all that was required for her trip. Behind her a number of people stood talking with no intention of moving out of the queue until it was their turn, with the exception of kids roaming around within proximity of their parents. She felt rather elated as it was her being served. “You have excess luggage,” said the lady behind the counter. She was taken aback as the lady explained to her the amount of money she had to pay, which was three hundred pounds. The check out lady at the desk replied you have excess luggage and you have to pay a fine of three hundred pounds or what you can do is take out some of their items in the suitcase. She started to unpack her suitcase which took about twenty-five minutes. After unpacking she notified the staff. She said to her the flight is already full and if you want to travel on the next flight you will have to pay an amount of seven hundred pounds. She told her she could not afford it. After a series of conversations, she asked if she could speak to the manager.

The manager then came to talk to her saying that it was the company’s policy to charge passengers extra money if they miss their flight. After a series of arguments with the manager, there was no way she would be travelling unless she paid.

She did not have any money to pay for an extra flight, so she had to return from London to Manchester. On the way home, she felt angry, disappointed and sad. She was thinking of where she could find extra money to borrow in the shortest possible time for the flight to Ghana so that she would not miss the wedding.

The journey from Manchester to London took four and a half hours. When she finally got to Manchester, she was tired and most of the shops were closed. She then went straight home.

Her husband had returned from work. He was surprised to see her home as he knew she was supposed to be in Ghana. She explained what had happened to him. He was willing to borrow some money but it was not enough to make the trip, so she had to ring a couple of friends to borrow some money.

Two friends offered to lend her some money. The following morning she went to the travel agent and booked the flight with a different airline which would depart from Manchester. The flight was for the following week. She then travelled safely home and fortunately she did not miss the wedding.

On first reading, at the centre of this story is a chaotic, disorganised subject. She is “flustered”, “lost in thoughts”, “fatigued” and as becomes apparent unprepared for the demands of air-travel, being over-laden with luggage and under-resourced to deal with this. Although the writer attempts to present the problem as lying with the unhelpfulness of airport staff by relating that she needed to see management, this portrayal is not entirely convincing. She had already let the reader know her suitcase was heavy and agrees eventually to return to Manchester.

This story differs from the previous two in that the (potential) restriction on travel does not come from immigration control, but from airport staff. Freedom of movement is not restricted by immigration control, but by business concerns. While airport security and ‘homeland’ security are linked and threats to security are often used to excuse intrusive practices, this is not an issue of security, but baggage handling and revenue for extra fees. The writer has fallen prey to the practices of a business that is set up for holiday and business travel – not for visiting separated family. It does not make allowances for those who can name two places ‘home’, but rather attempts to exploit this through financial penalties. The sums of money mentioned are high (much higher than the \$10 bill of H’s bribery attempt).

The story also says something about the familial responsibilities for the migrant woman. She is travelling for a wedding and the suitcases are heavy because of all the gifts for friends and family. As Lewis (2005), in an intertextual reading of the female migrant finds, she holds a particular place for the nation. She is both essential to the

national project as reproducer and potential destabiliser. However, because of her multi-layered citizenship (Yuval-Davies, 2011), she remains important to her 'other home'. Approximately £17.6 billion was sent 'home' to the world's least developed countries in 2011 by nationals working abroad (Guardian, November 2012). This income is considered essential for some countries, but it is also a source of revenue for the UK through practices such as charging for remittances. This story highlights one of the ways in which migration oils the cogs of globalised capitalism. The female migrant is a source of income to the UK through taxes and remittances, to her country of origin through gifts to friends and family and to the international business of an airline through potentially exploitative financial demands for travel.

### **Travelling – Key Findings**

Whilst there are a number of contrasts between the three stories, it is important to note that the cue 'control' produced so many stories about travelling. All three are also lone travellers. For the writers, travel was inspired by a number of factors, including in Alex's story an attempt to gain control. However, points of entry/exit between nations are experienced as a relinquishing of control.

What the stories also deal with is the issue of resistance. The form of the resistance is shaped by the wielding of the power to be resisted. Alex's response appears to be one of compliance. She has saved, has proper documentation and a UK sponsor. She does not ask questions of any officials, instead she offers "polite greeting" and responses (undocumented) to the questions (also mainly unrecorded). The treatment she receives is disorientating – she does not know "what is going on". She is made to sit and wait for four hours. However, Jordan (2000: 5) cautions against this form of compliance:

*Coerced cooperation is based on feigned compliance, strategic shows of need and helplessness, but covert deviance and non-disclosure.*

While Alex may be refusing drinks at the airport, once she leaves she is ready to take control again.



H's resistance is more overt, as is the power being wielded – soldiers, uniforms, a picture of the head of state. The writer in *Control #3* is caught up in bureaucratic policies and therefore her response is to call upon organisational hierarchies.

I approached these stories from an angle interested in social policy as anti-racist practice, desiring to learn about the control aspect of racialised structures of immigration. What is striking about all three stories from this disciplinary perspective is the “conspicuous absences”. Capdevila and Callaghan (2008) use this phrase in relation to a speech made by Michael Howard as leader of the opposition in the general election campaign of 2005. They note:

*Racism remains an unspoken phenomenon in British politics. Any politician whether making accusations of racism, engaging in racial analysis, runs the risk of the accusation of ‘playing the race card’. The effect of this anxious silence around matters of race in British politics means that it is quite possible for politicians to produce rhetoric that marginalises and denigrates entire groups of people, without risk, as long as they play the game too and do not explicitly name the issue as one of race.*

Within the stories no reference is made to ‘race’ or colour and my question about this is: does it matter? A study of social policy can show that this refusal or inability to label difference is of historical and political significance. It needs to be situated in the grand narratives of UK immigration control and also considered through Franzosi’s (1998: 53) classification of “chronological hotspots”. Two such hotspots are the post-war period of immigration, where the approaches and discourses adopted can be compared to the second hotspot, the period of the New Labour administration.

The post Windrush era (1948 – 1976) is considered a significant episode in UK Immigration control. Discussion of this period is characterised by Sales (2007: 134) as following a particular narrative:

*Many narratives of post-war immigration policy portray it as a process of gradual reduction in the rights of New Commonwealth citizens in response to popular pressure and the changing needs of the economy.*

In other words, migration policy initially reflected post-war Britain's labour shortages but gave way to the desire to curtail the undesirable "New Commonwealth" migration as the economic needs changed and the view that Britain "had a 'race' problem" developed (Somerville, 2007:15). Somerville (ibid: 18) goes on to argue that the official discourse in this period was exemplified by the implicit assumption that New Commonwealth immigration was a short term solution and its expansion to be resisted (belying the diversity of migration in this period) to avoid the deepening of the perceived racial tensions surrounding the Notting Hill Race Riots of 1958. It is during this period that immigration policy becomes bifurcated "emphasising the integration of immigrants (through a race-relations approach) and the restriction of immigration (a zero-migration approach)".

Certain parallels can be drawn with the New Labour era, another "chronological hotspot" in terms of immigration legislation. New Labour administrations were particularly active over their three terms in the field of immigration policy. Alongside the implementation of the Human Rights Act (1998), the acceptance of institutionalised racism within key social and political organisations following the McPherson Inquiry leading to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, there was a continued draconian approach to those attempting to cross national borders, through the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 and Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004.

*In race relations, the government has introduced the race equality imperative, but still speaks racist rhetoric in the asylum seeker debate.*

(Baldwin, 2002: 182)

Therefore, there is a continued attempt to separate out issues of internal race relations and immigration policy, to refuse a linkage between the two areas. Yet this was also a period which involved a range of issues and events which could not easily be separated. New Labour was involved in a foreign policy which sided with the US and involved war against Iraq. There were "race" riots in Northern Towns (Oldham, Burnley and Bradford) in 2001. An internal act of terror (the 7/7 bombing in 2005) was carried out by UK citizens. Right wing extremists used intimidating and scape-goating tactics in

deprived areas, but also gained credibility and minor electoral success (in 2001, the BNP gained 16% of the vote in Oldham West). Islamophobia was acknowledged as a feature of British life and attacks on Muslims increased. There was also acknowledgement by the government that “managed migration” was both desirable and necessary (Home Office, 2001). The interplay and complexity of foreign policy (including the forced migration of those in war zones), migration policy, internal race-relations and growing inequalities (Equality and Human Rights Commission (ECHR), 2010) made refusing a connection less tenable. For the social policy practitioner it also means that establishing the “generative mechanism” (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) for social issues/problems becomes masked, confused and incomplete.

A key example of this confusion and partial analysis is the response to the riots of 2001. The riots of Burnley, Bradford and Oldham each elicited a local inquiry which all produced a range of localised issues (Burnley – Clarke, 2001, Bradford – Ouseley, 2001 and Oldham – Ritchie, 2001 ). There was also a national response in the shape of the Cantle Inquiry (2001) which took within its terms of reference a comparison of areas where no rioting had taken place (e.g. Leicester). Responses to riots usually produce one of two arguments (Alexander, 2004). First, there is the structural argument which speaks of deprivation, disadvantage and discrimination, resulting in disillusionment. This echoes the response of the Scarman Inquiry in 1981 (page 206) which blamed the “racism and discrimination against Black people” that “remains a major source of social tension and conflict”. The second response is to read the activities as civil disobedience, borne out of criminal characters and dysfunctional cultures. Cantle (2001) stressed issues of segregation and saw “community cohesion” as central to the problem and solution for the unrest.

The term “community cohesion” quickly became established in the New Labour vocabulary (Thomas, 2007). It is a term which could be seen to point to structural issues such as discrimination in housing and employment policies, leading to segregated communities and schools. It is a term that could also suggest that a lack of social cohesion could feed right-wing myths about difference leading to a deepening of mistrust and discrimination. (Worley (2005) notes how there are slippages between the terms social cohesion, community cohesion and national cohesion in government documents). However, the official response to the riots was highly punitive through

criminal proceedings. Community cohesion became a term that, through political discourse, allowed slippages of blame away from the divisions of society to particular constructions of communities, without ever naming those communities. For example, the white paper *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* talks of “those communities that continue the practice of arranged marriages” (Home Office, 2001: 18). This evasion of racial discourses, however, does not mean that racism loses power it is just an example of the “habit of ignoring race [being] understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture” (Morrison, 1992: 43), leading to a foreclosure of discussion.

Recent UK riots, post New Labour, in the summer of 2011 have elicited a different governmental response. There is to be no inquiry. There has, however, been a swift response to the criminal element of damage to property and looting with harsh sentencing. In sentencing, riot and group involvement has been seen as an aggravating rather than mitigating circumstance. The riots were considered to have a racialised motivation (following the police shooting of a black youth). However, those who have been tried refuse simple racial classifications and are much easier to categorise in terms of age, generation and locality (the vast majority of those tried were under 25 (Guardian, 2011)). Alongside this, the EHRC (2010) have recently reported that “race” still matters – but that diversity and classification have become a more complex phenomenon and that the intersections of gender, class, disability, sexuality and socio-economic circumstances play a role in determining outcomes for people.

As previously stated, examining such chronological hotspots should also be considered alongside the grand narrative of immigration in the UK. UK immigration policy from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century onwards was a response to large scale movements of people across national boundaries, such as the increased scale of Jewish migration from 1880 to 1905, producing The 1905 Alien Act (Sommerville, 2007, Hayes, 2004). The historical construction of the migrant was of a collective identity. However, in recent years immigration legislation has introduced and concentrated on a new kind of traveller – the asylum seeker, constructed as “arriving spontaneously in Europe as individuals rather than as part of a planned programme” (Phillimore and Goodson, 2008: 1). Although the UN 1951 Convention was ratified by the UK in 1954, the first legislation to discuss asylum-seeking was the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act

1993. The narrative has moved from the collective to the individualised construction of the asylum seeker, as movements across boundaries have become more diversified.

According to Lewis (M., 2005) the language used about asylum seekers has become increasingly harsh. Although other forms of racism are becoming socially as well as legally unacceptable, there is “no social sanction against expressing extremely prejudiced and racist views about asylum seekers” (Lewis, M., 2005: 44 – 5). Lewis found that many people use the term “asylum seeker” to describe groups of black British citizens who have behaved in ways they have found unacceptable. Hostility towards asylum seekers thus has had a wider impact in legitimising the expression of racist attitudes. Just as immigration is now more diversified, racist responses and practices have become more diversified and codified. David Blunkett’s use of “community” and Michael Howard’s declaration that he is not racist exemplify such practices.

In particular, the refusal to name colour within political discourse is to realign the perils of racism as being labelled racist rather than being a victim of racism and the injustices and inequalities it perpetuates. To avoid this “dangerous territory”, “race” and colour become invisible. It is also a divisive tactic that seeks to equate national security with immigration and continues the pretence that internal “race” relations and immigration are not related, that they are concerned with two different cohorts of the population.

But what is the issue for social work education and the social policy practitioner? When the Diploma in Social Work was introduced in 1991 it carried a requirement that social work students specifically demonstrate knowledge of race and racism and means of combating this in their own practice (Llewellyn et. al., 2008). This distinctly anti-racist stance from the now defunct Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) has been diluted under current codes of practice which read:

*As a social worker, you must protect the rights and promote the interests of service-users and carers. This includes... promoting equal opportunities for service-users and carers; and respecting diversity and different cultures and values.*

(GSCC, 2010: 6)

Is it this dilution which is apparent within the students' writing, where 'race' has to be detected? It is not readily available. Maybe because I have the privilege of knowing the nationality and whiteness of H, I could trace this in his writing, but the clues are sparse. Are my assumptions, that the use of the word 'lady' in Control 3, suggests a classed and racialised (white) subject different to the writers justified or an example of the qualitative analyst over-interpreting (Roseneil, 2006)? However, from an anti-racist perspective, the stories could be described as "colour-blind", meaning that, rather than acknowledging collective identities and racialised structures, they are individualised without acknowledgement of racism as a practice that impedes lives. Dominelli (2008: 31) describes this position as "a formulation negating a black person's specific experience of racism."

Anti-racist social work stresses the role of collective action and is a call for identity politics. This is exemplified by the emergence of the use of the word Black as a political identity, "a unifying collective term" (Bhatti-Sinclair, 2011: 16) that acknowledges a commonality of the experience of racism for those whose colour of skin exposes them to discrimination. Whilst it may have conflated a range of experiences and backgrounds (Bhatti-Sinclair, *ibid.*), it was a deliberate refusal of the word "Black" as a biological category or signifier and is in defiance of the scientifically discredited notion of "race."

Social policy also acknowledges that "race" is a socially constructed category. However, "race" remaining in quote marks is still discussed in social policy texts, because, whilst its scientific basis is discredited, racism is a real (political, social, individual and collective) experience. The approach within social policy to "race" and racism is summed up by Alcock (2003: 290), when he says:

*It means that the focus of our analysis is thus not race but racism.*

However, the separation of "race" and racism is not so easily made through social policy processes. If racism is the problem then data must be collected to establish indicators of incidence, prevalence, distribution and intensity of the problem (Spicker, 2008). Currently, most data used to explore issues of racism, use the census categories. These offer research participants a number of potential identities (not just Black and

White, or vulnerable to racism because of the colour of skin or not). The categories are a curious mix of descriptors (for example, Black, White, Mixed), national identities (Chinese, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, etc.), and locations (Caribbean, African). This may be a result of the diversity of the country's population, but in its layout it suggests hegemony. White is the standard against which "others" are judged. Black becomes a descriptor rather than political. Black people, according to the categories whether British or not, come from Africa or the Caribbean. They are not Asian, Chinese or Arab. Furthermore, the collection of this data can be misused and be substituted for action. Ahmed (2004, online) captures this when she says of her own experience when writing an anti-racist policy for a university:

*A document that documented the racism of the university became useable as a measure of good performance.*

This was also my experience as a Policy Development Office for a Local Authority Social Services Department. Armed with the McPherson Inquiry (1999) definition of institutional racism, I found a way of championing race equality issues. What the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry highlighted was collective institutional failings in delivering to the public and social services were concerned that they could also be found wanting. Therefore, it offered a way to improve the collection of statistics around access to services for the diverse population of the authority in the hope of uncovering any "unwitting prejudice" and putting in steps to address this. However, the collection of data soon came to replace the other steps of policy development. When rioting finally exploded in the area, the subsequent report into the role of public authorities cleared health and social services of segregation and lack of cohesion. There was good work being done by a number of practitioners and specialist teams which deserve recognition. However, alongside this, the ability to name and demonstrate failings felt like a goal in its own right.

Yet the collection of this data can also be put to good use. Without such data the EHRC (2010) could not make their claims about the continued relevance of racism affecting life chances in the UK. Their report *How Fair is Britain* (2010) carried a range of statistics collected along these lines that highlighted for example, that Black African women who are asylum seekers are estimated to have a mortality rate 7 times higher

than white women partly due to inequalities in accessing health care. It appears then, that to promote anti-racism, social policy must, to some extent, buy into socially constructed racist notions of identity. This is a tension worth exploring.

Midwinter (1994) usefully highlighted the four key debates in social policy as being: the public/private compromise, the central/local compromise, the domestic/institutional compromise and the cash/in-kind compromise. However, what these stories have highlighted is a further compromise/debate with which social policy must contend – the individual/collective identity compromise. Refusing to or ignoring the need to provide racial identifiers may free protagonists from socially constructed categories, but it also denies them the opportunity to explore the power relations at play. Travel could be couched in terms of freedom of movement. However, it was the cue of control that prompted these stories. Control is strongly linked to notions of power and in the case of travel and migration it is linked specifically to state, national and colonial powers which rely on notions of belonging and exclusion.

*The forms of racism are varied and indeed racism itself is a set of processes whose parameters are shifting away from biologicistic consideration to include cultural and national ones.*

(Bhavnani and Phoenix, 1994: 5)

This quote alludes to the difficulties of tracking the changing faces of racism, racist practices and challenging them. This difficulty is compounded by a culture of fear of naming colour. Yet, statistical categories bring problems of their own. So that “instead of belonging to ambiguous and multiple ethnicities and religions, they became categorised as members of one sub-community or another, a fact that many people related to the ‘divide and rule’ governance technology of western colonialism” (Yuval-Davies, 2011: 71). The discipline needs perhaps to work towards a method of understanding the negotiated and relational aspects of identity. The following story highlights this process.



## Settling

Previous stories were about the journey. However, the story which follows is about a subject who has travelled and now resides in the UK. It is a story that points to the dichotomy of host and guest and the conditionality of hospitality (Derrida, 2001).

### **Control #4 – Simba and Shona**

This is Simba's story and his experience as an immigrant in Britain.

Africa's health professionals are working everywhere and anywhere but Africa. Shona, Simba's wife, as a nurse was no exception to the pull and push factors. She secured a job with the NHS in Britain and the family relocated and roles and positions of control shifted and were under constant negotiation and renegotiation. It was a period of flux for Simba. Finding a footing in this new setting cost Simba his status as the traditional breadwinner, his influence and authority challenged.

Professionally, Shona has achieved middle-class status; her social mobility was on the rise, supported with the diffusion of western culture and feminist thoughts that promoted egalitarian ideologies challenged the traditional family unit to dysfunction. The acquired knowledge coupled with financial muscle was manipulatively used to undermine his power base at home and outside. The new environment in comparison to Africa was enabling, liberal and empowering to Shona. Simba's culture ascribes to gender relationships, a patriarchal nature in which a man's status is higher than females. To him, men are to exercise ruling power, both in public and private arenas, while women have to be obedient and modest.

In the home Simba would refuse to do supposed women's work, tasks such as cleaning and cooking in order to maintain his role as head of the household. His culture stigmatises men who do woman's work around the house. It was a cold war. The struggle for hegemony and control of family left scars to both parties. Children became sucked into the fray. Simba was one of those men not ready to honestly disengage his tyrannical authoritative attitudes even though during the day he acted like a "warrior

human-rights defender”.

Meanwhile, Shona doubled shifts, was active in the community as a charity worker, advancing equality issues. Simba had empirical information on her activities. The wife’s approach to charity programme work was to promote respect for human rights and social justice with an emphasis on women’s emancipation. In the work place Shona acted in a British way, daring to challenge stereotypes of her fellow African women and to fight against unfair treatment. In her work life she consciously abandoned African cultures which upheld vivid characteristics of womanhood such as submissiveness. Shona’s purpose in the conflict was to challenge and usurp control of the family from how she knew it historically.

Simba reflected on developments and the manipulation of his wife of events and circumstances. His authority came from tradition, culturally where husbands rule because they have always done so. But somehow, he could see his control waning and getting out of grasp. Simba was frequently travelling back and forth between British culture and African cultural norms. His past lifestyle granted parents authority over children and he was keen to sustain the policy in the new setting. Children were taught and are taught in school that parents should respect their rights and autonomy. It became difficult to change their perceptions against authoritative parenting. Influence of the host country dominant culture determined the socialisation tide.

This is the story of two people – Simba and Shona. Although the names chosen suggest equilibrium through half-rhyming resonance and equal syllables, the story is not one of balance. It is Simba’s voice that dominates – “This is Simba’s story” – and it is an authoritarian voice that demands recognition of its expertise of African culture and people (including their gendered relations). The choice of pseudonyms was not expected to be a site for analysis and had not been an issue in other stories. However, these names are relevant to the story. Simba is a Zimbabwean name for ‘Lion’. Shona is the name of a Zimbabwean language – the ‘mother’ tongue. The names are about asserting gender differences. Simba is also familiar to many as it used for a Disney character – The Lion King, a young cub who has to learn to be king after running away from responsibility.

This is not a story that deals with detail, but is an overview of the process of socialisation of the migrant subject. (For example, we know that there are children in this relationship but we do not know how many and of which genders). The story locates the negotiation of identity within the struggle of gender relations. It begins with the assertion of the role of global capitalist structures in shaping people's lives. "Africa's health professionals are working everywhere and anywhere but Africa". This highlights the power imbalance in the global skills market, but does so in a way that asserts a person's location with belonging ("Africa's health professionals" – a possessive phrase). These large power structures impact on personal lives and this story is an attempt to describe that impact.

The telling of this story enacts the tale it describes. In other words, its tone moves from the stable confidence of expertise to being more measured and less certain. It is a discussion of the position of control within a relationship and that control is under "constant negotiation and renegotiation". It describes a "period of flux" which it does not seem is resolved by the end of the story. So, for example the opening is authoritative and takes a position on global economics and "push and pull" factors of migration. The middle section is less sure-footed. At first it is Shona who is manipulative, so as to undermine Simba's power. Then, there is acknowledgement that Simba is not blameless and is inconsistent with his public and private values. "Simba was one of those men not ready to honestly disengage his tyrannical authoritative attitudes even though during the day he acted like a 'warrior human rights defender'". However, the reflective coda of the story suggests resignation rather than enlightened realisation. "Influence of the host country dominant culture determined the socialisation tide".

This is a story about adapting and change, told from the perspective of someone expected to make changes – to come under the "influence of the host country" – but what does it say about the hosts? Do they/we offer what Barber (1998) would call an "hospitable space"? "In the work place, Shona acted in a British way, daring to challenge stereotypes of her fellow African women and to fight against injustice." This is the British way? – a culture which affords children's rights, women's equality but

which takes Africa's health care professionals as its own and undercuts Simba's traditional authority. The notion of being a host, of hospitality is fraught.

*Hospitality, like the notion of tolerance assumes pre-given boundaries of belonging that guests, like tolerated minorities cannot transgress.*

(Yuval-Davies, 2011: 189)

Simba has not found the "unconditional hospitality" of Derrida. He is in negotiation with the host, testing boundaries and losing control.

### **Travelling, Settling and Social Policy**

Reading all four stories together has placed the global within the local. It asks questions about the movement of people across boundaries – which countries do people travel to, through and settle in? How are travellers received? How do settlers learn to belong? The issue for this research is also to ask how should social work respond to these questions?

Social work has constructed solutions to its perceived and actual failings in relation to the control, care and regulation of people racialised as minority subjects. Lewis (2000) has investigated the positions taken in the late 1980s and early 1990s in relation to the minority welfare user. At this point "ethnic minorities' were identified as having particularistic welfare needs, which welfare agencies in general and social services departments in particular, were not able to recognise or adequately cater for" (Lewis, 2000: 9). The solution was to increase the number of qualified staff from minority ethnic populations, constructing black social workers as experts in 'race' relations and community provision. This exercise also was highly gendered as is the general case with care work.

However, as Lewis makes clear, this solution, whilst offering some Black women professional employment opportunities, was based on a number of misunderstandings; the first and most fundamental of which is the denial of 'race' as a "deeply embedded feature of the national formation" (Lewis, 2000: 44). This refusal produces policies and practices of paternalistic assimilation and integration that reduce the ethnic minority

subject to a junior citizen or citizen-in-training. It also leads to the bifurcation of the racialised subjects into those who can be seen as new-comers and those who are settled. This allows policy-makers and practitioners to talk about race-equality as different and separate to regimes of migration control. Whereas, acknowledging 'race', racism and racialising processes as a part of national life, rather than discrete episodes would allow a more mature discussion around belonging which includes acknowledging 'race' and racism, rather than politely declining to comment.

This will cause tensions for the discipline of social policy, in particular around the collection of statistical data, which in current forms suggests that "ethnicity and/or 'race' are conceptualised as if they are pre-social, static and externally generated qualities or conditions belonging to 'minority' groups relatively newly arrived in Britain" (Lewis, 2000: 12). A change in the categories will not be enough to address this issue. Instead a way needs to be found that can analyse the wider context of racialised lives (both Black and white) "around numerous axes of power and differentiation" (Lewis, 1996: 50). Alongside methodological issues around the collection of data, it will also mean the opening up of UK social policy to acknowledge UK foreign policy as impacting upon social lives. Yuval-Davies (2011) makes this point in relation to the 7/7 bombings of 2005, where it was noted with shock that the bombers and their victims were both British. However, it can also be seen in Simba and Shona's story. Shona arrives in Britain to work within the National Health Service; a public welfare service which relies on migrant workers at all levels but recruits from specific colonised spaces.

## **Conclusion**

Writing this chapter was a complex process. When I suggested the cue of 'control' I expected that I would be writing about the tensions between care, control and social justice which characterise social work practice and form the site of ethical discussion for the profession. I did not expect to be writing predominantly about anti-racist approaches and migration. However, the writing has led me to acknowledge control within the discipline of social policy which aims to take the unruly, travelling, not quite settled subject and categorise it according to essentialised and supposed pre-social states.

Racism is a blight on our lives. For me, this is self-evident. Yet, how to recognise and then challenge it is not always so obvious. The students' stories about control and travel were oblique about the colour of privilege and power. This is reflected in current political discourse where naming a colour, any colour, is to be avoided. The question for social policy is "does this matter?"

Let's see. I am Rachel Robbins and I am white – a declaration of my whiteness. Does this help. Ahmed (2004: online) is not convinced. She says:

*The difficulty may come in part from a sense that the project of making whiteness visible only makes sense from the point of view for those for whom it is invisible.*

Was the lack of any declaration of difference in the students' stories simply a reflection that the colour of officials versus the colour of travellers/migrants was self-evident? However, Ahmed (ibid) also goes on to say that those declarations of whiteness, like any other colour, "can work to conceal the power and privilege of whiteness." Yet refusing to declare whiteness, refusing to give privilege its colour can also work to gloss over the racialised nature of structures and produces "a silence that shields and veils" (Mazzei, 2008: 1126). This was my source of discomfort in reading the stories.

The discipline of social policy has attempted to find means of challenging discrimination and the inequalities that racism perpetuates. However, it is troubled by the desire to dismiss 'race' as socially constructed and the need to collect data along racial lines. This is not easily answered and the link between categories of people and racism should continue to be troubled.

It also points to a need to broaden methodological approaches and reconsider whether social policy's role is simply finding the "generative mechanism". Here, I return to Spicker's (2011) call for the role of phronesis. This is a recognition and a justification for professional discretion and autonomy that requires the practitioner to draw on experience and ask "What should I do in this situation?" (Noel, 1999: 274). It reasserts social work practice as dialogistic and constructionist rather than an actuarial tick-box

exercise. Spicker (ibid) suggests that rather than simply being engaged in generalisations from either theory or data, the discipline should draw on the experience of its practitioners. This supports Flyvberg's (2006) assertion that expertise cannot be predicated simply upon theory and contextual knowledge but requires a working knowledge of several case studies.

However, there is a tension in this suggestion for race equality and anti-racist work. It is the tension of the universal versus the specific. As Spicker (2011: 14) points out "causal analysis is universal, phronesis is particular." This tension undercuts its appeal. Anti-racist work has often relied on the collective and the use of commonalities. In "race" relations, this debate is encapsulated by the political use of the word Black to acknowledge a commonality of experience of racism for those whose colour of skin exposes them to discrimination. It is a call for a collective identity. However, it is also a label that some who could use, refuse, claiming that its universal application irons out their specificity.

Take, for example, Andrew Kane, a founder of the Turquoise Association (cited in Observer, 2009) who says:

*"Everyone was saying, 'Here is the first black F1 champion, here is the first black president' and we thought 'They are mixed race'. We are not saying that they should not be proud of their black heritage. But we are saying we are not just black and we are not just white."*

I know this can make uncomfortable reading for some, as it suggests a political disengagement from the use of the category Black, perhaps it is even a reassertion of some biological basis, but I think this tension is worth exploring. It is worth acknowledging and making strategic and informed decisions about it. Just as feminism has had to do with its tendencies to make use of the strategic category of woman. As Hazel Carby says:

*"In other words, of white feminists we must ask, what exactly do you mean when you say 'WE'?" (Carby, 1997: 52).*

It is a call for the discipline to recognise strategies as historically significant and in constant negotiation in the same way that Simba and Shona are negotiating their familial, professional and cultural positions. As for theoretical resources within this area, Gray and Boddy (2010: 386) argue that “post-colonial feminism best reflects the challenges facing social workers in their daily practice, has the most realistic grasp of the ‘work to be done’ and hence it is ideally suited to social work practice.” Just as Gray and Boddy suggest a theoretical resource for the social work practitioner, these stories offer a resource for the social work educator.

