The pleasures of being a student at the University of Sheffield

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National Centre for English Cultural Tradition

Quality of life is sure to decrease significantly: accept this fact and prepare. You will not be able to justify buying gratuitous fancy dress costumes for those [oh so indispensable, those legendary, those so difficult to get out of] novelty bar crawls: you may have to lower your expectations as to those compliments your costume will invite in flaming, acrid bars – where pub crawls venture too far from their source and motivation – and you will no longer be able to resemble your favourite characters from childhood shows, (those ones you had forgotten until arriving in Freshers' Week and discovering the resurrected interests, the mass hysteria to bond groups with nothing in common but their accident of age); from bemused charity shops, or cynical, colourful, fancy dress shops (that multiply like bacteria populations throughout student areas), as you only abandoned them before ten o'clock on the floor of a pub covered with body paint and sick.

—Toby Hobbs

I said, Hey stu-dent! Hey stu-dent! Hey stu-dent!
You're gonna get it through the head, I said.

—The Fall

Well the modern world is not so bad
Not like the students say
In fact I'd be in heaven
If you'd share the modern world with me
With me in love with the USA now
With me in love with the modern world now
Put down the cigarette
And share the modern world with me.

—The Modern Lovers

All folklore books are performances for certain markets.

—Jeremy Hardy

In the life of the Hall the small intolerances that divide specialist scholars are rubbed away; the literary man realises by experience that the technologist is not the barbarian he might be thought; the medical student finds that the classics make a contribution to general culture that he can ill afford to despise, and men can test their opinions in frank and easy discussion with those of a different outlook.

—A.W. Chapman

Alumni expect anecdotes – narratives of student pranks and recounting of incidents involving students outwitting their mentors. Cultural and social historians assume full treatment of the relation of the college or university to the society in which it flourished.

—Glenn Weaver

[I]t is impossible to write sympathetically about subjects such as divination, magic and witchcraft in modern history without automatically taking sides in at least one major, and often bitter, cultural debate.

—Ronald Hutton

Everything in Sheffield gets turned into student accommodation.

—Jarvis Cocker

You have no idea how the place runs when you are a student.

—Rosie Valerio

We've a world of our own and they can't enter there.

—Sheffield student song

Help! I own two very comfortable pure woollen jumpers, both of which are dear to me. However, not heeding my mother's (and the label's) advice, I washed them both by machine and they shrank, so they're not really comfortable any more (sob). I live in rented student accommodation where it's very cold so I need my jumpers! Can you suggest any method by which I could re-stretch my jumpers, which doesn't involve wearing a bin-liner and using my own body to stretch them while wet?

Oh dear. You students with your anarchic approach to life, questioning a garment label's authority, flying in the face of your own mother's advice. I wish there were a magic solution, but there isn't. Your fault was, I hazard a guess, not just in putting your adored jumpers in the machine, but putting them through a non-woollen cycle, because, as previously discussed in this column, you generally can wash jumpers in the machine in a specialist woollen wash. This is a rite of passage thing, Peter. Look on the bright side; cold aids concentration, so you'll do better in your exams and get a well-paid job so you can afford a different Connelly cashmere jumper every day (the crème de la crème of cashmere jumpers, put one on your Christmas list now).

—The Guardian

Abstract

This thesis investigates the distinctive means by which undergraduate students identify as a group outside the official university agenda of learning and teaching. It is based on ethnographic fieldwork carried out between 2005 and 2008 at the University of Sheffield and is thus an exploration of largely mobile, traditional students at an elite university in a time marked by 'Chicago-school' economic policies, global and post-industrial social change and pervasive technological mediation. Its findings are situated in three contextual narratives: the postwar development of a youth consumer culture, the expansion of Higher Education in the United Kingdom and the intensification of its night-time economy. Student identity is seen to be actuated within the latter, specifically the regular, ritualised activity of 'going out' which is understood, in a student context, as having developed from traditional, carnivalesque behaviours over three definite periods of student culture. The monetisation of these behaviours in the night-time economy is interpreted as having wrought significant temporal and spatial transformations on student life, the University and the city of Sheffield. Going out is seen as both performance and social process, one acting on and enacted by a small group of friends typically formed in student accommodation. Through this dual articulation going out is demonstrated as both propagating and being propagated by the pressures of mediated representation, especially those of the social-networking site Facebook. Going out, and especially the binge drinking that accompanies it, is ultimately understood, via Berardi (2009), as a raw, psychoactive medicine for the very pressures of objectification enshrined in mediated youth culture. Theoretically the research connects Noyes' (1995) formulation of group identity enacted in performance to Paglia's (1991) dichotomy of objectification and dissolution. In turn this is mapped onto Bourdieu's (1984; 1990) writing on sociology, Measham and Brain (2005) and Winlow and Hall's (2006) writing on the night-time economy and Allen and Ainley on Higher Education (2010). The thesis concludes with several recommendations: firstly a minimum price per unit accompanied by enforced social responsibility standards in the night-time economy, secondly the incorporation of the undergraduate first year into degree classification, thirdly a more practical emphasis on community and corporate life in both academic departments and residences and fourthly the pedagogic engagement of students in issues of pleasure, consumerism and culture.