This chapter provided a different relationship between stories and analysis. In previous chapters the question was concerned with what the stories could tell me about social policy processes and concepts. However, in this chapter the question was in some ways reversed and became what can the processes of social policy tell me about the stories? This is linked to my own research narrative. As the project and analysis progressed I became more interested in the discipline of social policy, its practices and resources. Through the stories, I had become aware of the limitations of some of the approaches within the discipline in uncovering lived experiences and the writing of this chapter has been fundamental to this. The first three stories used are about a black African-Caribbean woman, a white British man and a black African woman. However, it is not simply these categories of “race”, ethnicity or gender that determine their experiences. It is instead the micro-politics of boundary control; the exchange between officials and travellers, that is key to the stories. However, it is also the case that the categories of “race”, ethnicity and gender are important in understanding the stories. Using Alex’s Story in *Control #1* in the classroom can bring into focus the colonial relationship between the UK and the Caribbean. Using *Control #2*, H’s story of travelling appears to make more sense to students once the ethnicity and nationality of the traveller is revealed.

The attempt by social policy processes to delineate boundaries around particularly minoritised subjects may be useful for certain aspects of analysis but does not explain all the intricacies of control within official/migrant relationships. (H. may have a privileged position more generally that provides the opportunity to travel, but he does not own a gun). Social policy is at a loss as to how to describe this issue. It aims to chart and challenge the racism that national boundaries and policies can perpetuate.



However, “no set of qualitative descriptors can establish black or white identity across all possible worlds, but we cannot say that black and white do not exist” (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000: 141).

## Chapter Eight - Need

*“Our needs are made of words: they come to us in speech, and they can die for lack of expression. Without a public language to help us find our words, our needs will dry up in silence.”*

(Ignatieff, 1990: 142)

*“The personal social services are large-scale experiments in ways of helping those in need. It is both wasteful and irresponsible to set experiments in motion and omit to record and analyse what happens. It makes no sense in terms of administrative efficiency and, however little intended, it indicates a careless attitude towards human welfare.”*

(Seebohm, 1968, para 455)

### Introduction

Need is an evocative word. The suggestion that one needs somebody or something elicits a sense of yearning and stirs up ideas of potential harm or expectant fulfilment. It speaks of basic and essential requirements, and is dismissive of wants or preferences. Need is central to an understanding of social policy and social work (Payne, 2006, Manning, 2008, Dean 2010). The role of welfare is to address need, and the many understandings of need shape social policy.

*Clarifying social need is more than simply a theoretical debate. It is at the core of the construction and evaluation of social policies and has real practical significance, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable in society.*

(Liddiard, 2007: 121)

However, need is also an elusive concept, mired within social, political, moral and cultural contexts. The ‘needy’ are open to judgement, can be symbols of individual or societal failures, positioned by power or easily unheard or dismissed. The aim of this chapter is to interrogate some of the different positions in relation to need within social policy and to consider when an individual need becomes a social problem worthy of

welfare or policy intervention. It is written in recognition that “needs are not self-evident” (Pantazis et. al., 2006: 92) and require an acknowledgement of the roles of context and interpretation.

In particular, the teaching of social policy requires an historical perspective. Illich (2010) argues that the birth of the discourse of need is related to the US post-war development programme. He characterises this move as securing the role of necessity as a move away from seeing need as an essential element of the human condition, to an evil that could be diminished through progress. Gronemeyer (2010) writing in the same volume, also sees this period as establishing different relationships of power between those who help and ‘the helped’ – with ‘help for self-help’ being a key aspect of the development agenda. It is no coincidence that, in considering the meeting of need in British Welfare, the post-war era is also considered significant. The Beveridge report of 1942, in a literary flourish declared “want” as one of the five giant evils, arguing that the state should be involved in providing for basic needs. The report played a role in the establishment of the National Health Service in 1948. A key tenet of the modern welfare state was that healthcare would be provided to all based on need rather than ability to pay (Dean, 2010). The “New National Health Service” information leaflet of 1948 states:

*It will provide you with all medical, dental and nursing care. Everyone – rich or poor, man, woman or child – can use it or any part of it. There are no charges, except for a few special items. There are no insurance qualifications. But it is not a charity. You are all paying for it, mainly as tax payers, and it will relieve your money worries in time of illness.*

(Cited in Webster, 1998: 24)

The use of the word charity was designed to show a change in the state’s attitude to need. Receipt of charity could be seen as stigmatising and/or demeaning. In contrast, the service being offered here was the result of collective taxpayers’ achievements. However, deciding on what constitutes a need is not adequately addressed through the provision of service.

Bradshaw's (1972: 643) taxonomy of need aimed to "clarify and make explicit what is being done when those concerned with the social services are studying or planning to meet social need." Bradshaw was writing in the immediate post-Seebohm era of social services. Seebohm set the template for local authority social work organisation in his 1968 report, in which he made a strong case for the requirement of social services to be engaged in the research and evaluation of population needs and whether they have been met through services. To support this task, Bradshaw produced a taxonomy, which defined four over-lapping categories of need: normative need, felt need, expressed need and comparative need. Forder (1974) added to this the category of "technical need" which is when a new form of provision evolves, highlighting that need can be a positive product of society's advances as well as a negative product of its failing. However, within his own schema, Bradshaw noted the problems still faced by policy-makers in deciding "exactly what part of the total is 'real need'" (ibid, 641). This leads to the inevitable discipline discussion around measuring need and its absolute and relative aspects.

Townsend (1981: 477) argues passionately for a recognition of not only the relative aspects of need, but also against the broader concept of basic needs, which he saw as "legitimizing the continuation of impoverished conditions" and under-estimating human needs "because they did not also fully recognise the social obligations and roles of parenthood, friendship, work, neighbourliness, membership of the local community and citizenship". This argument is taken up by Doyal and Gough (1984) who argue that 'need' has a universal basis, but that this is broader than meeting subsistence requirements of an individual and should also include the recognition of social needs, health (physical and mental) and autonomy.

Need has remained an issue within the implementation of social policy and social work practice. In adult services, care management practices from the 1990s were concerned with need assessments. More recently the Assessment Framework for Children in Need and their Families (DoH, 2000) is concerned with the identification and categorisation of needs, both processes acknowledging a further category of need – unmet need.

Shepard (2006:96) argues the continued relevance of these theoretical discussions about categories of need for social work, by saying:

*Social work subscribes to two concepts of need (basic and social) and possibly a third (those that can be individually defined).*

However, a glimpse at recent social work research literature highlights the role of “expert” opinion in determining and discussing need. Using Bradshaw’s taxonomy the key category of need discussed is normative need. “This is what the expert or professional administrator or social scientist defines as need in any given situations” (Bradshaw, 1972: 640). This allows need to be turned into administrative categories “so that decisions can then be taken as to how they should be met” (Lister, 2010: 183). This gives rise to the discussion of, for example, Children in Need (Children Act 1989), the needs of people with alcohol or drugs problems (Galvani, 2007), or even the support needs of social work students with mental health difficulties (Collins, 2006). These are all needs which can be evidenced. However, the categorisation process could be argued to produce an accentuation effect, highlighting the differences between those in need and the general population (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Such need, it could be argued, whilst observable also functions as serving the professionalisation of social work through “expert discourses”.

Categories of need, then, are profligate. Dean, writing in 2010, produced a glossary of need which included 30 categories. If we are to accept Payne’s (2006: 188) assertion that “needs-based provision is the main social priority and how most people understand social work” then ‘need’ demands to be examined by social workers as part of their training. It was for this reason that ‘need’ appeared as a cue on my list of possible prompts for writing.

In terms of the ‘Writing Stories’ groups, only one (the lilac group) chose the cue ‘need’ and in total four stories were produced using it. Yet, the four stories all illustrate a different facet of the concept, and different approaches to those in need, being needy or needing. All four stories are being used here to explore how students position themselves in relation to need. Position is a vital component of interpretation. Feminist standpoint theory as espoused by Haraway (2004) links the acknowledgement of position with the ability to recognise or see other perspectives. These stories pose questions about “How to see? Where to see from? What limits to vision? What to see

for? Whom to see with? Who gets to have more than one point of view? Who gets blinkers? Who wears blinkers?” (Haraway, 2004: 91). All four stories were produced by women and they all make reference to gendered constructions of and responses to need. “Feminism is about critical vision consequent upon a critical positioning in inhomogeneous gender social space” (Haraway, 2004: 92 – 3). Interpretation, then, will focus on shifting and determining relationships of need, paying attention to the moves between need as an inherent part of an actor to need as it is generated, identified and responded to. It will chart the move between need as a noun and a verb (Dean, 2010).

### **Stories of Need**

All four stories produced by the project to the cue “need” will be discussed in this chapter. The first three of those stories presented here take place within the context of friendship. However, beyond that, similarities are scarce.

#### **Need #1 – The Tracksuit**

“I’ll be at yours for 7.30pm,” Mya said.

It was only 6.00 so she didn’t rush. Mya was always late. Fannyng around doing unnecessary things which was extremely irritating but that was just Mya. You either loved her or hated her.

Finally, she arrived; the girls were off to the Trafford Centre to do some late night shopping and supper. This was a frequent but enjoyable activity which they often indulged in. Selfridges was the first stop, a shop with multiple shops in it. It was a fascinating shop as it took at least an hour just to browse around it, but by the time you had, you’d be guaranteed an outfit!

Halfway around it we stopped at the Juicy Couture tracksuits. They sparkled, glistened and instantly attracted the eye of the young enthusiastic shopper.

“I’m getting the grey one!” Mya yelled.

She just looked at Mya from the corner of her eye with an evil glare.

“But I told you I was getting the grey one last week. I’m just waiting for my cheque to clear from the college... You know that!” she said.

“Oh well... If you’re not fast, you’re last and if you snooze, you lose!” she said in an amusing voice, picking up the tracksuit.

As Mya approached the till, her friend followed behind her hissing. The wickedness in her deep brown eyes glared to the back of Mya’s coat.

“Sorry love...” the cashier said. “Your card has been declined.”

“What...”

Mya looked devastated.

“Aaaaaaaaahahahahehehehe”, she thought in her mind.

The next day, she woke up and the vicious bitchy side of the dominant female awoke with her and the immoral decision to get on the bus and buy this tracksuit sided with her. As this sinful female showered and made up. She chanted in her head.

“I WANT this tracksuit. I NEED this tracksuit. I WANT this tracksuit. I NEED this tracksuit.”

And off on the bus she went. Hours later, as she pranced around the house in her new couture tracksuit, the phone rang. It was Mya.

“Hey babe, where have you been today?”

“Just come back from the Trafford Centre... Sorry love, I got that tracksuit... I needed

it.” She said.

“What...” she said pausing. “ You complete bitch... I thought you were my mate.. you know you...” and the tone went dead. She slammed the phone down.

Sorry Mya, I needed that tracksuit...

This story is about two friends, Mya and the writer. However, what defines the story is the relationship of the writer to the market. The action is centred on the activity of prestige shopping in a large retail complex. Commercialism and competition permeate the writing. For example, to describe her friend the writer appropriates Marmite’s advertising tag line – “you either loved her or you hated her”. The writer herself is defined through consumption – “the young, enthusiastic shopper”. Late night shopping was a regular event, an indulgence, tinged with seduction that guaranteed an outfit and in which tracksuits “sparkled” and “glistened”. And it is against this background that a story of need is told.

Many writers, (for example, Shepherd, 2006, Manning, 2008 and Dean, 2010) when discussing need, present a dichotomy of individual preferences and basic necessities as a means of providing the distinction between ‘needs’ and ‘wants’.

*We can all recognise that there are things in life that we might want that we do not need and things that we might need that we do not want.*

(Dean, 2010: 14)

However, the writer of *The Tracksuit* refuses such distinctions and conflates need and want with her determined chant before purchasing the tracksuit. The writing opens up the possibility of analysis of the concept of ‘need’ around two key axes – the market place and the role of inter-personal relationships.

If need is to be seen in relation to the market the question becomes who can assess and determine what need is. The story could be read as a triumph of liberal economics, within which the only real expert on need is the consumer and need can only be determined by the choices made in the market (Shepherd, 2006). The market place is



also competitive and with the writer's final unapologetic apology, the competition has been won. She is triumphant and she has won by satisfying her need. In social work terms it could be seen as an assertion against expert discourses of needs assessment. "Privatisation and market mechanisms have been encouraged to the point where social welfare can increasingly be thought of as a consumption good" (Manning, 2008: 28). Personalisation, in some of its many guises (and it is a development open to many interpretations) can be seen in this light, in which choice is seen as one of the guiding principles (Gardner, 2010) with the service-user being the expert in their own needs.

However, as Shepherd (2006: 84) points out "there are limits to the extent to which such a position can be pursued, while remaining consistent within the nature of social work". Here Shepherd is alluding to the issue of control and providing not only for individual needs, but for having a role in providing for the wider, social good. The wider, social good could be translated to be the relationship between two friends, or a consideration of the wider global aspects of justice and trade.

Following this line, the story could then be used as a parable of Marxist interpretations of capitalism's manufacture of need, within which the individualist ideology is linked to identities established through possession. "This conveniently extends our desires and needs, and thus maintains the level of demand necessary for capitalism to operate" (Goodwin, 1987:20). And within the context of late modernity, it is consumption rather than production that drives modern capitalism implanting 'false need' so that need can be seen as "an artefact of the consumer society" (Dean, 2010: 37). The writer of *The Tracksuit* then becomes subject to capitalist structures that compel her to 'betray' her friend in pursuit of goods. Purchase is mistaken for agency.

From this perspective, the writer can no longer be seen as an expert in her own needs. She appears to be using scant resources (waiting for a cheque from the college to clear – her Education Maintenance Allowance?) to buy a luxury, branded item. Competitive behaviour has obscured the role of need and led to unhealthy comparisons. As a category of need, 'comparative need' usually relates to others having something that the needy do not (Manning, 2008). However, here, this is reversed. The needy must obtain something the others do not have. This is related to the argument that "the pursuit of wants over needs is, in itself harmful to human flourishing" (Lister, 2010: 170). This

could be examined through a consideration of the portrayal of friendship within the story.

*The study of friendships can, even today, be viewed as a rather trivial exercise.*

*It can be seen as reflecting a concern with the emotional, the tangential.*

*Friendship, it is implied, is not concerned with the realities of sex or money and hence is not worth serious attention.*

(O'Connor, 1992: 1)

However, social work is a profession that straddles the personal and the political. It is concerned with how the public impacts upon the relationships within the private and how private relationships can become public issues. This story tells of a tension between the expectations of friendship and economic contexts.

The relationship is not described as friendship until, at the end, Mya slams the phone down on her “mate”. However, the relationship is implied throughout through the actions of the two characters. They make arrangements for a regular leisure activity; they show awareness of each other’s habits and phone each other. They share tastes. However, the relationship is also characterised by jealousy and competition and this is portrayed as connected to the gender of the writer – “the vicious bitchy side of the dominant female”. The writer declares herself a “sinful female” and her decision to purchase the tracksuit as “immoral”. This is not to say that this aspect of the friendship is necessarily unpleasant. The desire for the same seductive object and the competition for it, hints at some homo-erotic diversion to be found within the potentially destructive elements of this friendship.

Female friendship as portrayed within feminist literature is often narrated as a testimony to our capacity to love and to be loved (Fisher and Galler, 1982) and challenges notions of independence as the means of autonomy. More importantly, for moral development, Gilligan’s (1982: 19) ethic of care associated with the feminised private sphere of female relationships suggests moral activity is “around the understanding of responsibility and relationships”. This means, that in acting responsibly and within moral reasoning, one should take account of the negative consequences for other people. The writer acknowledges this, but temptation is too strong.

Bauman (2007:2) suggests that this is expected behaviour within our modern times “when individual exposure to the vagaries of commodity and labour markets inspires and promotes division, not unity”. In many ways, the writer is an ideal type of Bauman’s liquid modern phase where the “homo consumens are men and women without social bonds” (Bauman, 2003: 69). The suggestion here is that the liquidifying of social structure and its certainties has led away from an ethic of care, which, while we remain conscious of those obligations, we are unapologetic when we break them. “Sorry Mya, I needed that tracksuit”.

In the following story, friendship and a different market are the focus.

## **Need #2 - Drugs**

I listened to her intently as we walked down the road. Thoughts ran through my head as to where we were heading and exactly what was involved. This was not something I knew about or something I fully understood, but I knew it was wrong. Drugs in general were wrong, so why was I going with her?

We arrived at her mums. We were only there so she could blag some money out of her. I sat, totally out of my depth, thoughts racing, hoping her mum wouldn’t give her any money; but she did.

We left the flat and headed towards destination two. As we walked along the street, everything inside me was telling me to turn back. I knew this was wrong, but she said she needed it. I questioned the consequences as I knew nothing about drugs, only what I’d heard. “I’ve had it before,” she said. “I know what I’m doing and it will just be this once. I need it. Honestly, I’ll be fine.” My heart was pounding, but she wasn’t budging. Her destination was set. In my mind, I knew I shouldn’t have been there, but I also knew that I had tied myself to this situation by starting the journey with her in the first place. My conscience was playing havoc with my thoughts. Thoughts of death and overdose took over and I knew I was going nowhere.

We arrived at a block of flats. I waited outside. It seemed like forever. Was she O.K.? What do I do if she doesn't come out? I felt agitated and out of place. I needed to not be there, but felt like I had to be there. The door banged. She was back. "Let's go," she said with a cautious grin that faded with my look of disgust.

We headed home the journey seemed to pass too quickly I needed to find a way out not just for me, but for her as well. I went through everything that had happened that day. I didn't hold back on my feelings as panic was setting in. I needed to stop this now. "You just told your mum you had no electric for that. She hasn't even got money for herself and you blagged money off her for drugs", I said. "I'll pay her back when I get my money" she replied uninterested. "Well what if you die," I blurted out. "I won't die", she replied. "I know what I'm doing." I didn't feel convinced but knew I wasn't really in a position to comment as I knew nothing about it.

We arrived home. I wished the earth had swallowed her house up, so we didn't have to go in – it hadn't. I sat nervously asking questions about what to do if anything happened, while she hunted around for the bits of drugs paraphernalia she needed. She answered my questions briefly. Her mind was elsewhere as she couldn't find tin foil, which in my naivety I thought was strange, but thinking she had decided to make food instead I wandered into the kitchen after her, still asking questions. "Got it," she said sounding like a child looking for a lost toy. This was it. I watched in amazement as the act of tooting took place in front of me and a sweet sickly smell filled the air. I looked at her and asked if she was o.k. She said that she was. Another ten minutes passed by and my need to not be there was getting stronger by the second. I stood up, "I need to go," I said. "I can't watch you do this." She didn't answer. "Call me, if you need me," I said. She looked vacantly at me and nodded. I shut the door and left.

Dean (2010) categorises four broad responses to need as: humanistic, economic, paternalistic and moralistic. The opening of this story highlights issues of morality. "This was not something I knew about or something I fully understood, but I knew it was wrong. Drugs in general were wrong, so why was I going with her?" However, amidst the certainty of the morality of the situation, that final question hints at the writers' own doubts and concerns as to where she should position herself? Linking

position back to sight and vision (Haraway, 2004), as the story progresses the writer becomes an unwilling voyeur to the adventure, before declaring “I can’t watch you do this.” Choices are being made about what to see.

Fundamentally, this is a story about dilemma. At the friend’s mother’s house, the writer acknowledges that she is “totally out of my depth”. As they make their way to the dealers, she questions consequences, and is troubled by her conscience. Much of the story is filled with waiting which leads to feelings of agitation, vulnerability and panic. In contrast to the previous story, this writer not only acknowledges an ethic of care, she makes use of it in her bid to convince her friend of her wrong-headedness. “You just told your Mum you had no electric for that. She hasn’t even got money for herself and you blagged money off her for drugs”. This is a direct appeal to the role of responsibility and relationships in moral decision-making. Eventually, she decides on action by leaving, but in doing so she leaves an offer of help. “Call me, if you need me”

At the centre of this story, need is being interpreted in terms of addiction. Addiction is highlighted as a complex and contradictory process. “It will just be this once. I need it.” In many ways, parallels can be drawn with the analysis of the market in the previous story and here. If a tracksuit can be seen as a false, manufactured need, so can heroin. The conflation of want and need and the lack of consideration of the consequences for relationships are also at play here. It also highlights the role of choice and consumption in identity-making and that, in order to make such choices, this creates a derivative need for money, which can be accessed through sanctionable routes – using benefits to purchase luxury goods or “blagging” from relatives.

However, one of the ways in which the stories differ is in the portrayal of relationships. In this story, the writer provides a more recognisable performance of social work, possibly because the story is concerned with a more recognisable social problem. (That being said a dominant discourse around drug use equates it with health rather than social care (Galvani, 2007)). The dilemma at the centre of the writing is how best to support a friend, whilst keeping a clear conscience. It is both a performance of proximity and distance which echoes the tensions of professional boundaries and access within the helping professions.

The fear and uncertainty of the writer echoes Cooper's (2005:6) discussion about working within child protection:

*I was often afraid when doing this kind of work; afraid of what I would discover about what was happening to children, afraid of facing parents or carers; afraid of what would happen if I did not find out what was happening, or if I backed away from facing adults with my suspicions.*

However, the final paragraph is pivotal in watching the relationship as helper and helped become established. The portrayal of innocence quickly dissolves. In one sentence, the writer mentions her naivety about the search for foil. Three sentences later, she uses the drug slang "tooting". Once the smell and the effects of the drugs are apparent a decision is taken to leave. "I can't watch you do this". This is less a statement of capacity, but more repudiation – but it is followed by an offer of support. In social work terms, she has collected evidence, assessed the needs and offered support. Jordan (2000: 80) offers a description of modern day social work as something which happens "at some distance from the 'front-line' of human problems". This story also suggests that distance is a requirement for the helper. This is not meant as a criticism. It is hard to imagine many other responses to the situation. "I shut the door and I left", however, places the onus on the addict to seek support, which is echoed within social policy approaches to addiction. It is Gronemeyer's (2010) "help for self-help" at the centre of much current welfare provision.

The addict finishes the story with a vacant stare and at this point it may be difficult to remember that she started as someone actively seeking resources to participate in the market-place. "While market places are intended to allocate resources according to demand, social policies are concerned with allocating resources according to need" (Alcock et. al., 2002: 158). Demand and need, however, are intertwined in this story. The market place not only responds to demand, it creates it. Social policy intervenes when demand is seen as problematic, but where and how to intervene is ideologically driven by an understanding of that need on the continuum of individual failing to the "poverty and social exclusion that are the lived realities for many beginning substance users" (Galvani, 2007: 705). In navigating the application of policy, the social worker

is involved in positioning themselves in relation to those in need. Following this story, would suggest that being side-by-side with need is intimidating and dangerous. It forces you to see things you can't watch.

The next story is also concerned with a friend's position in relation to need and is a similar negotiation of where to place oneself as helper.

### **Need #3 – A Friend in Need**

Needing someone was not what she was used to. Such a strange and alien concept to her, she never fully understood it. There were not many things in her life she considered 'precious'; there were things she cared about and valued but there was very little that she truly felt she needed. She hated the idea of not being able to function on her own, dependency on others was something she most feared and hated. She saw it as a weakness. Certain things were pleasurable if they entered your life but they were not essential. You certainly shouldn't fall apart if you wake up one day and they're gone (of course, this didn't apply to all things).

This was her take on men since becoming a single woman. She hated the idea of being 'available' or 'on the market'. She had come to the decision that if a man cropped up in her life that would be o.k. but she wasn't looking and she didn't 'need' one.

She had witnessed needy people far too often and although she was supportive, it often frustrated her. She couldn't stand the comments. "Well, you're really strong, you can handle it. I'm not as tough as you." This was the excuse her friend always gave, the excuse that followed the inevitable three month breakdown after he left... yet again. "I can't do this on my own. I can't cope. I need him back." She always said. (This being the person who after a five year relationship and a child began a new relationship after only 2 weeks.) She was a frustrating person, bound and tied by her own insecurities and far too weak to break free and realise her true potential. She never gave herself chance to be alone and to learn that she could cope. The conversation always ended with "but I need him, I love him". She knew however frustrating that this vulnerable girl 'needed'

her to be there for her. She knew without her support that she would break and with a toddler depending on her, she had to provide this service for her friend.

It was times like that, that made her thankful for the way her life was. She didn't have loads of money, a flash car or a huge house. All were things that anyone would 'like' but not something she 'needed' in her life. She was grateful for the basics, for the simple function that kept the cogs turning. For the people that supported from afar but never got too close to interfere or question. For her family for having faith and believing when no one else did and for those special people in her life who just knew, thankful for her own judgement and for the decision that she had made. All these things were important in her life, but she could still function without them. But there was one thing she knew she needed, to be without this would be like surviving on limited oxygen. You would exist but every breath; every moment would be a struggle, painful, torture, an unbearable nightmare that you couldn't escape. She knew she needed her daughter.

Whilst the writer of the previous story concluded that she had to put distance between herself and her friend, this story sees this as a starting point. It starts from the position of difference and distance between herself and those who 'need'. The story is a presentation of an on-going and constantly renegotiated position in relation to her friend's needs and her own. To use Haraway's (2004) metaphor of vision, we are allowed glimpses of how the writer sees herself in relation to need, how others might see this and how this vision can be turned both inwards and outwards to produce different conclusions.

The story starts with an assertion of independence and clear distance between the writer and need. "Needing someone was not what she was used to. Such a strange and alien concept to her". Comparison leads to an unflattering description of her friend, who is a "frustrating person, bound and tied by her own insecurities". Through the eyes of the writer, we are given a picture of servitude. However, she also gives an image of herself as she presumes she is seen by others. "You can handle it. I'm not as tough as you." At this point, the writer seems to be advocating the kind of 'tough love' which Jordan (2000: 25) suggests characterised New Labour's approach to social policy.



*'Tough love' means that the service-providers expect more from service-users, must test their eligibility for services more strictly, must activate them more vigorously and support them more strongly in any efforts they make to be independent.*

This sentiment is apparent in the sentence: "She never gave herself the chance to be alone and to learn that she could cope." Yet, she relents from this position and offers support on the basis of duty and care for a child. This could be seen in similar terms to the support and performance of social work offered to the drug addict. It is an offer of help, but with the requisite distance.

However, whereas the previous story finished with that distance, this story covers ground and moves towards an understanding of the writer being also someone with needs. The final paragraph makes a clear distinction between wants: "loads of money, a flash car or a huge house" and "the basics". It then moves to explore what a necessity is, the "surviving on limited oxygen". This essential is not food, shelter or health, but a relationship, her need for her daughter.

The appeal to motherhood is important both as justification for offering support and in acknowledging vulnerabilities inherent in the responsibility within relationships. In social policy terms, both women could come under one category of welfare recipient – lone mothers. However, the writer sees this commonality of position, but wishes to assert the response to it as a difference between the two women. This appeal to motherhood highlights one of Dean's (2010:2) arguments about the centrality of need in connecting "an understanding of our interdependency as human beings with arguments about the rights we can assert against each other." The support offered to another mother is on the grounds of her motherhood and her child's right to have a mother who is capable of responding to her needs. This motivation is in competition with the rights of the writer to walk away from the situation and her moral position of the centrality of independence as an aspect of adulthood.

Dean (2010:2) goes on to say that "it is through contests over human need that social policy is made." This is particularly pertinent to the issue of lone motherhood within neo-liberal discourse. Single parenthood is a focus for welfare intervention because of

the “tensions and conflicts around women’s dual role” in “articulating public and private realms in the ‘dual shift’ of waged and unwaged labour” (Clarke, 2004: 32). A key shift in welfare provision under the neo-liberal project beginning with the retrenchment of the welfare state in the 1970s has been the move away from protecting people from the market to a social investment state which “seeks to facilitate the integration of people into the market... Individual security in such a context is viewed as resulting from a capacity to change” (Fawcett et. al., 2004: 5). This is what the writer is asking of her friend – to change, to be stronger, to be tougher. However, this message is then modified because there is a recognition that being tough is difficult to take and responsibility can be overwhelming.

However, within the story, the two mothers also highlight another issue for social policy; that which Pickvance (2007:659) characterises as the distinction between “horizontal” and “vertical” dimensions of need. The proportion of the population in need is referred to as the ‘horizontal’ dimension. In other words, it relates to a ‘head-count’ of those who could be considered belonging to a welfare category – such as single mothers. However, the level of need is referred to as the ‘vertical’ dimension and this is used to consider the level of support and benefit needed per person. Within this story, the level of need between the two mothers is initially presented as very different. One proposes independence, whilst the other is suggestive of dependence. It is only on closer examination that both can be said to demonstrate the role of inter-dependence in meeting quite different needs within similar relationships.

The following story also puts the role of motherhood under the spotlight. Manning (2007: 79) states:

*The needs that should be met have generally been identified as those that alternative institutions such as the market and the family have failed to meet.*

In Need #1 the market produced and provided for the need. In Need #2, an illegal market manufactured a need which required offers of friendly support and which could also be identified as a potential site for state intervention with services provided for those who use drugs. In Need #3, need is envisaged as (inter-) dependence provided through partnerships and friends. However, in Need #4, the story is concerned with the

neglect of need, and a situation in which market, family, friends and state all fail to provide.

#### **Need # 4 – Not the Waltons**

She was the second of nine, quite shocking by today's standards and also difficult to comprehend. The Waltons, it was not. She used to get so angry with her elder sister who never cared about anything but herself, unlike her who felt she just had to keep the peace. Her mother was a nasty piece of work when she had a mind to take her moods out on someone and fortunately, it wasn't her. Well it wasn't as long as she kept the peace in the house. She loved her Dad but he did not live in the real world, he came home to a tidy house and food on the table. He did not ask who did it. He did not know, or she thought he did not know, what was going on in the house.

Although she hated her mother, she felt that as long as she did her mother's bidding they all would be safe from her tirades. Her mother could be quite terrifying, so much so sisters and brother were taking each other to A and E for stitches and concussion on a regular basis. Why did no-one ever question why the family had so many visits to A and E?

She chides herself, she knew then, at that time, children were not listened to. It was no one's fault. It was the way it was then. Who would believe a kid?

She loved her sisters and brother they were united in their neglect, but at the same time, she hated them. They should not have been her responsibility. Her parents should have been looking after them. It was a large family and she and her sisters and brother got a lot of abuse at school because it was obvious that they were neglected. She knew they were poor and often scruffy and it did something to her inner self. She felt she had to protect herself and her siblings so she lashed out the only way she knew how and that was by pretending to be hard, don't come near me or mine or I'll hit you, defence being the best form of attack. She was always in trouble at school, because she was always playing truant. She did not like school. She did not have a problem with the lessons she was quite bright really. Her reports would come back with "she has the capability she just needs to attend school." She managed to stay in the A stream all the way through school, but she knew she was not like the other kids. For

a start, she was so mature and capable. And after the dragon lady left, her skills were tested to the full as she now was full-time Mum. She cooked and cleaned, a modern day Cinderella. She often felt sorry for herself but no one cared. She had taken on a role. She could not let her Dad down. Who else was going to do it?

She did not know how to make it change. She was just dumped with it. No one was going to help her. This was not what it was meant to be. Where was her childhood? Why was no one looking after her interests? Why was there no one to talk to? Why did no one even notice?

The plot is a tale of a daughter from within a large family taking on the responsibility to provide care for her siblings and father, to cover the shortfall in her mother's attention and her violence. However, when the mother leaves, this marks an increase in the responsibility of the daughter. This is a story about a thwarted childhood. To make the point about the context of this particular childhood, the writer draws on children's cultural references. For example, the first comparison is with *The Waltons* – an idealised large television family living in Virginia during the depression of the 1930s, in which roles are divided (along gendered and generational lines) and responsibility is shared. The text also references a “dragon lady”; the mother is cast as a villain. The daughter becomes “a modern day Cinderella”, without a Prince Charming to rescue her.

Another key rhetorical device employed in the text is the use of questions. There are two kinds of questions – those by the child often appearing en bloc, one after another, mimicking the questioning of the curious child. But there are also those that remain unasked, by the father, the school, and the hospital A and E department. The use of questions highlights two aspects of need. The first is to draw attention to what happens when questions are not answered. The effect is to produce the opposite of attending to need – neglect. The second aspect the questioning draws attention to is how to get heard, how to get questions asked about you – in other words, it highlights the question of recognition.

Starting with neglect, it is the most common category under which children are subject to child protection plans (44.4% at year ending March 2010 in England (DfE, 2010)). It is defined as:

*... the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development (DH, 2006: para 1.33)*

The definition goes on to list potential failings of parents/carers in relation to child neglect, many of which could be used in this case, such as failure to ensure adequate supervision or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

The story builds a complex picture about who is in need and who is being neglectful. As Howarth (2007:3) makes clear "neglect is not a static phenomenon". It is instead a multi-faceted, relational concept which alters according to time, place, expectations and values. In particular, neglect is currently discussed in terms of parenting expectations and ability (or not) to meet children's needs (Churchill, 2011). Neglect is the result of not meeting need, an acknowledgement that unmet need can lead to harm (Lister, 2010).

This story draws attention to some of the forms of harm which neglect can produce within a family. It also shows how, even within one family, neglect can have different outcomes, with physical punishments metered out differentially ("fortunately, it wasn't her. Well, it wasn't as long as she kept peace in the house"), emotional attachments (the elder sister who "never cared for anything but herself") and responsibility. The writer of this piece finds herself, by the end, taking on responsibility for siblings and father.

Neglect is also evident in the story by a consideration of the writer's material position. "She knew they were poor and often scruffy". This is of key importance to the experience of the writer's neglect. She states, "it did something to her inner self" carrying around the signs of her material need. Her need to protect herself "by pretending to be hard" is congruent with research that show that children living within poverty are often bullied for their inability to demonstrate participation in consumption (Ridge, 2002). The writer knew she was poor and suspected that others could tell. As Dean (2010: 30) says:

*The reality of material need declares itself through a variety of detectable evidence, signs, fashions and claims.*

Identifying these declarations of material need is a part of the social work role in assessment. This case highlights some of those issues around assessment. Buchanan (2007) argues that the original 1989 Children Act saw Children in Need as different to those categorised as at risk or looked-after and that children in need could be offered preventative services. However, the Victoria Climbié Inquiry suggested that seeing children in need as different to those requiring protection was not always tenable. Yet this writer could be inserted into another category of need – a young carer. The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to inform young carers of their right to an assessment. In particular, young children should be offered an assessment under section 17 of the Children Act as a “child in need”.

The term ‘young carer’ is relatively new to social policy, and could be applied to the writer of this piece. She is engaged in a range of ‘caring activities’ that characterise the role such as practical tasks, physical care, emotional labour and looking after siblings (Fawcett et. al., 2004). As a new policy category, approaches to provision are still being established and the theoretical debates underpinning services are still being negotiated. As with many other welfare groups, there is a tension between non-stigmatising, universalised services and targeted, specialised services (Fawcett et. al, 2004). However, a more keen tension is the issue of the carer versus the cared-for within models of disability. Advocates of the social model of disability ask policy-makers and practitioners to consider the construction of disability in discourses surrounding the needs of young carers. For example, Morris, (1997) argues that the construction of children as a welfare category, such as ‘young carer’, undermines their rights as children and their parents’ rights to services.

However, this story is not about a young carer substituting for appropriate care and support within a model of oppression related to disability or illness. She is rather the victim of incompetency: her mother’s, her father’s and services who could have intervened. The lack of questioning, from those services, means even ‘basic needs’ emerge as discretionary at the interface between the needy individual and service providers. This brings into question the prevailing ways discussions of needs are

divided. Indeed the tenability of the distinction between need and want becomes questionable, since clearly claims to need are not inviolable in practice. The writer's role as carer remains invisible to external scrutiny. The central appeal of this story is to be heard and to have children's voices addressed. When the writer states: "It was the way it was then. Who would believe a kid?" she is suggesting that at the historical point of her story, children's voices, stories and experiences were considered unimportant. Implicit is that this may now have changed. Within a performance of social work, this is a recognition of a central discourse of contemporary social work – children's rights.

In 1989, the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) was opened to signature. It has since become the most widely ratified human rights instrument in history. The UK is a signatory and the convention is enshrined in UK legislation through the Children Act 1989. For this reason, children's rights have become a staple of social work education. The centrality to social work education, however, is not necessarily reflected in policy. Since its ratification the UK government has submitted three progress reports to the United Nations Committee on the rights of the child. Each submission has been followed by an increasing number of recommendations and concerns linked to research about the legal standing, material circumstances and well being of children in the UK. Payne (2009:151) makes the point:

*... children's rights in the UK have remained relatively invisible in the majority of government papers, debates, proposals and laws. To date any reference to the CRC [Children's Rights Convention] has been tagged onto policies rather than used as the starting point for policy development or legal reform.*

This can be seen in direct contrast to Human Rights legislation which is believed to hold a greater sway over legal and political decision making. Archard (2004) points to the tension in supporting children rights between the participation and protection rights afforded by the convention. This is not necessarily that different to the liberty and welfare rights provided to adults under the Human Rights Act (1998), but as Archard (2004:60) suggests, "we tend to think that children are in need of forms of protection it is inappropriate to accord to adults."

So the question remains “Who would believe a kid?” As a phrase it conjures up the Hegelian concept of recognition. In a discussion of need, that cites material deprivation and exclusion from services, it relates closely to Fraser’s (2008, 2009) discussion of social justice through both redistribution and recognition. Fraser (2008: 12) states:

*Struggles for recognition occur in a world of exacerbated material inequality.*

Fraser’s conclusion then is that “justice today requires both redistribution and recognition” (ibid). To relate this back to the story, the child at the centre needs financial support and welfare services and this can only be achieved alongside recognition of her role as a carer. Fraser’s arguments can be made most explicit through the use of this story. However, issues of recognition and redistribution in relation to need can be found in all four accounts.

### **Need – the local and the global**

Opening up all four stories to a consideration of redistribution and recognition offers another perspective, or way of seeing, the stories’ dilemmas. In *Not the Waltons* the lack of curiosity, the refusal to ask questions led to a refusal to see the writer’s position as a neglected child. What other questions could be asked in relation to need in the other stories in order to recognise those in need and to open up the context of power which positions some needs as recognisable and others as faceless?

Recognition is central to the dilemma in *A Friend in Need*. In order to provide support, the writer had to acknowledge or recognise her friend as a mother. She undertook a process to develop that identification that draws upon the resource of vulnerability. Butler (2004: 30 – 31) argues that vulnerability is both a site of deprivation, but also an essential human resource to understand “thwarted need”. This can be read on many levels. Within social work training this use of vulnerability is often used to develop empathy in inter-personal relationships. However, it is also a tool that can be used in understanding wider contexts, to acknowledge which lives, voices, experiences become valued within policy.



*The Tracksuit* can also be re-appraised looking at the issues of redistribution and recognition. First, the market appears to lead to a distortion of the redistribution element of social justice, as the writer appears to be using benefits for the purchase of a luxury item. Second, it could be argued that unlike the writer of *A Friend in Need*, this writer refuses to access the resources offered by vulnerability by not considering Mya's similar 'need' for the tracksuit. However, the issue of recognition being distorted by the market runs deeper and wider than these first two issues suggest. Fraser (2009:2) argues that in

*.. the heyday of social democracy... it went without saying that the unit within which justice applied was the modern territorial state.*

However, today the use of the state both as a location of justice and its boundary is less feasible. The market not only distorts local relationships, but the international. The right to purchase could be balanced against the rights of those who produce. Juicy Couture is an American-owned brand, but its goods are manufactured in China. China might not have the same reputation for sweat shop production as, for example, Bangladesh. However, nor does it provide the same level of worker's rights and health and safety requirements which could be found in the UK, as recent findings into the production of Apple goods have found (Garside in the Guardian, 2012). Furthermore, the supply of cotton in manufacture of many fashion goods can be traced to slave labour in Uzbekistan (Anti-Slavery, 2012). The market leads the relationship of the two friends at the centre vulnerable to competition. However, as Butler (2004: xii) points out:

*There are ways of distributing vulnerability, differential forms of allocation that make some populations more subject to arbitrary violence than others.*

The invisibility of production also occurs within the illegal markets portrayed in *Drugs*. In terms of social justice, addiction in the West has been used as justification to intervene in non-Western states. The Afghan heroin trade was a part of Blair's New Labour government's justification for invasion (Travis in the Guardian, 2002). The murder of five heroin-addicted mothers working as prostitutes in Ipswich in 2007 brought the role of addiction into the spotlight. It highlighted the precarious nature of

existence of those living with it. However, the Afghan war also appropriated feminist arguments about tackling the Taliban's treatment of women as just cause for forced regime change. Butler (2004: 143) offers an account of the portrayal of Afghan women in the US media. She asks:

*Similarly, although we might want to champion the suddenly bared faces of the young Afghan women as the celebration of the human we have to ask in what narrative function these images are mobilised, whether the incursion into Afghanistan was really in the name of feminism, and in what form of feminism did it belatedly clothe itself. Most importantly, though, it seems we have to ask what scenes of pain and grief these images cover over and derealize.*

These are questions designed to address issues of inequality in recognition and to address social justice by refusing to see women in these situations as merely freed captives of savage 'others'. Alongside this, when feminist activists point to the violence being done in 'their name', they are also judged harshly, their positions questioned and their rights to public speech dismissed (Thobani, 2001). The needs of addicted sex-workers in the UK should not be balanced against the needs of oppressed and silenced women in Afghanistan. Instead there should be an acknowledgement that the usual scales of justice are not appropriate here. Fraser (2009) uses the term "scales of justice" not just to refer to the metaphor of balance and the elusive hunt for the impartial judge, but also the "geographic metric for representing spatial relationships". She argues:

*By partitioning political space along territorial lines, this principle insulates extra- and non-territorial powers from the reach of justice. In a globalizing world, therefore, it is less likely to serve as a remedy for misframing than as a means of inflicting or perpetuating it.*  
(Fraser, 2009: 23)

## Conclusion

This chapter began by aiming to look at when need becomes a social problem, and by acknowledging that discourses of ‘need’ position people in relation to it. The stories produced by the students have led to an investigation which places need as central to ideas of social justice. In Fraser’s words, “Globalisation is changing the way we argue about justice” (2009: 12). If it is accepted that discourses of need were a key part of the power relations within post second world war international development we can see this as a continuing pattern. Certain countries are still being positioned as ‘needy’ and others as the helpers. Help continues to be provided on conditional grounds as qualifying “demands by the World Bank and IMF have put pressure on most states to ‘restructure’ which has often meant shrinking the state apparatus, its support of needy citizens and the abolition of state protectionism against the global market” (Yuval-Davies, 2011: 62). Patterns of power in relation to need remain international and usually along colonised and racialised lines. However, the impacts of this can also be detected in and connected to local relations.

Therefore, the impact of the cue ‘need’ and the stories generated has been to relate the project back to ideas of social justice. “Social justice is a primary goal of social work” (Weiss et. al., 2006: 789). The role of social policy within social work education is to enhance the delivery of social justice in particular through an understanding of structures and policy upon service-users. Weiss et. al. (2006) goes on to argue that social workers should also be involved in policy practice and intervene in the policy process. However, an understanding of policy and structure is not enough. It also requires empathy and the recognition of the ‘other’.

What these stories provide are examples of how difficult empathy can be and how it is possible to position oneself in opposition to those in need. As a resource for the classroom, the stories illustrate (especially *Drugs* and *A Friend in Need*) the negotiation required to keep others’ perspectives in mind and how practice can mirror that negotiation of distance and proximity. *Not the Waltons*, however, illustrates what happens when distance is maintained.

All four women have presented themselves from a different position in relation to need. This has provided an opportunity to explore the concept from a number of perspectives. Conclusions that can be drawn from this exercise highlight that need is not always self-evident. It can be detected in the material signs of neglect; it can be ascribed to another person; it can be manufactured; it can be unmet and lead to harm. However, to tackle need requires not only a redistribution of resources, but recognition of and attention to others. This can only be achieved by acknowledging the limits of any one perspective. It is for this reason that the next chapter will look more fully at the perspective(s) of social policy and its ability to support knowledge and vision.

## Chapter Nine – Violence and Knowing

*No-one engaged in thought about history and politics can remain unaware of the enormous role violence has always played in human affairs, and it is at first glance rather surprising that violence has been singled out so seldom for special consideration.*

(Arendt, 1969: 8)

### Introduction

Educational action research is characterised by its “open-ended, free enquiry” (McNiff et. al., 2003: 28), relying on connected cycles of change. Using a method of action and investigation to support one identified problem can lead to the uncovering or foregrounding of others. The Writing Stories project was my attempt to improve engagement of social work students with social policy teaching by trying to use accounts of personal lives and reading them alongside public policy. However, the project elicited a number of stories about violence. Violence was not a cue chosen by any groups, nor would I have suggested it as a cue for my students. Yet violence occurred and recurred in the texts they produced in many forms. Stories that were about violence could be found under the cues: Protection, Control, Need and Risk. The unlawful killing of a student’s father was also mentioned under the cue Positive. Sometimes the violence was centre-stage; sometimes it was merely glanced; sometimes it was only there as a threat. The new problem was not simply one of engagement with social policy, but to consider the role of violence in the social. In particular, to consider how violence shapes knowledge and ways of knowing.

Memory work was envisaged by the original collective to consider the mundane, the everyday, rather than the sensitive or the harrowing. Farrar (2001: 3) suggests that the method could “provide the opportunity for women to confront and challenge sensitive issues” but also recounts that using the method was “too painful to continue” (ibid: 5) when confronting the deeply personal. However, in this project I have read about an armed robbery, sexual assault, domestic violence, childhood sexual abuse, child neglect and rape. At first, I read this potential disconnect between the method and the data as a

result and a part of the students refashioning of the method. They rarely followed the original brief of providing fragments of a detailed memory. Instead they generally preferred to produce crafted narratives, which require climatic or dramatic action. However, that as a single explanation would homogenise the diversity of the writings and portrayals of violence. It would also suggest that violence was always experienced as dramatic, when in many of the stories it was expected; it was portrayed as commonplace.

My approach to this chapter differs to those before it. In previous chapters I have placed the concept that formed the cue at the beginning and related it to social work and policy. I have then examined the stories as performative narratives fashioned by social work students. Then conclusions have been drawn about the constructions of the concept and the narratives, attempting to show how social political discourses shape subjective presentations of self and how subjects respond to or resist those shaping discourses. In this chapter, however, instead of starting with stories generated by a particular cue, the chapter is concerned with a cue (Violence) generated by the stories. In other chapters, the stories have been in dialogue with social work and social policy texts. They have worked to elucidate the discipline of social policy as it is taught within social work. For this chapter, the stories have led to an investigation of knowledge within the discipline; how it is produced, reproduced, understood, accepted and resisted. This builds on a paper delivered at the 2012 Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development entitled “Challenging the banality of violence against women in student social workers’ stories.”

This emphasis came from my initial investigation into the texts. I was interested in how and why the students had written about violence. Haug (2001) as a visiting lecturer in Toronto discovered a prevalence of abuse stories. On trying to engage students in the process of Memory Work, she found:

*They refused to do memory work, demanded special measures of safety, asked for at least two additional therapists and wanted to know if I could handle this. It took me three weeks to understand that they had evidently assumed Memory Work meant that they would be expected to reveal an incestuous past, an idea that they found fascinating and horrible in equal measure”*

(Haug, 2001: 56)

Whilst Haug's students refused, my students were prepared to share.

I should acknowledge that I was not entirely surprised by the level of disclosure in the stories. At the time of their production I was one of only two female members of staff in a predominantly male teaching team. I had experienced this level of disclosure before as I was often the chosen member of staff for such discussion because of my self-identification as a feminist. Issues of boundaries, disclosure and self-disclosure are always reflexive and I had ensured in my research proposal and practice that I had considered avenues of support for students who might need it. I knew these stories were a part of the make-up of the students. I had been exposed to them prior to the project, as a part of the politics of emotional labour that female staff encounter in the academy. Indeed, part of what I wanted to explicate was the move from service-user to service-provider for some social work students; how they could position themselves in relation to those who now need services.

However, the new dimension to consider within this process was the impact on other students. Morley (1998: 24) had similar findings.

*It would be misleading to suggest that only teachers undertake emotional labour. Several students in my study commented on how demanding they found group work. Giving support and attention, listening to others, working through differences were often experienced as painful and difficult.*

Therefore, what was different for these students to my prior experiences of student disclosure was the audience. They knew it would be shared with their peers and that their peers would need to be trusted to use the knowledge appropriately.

Of course attributing motivation to why the students on my project were prepared to write such stories is fraught with difficulty, as this cannot be known. Only suggestions that acknowledge the social and power relations involved in the stories' production can be made. That students were prepared to share, sometimes for the first time, difficult episodes in their lives could be an example of Furedi's (2004: 40) observation that the

“act of sharing – that is turning private troubles into public stories – strongly resonates with current cultural norms”. Furedi relates this to an internalisation of the self-help model and the marketisation of the social experience. Whereas Foucault (1978: 60) sees the need for disclosure as inscribed in power relations – “the obligation to confess is now relayed through so many different points that we no longer perceive it as the effects of a power that constrains us.” And it is important to recognise the context of the production of these texts regarding violence. The students writing were aware that they were occupying a role of trainee in human services relating to care and control. Using Furedi, it could be argued that the students were offering these stories in the knowledge that “openness to seeking help is culturally represented as virtuous behaviour” (2004: 37). The suggestion is that to be in a position to be perceived as able to help others, they must have been open about their own pasts. Furthermore, those pasts must align them with the concerns of social work.

Asking “why?” stories are written can only be a question of informed conjecture. The understanding of “how” they have written about violence becomes an issue of analysis and interpretation. As Brison (2003: xi) says:

*How can we speak about the unspeakable without attempting to render it intelligible and sayable?*

A key issue that lingered following my first reading of the stories was that although some accounts of violence were dramatic, in many of the stories there was a sense of inevitability surrounding the violence. Examples of phrases I would keep returning to included:

*“... she knew what was coming” (Violence #1)*

*“...but knew all too well what it meant and what was about to happen”  
(Violence #2)*

*“She uses the opportunity to ring Becky and tell her that she is to ring the police at 10 am if she hasn’t turned up and ask them to attend a domestic at her house,*



*knowing that when they got back he would lock the door and take the phone.”*  
(Violence #4)

On first reading these phrases gave the violence credibility and acceptance. I wanted to challenge that. This came from my feminist impulse that “we deal with the ‘ordinary and everyday’ violence in women’s lives” (Stanko, 2006: 546).

However, on further reading and through the act of typing out the phrases my emphasis was changed. The phrases all highlighted the issue of knowledge. They all knew what was going to happen. This knowledge was something they possessed and it became a question of how their knowledge complemented or clashed with the knowledge provided through social work training.

### **Domestic Violence within Social Policy: Choosing a Sample**

As noted above the stories of violence were to be found throughout the project. The stories were diverse and provided a complex portrayal of violence within society. For this chapter, I have chosen to focus on what could broadly come under the heading of domestic violence. Before explaining this emphasis, it is worth commenting on the term domestic violence and its definitions. It is a problematic term, not least because of its gender neutral connotations which can be found in the definition below. Domestic violence has been most recently defined within a consultation document as:

*...any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.*  
(Home Office, 2011: 6)

The Home Office consultation was to consider the benefits of widening the definition to include coercive control and 16/17 year olds or all those under 18. This suggestion was in recognition that the current definition excludes the experience of young women who in turn will have problems naming their experience (Harne and Radford, 2008). However, through other constructions of womanhood, although not explicitly excluded from the definition there are a number of women who have found themselves excluded

from research and/or services concerned with domestic violence. For example Harne and Radford (2008) list disabled women, migrant women, and women living within traveller communities as well as those under the age of 18.

A further problem with the term is the word “domestic”. It is an adjective which often diminishes the value of its noun. (For example, domestic science does not elevate the subject to a level with physics). However, more importantly, it suggests that the violence must take place within the home, whereas violence from partners, ex-partners and family members can take place in many different settings. Nevertheless it is a term that retains some currency and understanding and that is why I have chosen to use it within this context.

My focus on domestic violence is for a number of reasons, not least that I am often engaged with domestic violence as an aspect of pastoral support for students. This was particularly true at the time of the field research, where I was often singled out for such disclosure and support by students by my gender (within a predominantly male teaching team) and my own self-imposed label of feminist. From the perspective of a social work educator, it seems imperative to understand violence as experienced by students as a part of a critical humanist approach in ensuring that the site of education is a safe place to reflect on the experience. (If the wider aim of the project is to improve engagement, the existence of violence must surely contribute to disengagement). However, these students make valuable contributions to the classroom and it is also important to acknowledge the contribution of practitioners to the field of domestic violence who are also survivors of it (Hague and Mullender, 2005).

Alongside concerns about improving my own practice in relation to pastoral support for students both in and outside of the classroom, the focus on domestic violence is in recognition that in order to address violence in women’s lives, research should be driven by the values from the “inspiring contributions of other service-user movements which have self-organised over recent years to challenge poor or discriminatory services” (Hague and Mullender, 2005: 148) and have theorised from attending to the words and experiences of the discriminated against. As Swigonski says (1993: 171) “If social workers could agree on one thing, it would most likely be that their primary imperative is to ‘begin where the client is’. Yet much social work research begins from

the privileged perspective of those who control the social structures.” I wanted to attend to these texts, begin from where the students are and acknowledge their understanding and knowledge of a subject that may feel at odds with the understanding and knowledge offered by the academy. This is of course a reflection of standpoint theory and its attempts to decentre knowledge.

*Standpoint epistemologies have long counted among the most powerful challenges to the conventional view that true knowledge is value-free, disinterested and situationally transcendent.*

(Pels, 2004: 273)

I am also concerned to mainstream the issue of domestic violence into social policy. Currently, whilst many books about domestic violence draw upon social policy, general texts on social policy do not cover the topic at all or give it scant regard. (For example, it is not indexed in Spicker (2008) or Alcock et. al. (2008) and is given 2 pages in over 600 in Baldock et. al. (2007) – all mention crime, but a key feature of domestic violence is that not all aspects of domestic violence are criminalised (Harne and Radford, 2008)). This omission is important because “social policy defines the boundaries of state responsibility or state responsiveness to social and criminal harm” (Stanko, 2006: 551). This absence is reflected within the social work curriculum, where domestic violence is considered, but not necessarily within social policy. Instead, it is covered in modules concerned with professional practice skills, therefore not granting the full context to the work.

The stories I have chosen for my investigation into this topic are:

Violence #1 – A story of incest committed against a daughter by a step father (written to the cue Protection)

Violence #2 – Violence against a woman by a male partner (written to the cue Protection)

Violence #3 – Violence against a teenage girl by an older boyfriend in front of peers (written to the cue Control)

Violence #4 – Suspected and threatened violence against a woman by a male partner (written to the cue Control).

All of the stories feature either the threat or the reality of physical and/or sexual violence. This sample is problematic. From my student cohort, I could not get a full range of the violence experienced within familial or intimate relationships (thankfully) and the nature of the writing has meant that much of the narratives have concentrated on a particularly dramatic episode, which may work against the notion that domestic violence is characterised less by the one-off incident, but is continuing in nature with a cumulative impact (Harne and Radford, 2008). However, all the stories provide clues that the episode described is a part of a wider story and builds on previous experiences. This is often done through an appeal to a form of shared understanding or knowledge. It is this which I wish to investigate.

### **Domestic Violence within Social Policy – an exploration of knowledge and knowledge production**

Social policy draws on a range of sources and processes in order to shape its knowledge base. These could be broadly categorised as: history, research (both quantitative and qualitative), analysis/evaluation of process and theoretical positions (taken from within the discipline through phronetic approaches and from wider reading). The strength of the discipline comes from a review of and reflection on all sources, although often certain forms of knowledge production are privileged through disciplinary policing. (A quick perusal of the Journal of Social Policy articles in 2011 shows that there is a wide range of writing within the discipline with most articles giving historical context to research findings. There is also a healthy mix of articles concerned with political commentary, methodological discussion and research findings both quantitative and qualitative. However, whilst the content reflects a wide range of approaches, there is also a noticeably higher number of quantitative studies and a reliance on numerical tables in many of the articles, compared to qualitative studies. It is also worth noting that within that 12 month period, domestic violence was not one of the issues covered.)

The variety of approaches within the discipline could be said to mirror Burawoy's (2005) taxonomy of sociological types: professional, critical, policy and public, each of which have a different engagement with the discipline, the public and policy makers.

There are tensions between these traditions which provide a rich insight into the discipline's main purpose which is "the study of human well-being" (Dean, 2006: 1). Considering the complex picture of social policy knowledge it becomes difficult to map its understanding of domestic violence. However, it is worth considering some of the discipline's key resources to build an understanding of the issue and how it can be relayed to students.

### Historical approaches

History is "both an academic study or discipline as well as a narrative or chronology of past events" (Gladstone, 2008:19). Within social policy the role of historical analysis is not just to describe change but to explain it. However, constructing a history in relation to domestic violence is fraught with difficulties. Domestic violence is a contemporary term and reflects a current dominant position towards intimate relations. It is a term that is not reflective of all periods within the struggle to engage with the issue of violence. What currently counts as domestic violence and therefore unacceptable is not easily traced through a period where gender relations have undergone considerable change.

A second problem relates to the term domestic violence and its potential for gender neutrality. That women have been "hidden from history" (Rowbotham, 1973) has become an established tenet of feminism. Kelly-Gadol (1987: 15) writes:

*Women's history has a dual goal: to restore women to history and to restore our history to women*

This is an ongoing practice and our understanding of the role of women's activity will continue to be developed. Therefore, any history now can only be partial at best. It should also be noted that within that process some women are finding their place in history more easily than others.

*Amongst all the books I have on my shelves about feminist knowledge, philosophy and politics, research which deals with areas of women's lives such as employment and motherhood, writings on domestic violence, reproductive*

*rights, feminist perspectives on the welfare state, on child abuse and so on – not one deals with the experience of disabled women.*

(Morris, 1996: 1)

Within my teaching I have used a series of quotes from feminist writers that demonstrate how at some point they have felt excluded from feminism by dint of their (dis)abilities, colour, class, sexuality or any combination of the above. Feminism, in the main, aims to rise to these challenges. Therefore, in offering any history I know that there is a need to be mindful of the diversity of women's experience.

However, a key problem with historical approaches within social policy is how to present it. "Today, any attempt to construct a 'grand narrative' is widely seen as both misguided and old fashioned" (Bryson, 2003: 2). Yet the story matters. As Bolton (2010: 9) goes on to say: "A story is an attempt to create order and security out of a chaotic world; strong stories have unique power to make sense of issues".

There is a history that is told about domestic violence that can, to some extent, be mapped onto a similar narrative of feminist waves of struggle, which begins with early legislation linked to first wave feminism such as the 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act which widened the availability for divorce and allowed women to divorce cruel husbands.

Second wave feminism is generally regarded as the resurgence of feminist thought after the Second World War and linked to other civil rights movements. As Dobash and Dobash (2000: 189) state: "It is critical that the battered women's movement in Britain and the USA began in the 1970s when governments were generally more interventionist and welfare orientated." The 1970s certainly saw a rise in provision. In 1972 there were six refuges in the UK and by 1975 there were 38 (Harne and Radford, 2008).

In keeping with feminist thought and third wave thinking, there has since been an engagement with issues of diversity and global perspectives. Harne and Radford (2008: ix) state:

*The recognition of domestic violence by the United Nations as a human rights abuse in the 1990s has meant that domestic violence has achieved a much greater profile and in terms of law and policy development in many countries.*

So, a key aspect of the narrative of domestic violence is that through the struggle of “women’s groups who brought the problem onto a world stage and sought social and political changes and interventions” (Dobash and Dobash, 2000: 187) domestic violence is now recognised and debated on a global scale. This has led to the “wider recognition that domestic violence is about perpetrator power and control over women” (Harne and Radford, 2000: ix – x), and there has been an increase in the range of behaviours and situations covered. In UK terms, this has meant an increase in the criminalisation of domestic violence. However, if the struggle for recognition of and action to end violence in women’s lives can be mapped onto the history of the wider women’s movement, this means that it is also at a point of establishing a fourth wave of action and theorising.