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Abbreviations

Accommodation & Campus Services[1]	ACS
Activities and Events Committee	AEC
Altered state of consciousness	ASC
Computer mediated communication	CMC
Community Development Committee	CDC
Curriculum Vitæ	c.v.
Higher Education	HE
Higher Education Funding Council for England	HEFCE
Higher Education Statistics Authority	HESA
Information Commons	IC
Junior Common Room	JCR
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual	LGBT
National Union of Students	NUS
National Centre for English Cultural Tradition	NATCECT
Oxford English Dictionary	OED
United Kingdom	UK
United States of America	USA
Vice-Chancellor[2]	VC
Widening Participation	WP

Endcliffe Student Village	Endcliffe or the Village
Earnshaw Hall of Residence	Earnshaw
Halifax Hall of Residence	Halifax
Ranmoor House Hall of Residence	Ranmoor
Ranmoor Student Village	see Endcliffe Student Village
Sheffield Hallam University	Hallam
Sorby Hall of Residence	Sorby
Stephenson Hall of Residence	Stephenson
Studentland	The student habitus (see p. 40)
Tapton Hall of Residence	Tapton
University of Sheffield	University or Sheffield
University of Sheffield Union of Students	Union

[1] In October 2010 the department changed its name to Accommodation & Commercial Services.
[2] When unspecified, typically refers to the current VC of Sheffield, Professor Keith Burnett.

1 Introduction

The tallest building I have ever lived and worked in, Sorby Hall of Residence, was demolished by the University of Sheffield in a three-second 30-kilo controlled explosion on Sunday 27th August 2006 at 11 am. I was there to watch it fall.

If I had not been, I could have seen it again the next day, for an undergraduate who had also lived there sent me a link over Facebook, at that time a University-only website. This link directed me to a YouTube video that he had made of the demolition (Dannat, 2006). The film, entitled 'Sorby Tribute Video', lasts 2 minutes 55 seconds, and contains manipulated footage of the building collapsing and coming back up again, up and down. It ends with the caption,

> Those who were lucky
> enough to stay at
> Sorby, feel very
> privileged.

At time of writing the video has received over 7,500 views. At least 25 are mine; I have watched that tower, built in the modern brutalist style, go down and come back up many, many times. This thesis began inside room E22, where I was employed to live as a resident support worker and where I first encountered the performances of student culture, the focus of this research.

As residents of the twenty-first century know all too well, falling towers make forbidding images, creating powerful metaphors of terrible, sudden and unforgiving change. Such themes are represented by The Tower in the Tarot, a card which typically depicts a tower being struck by a thunderbolt, its battlements collapsing as two figures fall to the earth below. The following quotations, taken from popular magical texts I assembled during the course of my PhD, suggest possible interpretations of this card:

> Illusions are going to be shattered and the truth about people and situations will be revealed in startling clarity. There will be a questioning of previously accepted beliefs, trust will be destroyed.
>
> (Fenton, 1985, p. 113)

> [Y]ou will cause a sudden change or show a rebellious attitude that will be a shock, surprise or dismay to others.
>
> (Dee and Barker, 1996, p. 22)

> Only when Reality starts tearing up their picture do the children realize that all is illusion. Will that knowledge drive them insane, or will they grasp the opportunity to make friends with the giant?
>
> (Woudhuysen, 1979, p. 82)

> In mundane terms The Tower suggests the destruction of an out-dated philosophy which is unable to adapt to new conditions.
>
> (Douglas, 1972, p. 100–101)

Sorby, and its destruction, is an obvious metaphor for the change we have seen in Higher Education (HE). The tower was constructed in the same year that the Robbins Report was published, 1963. Since then, HE has undergone persistent and relentless expansion. Alongside the establishment of post-1992 universities, the introduction of tuition fees and research-based funding, university accommodation has been transformed in order to meet the needs of this expansion. I lived in and worked for student residences through a period of great change at the University of Sheffield, the academic years 2005/6, 2006/7 and 2007/8, three years that saw a complete overhaul of its residential strategy with the construction of a 'Student Village', a development common to many Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in the United Kingdom (UK) (Silver, 2004).