### Quantitative Research

Historical perspectives offer the discipline a way of considering and describing the circumstances and processes by which a personal problem can become a public issue. Quantitative data can provide a snapshot of the extent of an issue through statistics of incidence, prevalence, distribution and intensity (Spicker, 2008). Over time these statistics contribute to the narrative by providing trends and patterns. Many feminist commentators have pointed to the problem of trying to provide quantitative accounts of the prevalence of domestic violence and also which women will appear in statistics. Gupta (2003) has expressed concern that the murders of South Asian women have been concealed as accidents or suicides. Harne and Radford (2008) provide a detailed critique of the problems of the British Crime Survey in relation to domestic violence with problems of naming the experience both by victims and police officers, leading to under-reporting. Hitchings (2005) has underlined the difficulties that potential criminalisation of offenders could have in reducing reporting in her discussion of the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act (2004) and its blurring of civil and criminal law.

These are important discussions as any evaluation of the success of policy interventions will use such statistics to justify further funding or resource cuts in the sector.

However, quantitative research has been crucial in highlighting both the prevalence of domestic violence and its gendered nature. There is a stark, oft-cited statistic when considering the role of violence in women's lives. On average, two women a week are killed by a violent partner or ex-partner. This constitutes nearly 40% of all female homicide victims (Home Office, 2006). The vast majority of survivors who seek help from the police, support agencies and health services are women and that in terms of perpetrators men outnumber women in all major crime categories (Home Office, 2006). What this means is that although domestic violence is still often referred to as a hidden crime, many women know exactly what its impact is. This includes the women amongst the student group. They do not have to imagine the situation. It is a reality.

Social policy is also concerned with responses to a problem and quantitative data is also available to consider resources aimed at an issue. Alongside concerns that the recession will provide an increase in violence against women, austerity measures are already having an impact on protection and safety. According to Walby and Towers (2011) in 2011, 230 women were turned away by Women's Aid because of a lack of space. 31% of funding to the sector was cut by Local Authorities between 2010/11 and 2011/12. Just as ideology played a role in the increase of refuge provision in the 1970s, it is possible that it is playing a role in its reduction now.

### Qualitative Research

However, these figures alone do not demonstrate the impact of violence in women's (and men's) lives. Qualitative research provides insight to some of the issues experienced by women facing violence. The ESRC have funded research into the issue of violence which was reviewed by Stanko in 2006, who used the opportunity to highlight three key findings. First among these was that violence is not hidden.

It has become a cliché of domestic violence that it is often cited as taboo, or can only be discussed in hushed tones. However, this does not stand up to the evidence. We know how often police take calls on domestic violence. We know how likely women are to lose their lives. Stanko (2006) lists the number of ways in which violence is



documented and recorded in public service (police records, GP notes, social work files, etc.) as well as the less formal information held by family and friends. My own work supports this. Alongside these stories I have been the confidant of many students about previous or ongoing domestic abuse. That students are surviving or have survived violence is not hidden. However, choices are made about to whom it is disclosed and in what circumstances it can be recorded. These stories are testament to the role that qualitative research plays in the continued search to have women's stories heard and to explicate the conditions for and constraints upon the speaking and hearing of such stories.

Stanko's second point is that gender matters in any discussion of violence, not simply as a variable about perpetrator and victim, but also as a recognition that gender is a social relation. Gender is a key ingredient in our cultural understanding and interpretations of violence and whether to treat it as natural, condemn it or even acknowledge it. It is through an examination of the gender relations that we can consider the assumptions that are made about the normalising discourses of violence. For example, the question "Why don't they leave?" (Glass, 1995) can be deconstructed to consider who is placed as at fault. Jones (1980) makes the point that it would be more telling to ask why men don't let them go, highlighting issues of possession and diminishing victim-blaming.

Stanko's third point is that people's accounts matter. For Stanko they matter because "the accounts of people help to expose the rules of engagement for violence" (2006: 554). These narratives produced by the students within this project matter because they show some of the strategies that women adopt in order to manage and minimise the damage of their perpetrator's actions. Whilst some of these strategies are about resorting to taking responsibility for somebody else's action through discourses of "self-blame" or "hurting the ones you love", these stories are also performative of the role of social work trainees and often examples of having overcome adversity. These women have survived and are here (in the space of social work training) to tell their tale.

This is particularly important in considering provision for domestic violence survivors. Provision was a key demand of feminist struggles, built on attempts to understand

women's experiences. However, this is an area in which some women now feel silenced. Hague and Mullender (2005: 151) in their research found that:

*The majority of the women interviewed felt that service providers overlooked their views to a considerable extent, and their needs were not adequately met. They felt silenced, regarded as not important and unable to achieve the type of service and policy responses which they sought.*

If services are to continue to develop, attention needs to be paid to the stories and strategies which women can provide about their survival. This should be done with an acknowledgement that the stories will be shaped by context and dominant discourses. In the case of the stories that the women students produced, there was little discussion of external state or voluntary sources to support them. This is telling when considering the “rules of engagement”.

#### Theoretical Resources – Neo-Liberalism and Bauman's Liquid Modernity

The use of quantitative and /or qualitative approaches in providing data suggests that ‘facts’ are “lying about waiting for the researcher to spot them” (Ramazanoglu, 2002: 154). However, ideological insight will shape the research question and answers. Research is as much about analysis as it is about investigation. This is true of both social policy and social work. “Interpretation is at the core of social work” (Gray and Webb, 2009: 3). Theory provides the intellectual foundation for interpreting the social world. In particular, it draws attention to the social and political context of policy and practice. In understanding the context of current policy direction and in interpreting quantitative and qualitative data, the use of theoretical perspectives adds insight. Current stories about domestic violence are best understood by considering dominant discourses – in particular the pervasive nature of neo-liberalism and its impact on subjectivity.

Neo-liberalism is often a focus of critique where it is “understood variously as an ideology, a hegemonic power, a policy framework, a set of initiatives and a government strategy” (Penna and O'Brien, 2009: 109). As its prefix denotes neo-liberalism is a new movement building on and adapting older ideas. Rather than suggesting a break with

the past, neo-liberalism is a movement of continuity, building on the ideas of Adam Smith's economic liberalism, which advocated a minimal role for the state in trade to allow for growth in entrepreneurship, it is a resurgence of pre-industrialisation liberalism. The timing of this resurgence is important. While the post-war writings of Friedman and Hayek are often quoted in relation to the theoretical basis for neo-liberalism, they found favour and an outlet for implementation as a result of the economic downturn in many western liberal democracies in the 1970s (Pratt, 2006). Alongside this, Sivanandan (2012) points to the technological revolution facilitating the break between national policies and protecting labour force. Neo-liberalism has also benefited from the loss of ground within alternative strategies. In particular, the key principles on which the policies of social democracy have been overturned or fallen out of favour. (See; for example, Runciman's (2006) account of the UK Labour Party over this period).

In other words, economic liberalism has recovered its dominance within western thought after a brief flirtation with Keynesian economics and social democracy. However, neo as a prefix also suggests a change in emphasis, a mutation or adaptation to previous thought. Whilst neo-liberal thought, like its predecessor, is concerned with rationality (Pratt, 2006) and a negative conception of freedom (George, 2001), the emphasis of neo-liberalism is the centrality of the market. The formulation that there is 'no alternative to the market' (Ferguson, 2004) has meant that all policy, including social, criminal and defence is seen primarily in economic and market terms. The role of the state is reduced to unfetter the market through "deregulation, privatisation and flexibilisation" (Lorenz, 2005: 93).

So, a key characteristic of neo-liberal thinking is 'more market'. This is accompanied by 'less state' and a plea for 'individual responsibility' (Lorenz, 2005). In practice, for the traditional public sector, this has led to "anti-welfarism and anti-statism" (Clarke, 2004: 30) and resulted in cuts to social spending (McGregor, 2001).

As an ideology, neo-liberalism has had a powerful reach and George (2001) suggests it is the driving force of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation. Clarke (2004) lists its mobilisation of power through military, economic, political, cultural and discursive forces. Clarke (2004: 30) defines the use of

discursive power as “neo-liberalism tells stories about the world, the future and how they will develop – and tries to make them come true.” It relies on a discourse of inevitability (Davies, 2008).

In order to tell stories, neoliberalism needs to identify an ideal subject. Clarke (2004) emphasises the need for the neo-liberal subject to be a responsible individual and is to be produced through policies aimed at responsible consumption of life-style choices and health services. McGregor (2001) also highlights the neo-liberal subject as someone who does not seek social solidarity but is a consumer. Bauman (2003: 69) describes this consumer as:

*... the lonely, self-concerned and self-centred shopper who has adopted the search for the best bargain as a cure for loneliness and knows of no other therapy... a character whose life-world is populated with other characters who share all these virtues but nothing else besides.*

This ideal subject marks the shift between pre-industrial liberal economic thought and current neo-liberalism. The subject of traditional thought is the economic individual “producing, buying and selling in order to maximise their utilities, without government interference” (Goodwin, 1987: 45). The neo-liberal subject is a reductionist version, seeing the primary role for the individual as consumer rather than producer. Both conceptions, however, hold problems for gender relations. As Philips (1987: 15) says of liberalism:

*Liberalism pretends we can be equal in the public sphere, when our differences are overwhelming in the private: it exhorts women to apply for good jobs while treating their babies as their private affair; it offers them equality with one hand and takes it away with the other.*

In other words, traditionally liberalism has exhorted the values of tolerance as a part of the pursuit of individual interest (Goodwin, 1987) without offering a structure to support difference, or even acknowledge the inter-dependency of gendered relations.

Neo-liberalism holds similar gendered constructions in its distrust of the state and the consequent shift of social responsibilities from the public sphere to the private it has drawn on an informal pool of carers (predominantly taken from female, older male and migrant sectors of the society).

*The conception of infinitely plastic female labour continues to underpin such privatisation even in the face of substantial change in the patterns of women's employment*

(Clarke, 2004: 33).

With its genderless rhetoric and gendered assumptions, women cannot easily be added back into neo-liberal ideas. Waylen (1986: 85) argues that “neo-liberalism is the antithesis of the ideas of the women's movement.”

Furthermore, the emphasis on the individual and individual actions and decisions has consequences for the feminised social care workforce. Neo-liberal ideas, use of “corporate management language and the prioritization of budget management and control” (Penna and O'Brien, 2009: 116) means social work could fall prey to privatising social relationships further (Lorenz, 2005: 97). This is evident in the field of domestic violence support. McDonald (2005) argues that neo-liberal, managerialist ideology has led away from the structuralist approaches of feminist interventions of the refuge movement to the de-politicised, clinicalised, pathologising of neo-liberalism in relation to social problems. Domestic violence is to be case-managed, rather than collectively resisted.

In summary, a key aspect of teaching social policy to social work students is to grasp the pervasive, transnational neo-liberal project and its impact on “what is encouraged, how things might be done” (Penna, 2003: 2). Neo-liberalism has brought with it a number of institutional changes. Importantly for social work it has sought to reduce the role of the state in public service. Social work is now seen primarily as a safety net for the most vulnerable rather than a preventative service for those experiencing difficulties. Current policies prefer to rely on market forces and private providers of social care, rather than the bureaucratic, universalising tendencies of public provision.

Underlying the principles of neo-liberalism is an imagined subject who is envisaged as an individual “free chooser” of a number of consumer choices. This subject forms a part of the discursive power of neo-liberalism and impacts on social, national and gender relations. Bauman’s recent writing has been concerned with the question of strategies for living in an age shaped by neo-liberal discourses. This concern arises from the Marxist principle that sociology should not just describe the world but change it (Blackshaw, 2005). However, he is also concerned to illustrate the problems of promoting social change in what he suggests is an era of ‘interregnum’ – “when the old ways of doing things no longer work, the old learned or inherited modes of life are no longer suitable for current *conditio humana*, but when the new ways of tackling the challenges and new modes of life better suited to the new conditions have not as yet been invented, put in place and set in operation” (Bauman, 2012: vii).

Within this discussion he utilises the metaphor of liquid modernity. Primarily his use of the metaphor is ascribed to the structural forms of life, which do not keep their shape for long (Bauman, 2007). The effects can be felt throughout public life, including the academic where the movement between and across previously non-porous disciplines is common place (Roseneil, 2012). However, it is also a metaphor which suggests floating, leaving those who have to live with the discontinuity of modern life, drifting. This has a number of impacts on ways of living.

First, the role of relationships are relegated as they are a part of the “non-market economy”, resulting in “deeply felt and troublesome incarnations of ambivalence” (Bauman, 2003: viii). This ambivalence is characterised by Bauman as being concerned with the cumbersome prospects of commitment and the splicing of life into episodes. However, a more gendered reading of this phenomena is required, especially with regards to the “tensions and conflicts around women’s dual role” (Clarke, 2004: 32) in waged and unwaged labour. This is exemplified in state responses to lone parenthood where the good lone mother should be a wage-earning mother, despite commitments and work in the private sphere. Responses to ambivalence and (lack of) commitment can be performed and experienced along gendered lines. For example in Violence #3, at the heart of the story is ambivalence. Is the boyfriend an infatuation, a status-symbol, love? His ambivalence to her is demonstrated in the range of behaviours

of possessiveness, violence and intimacy. “Still to this day, she never really understood the way he felt.”

A second impact is upon the role of knowledge. For Bauman knowledge is not culminative and universal, but contingent (Blackshaw, 2005).

*Skills do not retain usefulness for long, for what was yesterday a masterstroke may prove today inane or downright suicidal. Just as long term commitments threaten to mortgage the future, habits too tightly embraced burden the present; learning may in the long run disempower as it empowers in the short.*

(Bauman, 2004: 22)

This has implications for the knowledge presented in the women’s stories. They knew (past tense) what was going to happen. But it pours doubt on the relevance of that knowledge within a different context.

This links to a third impact of living in fluid times – the way in which stories can be told. Bauman (2012: 70) makes reference to Wright-Mills (1959) sociological imagination when he says:

*Private problems do not turn into public issues by dint of being vented in public.*

Accounts instead appear to be “expressed in the vernacular of private concerns, worries and pursuits” (ibid: 39), offered as a form of self-help – “... the way individual people define individually their individual problems and try to tackle them deploying individual skills and resources is the sole remaining ‘public issue’ and the sole object of ‘public interest’” (ibid: 72).

The process of individualising public issues back into private troubles means that stories can only offer individual effort as a response denying links and structures a place in the foreground. By casting stories in this way the issue of material circumstances is reduced. “Not all choices on display are realistic and the proportion of realistic choices is not the function of the number of items to choose from, but of the volume of resources at the disposal of the chooser” (ibid: 87).

The role of the social commentator then is to “recollectivise” these individual endeavours “so that they can acquire once more the shape of the visions of the ‘good society’ and ‘just society’” (ibid: 51). This calls for a sensitivity that acknowledges that “although a survivor experiences, remembers and narrates trauma as a member of at least one group, such a narrative should not be taken in isolation as standard for victimised members of that group” (Brison, 2002: 29). Each story has value of its own, which can be both multiplied by reading and working with others, or reduced and lost in the throng.

### **Stories of violence**

Having considered knowledge construction within the discipline of social policy, I return to the stories and consider their construction of knowledge.

#### **Violence # 1 - Protection**

Ruth walked up the stairs with that horrible feeling in her stomach; she’d seen the look he’d given her, just a glance innocent to all but those who knew what it meant, so knew what was coming. Her sister Katie wanted to talk about school and friends just innocent girls talk which they often shared but Ruth couldn’t, she just wanted her to get to sleep so that it could be over with. She lay in her bed watching as her younger sister Katie dropped off to sleep, she looked so warm and comfortable whereas Ruth just felt cold, scared and alone.

It started to get darker and the house was getting quieter, she heard her mum downstairs making a cup of tea to take to bed with her, Katie by now was fast asleep, probably in dreamland she often talked about the dreams that she had. They were usually nice dreams, often of the sea and holidays which Ruth found quite strange as they never went on holiday. Ruth was really cold now; the waiting time to her, was often the worst. Then she heard her mum make her way to bed, the toilet flushing and turned to face the wall when her mum came to make sure that the girls were fast asleep, she wanted to say something to her, plead with her to sleep in their room with them to



protect her but she couldn't. She had been warned many times that if she told then her sister would get it, and she wanted, had to protect her sister from him; that was her job as a big sis.

So, she just lay quietly pretending to be asleep, starting now to feel sick. There was nothing she could do other than to keep quiet and do what he told her. The clock ticking on her dressing table seemed really loud now. It seemed to take ages between ticks. Katie sighed and turned over in bed mumbling as she did so. Ruth always tried to make out what it was her sister was saying but never could, she was always that bit too quiet. Ruth began to focus on good things her friends, chocolate, what was happening in her favourite television programme at the time, Grange Hill, anything to block out what she knew was coming. The only noise in the house now was the ticking of that bloody clock. She knew that everyone else in the house was fast asleep except herself and him. She heard the living room door open, footsteps softly on the stairs pausing at her mum's bedroom where he checked that her mum was asleep, then watched the handle of her bedroom door turn, and her step father whispering her name in the dark. She got out of bed and walked across the room to him taking a last glance at her little sister fast asleep before she followed him downstairs.

As an adult now, Ruth still can't sleep in a room with a ticking clock.

Within the first sentence, knowledge is related to fear – it is not the opposite of ignorance, but innocence. This innocence is provided by the younger sister and her dreams of unobtainable holidays. The younger sister is presented with oppositional adjectives, “warm and comfortable” rather than “cold, scared and alone”. The use of opposition is important here, as there is always a relation of power between the poles of the binary (Derrida, 1981). Whilst “warm and comfortable” might be preferable, it lacks the moral authority of “cold and alone” which is a situation that has been produced through knowledge (loss of innocence) and maintained through duty to protect her younger sister.

Knowledge, then is linked to responsibility, but it is not to be shared, not even with the mother. The story acknowledges the potential for witnesses, for protection, but these are quickly foreclosed. Knowledge is personal. It brings with it an understanding of

process. The ticking of the clock points to the inevitability of violation. It is a slow countdown. The knowledge in this story is also the unwanted knowing of a young girl. However, that knowledge permeates adult life; it cannot be forgotten. “As an adult now, Ruth still can’t sleep in a room with a ticking clock”.

## **Violence # 2 – Protection**

It was summer 2000 and Pam had been single for 2 years since the break-up of her relationship with her children’s father. She had just recently moved to a new part of Stockport after the sale of their joint house and was feeling quite lonely as she didn’t know anyone. After the break-up she decided to stay in Stockport even though her friends and family lived in Manchester she’d got used to life in Stockport and didn’t think returning back to Manchester was an option as it brought back too many unhappy memories.

After settling into the new house with the children Pam began to get to know a few people and became good friends with the neighbour at the back. In time, she met somebody who seemed to be nice, Ian, who used to be local to the area so they knew the same group of people. Pam had finally managed to save up enough money to have her house fully carpeted and was feeling quite pleased with herself as times had been hard since the break-up with the children’s dad. She looked forward to the carpet fitters calling round on the Wednesday to measure for the carpets, as the fitters were old friends from Manchester who she had not seen for a long time.

Wednesday had arrived and Ian rang in the morning. He seemed a bit off with Pam and wanted to know what time the fitters were arriving, she was unsure but knew it wasn’t before two o’clock. She invited him round for tea later on as she had work in the morning. The fitters came around 3.30, Pam had made them a cup of tea whilst they measured the floors and it was nice for Pam and the kids to catch up on old times and to find out how their old friends were getting on back in Manchester.

When they’d finished Pam showed them out. Ian was over the road. He turned and walked away shouting something as he went. Pam made nothing of it and went back

inside to make a start on tea. Putting the potatoes on the stove Pam turned to find Ian stood in the hallway. She suddenly began to feel uneasy as he had a look about him that she hadn't seen on him before but knew all too well what it meant and what was about to happen. Before she could say anything she was struck round the head which caused her to stumble into the stairs. As she tried to protect herself she was praying the kids were still upstairs playing so they didn't have to see what I had seen growing up.

Whilst slipping in and out of consciousness, Pam thought back to when she was a child growing up, she had witnessed her mum go through this same ordeal most weekends, being a child she was unable to help her mum so had run away from home at sixteen, she spent the next year sleeping on park benches and friends' floors.

Pam's children had now heard what was going on and had come down the stairs. She could hear the potatoes boiling over on the stove and had tried to make her way over there. Ian must have had the same idea as he pulled her face closer and closer to the hot steam. The children started to scream, when the youngest came charging at Ian, fist clenched begging him to leave his mum alone. He knocked him across the room and at that instance, Pam knew she had to get this animal out of her house. She may not have been able to protect her mum when she was growing up but she knew she would not allow her children to go through what she went through.

The violence here is different. Pam is not a daughter but a mother. Ian is not a stepfather charged with her care, but a partner, someone who "seemed to be nice." The suggestion is that he has not been violent to Pam before; it was "a look about him that she hadn't seen on him before". Also unlike the previous story, the description of the violence is present rather than anticipated. The violence is also overtly witnessed by her children. However there is still an appeal to knowledge – "she knew all too well what it meant and what was about to happen". It is the thought of the witnesses that causes the disruption in the third person story-telling – "so they didn't have to see what I had seen growing up". Knowledge then becomes personal and linked to individual experience. This resists the role of third person writing in Memory Work in which the memory can "become the property of the collective" (Farrar, 2001: 4).

However, there are also similarities between the stories. Knowledge is seen in opposition to innocence, in particular childhood innocence. Knowledge thwarts childhood. Pam, as a child cannot live with it and this leaves her vulnerable. Knowledge is not to be shared, but individualised and private to ensure others protection.

### **Violence # 3 – Control**

She was just 15. That tender age. The age where she had started experimenting with drink, guys, sex and drugs. She longed to fit in, if not fit in be the coolest of her mates, have the latest trainers, phones and other materialistic things that she thought would enable her to create for herself this powerful, unseen image. She gave off a don't care attitude, fight me if you're hard enough character, played up to this symbolic status.

He was bold, status already created. A few years older than her but over the age of 18. He spoke with a northern type scally accent. That mixed with the slang that sounded cockney. Every second word was a swear word and in between that he would discharge a huge ball of spit. He wore all the latest clothes. Had all the latest gadgets, claimed through dishonesty which made him that little bit edgier. She loved him but looking back on his personality she was infatuated, wrapped in a bubble of teenage fantasy. He would pull up outside school in the latest car, leaning to one side, with his cool but pathetic gestures. She'd get into the car and the thought of everybody behind her muttering talking about her made her heart skip a beat of excitement thrill and self-indulgent pleasure!

"Where are you?" he would regularly ask.

"Just at a friend's", she would reply.

"No, you're not, I don't believe you. Come outside."

And that's where it would all begin the public humiliation of being dragged about in front of a car load of people which had already been heir to the throne of cool. Not being able to finish her sentence, stuttering for an excuse, which simply wasn't there. Denying a mentally and emotional sadistic thought that had been over-exaggerated and was completely unreal. Playing the key character in this insane pantomime. But this was what she wanted; this attention was what she craved. This male created her status

giving her power on the streets. All because she was his other half. She was the one dealing with this thug's unstable background. The hurt and trauma that had happened in his life, had now become part of hers, she was the one who had to feel his pain, deal with his pain and be the one who he released his pain on.

When his pain had been released he would hold onto her remorseful, and tell her that it was all over and that it would never happen again. Reiterate how much he loved her. That was the part where she felt the love. She feels the pain inside him, and believes that it would never amount to the pain or scars that she felt or had on her body.

He would control the love that he would give to her, restrict it and free it at the most unexpected and unusual times. Still to this day she never really understood the way that he felt. Whether she was just an emotional cushion to relieve his anger out on? Or whether he did really love her?

Fifteen, we are told is a tender age. It is a tipping point in maturity where experimentation is linked with innocence. It is also a point of identity-making in the style of Bauman's (2003) "*homo consumens*" – "latest trainers, phones and other materialistic things". Status is also revealed as not being about the situation of birth, but related to choices and relationships. Maybe, because of this age, the knowledge presented in this story is less sure-footed. In a few years, it could be different, "bold status, already created". However, at such a tender age, self is only in relation to others. Cool is produced through others' mumbling and belonging to someone. It could also be taken away, publically. Violence is witnessed by others. The story is constructed as both a one-off incident and an on-going practice. The dialogue perhaps a specific moment, followed by the implied repetition of "And that is where it would all begin..." It is a recounting of a pattern of humiliation, aggression, remorse and intimacy. In other words, she knows what is about to happen and knows that alongside the pain she will also feel love. However, this knowledge is more tentative than the presentation of knowledge in the other stories, in which knowledge of process has produced insight around relationships. This woman is still searching for that insight. "Still to this day, she never really understood the way he felt."

#### **Violence # 4 – Control**

She stomps off, slamming the door behind her. I've had just about enough of this she thinks to herself as she makes her way to her friends round the corner. "You, o.k.?" Emma asks as she walks in and goes into the kitchen. She says she has had enough of her boyfriend trying to control her life and they go into the living room and turn Eastenders on.

"Why don't I go across the road for something stronger?" she says. Emma nods in agreement, saying, "You look like you need a drink." So, she goes to Bargain Booze across the road and gets some cans. While she is doing this she is already dreading what his reaction is going to be, when her mobile starts to beep. COME HOME NOW. Here we go, she thinks as she pays the shop assistant and walks back across the road. Beep, beep, beep, beep. I SAID COME HOME. "He's started already." "Turn your phone off," replies Emma. She thinks about the consequences and decides to leave it on, but does turn it to silent.

They sat there repeating the same old conversations about how he treats her and doesn't have any respect for her. She decides that it's time he realises that she is her own person and can do what she likes. Her friend Becky calls and asks her if she wants to go to the pub. So, she agrees knowing only too well that a storm is on the way. She turns to Emma and shares her predictions about what will happen when she gets home. Before she has a chance to reply the buzzer shrills and makes them both jump.

"You're not going to believe this, but he's at the door."

"I'd better go and talk to him," she says and goes down the stairs to the main door. "What do you want?" she asks him. "I told you to come home, now go and get your stuff and come back so we can sort this out." "Forget it, I'm going out with Becky later, so yes, I will come home with you, but I will be getting ready and going." "I don't think so, now get your stuff we're going." She goes up the stairs and tells Emma that she is going home and get ready and that she will call round in the morning. "You sure you're going to be o.k.?" She reassures her friend that she will be fine whilst

inwardly dreading going back home.

When she gets down the stairs, she asks who is minding the children. He replies that a mutual friend had turned up while she was out. “Hope you don’t seriously think you’re going out,” he says. “I will do what I want,” she says and then they start to argue quite loudly as they are walking down the street. She feels brave as they are in public and starts to shout that she is going out and can make her own mind up. A couple are walking towards them, so she uses the opportunity to ring Becky and tell her that she is to ring the police at 10pm if she hasn’t turned up and ask them to attend a domestic at her address, knowing that when they got back he would lock the door and take her phone.

In Violence #2, Pam is “struck around the head. In Violence #3, the fifteen year old is “dragged about”. We see the violence. In this story, as in Violence #1, we do not see the violence, but we are aware of its ongoing existence. This story highlights both the writer’s knowledge about her relationship and the knowledge that is constructed by the reader through the telling. Throughout the story the writer shares the knowledge that her actions will have consequences that she both fears and can predict: “dreading what his reaction is going to be”, “Here we go again”, “knowing only too well a storm is on the way.” Much of the telling of the story is an appeal to shared understandings about the nature of the relationship. Becky and Emma, her friends, are aware of the situation. However, in the public telling, it is not just her friends who understand the conditions and consequences. The reader is also expected to have some knowledge. It is a testament to Stanko’s (2006) observation that the violence is not hidden. We are expected to understand the cause of the inward dread. It is not delivered with mystery. However, at the same time it is not explicitly stated. It does not need to be, because we know that locking the door and taking the phone is not the end. There will be “a domestic”. It is because she knows we can understand this, she can be brave in public.

In common across all four stories, knowledge is presented not in opposition to ignorance, but to innocence. It is detected in patterns of behaviours that the writers recognise, but can also call upon readers to recognise. I return to my initial concern with the banality of violence in the stories and hope to show that by drawing on this

common concern it can comment on wider societal issues without dismissing the individual strategies and circumstances that produced the stories.

### **Banality and Violence**

The theoretical use of the concept of banality is most associated with Arendt and her account of the Eichmann trial. She uses the term to express the lack of imagination inherent in the evil behind the bureaucratic cogs of the Holocaust. Evil may often be characterised by activity and monstrosity. Yet it is also to be found in thoughtlessness – “something by no means identical with stupidity” (Arendt, 2006 (1963): 285) and here lies its banality. Banality suggests baseless and dull, but it is not intended within Arendt’s use to suggest benign. When I use banality in this context about these stories, it is not to suggest the violence or threat of it is anything but shocking, but the presentation of it draws on the language of banality. The concept of banality is intended to prevent the mythologizing of the perpetrator whilst holding them to account (Kilby, 2010).

This concept of banality has been taken up by others to explore what underpins visible forms of violence. Billig (1995) uses it to explore the mundane activities of nationalism that can then be mobilised to bloodshed. Burman (2010) addresses the banality of immigration control that leads to exclusion and enforced destitution. It is an apt concept for this investigation because of the presentation of the horror and the violence in these stories is often undercut by a sense of its inevitability.

*“The waiting time to her was the often the worst” (Violence #1).*

*“And that’s where it would all begin” (Violence #3).*

*“They sat there repeating the same old conversations about how he treats her and doesn’t have any respect for her” (Violence #4).*

In particular, taking the idea of banality can be used to explore the presentation of facts – the knowledge of the violence – “rather than self-evident truths, the claims which can



be interrogated in terms of how they accomplish their ‘factuality’” (Burman, 2010: 121). The factuality within these texts is that violence is present and will re-occur.

In Billig’s investigation into banal nationalism he argues that to understand the process of nationalising close attention needs to be paid to conventional use of language which provides the grounds for inclusion and exclusion. “It, also, means becoming linguistically microscopic. The crucial words of banal nationalism are often the smallest: ‘we’, ‘this’ and ‘here’, which are the words of linguistic deixis” (Billig, 1995: 94). The verb ‘to know’ has become the crucial word for examining the banality of the language in violence against women. Each story contains elements of cruelty and threat. For example:

*“Ian must have had the same idea as he pulled her face closer and closer to the hot steam.” (Violence #2)*

*“... being dragged about in front of a car load of people” (Violence # 3)*

This cruelty is both intensified by the knowledge that it is going to happen, and reduced because it is predictable and survivable.

In the banality of the language of nationalism, much of the emphasis is on belonging to. However, the language of knowledge within ‘everyday’ violence as presented in these stories is more ambivalent. For example, it could be read as performing a resistance. I knew what was going to happen. I was there; you were not. It is a form of exclusion and exclusivity of the knowledge. Because it places the knowledge in opposition to innocence, it is therefore asserting itself as a knowledge borne out of experience and practical resistance. This could easily be read as a resistance to the presentation of academic knowledge, which could be seen as naive and distant. This is particularly pertinent to the issue and presentation of feminist knowledge. Whilst feminist, anti-racist and post-colonial theorists have interrogated knowledge as a history of exclusion, this activity can result in the opprobrium of the “blue-stocking” those “unsexed, strident female intellectuals *who no longer know their place*” (Code, 2007: 212 my emphasis). In resisting one form of knowledge are the students pointing to a better understanding of knowing their place?

Women, of course, are not supposed to talk about violence in overt terms. It oversteps a mark. When Thobani used the words “soaked in blood” in opposition to the Orwellian machination of “collateral damage” to underline the brutality of American foreign policy her choice of words are described as “inflammatory, excessive, inelegant, unacademic, angry” (Thobani, 2001: 2). She did not know her place.

However, these stories also point to a common knowledge – the prevalence of the violence against women. This is a knowledge that research has helped to shape. “One reason sexual violence is taken for granted by many is because it is so prevalent” (Brison, 2002: 3). The writers (and the readers) knew it was coming, because why wouldn’t it. Violence against women is everywhere. The difference between writer and reader is not that they do not expect violence but rather that they do not know what form the violence will take. My concern here is that because the violence is presented as inevitable, as known, is this a means of limiting debate and “manufacturing consent” (Herman and Chomsky, 1994)? Herman and Chomsky use this phrase in relation to the production of worthy and unworthy victims within US foreign policy and propaganda in which the unworthy go unnamed and dehumanised and where violence against them is deemed natural, reasonable and even just.

The appeal to knowledge is double-edged. If you can know what is going to happen, can it not also be avoided? Knowledge is suggestive of culpability:

*Those who haven’t been sexually violated may have difficulty understanding why women who survive assault often blame themselves, and may wrongly attribute it to a sex-linked trait of masochism or lack of self-esteem. They don’t know that it can be less painful to believe you did something blameworthy than it is to think that you can live in a world where you can be attacked at any time, in any place, because you are a woman*  
(Brison, 2002: 13)

Culpability, however misplaced, may be easier to bear than searching for solutions. This is not unlike the central paradox of social policy, that knowing the way into a problem is not necessarily the way out of it (Spicker, 2008).

Foucault (1980: 52) says:

*It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power.*

Yet, here we appear to have an example of knowledge stemming from powerlessness (victimisation) and which as an acknowledgement of culpability is not offering power. However, Foucault's aim was to concede that knowledge always works in the interest of a particular group (Mills, 2003). So, while the women in the stories claim that they know what is going to happen, this is not necessarily granted the status of fact. However, through its production in a story written within a social work course, it begins to offer a competing view to more accepted views of knowledge. It is an exercise of power. "The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and conversely knowledge constantly induces effects of power" (Foucault, 1980: 52). In particular, the exercise of power through knowledge is in shaping the narrative to articulate the women's own understanding of the events.

The knowledge within these stories is also written from a particular perspective or standpoint – that of survivor. Surviving involves a number of strategies. Brison (2002) in recounting her own experiences of violence narrates that in preliminary accounts she did not mention the sexual assault. Confidentiality was a strategy of regaining control. However, over time a bolder strategy is used.

*Granted, those of us who live through sexual assault aren't given ticker-tape parades or the keys to our cities, but it's an honour to be a survivor. Although, it's not exactly, the sort of thing I can put on my résumé, it's the accomplishment of which I am most proud.*

(Brison, 2002: 20)

This returns us to the difficulties within standpoint theory, and the role of 'situated knowledges' (Harraway, 1991) within social work knowledge and practice. "What standpoint theories ultimately seem to offer is a more general or abstract *social epistemology of the stranger*" (Pels, 2004: 278). The knowledge presented by the

women in these stories comes from a particular marginalised standpoint – the survivor of domestic violence. The stories are suggestive of the limited, partial and partisan knowledge offered by the position-bound academy (Pels, 2004). Women in abusive relationships are not simply fodder for statistics about crime or participants in research. They have the ability to negotiate and if necessary adapt to their relationships. They have courage that is manifest in many ways.

*“She had been warned many times that if she told then her sister would get it, and she wanted to, had to protect her sister from him that was her job as a big sis.” (Violence #1)*

*“She may not have been able to protect her mum when she was growing up but she knew she would not allow her children to go through what she went through.” (Violence #2)*

*“The hurt and trauma that had happened in his life, had now become part of hers, she was the one who had to feel his pain, deal with his pain and be the one who he released his pain on.” (Violence #3)*

*She feels brave as they are in public and starts to shout that she is going out and can make her own mind up. (Violence #4)*

They protect themselves and others and seek out opportunity through the violent policing of their gender (Butler, 2006). This policing happens at the inter-personal level, but as Billg also suggests, a similar form of banal language polices violence at the national and international level. Herman and Chomsky (1994) frame this as the manufacture of consent. Thobani (2001: 5) points to the gendered nature of this consent:

*Women are taught to support military aggressions, which is then presented as being in their ‘national’ interest.*

However, the knowledge presented in these stories is not enough for either practice or for the academic aspects of a social work degree. Within my research practice, the

stories offer access to others' experience and facilitate the empathy needed for an ethical understanding of how women survive. The stories are, however, unquestioning of the presence of violence and do not offer a wider framework for understanding its presence and acceptance. Instead, the stories in their particular appeals to knowledge potentially resist attempts to theorise or change the situation. "Violence demands that we content ourselves with a lesser understanding" (Kilby, 2010: 265). Therefore, the stories need to be further investigated drawing upon other resources.

## **Conclusion**

Knowledge about domestic violence can draw upon a number of resources: the historical, the quantitative, the qualitative and the theoretical. It should also be conceded that any conclusions can only be partial and that knowledge is situated. This causes complexities and tensions for women who have survived (or are still surviving) domestic violence and who must become practitioners within in it. They offer a further perspective to the issue.

However, as Pels (2004: 281) points out, this ability to straddle the position of marginalised from within a position of power (such as the marginalised academic, or the social worker) is important for further learning:

*Marginalised standpoints by themselves do not suffice; they must be intellectualised, pass through theory, which evidently requires the guiding presence of the professionals of theory themselves.*

Many writers (Flyvberg, 2001 and 2006, Spicker, 2011 and Roseneil, 2012) have suggested a further resource for social research practice – that of phronesis, practitioner wisdom. Flyvberg (2006: 222) in particular asserts the need for the case study to be seen as a central resource.

*Common to all experts, however, is that they operate on the basis of intimate knowledge of several thousand concrete cases in their areas of expertise. Context-dependent knowledge and experience are at the heart of expert activity.*

This, of course, can no more be accepted uncritically than any other form of knowledge and the call to expertise sits uncomfortably within the feminist project of decentring knowledge through standpoint theory (Roseneil, 2012). However, it does offer an opportunity for the knowledge of the students to be recognised and applied. Their stories are the first case studies through which they can gain an insight into practice. They stand alone as a source of knowledge and also provide a dialogue with other explanations.

Whilst within this chapter, I have attempted to challenge the knowledge as presented within these stories through the use of the theoretical concept of banality; the real challenge has been the content of these stories. The women who produced these stories have faced risk and danger and survived. One of the aspirations of the project and the use of experiential accounts was to validate experience and it has brought to the fore the fortitude of several women.

However, these stories continue to trouble me both as a researcher and an educator. As a researcher, I am troubled by the process of revealing truths about a generalised problem such as domestic violence, through individualised accounts; particularly accounts which stress their individualism and isolation. Through the processes of the project, there has been little opportunity to assess whether the sharing of these stories has been the hoped-for validation and empowering experience. There is no way of understanding the cost of sharing the stories with others.

This linked to my concern as an educator. These stories existed whether the project had taken place or not. Like many students I have attended classes to face the dull realisation that the problem being described relates to me. My own experience of this has not necessarily been validating, enabling or led to an ability to challenge. The challenges of ensuring a safe place for students who have experienced violence to explore that experience and how it relates to practice remains. In other words, these stories have reasserted the project as an Educational Action Research project, within which the context of the classroom and the relationship between teacher and student is paramount. For researchers, this means a shift is required to see research as a process for learning rather than a process for proving (Flyvberg, 2001 and Roseneil, 2012).

When a woman asks:

*Still to this day she never really understood the way that he felt. Whether she was just an emotional cushion to relieve his anger out on? Or whether he did really love her? (Violence #3)*

There is no easy response. Instead, working with knowledge can produce different ways of asking the questions.

## Chapter Ten – Reflections and Conclusions

*An account must be produced about what has been done, and this institutional demand for some kind of report is the only thing a qualitative researcher can be sure about.*

*(Parker, 2005: 33)*

### Introduction

So, this is the bit where I write about what has been done. This can take many forms. It can be in the style of a first person confession (Parker, 2005) which becomes problematic within a research story that has aimed to highlight constructions of self-hoods as performative and constituted through historical and material relations. Therefore, the researcher could move to a discussion of position. “The position of the researcher is the socially constituted research subjectivity that has enabled some things to happen in the research and perhaps closed down other things” (Parker, 2005: 30). This provides an opportunity to consider the role of the gendered, ‘raced’ and classed relations within the process and production of the writing. Parker (ibid.) constructs this as a move from first to second person, which can acknowledge the collective aspects of the research. There then follows a final move to third person, where theory supports the discussion of positioning. This seems most apt for a research project influenced and following the work of Haug, which is concerned with testing the perceptions of the individuality of experience through collective challenge and ownership of third person accounts. In effect, the reflections presented here will take from and move between all three approaches.

However, Parker (ibid.) also suggests that in the writing up of research a fourth dimension is required – that of crafting the reflection, the need to find a structure. Reinharz (1992) notes that in feminist research learning must occur on three levels: the person, the problem and the method. These three over-lapping areas provided inspiration for my chosen reflective structure. I have chosen to look at the over-lapping areas of the method, the process and the question. These headings will give me the opportunity to address first person confessions of inadequacy and doubt alongside



theoretical considerations and summing up of arguments. However, I have also added a fourth dimension/heading to address – that of originality. “The PhD is awarded for an original contribution to knowledge” (Phillips and Pugh, 2005: 61). This subheading gives me the opportunity to position myself as a PhD candidate and stake a claim towards originality whilst acknowledging concerns that I have little creative to say.<sup>4</sup> However, it also offers a space to provide an outward-looking, future orientated reflection that is concerned with the audience for the research and the future of social policy teaching within social work.

## **The Method**

I wrote a first draft of a methodology chapter, three years ago in 2010. After the enthusiastic reception of my context chapter by my supervisory team, there was no doubt that this chapter was less well received and I agreed that I had found it more difficult to write. Heather Piper characterised the writing as “defensive”. Recounting these woes to my sister (an English Literature academic), she made the point that social scientists love to blather on about their methodology and that I should just say what I had done and be a bit reflective about it. So, had I fallen prey to methodolatory – “the privileging of methodological concerns” (Chamberlain, 2000: 285)? Possibly, but if so this is hardly surprising. I was writing about an interpretive piece of research within the space of social work training:

*Perceived as being feminine, it counters this by subscribing to gender-neutral, rational social science. The combination of social science and altruism makes social work into one of the major instrumentalities through which the state governs and provides for the welfare of its citizens.*

(Epstein, 1996: 4)

My defensive writing was a result of this tension. This tension was amplified by the organisational context of the research where, in order to secure funding, I was being asked to prove the relevance of research to pre-defined personal development targets

---

<sup>4</sup> As an example of first person confessional reflection, an early diary entry discusses how I cringed when I said to my Director of Studies “I will say something clever soon” – that feeling that I have not said anything clever yet, still persists. However, now I use that example of my own fears to work with students around theirs.

written using the positivist language of SMART objectives. In other words, I felt embroiled in the debate about the relative merits of the positivist versus interpretive approaches, which according to Oakley (1999: 155) “could politely be termed a dialogue, it is in many ways more appropriate to call the dialogue a war.” At a different stage in the process and from a more secure position of employment, it has felt easier to have confidence in what the research was about and to adopt a less apologetic tone.

My primary concern was that the vocabulary and discourses of social policy were not connecting to those who would be working within it. Like Hunter (2012) I still think the discipline requires its rationalist approach, particularly in relation to influencing policy-makers. However, relating to approaches that can connect with practitioners it needs to be complemented with other “more nuanced inquiries” (Williams, 2000 cited in Hunter, 2012). As the process and the writing of the research progressed, I began to see it more in the light of Spicker’s (2011) call to phronesis. I wanted to build on the experience of the students as a means of their development and also to validate their experience as relevant to the study of the social world. All of the above (positivist, interpretative, nuanced theoretical and phronetic approaches) should not necessarily be seen as competing perspectives or methods, but complimentary if occasionally antagonistic (even contradictory) approaches required for the discipline to mature.

*One modernistic concept that I think continues to have a great deal of utility is the notion of ‘contradiction’. This refers to the co-existence of two ideas that are in opposition to each other, to the point of mutual negation, but where the conditions of each also lead to the existence of the other.*

(Hugman, 2005: 617)

Adopting this position of contradiction may appear as some lazy compromise, or an attempt to back out from the argument or “the war”, so I should make absolutely clear, I believe I chose the right approach for my research question. My central concern was to draw attention to the centrality of social policy in producing social work subjects and to cover the gap between the “accumulation of data” (Haug, 1998: 117) around policy issues and the lives described by such data. Without undertaking such work, the accumulated data lies dormant within practice.

Therefore, writing about method was fraught because of its relationship to discipline and organisational context. However, the writing of methodology also posed problems about where to position it within the interpretive paradigm. Was it action/practitioner-research, narrative, participatory, feminist, some or all of the above?

In many ways, the research fits the brief of Educational Action Research which “tends to be small-scale and qualitative, because pedagogical problems are likely to be complex, necessitating in-depth illuminative research methods and practice issues arise in localised settings” (Weiner, 2004: 33). Action research, however, is practised along a continuum. It can be seen as a “form of personal enquiry” in which practitioners “aim to change themselves by questioning what they are doing” (McNiff et. al., 2003: 14). This can be misjudged and place action research as an individualistic pursuit. These sentiments are echoed by Feldman (2007) who states that alienated teachers engaged in action research will inquire into their own practice in a narrow, technical or practical sense. Esposito and Evans-Winters (2007) also complain that conventional texts on action research focus on the teacher-researchers’ needs rather than the students’ needs both in and out of the classroom. Writing from the other end of the continuum they advocate for action research “that is critical, emancipatory and empowering for all stakeholders” (Esposito and Evans-Winters, 2007: 221).

The tension between these two positions has been a site of ethical reflection. Ideals and principles might well favour a critical, participatory approach and I could argue this position for the research as students participated in the group processes, which produced the material and provided, in some cases, some analytical insight. However, at the end of the group stage the process focussed more on my approach to the analysis and on-going participation became untenable, because of my move out of the organisation and the complexities of the lives of the students. And therein lies the tension. Although I may have preferred a greater level of student participation, this project and context was not the ideal site for it. Participatory projects have at their heart a collective desire for change. However, this research was focussed on my problem, my need for change. Whilst this was supported by the social intent to improve educational engagement of social work students, the focus is on my ability to provide a better learning experience for students. Further participation by the student group would have been an unnecessary demand. The contemporary nature of undergraduate

experience and finance means that many students have expanding portions of their week taken up with waged work, alongside the requirements of the HEI. With social work students, many are mature students who have additional caring roles (this also applies to some ‘non-mature’ students). Furthermore, as the course progresses the requirement to attend placement full-time means that students are not available for additional work. Therefore, it is entirely right that participation with the project finished at the end of the academic year, with contact maintained through email and alumni meetings. Whilst students might not be physically engaged with the project, their participation is also continued in their absence by the continued use of their stories and the analytical insights they have brought into my current and future teaching.

In other words, throughout the project, there was a tension between individual focus and group needs. It was and remains a site for ethical consideration. To suggest the focus was simply about my practice would ignore the productivity of the student groups. However, to claim it as a participatory exercise would not acknowledge the limits of the students’ ability to contribute. However, it was not a straightforward compromise along the continuum. Nor was it a choice from either end. Rather, it was a continued negotiation of the roles of individual focus and group concerns.

However, what also came to occupy my reflection about the method was whether I could label it as feminist, simply because it was inspired by a method taken from feminist activity and I apply the label to myself and my politics. However, I was aware that “there is no intrinsically feminist method or methodology” (Burman, 1994: 121) and there were spaces where I felt the issue of gender inequality was not fully integrated into the student discussions and could disappear from my own processes, although it would then be wilfully re-inserted.

My concern became how is gender rendered visible or invisible through research methods? Previous arguments have highlighted the imposed gender neutrality of the neo-liberal project, producing an individualistic discourse which provides little space for gendered subjectivities. However, feminism in grappling with the post-industrial society has also posed arguments about the stability of gendered categories, to the point, it could be argued, that it is “difficult to talk about women in any meaningful way, and therefore seems incompatible with the identification and analysis of patriarchy or with

collective struggles against it” (Bryson, 2003: 241). Here Bryson is highlighting the difficulties of working with post-modern thought which if not used with sensitivity and care can negate the various social positions of women. However, post-modernism is also a potential resource which, if handled more carefully, can “help us to understand and contest the deep-seated nature of gender hierarchies and identities and their roots in language, culture and psychic identity” (ibid: 242).

In other words, postmodernism can support de-essentialising arguments and point to how gender is more than a variable to be measured. Feminism has long made this point. “To be a man or a woman, a boy or a girl is as much a function of dress, gesture, occupation, social network and personality as it is of possessing a particular set of genitals” (Oakley, [1972], 2005: 8). Postmodern thought, however, has added nuance and depth to this discussion by decoupling sex and gender and to see it not only as a relation between the biological and the social, but also a performance of the inter-personal, historical moment and location.

*Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylised repetition of acts.*

(Butler, 2006: 191)

Gender is performed in a number of ways through the students’ stories which had to be acknowledged through the analytical process. It is also performed through the production of knowledge and the policing of disciplinary boundaries. Therefore, the seeking of the label of feminist for this research, is to be found in the “challenge to the scientism that refuses to address the relations between knowledge (and knowledge generating practices) and power” (Burman, 1994: 121).

## **The Process**

Haug (2008) calls the person leading Memory Work an “organic intellectual” following Gramsci. This is an interesting choice to make, as it places Memory Work outside of what Gramsci (1971) would call the traditional intelligentsia or intellectual class who are removed from pressing social concerns. The “organic intellectual” has a basis in the

class system, with each stratum providing their own organic intellectuals to formulate and serve the interests of the group. Adopting this role could position me as representing the learning needs of the student body. This could be problematic within the hierarchical setting of education. Yet, the concept of organic development proved useful when considering approaches to analysis where the aim was “to tease out those progressive elements contained within that class’s common sense” (Jones, 2006: 10). In the end, I could not produce a systematic method for analysis. Analysis relied much more on intuition and creativity. It was a case of “teasing out” the links between personal stories and policy work. However, this led me to be overly aware (perhaps even cautious or sensitive) of the arguments about validity of approach. Writing for journals, the home of the traditional intellectual, was a constant source of this irritation. Insight had to be replaced by method. My experience of living with the texts reduced.

As the process of analysis became established, organic elements of development continued. This was particularly true in the case of considering the perspectives brought to bear on the material.

*It is tempting to assume, for example, that the pedagogical difficulty in a given class is one of student ‘resistance’ when the problem might also be defined as one of the teacher’s anger toward a student for not accepting her point of view... Thus, it becomes important what constitutes the problem, to allow for the possibility that what we consider a social justice teaching issue may be framed and reframed a number of times.*

(Fisher, 2001: 215 – 216)

Acquiring and developing the role of ‘organic intellectual’ was a means of considering the frames set around the problem. Eager to feel some intellectual comfort at the beginning of the process, I had wished to frame the project within national boundaries. I teach social policy on an English social work course and wanted to retain a focus on UK policy. This is not to say that I had not considered more international perspectives. I had, in my teaching, discussed comparative approaches and other national solutions to welfare issues. I had mentioned UK policy abroad when discussing welfare of returning soldiers, or the impact on migration patterns. I had also mentioned the influence of particular forms of globalised economic power on the UK. However, what

I had failed to fully acknowledge within this was the way in which my nationality had impacted on my portrayal of these issues, even if I was critical of UK policy within this. In other words, I felt comfortable within a context of which I could afford to be critical. However, through the analysis of texts and the content of the students' stories this comfort became less convenient. This shift in thinking is evident in the process of analysis.

The chapter on Risk and Protection is concerned to show that rather than being objective categories, they are relative concepts which can be used to produce a particular kind of subject. Currently, that subject is one of assumed vulnerability and reduced agency. This is discussed in generalised terms and though reference is made to specific UK policy and research, little reference is made to the specific national context.

In the following chapter, Success is considered, and from the beginning it is considered as a relational concept, connected to power and the authority to categorise and label. The story, *The Office*, highlighted organisational practices in determining success and analysis initially critiques New Labour approaches to this. Success in UK policy is seen as top-down enterprise, relying on targets and scrutiny. However, *Jazz*, a reflection on success across generations and continents, disrupts this line of inquiry. It offers success as a negotiated, ongoing concern. I had two distinct concerns when writing this chapter. The first concerned the choice of stories. Initially, I did not want to write about *The Office* and *Jazz*. I found the former a little dry and the latter beautiful, but unwieldy. In terms of critiquing the conditions of *The Office*, I was also reminded that a significant part of my role in policy work for a social services department had been instituting performance management, a task towards which I was ambivalent at the time and with distance and reflection I now find uncomfortable. The second concern was addressing issues of gender and it was my first draft of this chapter that led me to explore the apparent appearing and disappearing act of the concept. However, in writing about it now I can see that it is also a chapter that despite the challenge of *Jazz* sits within the comfort of a national identity and borders. *The Office* acts as an exemplar of the impacts of UK policy processes, whilst within the disciplinary construct of social policy, *Jazz* becomes a comparator. The shift outside the UK is apparent, but it is still using the outside to comment on the inside.

In Chapter Seven, *Control and the Travelling Subject*, the national context is made explicit because the stories are about the negotiation of national boundaries. The analysis begins to uncover the permeable nature of the boundaries of control. UK immigration is not just about policing a border; it also acts outside of its national boundaries through its requirements of visas and sponsorship (highlighted by the character, Alex). Then, there is a role for internal control of the travelling subject through access to welfare services. Finally, there is also an attempt by policy processes to delineate boundaries around particular minoritised subjects as either citizens (although infantilised [Lewis, 2000]) or outsiders, through a pretended difference of internal racial equality concerns and external migration issues. However, as the negotiation in *Simba and Shona* demonstrates, this distinction is often untenable. Shona is a nurse working for the National Health Service, affording herself and others the social rights of Marshall's (1950) welfare citizenship. However, at home, she is engaged in a cold war around a more 'authentic' role for her as a Black, African woman.

Social policy is at a loss as to how to describe this issue. It aims to chart and challenge the racism that national boundaries and policies can perpetuate. However, "no set of qualitative descriptors can establish black or white identity across all possible worlds, but we cannot say that black and white do not exist" (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000: 141).

By Chapter Eight – *Need*, the stories do not have to directly cite the nation state for the concept to be critiqued. All four stories are about the inter-personal and familial, but a closer inspection points to the role of national policy and international market forces in producing needs, met and unmet, inequality and social injustice. The chapter begins with looking at when need becomes a social problem and recognises that "Globalisation is changing the way we argue about justice" (Fraser, 2009: 12). Space and distance impact upon the needs that can be acknowledged, both internationally and inter-personally.

Chapter Nine – *Violence and Knowing* is primarily concerned with the epistemological limits of social policy when considering domestic violence and women's lives. Its aim is to bring into sharp focus the role and impact of the experience of violence within women's lives. Its key argument is to consider the connections and disconnections



between disciplinary resources and women's knowledge. However, within this it is not a coincidence that Thobani's (2001) *War Frenzy* and Herman and Chomsky (1994) *Manufacturing Consent* are referenced. This forms a part of the growing awareness that globalised perspectives need to inform practice.

*Men who kill women and children abroad are hardly likely to come back cured of the effects of that brutalization.*

(Thobani, 2001: 4 – 5)

The use of those sources was done in the knowledge that when discussing violence in the domestic sphere, women are also taught to support military aggression especially when it is “presented as being in their ‘national’ interest” (Thobani, 2001: 5). It forges a link between Billig's banal nationalism and the banality of the violence in the student stories.

*All new postgraduates have to be prepared to unlearn and rethink many of the doctrines which they have had to accept up to this point in their student career.*

(Philips and Pugh, 2005: 5)

My key piece of unlearning and rethinking has been in relation to the role of nation. Over the process of this research, I have learned to move from the comfortable and softly lean into the discomfort. This shift in acknowledging my preferred boundaries has been organic and partly in response to the students' stories. Their diversity has gently and kindly questioned my own assumptions and perspectives.

## **The Question**

At the beginning of the process, I articulated my aims as:

1. To demonstrate how public policy intersects with personal lives through the use of personal experiential narratives of social work students
2. To investigate constructions of social work, social workers and service users, aiming at understanding the role of social policy and social policy teaching within social work education

3. To analyse the contemporary definitions of social workers produced by the public and political sphere with an emphasis on the intersection of gender, 'race' and class.

It is expected that any reflective chapter must draw conclusions against aims. Aims within an exploratory, interpretive piece of research are only ever loosely articulated. Within Educational Action Research, there is also recognition of the potential of the method to foreground other issues than those originally conceived as the source of inquiry. However, what has surprised me is that despite the many, varied concepts under discussion, that it is possible to make links across them in terms of how policy and political discourses shape experiential writing. Jordan (2010: 35) suggests:

*... in a society ordered around consumption of commercial products... people are judged and esteemed by what they possess and display, the vehicles they drive and the places where they are seen, rather than what they contribute to the well-being of others*

This is a quote that could have been used in the chapter on success to outline the lack of empathy and warmth in the treatment of an employee in *The Office* (whilst financial rewards and incentives are substantial); or in the chapter on need to highlight the desire for a tracksuit over a friendship; or in the chapter on control, where airline procedures overtake the ability to deliver gifts to friends and family; it could even have been used in the chapter on violence and the role of the material in defining a young woman. Consumption, then, was a key theme to emerge from the writing. This has led to a shift in the role of the Welfare State and social work within that. Welfare was once considered to be a protection against the vagaries of the market, whereas the effort is now focussed on supporting those outside the market economy to move into it. This can be seen within the personalisation agenda. The Disabled People's Movement criticised a welfare state that had left them outside of full citizenship (Gardner, 2011) and refused to acknowledge disabled people's capacity and unique embodied experiences. This collective demand for a change in the relationship between welfare state and service-user has been recast as a debate about individual choice and consumption. In other words, welfare state users are now consumers in a social care market, which provides products rather than services.

So, the subject of social policy discourse is a consumer. What other characteristics does this consumer possess? They must make choices based on individual skills and resources. “Neo-liberalism heightens individuality and competitiveness, seeking to shape each of us as a flexible economic unit to be of use in the market economy” (Davis, 2008: 59). Therefore, responsibility is towards the self. This leads to the breaking of mutual dependence, except in regards to surveillance and control. Surveillance became another linking theme across the chapters. The consumer is not always to be trusted and needs watching. This is most obvious in the case of risk and protection. Within this chapter the social worker is cast as someone with state responsibility for “conspicuous failure in child welfare” (Lewis, 2007: 64) and who had to tread the delicate line between family and state. However, it is also acknowledged that:

*State intervention in respect of the family has changed dramatically in the UK since 1997 with more explicit intervention affecting all families with children, not just those ‘at risk’.*  
(Lewis, 2007: 60)

However, in the chapter on success, we see that it is not only welfare users (consumers) who require surveillance. Instead, social workers themselves are found to be vulnerable to managerial and organisational practices that monitor performance. In the chapter on control, we are faced with a particularly untrustworthy subject, one who travels, so that surveillance requires policing efforts outside of national boundaries. However, the chapter also points to the problem for the discipline of social policy of the seeing, recognising and surveillance of racialised subjects. Yet, what is also of concern is that surveillance does not guarantee safety. As Chapter Nine – Violence and Knowing discusses, we can know about a subject, we can track the potential risks of a population, but women remain vulnerable to violence and are still expected to draw on their own skills and resources when facing complexity and uncertainty. The discussion of social networks and state support is very limited within the students’ stories used in that chapter.

Collection of data and surveillance was a large part of the New Labour administration's governance of public services. The emphasis was on tracking individual actions (what parents, children, workers do) and despite publically stated concerns about poverty, material circumstances were pushed to one side. However, it now seems almost 'quaint' to criticise New Labour in the aftermath of swingeing, ideologically based welfare cuts of the coalition government. Yet, many of the arguments being used by the current administration can be seen as a continuation rather than an opposition to New Labour policy. For example, regulation is still something that applies stringently and punitively to the public, not the private.

*The Third Way's attempt to counter the selfishness and greed it sees as characterising economic individualism is applied only to those citizens who rely on benefits and services and not to the mainstream population.*

(Jordan, 2000: 5)

This is felt most keenly around services for those who need protection from domestic violence. Austerity measures are having an impact on protection and safety. According to Walby and Towers (2011) in 2011, 230 women were turned away by Women's Aid because of a lack of space. 31% of funding to the sector was cut by Local Authorities between 2010/11 and 2011/12.

Therefore, the Writing Stories project can claim some success in meeting aims around considering how political discourses intersect with the construction of personal accounts and in considering the contemporary construction of the social worker and the service-user. However, the third aim was to consider intersections of gender, 'race' and class in the construction of social work. This aim has perhaps been less successful. I came to the concept of intersectionality as a feminist. When studying for an MA in Women's Studies in the mid 1990s, I had come to the course with a possibly naïve desire and perspective about women's shared experiences. I also came to the course with a background in disability work and political engagement with anti-racism, through the anti-apartheid movement, supporting asylum protests and anti-fascist demonstrations. The course forced me to stop seeing those three areas of interest as unrelated and not just simply being about social justice, but about the overlapping, the contradictions and complexities of experience. In my MA work, I researched the lives

of women with learning difficulties and their access to support networks and the building of friendships and began to consider how best to understand their experience and would use terms like multiple oppression or simultaneous discrimination. These explanations felt incomplete and I was left with the words of Jenny Morris (1993: 63) ringing about their potential downfalls:

*I don't think that I, or many other disabled women, want to read of non-disabled researchers' analysing how awful our lives are, because we suffer from two modes of oppression.*

Intersectionality offers a concept that moves way from the counting of forms of discrimination to a consideration of how they intersect and can provide further understandings of the working of power. It is an analytical concept that challenges the analyst to consider the lived complexities and the strategies employed living under the various constraining structures. It makes clear that a concrete and stable identity is imaginary and that if we accept that identity is produced through social relations, how certain identifiers can become primary in some situations and less so in others, and also how they can overlap at other times. However, intersectional analysis remains difficult. Gender analysis is comfortable, but I am aware that this comfort belies potential homogenising. One key strategy to reduce this tendency is to broaden the sources used to include black, feminist theory and queer theory. Yet, further work is still required to ensure that the challenge these texts pose and the differences they expose are not flattened out.

Finally, the research has also been categorised as Educational Action Research and reflection is also required on the role of social policy teaching. Here, I want to make two key points, a general and a specific point. The general point is about the use of story. Bauman (2002 cited in Blackshaw, 2005: 22) has suggested that to “be any use to its new potential audience, sociology needs to offer knowledge that chimes with their experiences and corresponds to their problems and tasks”. Bauman suggests that this potential new audience is no longer the policy makers and managers and is particularly concerned that sociologists discontinue the use of ordinary people as an object of study which denies them their subjectivity. A similar argument could be made for social policy teaching within social work. Social Policy needs to find a means (a

methodology) that acknowledges people's experiences and problems. Teaching, then, should support travelling the distance between those living their lives and those with the power to tell the stories of their lives. It should address 'ordinary people' and engage with a process that is teaching and learning at the same time. For this, the use of story is central.

*And so the stories could continue, giving flesh and bones to the injustices and indignities of the world where so frequently in social science there is only bland and horrible jargon that serves to over-distance from the issues, to conceal and mystify what is actually occurring in the social world.*

(Plummer, 2000: 248)

The stories the students bring to the classroom and the space of social work training should not be seen in opposition to the formal language of knowledge of the academy. Instead, they offer a rich source of insight that enlivens the debates about the discipline. Social policy also tells stories about its methods, the causes of problems (for example, the relationship between observed phenomena) and its conclusions (for example, that work supports welfare and well-being, Vickerstaff, 2007). The use of experiential accounts is one means of challenging which stories become legitimate and why.

Therefore, in terms of teaching approach I aim to continue using story. This includes the stories that have constituted the material for this project, but also to support students in bringing and using their own stories as accounts of historical evidence to be investigated. Furthermore, drawing on the learning about the role of the nation state, the aim is to look for stories that open up the discussion about boundaries and their potential for exclusion and/or hospitality. Importantly, it is to look for stories that can do so in a way that challenges the presumed, superior Eurocentric perspective (Mangan, 1993), some of which can be found from within the student body. Whilst I have couched this in terms of my own development and practice, I think the argument could be made more generally to the social policy curriculum within social work. Developing the use of story and narrative analysis within social work education should support a more critical understanding of the lives of service-users and the limits placed on them. It should also open up a space to consider the 'stories' that social workers tell about themselves, to challenge the language used and the chronologies chosen. It should

support the recognition that, “other people or institutions concoct narratives for others without including them in a conversation; *this is what power is about*” (Czarniawska, 2004: 5 emphasis in original). Narrative analysis, with its emphasis on politics of voice, should support anti-discriminatory practice within social policy.

So, the general point is related to forms of teaching. The specific point I want to make is related to the content of the teaching. I began my chapter on violence by citing Arendt (1970: 8):

*No-one engaged in thought about history and politics can remain unaware of the enormous role violence has always played in human affairs and it is at first glance rather surprising that violence has been singled out so seldom for special consideration.*

She places this lack of curiosity alongside the acceptance of the extent and arbitrariness of violence. However, she also argues that this comes from a mistaken logic that can see violence as power, rather than the lack of it. I also want social policy to trouble this dyad by opening up the discussion about the impact violence has on users and/or practitioners. Therefore, I feel that violence, both public and private, should become a part of the social policy curriculum. The sheer volume of stories produced around a range of violent incidents and experiences suggest that violence is very much a part of the social. I am asking for it to be mainstreamed.

There are of course dangers with this approach in this specific historical context. McDonald (2005) makes a case for how the raising of the issue of domestic violence as something that requires state funding for services has led to a pathologizing of public issues and the displacement of feminist service models in domestic violence support services under neo-liberal discourses. However, social policy is an ideal site to open up the discussion around the policing of gender in political and historical terms rather than accepting its causes and reducing it to a set of practice interventions.

*It would permit us to recognise that women's oppression is not merely caused by intimate assault but by a larger social context that makes such assault possible, even tacitly condoned in sexist societies.*

(Hirschmann, 2007: 154)

Linking the general to the specific, within any cohort of social work students, it would be reasonable given the prevalence of violence to expect that some will have been subject to it and have stories to tell. Social policy teaching needs to be a safe space for students to evaluate those stories, whether shared or not.

## **Originality**

I have made myself write to this heading, because I have been aware and uncomfortable about its role in the research throughout the process. Originality is a key concept and some could argue the key criterion for doctoral evaluation. Philips and Pugh (2005) offer a list of nine potential contributions that doctoral candidates can make. There have been times when looking at that list would make me shudder and become anxious that I still had not said anything clever. However, I now realise I can make claims against their nine point list. Against point five, I have taken a particular technique (Memory Work) and applied it in a new area (Social Work Education). I have been cross-disciplinary (point seven) and therefore added to knowledge in a way that has not been done before (point nine). Yet, this does not seem a satisfactory way of defining the learning and gain from the project, and cannot portray the nature of the relationship between research and practice. The list seems to be made of generalised criteria that are inappropriate for the evaluation of action research.

What I want to offer as my original contribution to knowledge is the story(ies) of my research. Through working with the students' stories I have come to understand the power of stories and their ability to open out the ambiguities of experience, the unpicking of categories of the powerful and powerless and their appeals to understanding. As Walker (2007: 296) says: "They open the possibilities of revisiting past perspectives to develop new ways of seeing". They are also central to the action research process.



*People offer stories of their own improved understanding as outcomes. They share those stories, not competitively but collaboratively. This shared learning can lead to the construction of collective knowledge.*

(McNiff, *et. al.*, 2003: 133)

This, then, is a story that wants to challenge the linear assumptions about research, that knowledge is always culminative and that theory is something to be tested in practice, which as Romm (1996: 25) says “can amount to an unreflected /unreflexive endorsement of a theoretical position”. Instead, the story of this research is designed to show how knowledge is constituted through practice and is contingent. “One is not just applying ‘findings’ but intervening in the social discussion in a specific way, that is, in a way which authorises particular conceptions” (Romm, 1995: 145).

Of course, “the narratives of the world are numberless” (Barthes, 1977: 79) and narrative has a long and diverse history of study. My research story is also open to interpretation and my emplotment of the events a point of analysis. A simple story of my research is that I wanted to know if writing stories could help students with their engagement with social policy teaching and my understanding of how to teach. What I discovered is that the potential of story-telling for uncovering the role of policy discourses in enacted social lives was intriguing and could make a valuable contribution to form and content of teaching. In particular, a significant part of my story has been the growing recognition that research which seeks to influence policy is potentially limiting in terms of aspirations and possibilities. Indeed, social sciences and the humanities should be trying to communicate beyond the “situated discourse” of policy (Bloor, 2004: 318) and be trying to bring research into “a conversation with publics” and engaging in “a process of mutual education” (Burawoy, 2005: 7 – 8). This move for me has been facilitated by the increased interest in the notion of Phronesis (Spicker, 2011) and the role of case-study (Roseneil, 2006 and Flyvberg, 2006), which influences my teaching practice.

This, then, is one representation of the events. “Representation does not reflect; it creates” (Czarniawska, 2004: 188). As my story progresses, I will be able to use the events to illustrate different aspects of learning and contribution, and this will be developed through collaboration, positioning and audience.

Reading and re-reading the thesis, I can see a particular narrative arc of my own. I started the project with a clear(ish) understanding of why students need to engage with social policy – this was related to my own experience as a policy practitioner at a local authority and briefly at the Commission for Racial Equality as well as from support work experience of working with adults with learning disabilities. Students need to understand the context so that they can work within it and recognise their own values in relation to it. They need to be able to take advantage of the opportunities it offers and offer resistance to the more oppressive aspects of it. Social policy could also give students an historical understanding of their practice and could make explicit how social work is shaped by political forces.

However, my dilemma was that I was not sure that this enthusiasm for the political and the role of policy was being transmitted to students who were reporting low levels of interest in politics and current affairs. In other words, I believe that structures matter but I could not necessarily find a way to get that message across to individuals. What followed was an attempt to feed student experience back into the structures that produced it.

The process of analysis, then, was the tussle between the role of individuals versus structure which characterises much of the humanities and social science. It led to a recognition of the problems of this for social policy practice, teaching and learning. The emphasis on structure can lead to the discipline appearing distant and disempowering. The emphasis on the individual can lead to over-stated responsibility and breaking of mutual bonds. This is a story of trying to find ways of bridging the gap between on the one hand, structure and structural constraints and on the other, the individual and their agency. The discovery of story was key. The story becomes a site where individual endeavours can be shared, contested and contextualised.

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

So, if I am offering this as a story, where does this tale end and a new one begin? I stated in my context chapter, that the reflections would be both inwards and concern my own educational practice and outwards to consider the role of social policy teaching. Therefore, I am offering two key next steps to support both directions.

First, I want to consider my own learning and practice and what next step may support my continued learning about the constructions of social worker and service-user. As the reading and the project progressed, I found myself increasingly drawn to literature that described itself as “psycho-social”. I wanted to align my own analysis to this work, but felt unable to do so, because it uses terms from a discipline/body of work with which I was unfamiliar – psycho-analysis. This gap in my academic vocabulary was both circumstantial (not a body of work necessarily applicable to previous study) and possibly elected, out of prejudice. There is something about the haziness of the study of the mind that did not appeal and did not resonate with my sense of justice and the role of big picture, collective identities and social struggles. I may also have been (subconsciously?) swayed by feminist arguments against psycho-analysis “on the grounds that it is biologically essentialist” (Gray and Boddy, 2010: 369).

However, because of the nature of the research, over the course of the Writing Stories Project I have been pushed and pulled between explanations of the individual versus the structural and begun to realise that the micro-macro debate “so apparently intransigent within scholarship on the state” (Hunter, 2012: 5) is not always useful. Psycho-social studies may offer a way to balance the individual with the big picture, particularly with its emphasis on action (Hunter, 2012), loss and ambiguity (Roseneil, 2006) and the subject/subjectivities (Parker, 2011). I see the potential for psycho-social approaches to support the work of the feminist theory of intersectionality, which highlights tensions between collective and individual identities and asks feminists to consider the different practices of patriarchy.

*Feminist intersectional analysis allows us to theorise a space for complex experience which sits at the meso level between the individual and the collective.*

(Hunter, 2012: 5)

So, one next step is to explore the role of psycho-social studies and to bring this into my teaching practice.

My second 'next step' is to consider the social policy curriculum and my desire to mainstream the issue of violence and its impact on social research. The writing up of this research was interrupted (inconveniently at the time, but briefly) by the institutional requirement to produce a bid to generate research income. Working with colleagues, we produced a bid for the National Institute of Health Research, School for Social Care Research to evaluate Manchester Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) processes in relation to domestic violence. The stated aim of the bid is to identify and assess the effectiveness of social care's contribution to the development of MARACs and the protection of adults facing domestic violence. The bid was successful. The research borrows from case study literature by concentrating on one city over a particular period of time. The research methods include interviewing women who have been subject to the MARAC process and practitioners working within it. The research is already highlighting problems with the disconnection between bureaucratic processes and women's experiences. My hope is that, through the dissemination of this project, violence, and domestic violence in particular, will be moved out of the fringes of the curriculum into the mainstream (beginning at least institutionally).

Social Work remains a complex phenomenon. The role of social work policy teaching within social work education is a part of the process that social workers need to engage with when they are working with individuals with complex problems in a complex world. It is a discipline which benefits from a range of approaches and methods. Pedagogical practices within social work education should also attempt to look across the pedagogical range to engage students and give them a space to reflect on the big questions that their processes and procedures are a part of.

## References

- Abbott, P. and Meerabeau, L. (1998) "Professions, professionalism and the caring professions" in Abbot, P. and Meerabeau, L. (eds) *The Sociology of the Caring Professions* London: UCL Press
- Achebe, C. (1974) "Colonialist Criticism" in Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. and Tiffin, H. (eds) (1995) *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* London: Routledge
- Acker, J. (1991) "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations" in Ely, R. J. et al. (eds) (2003) *Reader in Gender, Work and Organization* Malden, MA. Blackwell Publishing
- Ahmed, S. (2004) "Declarations of Whiteness: The Non-Performativity of Anti-Racism" *Borderlands e-journal* Vol. 3. No. 2
- Alcock, P. (2003) *Social Policy in Britain [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition]* Hampshire: Palgrave
- Alcock, P. May, M. and Rowlingson, K. (2008) *The Student's Companion to Social Policy* London: Blackwell
- Alcock, P., Erskine, A., and May, M. (2002) *The Blackwell Dictionary of Social Policy* London: Blackwell
- Ali, S. (2007) "Feminism and Postcolonial: Knowledge/Politics" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31 (2): 191 – 212
- Alvesson, M. and Skoldberg, K. (2000) *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research* London: Sage
- Anti-Slavery (2012) "Background: Slavery in the Uzbek Cotton Industry" [http://www.antislavery.org/english/campaigns/cottoncrimes/forced\\_labour\\_in\\_uzbekistan\\_background.aspx](http://www.antislavery.org/english/campaigns/cottoncrimes/forced_labour_in_uzbekistan_background.aspx) [accessed 10 January 2013]
- Archard, D. (2004) *Children: Rights and Childhood [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition]* London: Routledge
- Arendt, H. (1969) *On Violence* Florida: Harcourt Books
- Arendt, H. (2006, 1963) *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* London: Penguin Books
- Austen, J. L. (1975) *How to do things with words: The William James Lectures* (Urmson, J. O. and Sbisá, M. (eds.)) Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Baldock, J., Manning, N. and Vickerstaff, S. (2007) *Social Policy [3<sup>rd</sup> Edition]* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Baldwin, M. (2002) "New Labour and social care: continuity or change?" in Powell, M. (ed) *Evaluating New Labour's Welfare Reforms* Bristol: Policy Press
- Barber, B. R. (1998) *A Place for Us: How to Make Society Civil and Strong* London: Hill and Wang
- Barthes, R. (1977) *Image, Music, Text* London: Harper Collins
- Barton, A. (2008) "New Labour's Management Audit and 'What Works' Approach to Controlling the 'Untrustworthy' Professions" *Public Policy and Administration* 23 (3): 263 – 277
- Bateman, N. (2000) *Advocacy skills for health and social care professionals* London: Jessica Kingsley

- Bauman, Z. (2003) *Liquid Love* Cambridge: Polity
- Bauman, Z. (2004) "Liquid Sociality" in N. Gane *The Future of Social Theory* London: Continuum
- Bauman, Z. (2007) *Liquid Time: Living in an Age of Uncertainty* Cambridge: Polity Press
- Bauman, Z. (2009) *The Individualised Society* Cambridge: Polity Press
- Bauman, Z. (2012) *Liquid Modernity* [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition] Cambridge: Polity Press
- Beck, U. (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a new modernity* London: Sage
- Becker, S. (2008) "Methods and Approaches in Social Policy Research" in Alcock, P., May, M. and Rowlingson, K. (eds.) *The Student's Companion to Social Policy* Oxford: Blackwell
- Begum, N. (1994) "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall" in Begum, N. Hill, A. and Stevens, M. (eds) *Reflections: The Views of Black Disabled People on their Lives and Community Care* London: CCETSW
- Benjamin, W. (1999) *Illuminations* London: Random House
- Benson, J. F. (2001) *Working more Creatively with Groups* [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition] London: Routledge
- Bhatti-Sinclair, K. (2011) *Anti-Racist Practice in Social Work* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Bhavnani, K. K. and Pheonix, A. (1994) *Shifting Identities Shifting Racism: A Feminism and Psychology Reader* London: Sage
- Billig, M. (1995) *Banal Nationalism* London: Sage
- Blackshaw, T. (2005) *Zygmunt Bauman (Key Sociologists)* Oxon: Routledge
- Blakemore, K. and Griggs, E. (2007) *Social Policy: An Introduction* [3<sup>rd</sup> Edition] Berkshire: Open University Press
- Bloor, M (2004) "Addressing social problems through qualitative research" in Silverman, D. (ed) *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice* London: Sage
- Bolton, G. (2006) "Narrative writing: a reflective enquiry into professional practice" *Educational Action Research* 14 (2): 203 – 218
- Bolton, G. (2010) *Reflective Practice* [3<sup>rd</sup> edition] London: Sage
- Bourdieu, P. (1987) "What makes a social class?" *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 22, 1 – 18
- Bourdieu, P. (1990) *In other words: Essays towards a reflexive sociology* Cambridge: Polity Press
- Bradshaw, J. (1972) "The Concept of Social Need" *New Society* 30 March 1972: 641 – 643
- Braidotti, R. (2005) "A critical cartography of feminist post-modernism" *Australian Feminist Studies* 20, 47: 169 – 180
- Brison, S. J. (2002) *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self* New Jersey: Princeton University Press

- Bryman, A. (2008) *Social Research Methods [3<sup>rd</sup> Edition]* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Bryson, V. (2003) *Feminist Political Theory: An Introduction* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Burawoy, M. (2005) "For Public Sociology" *American Sociological Review* 70 (1): 4 – 28
- Burman, E. (1994) "Feminist Research" in Banister, P., Burman, E., Parker, I., Taylor, M. and Tindall, C. *Qualitative Methods in Psychology* Berkshire: Open University Press
- Burman, E. (2003) "Narratives of 'Experience' and Pedagogical Practices" *Narrative Inquiry* 13 (2): 269 – 286
- Burman, E. (2006) "Emotions and reflexivity in feminised education action research" *Educational Action Research* 14, 3, September 2006: 315 – 332
- Burman, E. (2010) "Explicating the tactics of banal exclusion" in I. Palmay, E. Burman, K. Chantler and P. Kiguwa, (eds.) *Gender and Migration: Feminist Interventions* London and New York: Zed Books
- Burr, V. (2003) *Social Constructionism [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition]* London: Routledge
- Butler, J. (1997) *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* California: Stanford University Press
- Butler, J. (2004) *Precarious Life: The powers of mourning and violence* London: Verso
- Butler, J. (2006) *Gender Trouble [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition]* New York and London: Routledge
- Cabinet Office (2010) *The Compact: The Coalition Government and Civil Society Organisations Working Effectively in Partnership for the Benefit of Communities and Citizens in England* London: Cabinet Office
- Cantle, T (2001) *Community Cohesion - A Report of the Independent Review Team* London: Home Office
- Capdevila, R. and Callaghan, J.E.M. (2008) "It's not racist. It's common sense. A Critical Analysis of Political Discourse around Asylum and Immigration in the UK" *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 18 (1): 1 – 16
- Carby, H. V. (1997) "White woman listen! Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood" in Heidi Safia Mirza (ed.) *Black British Feminism: A Reader* London: Routledge
- Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming Critical: Education, knowledge and action research* Lewes: Falmer
- Chamberlain, K. (2000) "Methodolatory and Qualitative Health Research" *Journal of Health Psychology* 5 (3): 285 – 296
- Chamberlain, M and Thompson, P. R. (1998) *Narrative and Genre* London: Routledge
- Chief Secretary to the Treasury (2003) *Every Child Matters* London: HMSO
- Clarke, J. (2004) "Dissolving the public realm? The Logics and Limitations of Neo-Liberalism" *Journal of Social Policy* 33 (1): 27 – 48

- Clarke, T. (2001) *Burnley Task Force report on the disturbances in June 2001*, Burnley Borough Council: Burnley
- Code, L. (2007) "Feminist Epistemologies and Women's Lives" in Alcoff, L.M. and Kittay, E. F. *Feminist Philosophy* Oxford: Blackwell
- Cohen, Stanley (2004) *Folk Devils and Moral Panics [3<sup>rd</sup> Edition]* London: Routledge
- Cohen, Steve (2002) "Dining with the Devil: the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act and the voluntary sector" in Cohen, S., Humphries, B. and Mynott, E. (eds) *From Immigration Controls to Welfare Controls* London: Routledge
- Cohen, Steve (2004) "Breaking the Links and Pulling the Plug" in Hayes, D. and Humphries, B. (eds.) *Social Work, Immigration and Asylum* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Collett, J. (2004) "Immigration is a Social Work Issue" in Hayes, D. and Humphries, B. (eds.) *Social Work, Immigration and Asylum* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Collins, S. (2006) "Mental Health Difficulties and the Support Needs of Social Work Students: Dilemmas, Tensions and Contradictions" *Social Work Education* 25 (5): 446 – 460
- Community Care (2000) "Time to make the media hear the message" 17 May 2000
- Community Care (2008) "Learning by Experience: Disabled students and staff: disclosing disability" 25 July 2008
- Community Care (2010) "Failing Social Work Degree Courses Revealed" 28 April 2010
- Cooper, A. (2005) 'Surface and depth in the Victoria Climbié inquiry report' *Child and Family Social Work*, 10 (1): 1 – 9
- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (2008) *Basics of Qualitative Research [3<sup>rd</sup> Edition]* London: Sage
- Coulshed, V. and Orme, J. (2006) *Social Work Practice [4<sup>th</sup> Edition]* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Cranny-Francis, A. (1990) *Feminist Fiction* Cambridge: Polity Press
- Crawford, J., Kippax, S., Onyx, J., Gault, U. and Benton, P. (1992) *Emotion and Gender: Constructing meaning from memory* London: Sage
- Cree, V. and Wallace, S. (2009) "Risk and Protection" in Adams, R., Dominelli, L. and Payne, M. (eds) *Practising Social Work in a Complex World [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition]* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Crompton, R. (2008) *Class and Stratification* Cambridge: Polity Press
- Cunningham, J. and Cunningham, S. (2007) "'No choice at all': Destitution or Deportation? A commentary on the implementation of section 9 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004" *Critical Social Policy* 27 (2): 277 – 298
- Cunningham, S. And Tomlinson, J. (2005) "Starve Them Out: Does every child really matter? A commentary on section 9 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004" *Critical Social Policy* 25 (2): 253 – 275



- Currie, G. (2010) *Narratives and Narrators: A Philosophy of Stories* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Czarniawska, B. (2004) *Narratives in Social Science Research* London: Sage
- Daniel, B. (2010) "Concepts of Adversity, Risk, Vulnerability and Resilience: A Discussion in the Context of the Child Protection System" *Social Policy and Society*, 9 (2): 231 – 241
- Danziger (1997) "The Varieties of Social Constructionism" *Theory and Psychology* 7 (3): 399 – 416
- Davies, B. (1989) *Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales* North Sydney: Allen and Unwin
- Davies, B. (2008) "Practicing Collective Biography" in Hyle, A. E., Ewing, M. S., Montgomery, D. and Kaufman, J. S. (eds.) *Dissecting the Mundane: International Perspectives on Memory Work* Maryland: University Press of America
- Davis, K. (1994) "The crafting of good clients" in Swain, J., Finkelstein, V., French, S. and Oliver, M. (eds) *Disabling Barriers – Enabling Environments* London: Sage
- Dean H (2006) *Social Policy* Cambridge: Polity
- Dean, H. (2010) *Understanding Human Need* Bristol: Policy Press
- Denzin, N. K. (2001) "The reflexive interview and a performative social science" *Qualitative Research* 1 (1) 23 – 46
- Department of Health (1989) *Caring for People: Community Care in the next decade and beyond* London: HMSO
- Department of Health (1998) *Modernising Social Services* London: HMSO
- Department of Health (2000) *Assessment Framework for Children in Need and their Families* London: HMSO
- Department of Health (2002) *Requirements for Social Work Training* London: Department of Health
- Derrida, J. (1978) *Writing and Difference* London: Routledge
- Derrida, J. (1981) *Positions* Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Derrida, J. (2001) *On cosmopolitanism and forgiveness* London: Routledge
- Derrida, J. (2004) "Living On" in Bloom, H., Man, P. D., Derrida, J., Hartman, G., and Miller, J. H. (eds.) *Deconstruction and Criticism* London, New York, Continuum
- Diaz, J. (2008) *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* London: Faber and Faber
- Dobash, R. E. And Dobash, R. P. (2000) "The Politics and Policies of Responding to Violence against Women" in Hanmer, J. and Itzin, C. (eds) *Home Truths about Domestic Violence: Feminist Influences on Policy and Practice – A Reader* London: Routledge
- Doel, M. (2006) *Using Groupwork* London: Routledge
- Dominelli, L. (2002) *Feminist social work, theory and practice* Hampshire: Palgrave
- Dominelli, L. (2006) *Women and Community Action [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition]* Bristol: Policy Press

- Dominelli, L. (2008) *Anti-Racist Social Work [3<sup>rd</sup> Edition]* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Douglas, T. (2000) *Basic Groupwork [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition]* London: Routledge
- Doyal, L. and Gough, I. (1984) "A theory of human needs" *Critical Social Policy* 4 (11): 6 – 38
- Eagleton T. (2008) *Literary Theory: An Introduction [Anniversary Edition]* London: Wiley Blackwell
- Ellesworth, E. (1989) "Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy" *Harvard Educational Review* 59 (3): 297 – 234
- Elliot, J. (2005) *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* London: Sage
- Epstein, L. (1999) "The Culture of Social Work" in Chambron, A., Irving, A. and Epstein, L. (eds.) *Reading Foucault for Social Work* New York: Columbia University Press
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (2010) *How Fair is Britain: The first triennial review* London: EHRC
- Espito, J. and Evans-Winters, B. (2007) "Contextualising Action Research: Lessons from Urban Educators" *Educational Action Research* 15 (2): 221 – 237
- Everett, A. (1998) "Research and Development in Social Work" in Adams, R., Dominelli, L. and Payne, M. (eds) *Social Work: themes, issues and critical debates* Basingstoke: Macmillan
- Falk, P. (1988) "The Past to Come" *Economy and Society* 17 (3) 244 – 251
- Farrar, P. D. (2001) "Too painful to remember: Memory work as a method to explore sensitive research topics" in Small, J. and Onyx, J. (eds) *Memory Work: A Critique* (Working Paper Series, 20/01), School of Management, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia
- Featherstone, B. (1997) "I wouldn't do your job: women, social work and child abuse" in Holloway, W. And Featherstone, B. (eds.) *Mothering and Ambivalence* London: Routledge
- Feldman, A. (2007) "Teachers, responsibility and action research" *Educational Action Research* 15 (2): 239 – 252
- Fenge, L. (2006) "Community Care: Assessing needs, risk and rights" in Brown, K. (ed.) *Vulnerable Adults and Community Care* Exeter: Learning Matters
- Ferguson, I. (2004) "Neoliberalism, the Third Way and Social Work: The UK Experience" *Social Work and Society* 2 (1): 1 – 9
- Ferguson, I. and Lavelette, M. (2007) "The social worker as agitator": The radical kernel of British Social Work in Lavelette, M. and Ferguson, I. (eds.) *International Social Work and the radical tradition* Birmingham: Venture Press
- Fisher, B and Galler, R. (1988) "Friendship and Fairness: How Disability Affects Friendship between Women" in Fine, A. and Asch, A. (eds.) *Women with Disabilities: Essays in Psychology, Culture and Politics* Philadelphia, Temple University Press

- Fisher, B. (2001) *No Angel in the Classroom: Teaching through Feminist Discourse* Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers
- Fitzpatrick, M., Friend, L.A. and Costley, C.L. (2008) "From Being Excluded to Giving Voice: Memory-work, Gender and Marketing" in Hyle, A. E., Ewing, M. S., Montgomery, D. and Kaufman, J. S. (eds.) *Dissecting the Mundane: International Perspectives on Memory Work* Maryland: University Press of America
- Flyvberg, B. (2001) *Making Social Science Matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Flyvberg, B. (2006) "Five Misunderstandings about Case Study Research" *Qualitative Inquiry* Vol. 12, 12: 219 – 245
- Forder, A. (1974) *Concepts in Social Administration: A Framework for Analysis* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Foucault, M. (1973) *The Birth of the Clinic* London: Routledge
- Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* London: Penguin
- Foucault, M. (1978) *History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction* New York: Vintage Books
- Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writing – 1972 – 1977* New York: Random House
- Foucault, M. (1991) "Governmentality" in Burchell, G. Gordon, C. And Miller, P. (eds) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* Chicago: Chicago University Press
- Foucault, M. (1999) *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* London: Routledge
- Fowler, A. (1982) *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Franzosi R (1998) "Narrative Analysis – or why (and how) sociologists should be interested in narrative" *Annual Review of Sociology* 1998 24: 517 – 554
- Fraser, N. (2008) "From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age" in Olsen, K. (ed.) *Adding Insult to Injury: Nancy Fraser debates her critics* New York: Verso
- Fraser, N. (2009) *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World* Columbia University Press: New York
- Freshwater, D. and Rolfe, G. (2004) *deconstructing evidence-based practice* London: Routledge
- Furedi, F. (2004) *Therapy Culture: Cultivating vulnerability in an uncertain age* London: Routledge
- Gabriel, Y. (2012) "Organizations in a State of Darkness: Towards a Theory of Organizational Miasma" *Organization Studies* 33 (9): 1137 – 1152
- Galilee, J. (2006) *Literature review on media representations of social work and social workers* [www.socialworkscotland.org.uk](http://www.socialworkscotland.org.uk) [accessed July 2010]
- Galvani, S. (2007) "Refusing to Listen: Are we Failing the Needs of People with Alcohol and Drugs Problems?" *Social Work Education* 26, 7: 697 – 707

- Gamson, W. A (1990) "Defining Movement 'Success'" in Goodwin, J. and Jasper, J. M. (eds.) (2009) *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts* [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition] Malden, MA.: Wiley-Blackwell
- Gannon, S. (2008) "Messing with Memories: Feminist Post-structuralism and Memory-work" in Hyle, A. E., Ewing, M. S., Montgomery, D. and Kaufman, J. S. (eds.) *Dissecting the Mundane: International Perspectives on Memory-Work* Maryland: University Press of America
- Gardner, A. (2010) *Personalisation in Social Work* Exeter: Learning Matters
- Garside, J. (2012) "Apple's efforts fail to end gruelling conditions at Foxconn Factories" *The Guardian* 30 May 2012
- George, S. (2001) "Neoliberalism" in Bircham, E. (ed.) *Anti-Capitalism: A Guide to the Movement* London: Bookmarks
- Gillies, V., Harden, A., Johnson, K., Reavey, P. Strange, V. And Willig, C. (2004) "Women's collective constructions of embodied practices through memory work: Cartesian dualism in memories of sweating and pain" *British Journal of Social Psychology* 43 (1): 99 – 112
- Gillies, V., Harden, A., Johnson, K., Reavey, P. Strange, V. And Willig, C. (2005) "Painting pictures of embodied experience: The use of non-linguistic data in the study of embodiment" *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 2 (3): 199 – 213
- Gilligan, C. (1982) *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Gilligan, C. (1987) "Woman's place in man's life cycle" in Harding, S. (ed.) *Feminism and Methodology* Indianapolis: Indiana University Press
- Giner, C. (2007) "The Politics of Childhood and Asylum in the UK" *Children and Society* 21 (4): 249 - 260
- Gladstone, D. (2008) "History and Social Policy" in Alcock, P. May, M. and Rowlingson, K. (eds.) *The Student's Companion to Social Policy* London: Blackwell
- Glass, D. D. (1995) *All My Fault: Why don't women leave abusive men?* London: Virago
- Goffman, E. (1961) *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* New York: Doubleday Anchor
- Goffman, E. (1974) *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience* New York: Harper and Row
- Goodwin, B. (1987) *Using Political Ideas* [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition] Chichester: John Wiley and Sons
- Gordon, P. (1985) *Policing Immigration Controls: Britain's Internal Controls* London: Pluto Press
- Gramsci, A. (1971, 1998) *Prison Notebooks: Selections* London: Lawrence and Wishart
- Gray, M and Boddy, J. (2010) "Making Sense of the Waves: Wipeout or Still Riding High?" *Affilia* 25 (4): 368 – 389
- Gray, M. and Webb, S. A. (2009) *Social Work: Theories and Methods* London: Sage

- Gregory, M. and Holloway, M. (2005a) "The Debate as a Pedagogic Tool in Social Policy for Social Students" *Social Work Education* 24 (6): 617 – 637
- Gregory, M. and Holloway, M. (2005b) "Language and the Shaping of Social Work" *British Journal of Social Work* 35 (1): 37 – 53
- Gronemeyer, M. (2010) "Helping" in Sachs, W. (ed.) *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge and Power* New York: Zed Books
- GSCC (2002) *Codes of Practice for Social Care Workers* London: GSCC
- Gupta, R. (ed.) (2003) *From Homebreakers to Jailbreakers: Southall Black Sisters* London: Zed Books
- Hafford-Letchfield, T. (2007) *Management and Organisations in Social Work* [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition] Exeter: Learning Matters
- Hague, G. and Mullender, A. (2005) "Listening to women's voices: the participation of domestic violence survivors in services" in T. Skinner, M. Hester and E. Malos (eds.) *Research Gender Violence: Feminist Methodology in Action* Devon: Willan Publishing
- Harden, A. and Willig, C. (1998) "An exploration of the discursive constructions used in young adults' memories and accounts of contraception" *Journal of Health Psychology* 3 (3): 429 – 445
- Harne, L. and Radford, J. (2008) *Tackling Domestic Violence: Theories, Policies and Practice* Maidenhead: Open University Press
- Harraway, D. (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* London: Routledge
- Harraway, D. (2004) "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspectives" in Harding, S. (ed.) *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies* London: Routledge
- Harrison, W. D. (2009) "Social Work's Evolution in the United Kingdom: A Study of Community Care and Social Control" *Families in Society* 90 (3): 336 – 342
- Hatton, K. (2008) *New Directions in Social Work Practice* Exeter: Learning Matters
- Haug, F. (1998) "Questions concerning methods in feminist research" in Burman, E. (ed) *Deconstructing Feminist Psychology* London: Sage
- Haug, F. (2000) "Memory Work: The Key to Women's Anxiety" in Radstone, S. (ed.) *Memory and Methodology* New York: Berg
- Haug, F. (2001) "Sexual deregulation or, the child abuser as hero in neo-liberalism" *Feminist Theory* 2 (1): 55 – 78
- Haug, F. (2008) "Memory Work: A Detailed Rendering of the Method for Social Science Research" in Hyle, A. E., Ewing, M. S., Montgomery, D. and Kaufman, J. S. (eds.) *Dissecting the Mundane: International Perspectives on Memory Work* Maryland: University Press of America
- Haug, F. et. al. (1987) *Female Sexualisation: A Collective Work of Memory* London: Verso Classics
- Hayes, D. (2002) "From aliens to asylum seekers: a history of immigration controls and welfare in Britain" in Cohen, S., Humphries, B. and Mynott, E. (eds) *From Immigration Controls to Welfare Controls* London: Routledge

- Hayes, D. (2004) "History and Context: The Impact of Immigration Control" in Hayes, D. and Humphries, B. (eds.) *Social Work, Immigration and Asylum* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Hayes, D. and Humphries, B. (2004) "Conclusion" in Hayes, D. and Humphries, B. (eds.) *Social Work, Immigration and Asylum* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- Healthcare Commission (2009) *Investigation into Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust* London: Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection
- Heikkinen, H. L. T., Huttunen, R. and Syrjala, L. (2007) "Action Research as Narrative: Five Principles for Validation" *Educational Action Research* 15, (1): 5 – 19
- Herman, E. S. and Chomsky, N. (1994) *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* London: Vintage Books
- Hill, A. (2010) *Working in Statutory Contexts* Cambridge: Polity Press
- Hinchman, L. P. And Hinchman, S.K., (1997) *Memory, Identity, Community: the idea of narrative in the human sciences* New York: University of New York
- Hirschman, N. (2007) "Feminist Political Philosophy" in Alcoff, L. M. and Kittay, E. F. (eds.) *The Blackwell Guide to Feminist Philosophy* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing
- Hitchings, E. (2005) "Blurring the Boundaries – Less Choice for the Victims of Domestic Violence" *Social Policy and Society* 5 (1): 91 – 101
- Home Office (2001) *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain* London: HMSO
- Home Office (2006) *Crime in England and Wales 2005/6* Home Office Statistical Bulletin London: Home Office
- Home Office (2011) *Cross Government Definition of Domestic Violence: A consultation* London: HMSO
- Hooks, b. (1989) *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* London: Sheba Press
- Horner, N. (2009) *What is Social Work: Context and Perspectives [3<sup>rd</sup> Edition]* Exeter: Learning Matters
- Hudson, B. (2002) "Interprofessionality in health and social care: The Achilles' heel of partnership" *Journal of Interprofessional Care* 16 (1): 7 - 17
- Hugman, R. (1991) *Power in the Caring Professions* Hampshire: Macmillan Palgrave
- Hugman, R. (2005) "Looking Back the View from Here" *British Journal of Social Work* 35 (5): 609 – 620
- Hugman, R. (2009) "But is it Social Work? Some Reflections on Mistaken Identities" *British Journal of Social Work* 39 (6): 1138 – 1153
- Hunter, S. (2008) "Living Documents: A feminist psycho-social approach to the relational politics of policy documentation" *Critical Social Policy* 28 (4): 506 - 528
- Hunter, S. (2012) "Ordering Differentiation: Reconfiguring Governance as Relational Politics" *Journal of Psycho-Social Studies* 6 (1): 3 – 29
- Ignatieff, M. (1990) *The Needs of Strangers* London: The Hogarth Press

- Illich, I. (2010) "Needs" in Sachs, W. (ed.) *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge and Power* New York: Zed Books
- International Federation of Social Workers (2000) Definition of Social Work <http://www.ifsw.org/p38000208.html> [accessed April 2010]
- Jones, C. and Novak, T. (1999) *Poverty, Welfare and the Disciplinary State* London: Routledge
- Jones, A. (1980) *Women who Kill* New York: Fawcett Columbine
- Jones, C. (1996) "Anti-intellectualism and the peculiarities of British social work education" in Parton, N. (ed) *Social Theory, Social Change and Social Work* London: Routledge
- Jones, S (2006) *Antonio Gramsci: Routledge Critical Thinkers* London: Routledge
- Jordan, B. (2000) *Social Work and the Third Way: Tough Love as Social Policy* London: Sage
- Jordan, B. (2007) *Social Work and Well Being* Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing
- Jordan, B. (2010) *Why the Third Way Failed: Economics, morality and the origins of the 'Big Society'* Bristol: Policy Press
- Kaufman, J. S., Ewing, M. S, Montgomery, D. and Hyle, A. E. "Philosophy and Overview of Memory Work" in Hyle, A. E., Ewing, M. S., Montgomery, D. and Kaufman, J. S. (eds.) *Dissecting the Mundane: International Perspectives on Memory Work* Maryland: University Press of America
- Kearney, P., Levin, E., Rosen, G. and Sainsbury M. (2003) *Families that have alcohol and mental health problems: A template for partnership working* London: SCIE
- Kelly-Gadol, J. (1987) "The Social Relation of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History" in Harding, S. (ed.) *Feminism and Methodology* Bloomington: Indiana University Press
- Kilby, J. (2010) "Judith Butler, incest and the question of the child's love" *Feminist Theory* 11 (3): 255 – 265
- Kincaid, J. (1995) "A Small Place" in Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. and Tiffin, H. (eds) *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* London: Routledge
- Kivel, B. D. and Johnson, C. W. (2009) "Consuming Media, Making Men: Using Collective Memory Work to Understand Leisure and the Construction of Masculinity" *Journal of Leisure Research* 41 (1): 109 – 133
- Kokko, S. (2009) "Learning practices of femininity through gendered craft education in Finland" *Gender and Education* 21 (6): 721 – 734
- Koutrolis, G. (2008) "Having a Go at Memory-work as Sociological Method: Experience of Menstruation" in Hyle, A. E., Ewing, M. S., Montgomery, D. and Kaufman, J. S. (eds.) *Dissecting the Mundane: International Perspectives on Memory Work* Maryland: University Press of America
- Krumer-Nevo, M. Slonim-Nevo, V., and Hirshenzon-Segev, E. (2006) "Social workers and their long-term clients: The never ending struggle" *Journal of Social Service Research* 33 (1): 27 – 38

- Labov, W. (1972) *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular* Oxford: Blackwell
- Labov, W. (1997) "Some further steps in narrative analysis" *Journal of Narrative and Life History* 7 (4): 395 – 415
- Laming, H. (2003) *The Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report* London: HMSO
- Lavalette, M. (2007) "Social Work Today: A profession worth fighting for" in Mooney, G. and Law, A (eds.) *New Labour/Hard Labour: Restructuring and Resistance inside the welfare industry* Bristol: Policy Press
- Lawthom, R. and Burman, E. (1999) "Tensions and Possibilities in feminist authority in post-compulsory education" *Education and Child Psychology* 16 (2): 35 – 48
- Leathwood, C. (2005) "'Treat me as a human being – don't look at me as a woman': femininities and professional identities in further education" *Gender and Education* 17 (4): 387 – 409
- Lemke, J. L. (2004) "Intertextuality and educational research" in Stuart-Francis, N. and Bloome, D. (eds) *Uses of Intertextuality in Classroom and Educational Research* Charlotte NC: Information Age Publishing
- Letherby, G. (2003) *Feminist Research in Theory and Practice* Buckingham: Open University Press
- Lewis, G. (1996) 'Situated Voices: Black Women's Experience and Social Work' *Feminist Review* 53, Summer: 24–56
- Lewis, G. (2000) *'Race', Gender, Social Welfare: Encounters in a Post-Colonial Society* Cambridge: Polity Press
- Lewis, G. (2005) "Welcome to the Margins: Diversity, tolerance and policies of exclusion" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28 (3): 536 – 558
- Lewis, J. (2007) "Families, individuals and the state" in Hill, J., Le Grand, J. and Piachaud, D. (eds) *Making Social Policy Work* Bristol: Policy Press
- Lewis, M. (2005) *Asylum: Understanding Public Attitudes* London: IPPR
- Liddiard, M. (2007) "Social Need and Patterns of Inequality" in J. Baldock, N. Manning and S. Vickerstaff (eds.) *Social Policy [3<sup>rd</sup> Edition]* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Lindsay, T. and Orton, S. (2008) *Groupwork Practice in Social Work* Exeter: Learning Matters
- Lishman, J. (2009) *Communication in Social Work* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Lister, R. (2010) *Understanding Theories and Concepts in Social Policy* Bristol: Policy Press
- Llewellyn, A., Agu, L. and Mercer, D. (2008) *Sociology for Social Workers* Cambridge: Polity Press
- Lock, A and Strong, T. (2010) *Social Constructionism: Sources and stirrings in theory and practice* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Lorde, A. (1984) *Sister Outsider* New York: Crossing Press



- Lorenz, W. (2005) "Social Work and a New Social Order – Challenging Neo-liberalism's Erosion of Solidarity" *Social Work and Society* 3 (1): 93 – 101
- Lymbery, M. (2004) "Responding to Crisis: The Changing Nature of Welfare Organisations" in Butler, S. And Lymbery, M. (eds.) *Social Work Ideals and Practice Realities* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Maas-Lowitt, M. and Hothersall, S. (2010) "Protection" in Hothersall, S. (ed.) *Need, Risk and Protection in Social Work Practice* Learning Matters: Exeter
- Mangan, J. A. (1993) "Images for Confident Control: Stereotypes in Imperial Discourse" in Mangan, J. A. (ed.) *The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience* London: Routledge
- Manning, N. (2007) "Welfare, Ideology and Social Theory" in J. Baldock, N. Manning and S. Vickerstaff (eds.) *Social Policy [3<sup>rd</sup> Edition]* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Manning, N. (2008) "Social Needs, Social Problems, Social Welfare and Wellbeing" in P. Alcock, M. May and K. Rowlingson (eds.) *The Students Companion to Social Policy* London: Blackwell
- Marshall, J. (2007) "Performance Management: causes and effects and their impact on community care" in Brown, K. (ed.) *Vulnerable Adults and Community Care* Exeter: Learning Matters
- Marshall, T. H. (1950, 1992) *Citizenship and Social Class* London: Pluto
- Martinez-San Miguel, Y. (2009) "Postcolonialism" *Social Text* 100 27 (3): 188 – 193
- McDonald, J. (2005) "Neo-liberalism and the pathologizing of public issues: The displacement of feminist service models in domestic violence support services" *Australian Social Work* 58 (3): 275 – 284
- McDonald, S. (2003) "Answering questions and asking more: reflections on feminist participatory research" *Resources for Feminist Research* 30 (1 – 2): 77 – 101
- McGregor, S. (2001) "Neoliberalism and health care" *International Journal of Consumer Studies* 25 (2): 82 – 89
- McInnes, A. and Lawson-Brown, V. (2007) "'God' and other 'Do-Gooders': A comparison of the regulation of services provided by general practitioners and social workers in England" *Journal of Social Work* 7 (3): 341 – 354
- McLaughlin, K. (2007) "Regulation and Risk in Social Work: The General Social Care Council and the Social Care Register in Context" *British Journal of Social Work* 37 (7): 1263 – 1277
- McLaughlin, K. (2008) *Social work, politics and society: From radicalism to orthodoxy* Bristol: Policy Press
- McLaughlin, K. (2010) "Control and Social Work: A Reflection on some Twenty-first Developments" *Practice: Social Work in Action* 22 (3): 143 – 154
- McNiff, J. (2002) *Action Research for Professional Development*  
[www.jeanmcniff.com/booklet1.html](http://www.jeanmcniff.com/booklet1.html) [accessed October 2010]
- McNiff, J. and Whitehead, J. (2006) *All you need to know about Action Research* London: Sage

- McNiff, J. Lomax, P. And Whitehead, J. (2003) *You and Your Action Research Project* [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition] London: Routledge
- McPherson, W. (1999) *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry* London: HMSO
- Means, R., Richards, S. and Smith, R. (2008) *Community Care* [4<sup>th</sup> Edition] Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Midwinter, E. (1994) *The Development of Social Welfare in Britain* Berkshire: Open University Press
- Mills, S. (2003) *Michel Foucault* London: Routledge
- Mohanty, C. (2003) *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* London and Durham: DUKF University Press
- Monin, N. and Monin, J. (2005) "Hijacking the Fairy Tale: Genre Blurring and Allegorical Breaching in Management Literature" *Organization* 12 (4): 511 – 528
- Morley, L. (1998) "All you need is love: feminist pedagogy for empowerment and emotional labour in the academy" *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 2 (1): 15 – 27
- Morris, J. (1991) *Pride against Prejudice: Transforming Attitudes to Disability* London: The Women's Press
- Morris, J. (1993) "Feminism and Disability" *Feminist Review* Spring, No. 43: 55 – 70
- Morris, J. (1996) (ed.) *Encounters with Strangers: Feminism and Disability* London: The Women's Press
- Morris, J. (1997) "A response to Aldridge and Becker – disability rights and the denial of young carers: the dangers of zero-sum arguments" *Critical Social Policy* 17 (51): 133 – 135
- Morris, L. (2007) "New Labour's Community of Rights: Welfare, Immigration and Asylum" *Journal of Social Policy* 36 (1): 39 – 57
- Morrison, T. (1992) *Playing in the Dark* Boston: Harvard University Press
- Mulvey, A., Gridley, H. and Gawith, L. (2001) "Convent girls, feminism and community psychology" *Journal of Community Psychology* 29 (5): 563 – 584
- Munro, E. (2004) "State Regulation of Parenting" *The Political Quarterly* 75 (2): 180 – 184
- Munro, E. (2007) *Child Protection* London: Sage
- Munro, E. (2010) *The Munro Review of Child Protection: Part One – A Systems Analysis* [online] [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)
- Nickel, J. W. (2007) *Making Sense of Human Rights* [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition] Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishing
- Nicolson, P. (1996) *Gender, Power and Organisation: A psychological perspective* London: Routledge
- Noel, J. (1999) "On the varieties of phronesis" *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 31 (3): 273 – 289
- Nuttall, J. (2002) *An Introduction to Philosophy* Cambridge: Polity Press

- O'Connor, P. (1992) *Friendships between Women: A Critical Review* London: Harvester Wheatsheaf
- Oakley, A. (1972, 2005) "The Difference Between Sex and Gender" in Oakley, A. (ed.) *The Ann Oakley Reader: Gender, Women and Social Science* Bristol: Policy Press
- Oakley, A. (1998) "Gender, methodology and people's way of knowing: some problems with feminism and the paradigm debate in social science" *Sociology* 32 (4): 707 – 731
- Oakley, A. (1999) "People's way of knowing: gender and methodology" in Hood, S. , Mayall, B. and Oliver, S. (eds.) *Critical Issues in Social Research* Maidenhead: Open University Press
- ONS (2009) *Social Trends: 39 2009 Edition* [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)
- Onyx, J. and Small, J. (2001) "Memory Work: The Method" *Qualitative Inquiry* 7 (6): 773 – 786
- Ouseley, H. (2001) *Community Pride Not Prejudice* Bradford: Bradford Vision
- Paradis, E.K., (2000) "Feminist and Community Psychology Ethics in Research with Homeless Women" *American Journal of Community Psychology* 26 (6): 839 – 858
- Parker, I. (2005) *Qualitative Psychology: Introducing Radical Research* Maidenhead: Open University Press
- Parrot, L. (2010) *Values and Ethics in Social Work Practice [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition]* Exeter: Learning Matters
- Parton, N. (2004) From Maria Colwell to Victoria Climbié: Reflections on a generation of public inquiries into child abuse *Child Abuse Review*, 13 (2): 80 – 94
- Parton, N. (2006) *Safeguarding Childhood: Early Intervention and Surveillance in a Late Modern Society* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Parton, N., Thorpe, D. and Wattam, C. (1997) *Child Protection: Risk and the Moral Order* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Patterson W (2008) "Narratives of events: Labovian analysis and its limitations" in Andrews M, Squire C and Tamboukou M (eds) (2008) *Doing Narrative Research* London: Sage
- Pawson, R. and Tilley, N. (1997) *Realistic Evaluation* London: Sage
- Payne, L. (2009) "Twenty years on: The Implementation of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child in the United Kingdom" in *Children and Society* 23 (2): 149 – 155
- Payne, M. (2005a) *The Origins of Social Work: Continuity and Change* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Payne, M. (2005b) *Modern Social Work Theory [3<sup>rd</sup> Edition]* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Payne, M. (2006) *What is Professional Social Work? [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition]* Bristol: Policy Press
- Pease, B. (2008) "Mothers and Sons: Using memory work to explore the subjectivities and practices of pro-feminist men" in Hyle, A. E., Ewing, M. S., Montgomery, D. and Kaufman, J. S. (eds.) *Dissecting the Mundane: International Perspectives on Memory-Work* Maryland: University Press of America

- Pels, D. (2004) "Strange Standpoints, or How to Define the Situation for Situated Knowledge" in Harding, S. (ed.) *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies* London: Routledge
- Penna, S. (2003) "Policy Contexts of Social Work in Britain: the Wider Implications of 'New' Labour Policy and the 'New Legal Regime'" *Social Work and Society* 1 (1),
- Penna, S. and O'Brien, M. (2009) "Neoliberalism" in Gray, M. and Webb, S. A. (eds.) *Social Work: Theories and Methods* London: Sage
- Philips, A. (1987) *Feminism and Equality* London: Blackwell
- Phillimore, J. and Goodson, L. (2008) *New Immigrants in the UK: education, training and employment* Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books
- Phillips, E. M. and Pugh, D. S. (2005) *How to Get a PhD: A Handbook for Students and their Supervisors [Fourth Edition]* Maidenhead: Open University Press
- Pickvance, C. (2007) "The Impact of Social Policy" in J. Baldock, N. Manning and S. Vickerstaff (eds.) *Social Policy [3<sup>rd</sup> Edition]* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Plummer, K. (2000) *Documents of Life 2: An Invitation to Critical Humanism* London: Sage
- Poso, T. (2009) "Memories about the intercountry adoption of Finnish children: Decisions about the child's best interests" *Adoption and Fostering* 33 (4): 53 – 63
- Powell, F. (2001) *The Politics of Social Work* London: Sage
- Pratt, A. (2006) "Neo-liberalism and Social Policy" in Michael Lavelette and Alan Pratt (eds) *Social Policy: Theories, Concepts and Issues* London: Sage
- Preston-Shoot, M. (2007) *Effective Group Work [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition]* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Prior, L., Hughes, D., and Peckham, S. (2012) "The Discursive Turn in Policy Analysis and the Validation of Policy Stories" *Journal of Social Policy* 41 (2): 271 – 290
- QAA (2000) *Social Policy and Administration and Social Work: Subject Benchmark Statements* Gloucester: QAA
- QAA (2008) *Social Work: Subject Benchmark Statement* Gloucester: QAA
- Quayson, A. (2000) *Post-colonialism: Theory, practice or process?* Malden, Mass: Polity Press
- Ramazanoglu, C. (1987) "Sex and Violence in academic life or you can keep a good woman down" in Hamer, J. and Maynard, M. (eds.) *Women, Violence and Social Control* Hampshire: Macmillan
- Ramazanoglu, C. (2002) *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices* London: Sage
- Rapaport, H. (2011) *The Literary Theory Toolkit: A Compendium of Concepts and Methods* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell
- Reay, D. (2004) "Cultural capitalists and academic habitus: Classed and gendered labour in UK higher education" *Women's Studies International Forum* 27 (1): 31 – 39
- Reinharz, S. (1992) *Feminist Methods in Social Research* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Reismann, C.K. (1993) *Narrative Analysis* London: Sage

- Reismann, C.K. (2008) *Narrative Analysis for the Human Services* London: Sage
- Ritchie, D (2001) *Oldham Independent Review – One Oldham, One Future*, Government Office for the Northwest: Manchester
- Robbins, R. (2008) “Whose side are you on? Guilty pleasures in the use of debate as a teaching strategy” *Through the Looking Glass: Reflective Practice in Post-Compulsory Education* 3 (1): 201 – 208
- Romm, N. (1995) “Knowing as an Intervention” *Systems Practice* 8 (2): 137 – 167
- Romm, N. (1996) “Inquiry-and-Intervention in systems planning: probing methodological rationalities” *World Futures* 47: 25 – 36
- Roseneil, S. (2006) “The ambivalence of Angel’s ‘arrangement’: a psychosocial lens on the contemporary condition of personal life” *The Sociological Review* 54 (4): 847 – 869
- Roseneil, S. (2009) “Haunting in an Age of Individualization” *European Societies* 11 (3): 411 – 430
- Roseneil, S. (2012) “Doing Feminist Research after the Cultural Turn: Research with Practical Intention” in Roseneil, S. and Frosh, S. (eds.) *Social Research after the Cultural Turn* Hampshire: Palgrave
- Roseneil, S. and Frosh, S. (2012) “Social Research after the Cultural Turn: A (Self)Critical Introduction in Roseneil, S. and Frosh, S. (eds.) *Social Research after the Cultural Turn* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Rowbotham, S. (1973) *Hidden from History: 300 Years of women’s oppression and the fight against it* London: Pluto Press
- Royle, N. (2003) *Jacques Derrida* London: Routledge
- Runciman, W. G. (2006) “What happened to the Labour Party?” *London Review of Books* Vol. 28, 12
- Rustin, M. (2004) Learning from the Victoria Climbié inquiry *Journal of Social Work Practice* 18 (1): 9 – 18
- Sales, R. (2007) *Understanding Immigration and Refugee Control: Contradictions and Continuities* Bristol: Policy Press
- Schiller, L. Y. (2003) “Women’s group development from a relational model and a new look at facilitator influence on group development” in Cohen, M. and Mullender, A. (eds.) *Gender and Groupwork* London: Routledge
- Scott, J. (1991) “The Evidence of Experience” *Critical Inquiry* 17 (4): 773 – 797
- Scourfield, J. and Welsh, I. (2003) “Risk, Reflexivity and Social Control in Child Protection: New Times or Same Old Story” *Critical Social Policy* 23 (3): 398 – 420
- Seebom, F. (1968) *Report of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services* London: HMSO
- Segal, L. (2012) “Identity Troubles: After the Cultural Turn” in Roseneil, S. and Frosh, S. (eds.) *Social Research After the Cultural Turn* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Seshadri-Crooks, K. (2000) *Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race* London: Routledge

- Shardlow, S. and Doel, M. (2005) *Modern Social Work Practice: teaching and learning in practice setting* Hampshire: Ashgate
- Shaw, I. (1996) *Evaluating in Practice* Aldershot: Arena
- Shepard, M. (2006) *Social Work and Social Exclusion* Hampshire: Ashgate
- Simmonds, F. N. (1997) "My body, myself: How does a Black woman do sociology?" in Mirza, H. S. (1997) (ed) *Black British Feminism: A Reader* London: Routledge
- Simmons, R. And Thompson, R. (2008) "Creativity and performativity: the case of further education" *British Educational Research Journal* 34 (5): 601 – 618
- Sivanandan, A. (2012) "The Market State vs. the Good Society" Institute of Race Relations: [www.irr.org.uk/new/the-market-state-vs-the-good-society](http://www.irr.org.uk/new/the-market-state-vs-the-good-society)
- Smith, D.E. (2004) "Women's perspective as a radical critique of sociology" in Harding, S. (2004) (ed.) *The Feminist Standpoint Theory: Intellectual and Political Controversies* London: Routledge
- Smith, M. (2001) "Kurt Lewin: groups, experiential learning and action research" [www.infed.org/thinkers/et-lewin.htm](http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-lewin.htm) [accessed April 2008]
- Smith, R. (2005) "The history of psychological categories" *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 36 (1): 55 – 94
- Social Work Task Force (2009) *Building a Safe Confident Future* London: HMSO
- Somerville, W. (2007) *Immigration Under New Labour* Bristol: Policy Press
- Spender, D. (1981) "The gatekeepers: A feminist critique of academic publishing" in Roberts, H. (ed) *Doing Feminist Research* London: Routledge
- Spicker, P. (2008) *Social Policy: Themes and Approaches [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition]* Bristol: Policy Press
- Spicker, P. (2011) "Generalisation and Phronesis: Rethinking the Methodology of Social Policy" *Journal of Social Policy* 40 (1): 1 – 19
- Squire, C. (2005) "Reading Narratives" *Group Analysis* 28 (1): 91 – 107
- Squire, C. (2008) "Experience-centred and culturally orientated approaches to narrative" in Andrews, M., Squire, C. and Tamboukou, M. (eds.) *Doing Narrative Research* London: Sage
- Stanko, E. A. (2006) "Theorizing about Violence: Observations from the Economic and Social Research Council's Violence Research Programme" *Violence against Women* 12 (6): 543 – 555
- Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1993) *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology* London: Routledge
- Stephenson, N. and Kippax, S. (2008) "Memory Work" in Willig, C. and Stainton-Rogers, W. (eds) *Qualitative Research in Psychology* London: Sage
- Swain, J. and French, S. (2003) *Controversial Issues in a Disabling Society* Buckingham: Open University Press
- Swigonski, M. (1993) "Feminist Standpoint Theory and the Questions of Social Work Research" *Affilia* 8 (2): 171 – 183
- Szaz, T. (1991) *Ideology and Insanity* New York: Syracuse University Press



- Tajfel, H and Turner, J. C. (1986) "The social identity theory of inter-group behaviour" in Worchel, S. and Austin, W. G. (eds.) *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* Chicago: Nelson Hall
- Talbot, M. (2010) *Language and Gender* [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition] Cambridge: Polity Press
- The Guardian (2011) "Who were the Rioters?" *The Guardian* 5 December 2011
- The Guardian (2012) "Poor countries need joined up thinking on remittances and diaspora – UN" *The Guardian* 26 November 2012
- The Observer (2009) "21st-century Britons are no longer either black or white" *The Observer* 18 January 2009
- Thobani, S. (2001) "War Frenzy"  
<http://www.kersplebedeb.com/mystuff/s11/warfrenz.html> [accessed 18 July 2012]
- Thomas, P. (2007) "Moving on from Anti-racism? Understandings of Community Cohesion held by Youth Workers" *Journal of Social Policy* 36 (3): 435 - 455
- Thompson, N. (1997) *Anti-discriminatory Practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed), Basingstoke: Macmillan
- Thompson, N. (2005) *Understanding Social Work: Preparing for Practice* [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition] Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Todorov, T. (1990) *Genres in Discourse* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Townsend, P. (1981) "Peter Townsend Replies: Last week David Piachaud criticised Professor Townsend's criteria for measuring poverty" *New Society* 17 September 1981: 477 – 478
- Toynbee, P. And Walker, D. (2001) *Did Things Get Better? An Audit of New Labour's Successes and Failures* Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Travis, A. (2002) "UK Heroin fight hit by record opium harvest" in *The Guardian* 26 October 2002
- Tsui, M. And Cheung, F. (2004) "Gone with the Wind: The Impacts of Managerialism on Human Services" *British Journal of Social Work* 34 (3): 437 – 442
- Vickerstaff, S. (2007) "Work and Welfare" in Baldock, J. Manning, N. and Vickerstaff, S. (eds) *Social Policy* [3<sup>rd</sup> Edition] Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Walby, S. and Towers, J. (2012) *Measuring the impact of cuts in public expenditure on the provision of services to prevent violence against women and girls* Northern Rock Foundation and Trust for London  
<http://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/VAWG%20Full%20report.pdf>
- Walker, C. and Walker, A. (1998) "Social Policy in Social Work" in Adams, R., Dominelli, L. and Payne, M. (eds) *Social Work: Themes, Issues and Critical Debates* Hampshire: Palgrave
- Walker, M. (2007) "Action Research and Narratives: Finely Aware and Richly Responsible" *Educational Action Research* 15 (2): 295 – 303
- Walker, M. U. (2007) "Moral Psychology" in Alcoff, L. and Kittay, E. F. (eds.) *Feminist Philosophy* Oxford: Blackwell
- Walton, J. (1981) "The Treatment of Pauper Lunatics in Victorian England: The Case of the Lancaster Asylum 1816 – 1870" in Scull, A. (ed.) *Madhouses, Mad Doctors and Mad Men* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania

- Warburton, N. (2004) *Philosophy* [4<sup>th</sup> Edition] London: Routledge
- Watts, J. (2006) “The Outsider Within: dilemmas of qualitative feminist research within a culture of resistance” *Qualitative Research* 6 (3): 385 – 402
- Webb, S. A. (2006) *Social Work in a Risk Society: Social and Political Perspectives* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Webster, C. (1998) *The National Health Service: A Political History* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Weiner, G. (2004) “Critical Action Research and Third Wave Feminism: A Meeting of Paradigms” *Educational Action Research* 12 (4): 631 – 643
- Weiss, I. Gal, J. and Katan, J. (2006) “Social Policy for Social Work: A teaching agenda” *British Journal of Social Work* 36 (5): 789 – 806
- Williams, F. (2004) “What matters is who works: Why every child matters to New Labour – commentary on the DfES Green Paper Every Child Matters” *Critical Social Policy* 24 (3): 406 – 427
- Williams, R. (1960) *Culture and Society: 1780 – 1950* [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition] Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Wilson, F. M. (2003) *Organizational Behaviour and Gender* [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition] Aldershot: Ashgate
- Wise, S. (1990) “Becoming a Feminist Social Worker” in Stanley, L. (ed) *Feminist Praxis: Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology* London: Routledge
- Worcester, R. (2005) “We’re not Bored, Just Thinking” in the Observer Election Special 1 May 2005: 3
- Worley, C. (2005) “‘It’s not about race. It’s about community’: New Labour and ‘community cohesion’” *Critical Social Policy* 25 (4): 483 – 496
- Worth, H. (2006) “Unconditional Hospitality: HIV, Ethics and the Refugee ‘Problem’” *Bioethics* 20 (5): 223 – 232
- Yianni, C. (2009) “Aces High: My Control Trumps Your Care” *Ethics and Social Welfare* 3 (3): 337 – 343
- Yin, R. K. (2003) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* [3<sup>rd</sup> Edition] London: Sage
- Yuval-Davies, N. (2011) *The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations* London: Sage
- Zvarisek, D. (2002) “The ethnography of memory in social welfare and social work practice” *International Journal of Social Welfare* (11) 266 – 269



## List of Appendices

As discussed in Chapter Three – Methods and Collection of Material the following is included:

- Information Leaflet
- Example Consent Form
- PowerPoint presentation for Teaching Session
- Group Exercise Reading

As discussed in Chapter Six – Success Stories

- Eight student stories written to the cues ‘success’ and ‘positive’

I have also published in advance of my thesis and included the following material:

- Robbins, R. (2011) “We assess the stories our service users tell us – but what about the stories we tell about ourselves? The Writing Stories Project: Attempting to engage social work students in social policy learning” *Social Policy and Social Work in Transition* 2 (2): 130 – 148
- Robbins, R. (2013) “Stories of Risk and Protection: A Turn to the Narrative in Social Policy Education” *Social Work Education* 32 (3): 380 – 396



## BA SOCIAL WORK FULL TIME YEAR 1

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

#### WRITING STORIES PROJECT 2008 – 2009 (Tutor: Rachel Robbins)

#### KEY TERMS

**Cliché:** A much used expression that has lost its freshness (example, "I was over the moon" to mean I felt elated)

**Collective:** A group of people who share or are motivated by at least one common interest or sharing of similar values

**Generalisations:** A remark made about all things in one group

**Metaphor:** A figure of speech which implies comparison (example, calling a ferocious person "a tiger")

**Objective:** Based on the observable – uninfluenced by emotions or personal opinion

**Stereotype:** A generalization about a form of behaviour, an individual, or a group

**Subjective:** Particular to a given person

#### WHAT IS THE WRITING STORIES PROJECT?

- It is a group work process
- The aim of the group is to share experience as a means of better understanding social conditions
- Groups with a common interest meet regularly over a period of months
- They analyse a series of written everyday stories
- The project also forms a part of Rachel's research project

#### THE PROCESS

Before writing stories each group pick a 'cue' for remembering

#### Writing Stories

- Write a short account from memory about an everyday episode
- In the third person (s/he)
- Do not include explanation or biography
- But include detail such as sounds, colours, smells, etc.

#### Analysing stories in group discussion

- Each person expresses opinions and ideas about each memory in turn and
- Looks for similarities and differences between the memories
- Identify clichés, generalisations, contradictions, metaphors
- Also look for what is not written in the memories, but what might be expected to be

#### REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Crawford, J. et. al. (1992) *Emotion and Gender* London: Sage

Haug, F. et. al. (1987) *Female Sexualisation: A Collective Work of Memory* London: Verso Classics

Lindsay, T. and Orton, S. (2008) *Groupwork Practice in Social Work* Exeter: Learning Matters

Preston-Shoot, M. (2008) *Effective Groupwork* [2<sup>nd</sup> Edition] Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan

Stephenson, N. and Kippax, S. (2008) "Memory Work" in: Willig, C. and Stainton-Rogers, W. (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology* London: Sage

#### BEFORE COMING TO GROUP WORK

Consider your feelings about groups and group working. The following questions may help:

- What positive experiences have you had as a group member?
- What negative experiences have you had as a group member?
- What is the best and worst thing that can happen to you in a group?
- What do you find easy in groups and what do you find particularly challenging?
- What images of groups and groupwork have these experiences left you with?
- What would help you to work in a group?

#### KEY ASPECTS OF GROUP WORKING

- Anonymity will be assured in the research project
- Each group will produce their own ground rules, by asking questions such as:
- How can we avoid moralising?
- How can we be open to question?
- How best can we respect the confidentiality of the group and the group members?

## BA IN SOCIAL WORK FULL-TIME YEAR ONE



### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GROUP

#### MEMORY WORK PROJECT

2008 – 2009

## **PARTICIPATION IN MEMORY WORK PROJECT 2008 – 2009**

Dear Student

I value your participation in the Memory Work Project.

This document represents my research contract with you.

I undertake that:

- My participation in your writing stories group will be through negotiation with you
- Material gathered during the research will be treated as anonymous
- All material will be securely stored and only social work teaching staff and my supervision team will have access to it
- Any subsequent publications will not include any names or identifying information
- If you wish to change your mind about use of data, this will be respected
- If you are unhappy or have reservations about any or all of things you have written and/or discussed then your contribution can be withdrawn wholly or in part, provided you do so within 2 weeks of submission

Rachel Robbins  
Lecturer – Social Work

Having outlined these commitments to you, please answer each statement concerning the process and the collection and use of research data

I understand that attendance at PDGs is a compulsory element of the college BA Social Work curriculum	YES	NO
I understand that Rachel will attend the PDGs but her participation within the group will be through negotiation	YES	NO
I understand that I can ask questions about the study at any time	YES	NO
I understand that I can withdraw any written or taped contribution from inclusion within the study if I contact Rachel within two weeks of submission	YES	NO

Name (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Professional Development Groups

### Writing Stories Project

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Why This Research Project?

- This is a new venture for the course
- Support learning in the area of "politics"
- Support teaching
- Develop my skills and level of analysis
- Higher Degree

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Writing Stories

Service-users do not become service-users  
by accident

But what about social workers?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Writing Stories

As social workers you assess the "stories" that service-users tell you

What about the stories that you tell about yourself?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### What is the Writing Stories Project

- It forms a part of Rachel's research
- Builds on the work of social researchers and a method called "Memory Work"
- It entails a group of people with a shared interest
- They meet regularly for a period of months

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### How do we do it?

- The group members are research participants and researchers
- They put forward their own experiences as data (in the form of written stories)
- They undertake a collective analysis of these experiences

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Process - Cues

- Before writing stories, groups pick a cue for remembering
- Avoid really obvious cues
- (For example, Haug chose not to look at "the first kiss" when discussing sexuality)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Process – Writing Stories

- Write a short account from memory
- Of a particular episode
- In the third person (s/he)
- Avoid interpretation, explanation or biography
- But include everyday details (e.g. sounds, smells, colours, etc.)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Process – Analysing Stories in a Group Discussion

- Each person expresses opinions and ideas about each story in turn
- Look for similarities and difference
- Each person identifies clichés, generalisations, contradictions, metaphor
- Each person should question those aspects which are not easily understandable
- Discuss theories, popular conceptions, sayings and images about the topic

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Why Third Person?

Haug, (1987: 46) says:

"Writing about past events is almost impossible, unless we have some way of distancing ourselves."

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Why Third Person

- Stephenson (2008) suggests:
  - It invites co-researchers to observe aspects of themselves
  - Releases writers from need to justify themselves
  - Produces possibility that their experiences could be understood and/or lived differently

Allows the group to analyse the text and not the person

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Group Exercise

- Read the excerpt
- In your group discuss:
  - What is the woman afraid of?
  - How does she write about single men and men in groups?
  - What does the piece tell us about the construction of gender?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Choosing a Cue

- Protection
- Risk
- Control
- Justice
- Deserving
- Help
- Politics
- Crisis
- Need

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Ground Rules

- How can you ensure that everyone contributes both to the writing and the analysis
- How can you ensure that all voice are heard?
- How are decisions going to be taken?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Practical Arrangements

- How will you distribute your writing?
- Will this be done before you meet?
- If so, how soon?
- Will it be typed, handwritten?
- Are there any special needs in your group that need to be addressed?
- What role would you like Rachel to play?
- Consideration of ethics form?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Summary – The Benefits for You

- Begin to understand how people “story” their lives
- Develop your reflective practice
- Develop awareness of language
- Group working skills
- Observing research in practice

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Summary

Any Questions?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The following scene was written by a woman in response to the general theme: "An Occasion when I was Afraid".

### **The Passage in the Underground**

She had recently moved to the city and was on her way home after a concert. She liked going out on her own in the evening, but today she felt bad about going home unaccompanied since it was already very late and the streets were almost empty.

The women in the audience had dispersed in different directions, and none of them seemed to be on the same tube train as she.

She stood alone in front of the entrance to the Tube and was afraid to go down the stairs. Up on the street she could see what lay ahead of her and could keep looking around. In the tube tunnel she would not know what was round the next corner. Moreover, her retreat could easily be blocked.

She was furious because she did not feel she was in control. In fact, she did not move from the spot. She did not want to wait for other people to come with whom she might have gone down to the platform. So she pulled herself together and went down the steps.

It was a ghastly feeling to walk along the brightly lit passage, coming closer and closer to the corner. She felt more and more helpless, the further away she went from the entrance. Once she had turned the corner no-one would be able to see her and come to her assistance. She was afraid of that first second of terror, the second it would take her to gain an overview of the passage round the corner. To see whether the way was clear or whether there was a man lurking, leaning against the wall. And what if there really was a man leaning against the wall?

She knew the feeling she had when a man came towards her on the street at night, or a drunk accosted her. Your heart stops for a moment. The thought of that moment made her feel panic. She felt helpless and alone, like a cornered animal.

Just before she reached the corner her anxiety was so great that she turned round and ran back to the entrance as fast as she could. As she ran, her anxiety increased still further. She now felt she really was being followed. At the same time, she felt that she was involved in an insane, self-induced panic.

Back in the street she thought for a moment that she would only get home again if she took a taxi. But she did not want to take a taxi. If she did not manage to get home in the ordinary way, she would never manage it again. She would think twice about going out alone again.

She was still unfamiliar with the bus system in Hamburg. So, she just walked round where she was, in search of a bus stop. When she found one, she saw by the timetable that the last bus had gone. She felt desperate. While she stood wondering what to do she saw a group of men and women walking in the direction of the Tube station. She followed them in the hope of being able to walk along the passage at the same time as them. In fact they were all going the same way. With a feeling of relief she went down the steps with them. There were a lot of people on the platform. She felt happy and was scarcely able to believe that a few minutes earlier she had been in the street alone and in despair.

Taken from Haug, F. (2000) 'Memory Work: The key to women's anxiety in Radstone, S. (ed.) *Memory and Methodology* Oxford: Berg

## **Success #1 – The University Interview**

She had applied for university. This was her second time round since leaving school and the horror and disappointment of not getting a place last time was still fresh in her mind. It was the day of the interview. No matter how hard she tried to relax the nerves were kicking in fast. She had never had an interview like this before and didn't know what to expect. As she walked to the college she tried to recall the things she'd learnt on the Access course. Her mind was blank. The more she thought the more nervous she felt. By the time she got in the building she felt sick. She quietly told herself to fix up. She knew she needed this place and unfortunately, this was the only way to get it. She walked into the room. There were people already there. She swallowed and went to a seat. As she looked round the room she saw many faces that seemed to mirror hers; the term lambs to the slaughter sprang to mind! Looking to the front of the room she focused on the two people at the front who looked calm and welcoming. They were obviously the interviewers. The interviewers gave a summary of the interview; her mind quickly picked out the words group interview followed by individual interview. Her mouth went dry. She was dreading the individual interview.

It was time everyone sat chatting nervously waiting for their turn to go into the room of doom (interview room). She could feel her throat closing up. She just wanted to get it over and done with. Somebody called her name – you're next she heard a voice say. She walked up the corridor. She was officially bricking it.

She waffled her way through the interview feeling totally overwhelmed. By the time she left she felt she must have made some sense. She also felt a great sense of relief that it was all over. It was just a case of waiting now. After the great sense of relief, she had just felt the reality of the importance of this place was looming; her mind was on overload as it had been before the interview. She tried to recall the questions she had been asked and the answers she gave, the more she tried to recall the less she remembered.

She had been watching the post for week for an offer of a place anywhere. This was starting to feel like déjà vu. Then the day came she opened the envelope telling herself that there was always plan B. Her eyes scrolled down quickly... She was in. She'd done it! She looked again just to make sure she'd read it correctly. She had, she was going to university. This would be the start of her success.

## Success #2 - Karaoke

The minibus ride was as bad as she expected. Can of lager in her hand (how classy) she gazed through the window at the barely visible vegetation flying by: fields, sheep, trees. She tried to focus and ignore the knot in her stomach that seemed to be tightening with every mile that passed. She felt sick; the nervous waves kept coming and going, drawing closer each time and getting quicker as they drew nearer to their destination. It was her own personal sea of fear lapping teasingly at her toes and she knew it would only get worse eventually drowning her if she didn't get a grip. It was funny really as she always reacted this way, even with all the encouragement and support that surrounded her.

"Drink up, L"

Pam. Pam was a little nuts really, not your average 48 year old. She had an amazing ability in which she could make any conversation, however innocent, rude. She could always be counted on to lower the tone... significantly. Sitting next to Pam was a wise move; she knew full well that her crude sense of humour would provide a welcome distraction. After approximately two hours of listening to Pam's take on the menopause and hormone replacement therapy she was relieved when the mini bus rolled up at the hotel.

The knot tightened in her stomach. The waves of panic had reached legs now and she felt a little wobbly as she staggered into the lobby. She glanced at the others, so relaxed, so at ease, well of course they were. They didn't have to anything; they were here for the booze and the food. She felt a pang of resentment as she glared at them; if it wasn't for what she was doing none of them would be here, happily preparing to enjoy a free buffet and bottomless cocktails. She contemplated stepping down, what would they do then? Who would get up and do it? Denise? Pam? The idea was too horrifying to bear. Pam would probably be drunk enough by 9pm and there was a high possibility that she would have no problem getting up there in front of 400 people.

"I can do this, I've done it before, it's fine," she resolved.

Time flew by as they all drank merrily while applying their makeup. Clothes flew around the room as they agonised over what to wear (oh, the hardship). The taxi call came far too early and the nerves were taking their toll. The waves of panic almost engulfed her now, they licked at her face. Her throat tight, she was struggling to swallow now. Breath, breath, breath. Be calm, be calm, and be calm.

The taxi ride was so short and before she knew it they were there. The room was beautifully decorated. It boasted a large stage surrounded by over 20 tables; all the tables were tastefully dressed and well stocked with jugs of cocktails and bottles of wine. An hour passed which felt like an eternity, she wanted it to be over so she could have some fun. Pleasantries were dispensed and the 20 acts were announced and given their order to appear. Her stomach churned as they mentioned her name. OK 20 acts, 6 through to the final; she would have to do this once... for sure. The first act went on, a band... quite good actually. 11 more to go.

She could barely breathe now. She was wading in the water that surrounded her, just about keeping her head above it. Her legs now useless only dragged her down further, nothing worked. Her name... She could just about conjure up enough mental strength to recognise and acknowledge it. Her legs did their job, dragging her now lifeless, beaten and terrified

soul to the stage. Lights warmed her face yet burned her eyes as she stood centre stage. There was no hope now. The wave over-powered her, drenching her in panic and fear. Her ears, eyes and nose filled with invisible fluid. She couldn't breathe. She couldn't see. She couldn't speak. The music, she knew it... the water began to drain from her eyes as she attempted to focus on the mass of faces on her. Her senses awoke as the notes became clearer and ... there it was. It always came out of nowhere rescuing her from the trauma she always put herself through. She sang, forgetting the eyes on her, forgetting the stage beneath her and forgetting the fear that engulfed her. Before she knew it was over. The relief came in another wave, so strong it almost knocked her over as her feet found their way down the steps accompanied by the rumbling obligatory applause. This wave was different though. It was a hundred arms around her, warm, strong, reassuring, yet gentle and calm. This feeling was what she loved and that was why she did it. Success, no matter what place she came she always won when she got that feeling. It was over... done. The acts finished and shortly after came the announcement of who had made the final. She wasn't even listening when they called her name as it wasn't something she'd expected (or hoped) to hear.

"Great," she sighed, "here we go again."

However, like anything it was never as bad second time around.

### **Success #3 - Judo**

That morning Mel woke up feeling exhausted. She had managed to get about 2 hours sleep that night and was now regretting not taking a sleeping pill.

One of the main reasons she had not been able to sleep was the noise made by the other girls in the room. She was sharing a room with one other girl who had taken it upon herself to invite everybody she knew in for a girly night.

Mel was away with the British judo squad and was staying in a hotel in Holland. She had been competing since she was eight years old and had already won 2 national championship competitions – one in Britain and the other in Paris. However, this one was different. Mel had reached 16 years old and now qualified in arm locks and strangles and her weight had jumped up putting her in a category that was much harder than she was used to.

She had spent the last year training with the men in her local judo club and had made an effort to also train with not only the North West girls squad, but with the men's squad also.

It was the first time she had felt scared. She did not get nervous normally but this feeling was different. The difference being this time she had never fought any of the people in this weight category whereas all the other times she was used to the girls she fought and had beaten them all before in this competition.

Mel got up and dressed and washed and double-checked she had got everything she needed. A double-sided suit, white on one side, blue on the other, two white tee shirts, water bottle, underwear and most importantly her judo licence. Without that she was fighting nobody. She ate a healthy breakfast and got onto the coach with the rest of the squad.

Everybody was nervous on the way to the venue and for some it was their first time at a national championship. Everybody there had been handpicked by the British Judo squads' scouts to be invited to compete in the competition. Most of us had been training together for years since we were picked for the British squad and we knew the routine. We always supported our team mates by being at the side of the mat when they fought studying their opponents and giving them tips and since weight groups were called in order of weight, I was one of the first up.

Luckily for me all of the women I was fighting were tall, giving me the advantage. I won the silver medal that day and for once I didn't mind too much coming second. However, my dad is still to this day convinced that the referee got it wrong.

#### **Success #4 – Academic Grade**

This particular morning seemed to have lasted an age. Grace was quieter than usual and every now and again her stomach would do a flip with anxiety. This was the day that she was due to receive her first major assignment back and as this was the one that she had failed last year when she had had to defer her college place she was very nervous. She almost felt as though the grade she would receive determined her ability to complete her course and become a good social worker.

As she went back into her classroom after break she noticed a cardboard box full of brown envelopes on the table at the front of the room and realised that her assignment was in among them. The lesson that had been planned for the afternoon was a briefing for her next assignment but she could not take it in as she was too consumed with sheer desperation to see what lay inside that brown envelope. Finally, after what seemed like another age the tutor began handing out the envelopes. Some students immediately stuffed theirs into the bags to later open them in private; whilst others cautiously tore away at theirs as the other students tried to read their faces! As Grace was handed hers, she ripped it open and pulled out the plastic wallet that contained the work that she had slaved away at for so long. She stared down at the page and saw 79% but could not take it in. As she continued studying the page for her real mark she realised that that was what she had been awarded. Her eyes flooded with tears of joy and her legs felt like they were walking on air! Immediately she went into the other room to call her mother, pleased that finally she could make her proud.

Since the day that Grace received this grade she has felt a great sense of relief. Although her journey for success is by no means complete she feels as though she has proved to the world that she is both capable and determined enough to succeed.

## **Success #5 – Driving Test**

She was shaking. She had messed up big time – so many mistakes in such a small space of time. She was perfect on the way there, no mistake about that; no-one could fault her. All the words of encouragement all out of the window and the nerves took over, filling her body and mind messing with every aspect of her, causing this potential mess she was now in. The only thought rushing through her mind was getting on that bus all the way there and back. She hadn't been on a bus for years. Her dad taxied her everywhere but that journey was too far and he had already said that he wouldn't take her. Then the money flashed into her thoughts. I can't afford this again. It all just costs so much. No job waiting to start the next day. But she needed this. Uni looming and she knew that she would be skint. "Look at them in Hollyoaks, they never have any spare cash," so why would she be any different. It just costs too much. People were stood around, watching, all looking in at her. She felt like a gold fish in a bowl. People walking past that she didn't even know looking in at her, staring. There they sat side by side in silence she felt sick to the stomach; the butterflies swooping and dancing in there. He was looking down at his knee tick this, cross that. The silence lasted for what seemed like hours. He had warned her that he needed a minute to sort himself out, but this was taking forever. He eventually turned to her, no expression, looking right through her. This is it, she thought, I will have to start again from the beginning. It will take forever, that bus, all that money!!! Then the words came, "it was very shaky, but congratulations you have passed." She sat in disbelief, "I'm going to cry" she said. His reply, "Don't let me stop you." "But I did so bad, I messed up. I'm so much better than that," she said then quietened not wanting to talk him out of his decision. Relief, excitement, the sense of achievement was so extreme it was a rush. Who to tell first? What do I say? After thanking him she got out and walked away trying to keep a straight face but all she wanted was to scream down the street to who was waiting for her, "I did it. I passed my driving test. I don't have to get the bus all the way to Stockport. I don't have to pay out £40 a week for lessons." She was so chuffed. It was such a big deal for her. It wasn't something that she wanted; she needed this more than anything else at this moment in time. Even telling people nearly a year later still fills her with the same sense of pride and success as it did on that day.



## Success # 6

Pam has a great success in her life since coming to the UK. As a child growing up, she was from a poor family background. She was unable to complete her formal education. Her parents were unable to afford to send her to school on a regular basis. As she got older she tried to finance herself through further education, but she did not complete her studying as she felt that she did not have the confidence to pass the exams and so left half-way through her studies. Pam always lacked the confidence in herself, fearing that she was not good enough to succeed academically. She never stays in a job for any long period of time as she thinks that she can do better than this.

Pam mainly got jobs, such as domestic help, bar work and factory work which did not require a high level of educational qualifications. Although, Pam thinks she can do better for herself, yet, she did nothing to pursue that goal. In 1999 Pam got the opportunity to come to the UK, but with only having a six month's visa Pam's time in the UK was only short. Pam wanted to remain in the UK and so she enrolled at a local college to study computing and would then apply for a student visa. During the fifth month of her stay she applied to the home office for an extension for leave to remain in the country as a student. The visa was granted on the grounds that she continued in college and gain a qualification. However, due to Pam's financial position she had to try and find employment as her funds were running low. Pam found a job in a care home and the hours she worked became longer and longer resulting in the days spent going to college reducing each week, until she stopped attending altogether after three months of working and without gaining a qualification. So, yet again Pam quit her studying.

Pam got married towards the end of 2000 and became a UK citizen in 2003. She was in full-time employment as a care assistant where she has been working since 2001 until the present which is the longest time she has spent in one job. Pam's husband died in 2007 and she felt she needed to make some positive changes in her life and as she was not getting any younger and needed to get a move on in making some changes in her life. Pam has had the thought of becoming a nurse in the back of her mind for a long time, even before coming to the UK but after occasionally coming in contact with social workers through her present job she was then drawn towards the field of social work.

In 2007, Pam applied to City College to do an access course due to not having any GSCE's or A level qualifications to gain straight entry into university. The year before she had completed a level 3 qualification in care through her work, she was not under any pressure. She could work at her own pace and because there were continual assessments throughout the course, there was no exam at the end, she also completed her level 2 in Maths and English. She gained a place on the access course, also during that year Pam applied to five universities to study for a social work degree. Pam was invited for an interview at all universities. However, she was only able to attend four of the interviews and was offered places at all four universities. Pam began to have confidence and believe in herself. Pam is now studying for her social work degree at her chosen university and is enjoying it.

It goes to show that with hard work and determination you can achieve and have success.

## **Positive #1 – Writing for the Group**

*Positive*, well that doesn't bring many memories rushing into her head, thought Pam, how am I supposed to think of positive things when nothing positive has happened she thought. Why couldn't they be given a simple word like *disaster* to write about?

She had put it off long enough and knew that she would be letting the group down if she didn't contribute to their monthly sessions. Pam liked the group and had come to know them on a more personal level than the rest of the class.

As she thought about her group and what she was going to write about, her thoughts were interrupted by her children, the sound of the older two arguing filled the air, as did her younger ones singing, her heart filled with pride.

This encouraged Pam to think of all the positives that have come out of a lot of negatives. She realised that she was a strong person who has overcome a lot of hurdles and come out of the other side relatively unscathed.

She went on to think of some of the positive things that she had achieved in her life, like being a champion runner for Manchester girls cross country team winning various medals and trophies. This led to her participating in a half-marathon run for Childline when she was just 13 years old.

Another positive highlight for Pam was being part of a successful netball team even though she was usually the smallest on the court during most games. She was very sporty and gave it all. She just wished she learned to be a good swimmer, as the doggy paddle is not a good look.

## **Positive #2 – Getting to University**

Alice felt as if she has had lots of positives in her life of late. After the story of her reunion with her father and stepmother didn't work out, she moved to a sheltered accommodation with her sister.

Support workers, who helped to rehouse her and helped her with applications, supported her throughout the process until her son joined her in the UK.

Once her son joined her she set herself a goal, which was to go back to education and do something for herself, as she didn't want to be doing jobs like cleaning for the rest of her life. She wanted to motivate her son about education. If her son sees that his mother is trying to do something positive then he might follow the same footsteps.

Alice later applied for a course in GCE Health and Social Care. She found it difficult at first, but she stuck at it and now she is in University doing her Social Work degree.

She is so proud of herself because she has achieved her goal; because people set themselves a goal and fail to meet them, she thinks she's done well in a positive way.