Before the detonation, the cameraman zooms in on a large blue banner that Accommodation & Campus Services (ACS), the University department responsible for the residences had attached to the building. It bears the message 'Farewell To Sorby Hall'. On Sheffield Forum, an internet site devoted to discussion of the city, a user commented on the choice of wording:

> having been blown up there is no way a lump of concrete is gonna fare well!!!!!! Surely goodbye would have been a far more appropriate term.
>
> (sea_doc, 2006)

As a folklorist one feels the need to address challenges of attempting to insensitively 'safeguard', 'rescue' or 'preserve' a changing culture from the passage of time. This is only heightened by working within the field of education, where the political and moral territory is contested and subject to huge financial pressure. I was not alone in seeing the destruction of Sorby as symbolic; just as Hugh Dannat was not alone in posting a video of the demolition online. The University of Sheffield did so on its own website, accompanied by a news item commenting on the 'state of the art' accommodation that was built in Sorby's place (University of Sheffield, 2006). In interview Dannat has expressed frustration with the new residential provision, and criticised the decision to destroy Sorby. This is indicative of the contrast between the student viewpoint, and an official, university line.
In investigating the context and consequences of change in HE I have had to interrogate my own opinions on education. Unlike the commentator on Sheffield

Forum I believe that the correct wording was chosen for Sorby's banner. Rather than say 'goodbye' to the hall and the residential and educational system it represented, I have written this thesis because I want them, and the principles that guided them, to 'fare well'. At 11 am on the 26th August 2006, when I saw the tower fall, such sentiments were not present in my thoughts or feelings. Aside from the thrill and wonder of watching something huge and complex collapse in seconds, I experienced a grim pleasure in seeing a year of my working life disappear. Unlike the many students who had commented online or to me in person, I felt little regret for its passing. If anything I experienced a sharp shiver of 'good riddance, begone'. As the Tarot may have warned me, strange and unusual things had happened in that tower and I wanted to leave them behind, buried in the rubble.

My PhD was originally concerned with magic. Students or HE did not factor; I was interested in belief and consumerism, crystals and the occult. It was only to help fund my time in Sheffield that I became involved with undergraduates, taking a job with ACS, working in Sorby, responsible for the pastoral care and disciplinary control of its residents. I took up residence in the summer of 2005 and lived alone for a month, lost in esoteric and popular magic books on the beliefs attached to crystals and minerals. It was an odd subject, but one that interested me and I was happy in my empty tower.

When the students arrived in late September 2005 Sorby quickly developed a vibrant community. Indeed I soon discovered that Sorby was famed, according to staff and students, for both its state of disrepair and the wild behaviour of its residents. It was, as many students informed me, 'the party hall'. Occupying a position of authority in such an environment was a steep learning curve, especially as the hall was recognised by ACS as having let standards slip. This tower was not a contemplative one and sleep became an elusive and highly desirable state of being. In my waking hours I read about crystals, often in the early morning, between bouts of amplified guitar from the student above me, who would drunkenly ignore that I'd already told him to be quiet. Despite the pressures of my job and the occasional dissonance between my lifestyle and that of the students, I found them warm, enthusiastic and full of joy, as students were nine years previously, when I was an undergraduate. My earlier experience of HE differed to what I saw in Sorby, understandably perhaps, considering the collegiate structure of the university I attended. Intrigued, I began examining the University of Sheffield in larger terms, not of comparing it with my past, but by attempting to understand it as I moved within it. Many aspects of undergraduate culture intrigued me; living and working with students gave me the space and time to explore them. In many ways my proximity and employment did not give me much choice.

Fancy dress was worn almost every night, and often accompanied by performed gestures. Pranks and acts of vandalism fascinated me; rarely a night went by without examples of either. Alcohol consumption was ritualised into games and

acts of binge-drinking bravado. Against frequent examples of chanting, bawdy discourse and images of male genitalia, I began to think of students in terms of Mikhail Bakhtin's (1968) conceptualisation of the carnivalesque. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the mass of images and messages displayed on Facebook, a site that launched in 2005 exclusively to university students, long before its opening to the general public. If I didn't see or hear students come back drunk in costume, it seemed as if I would later see their activities represented on Facebook. The extent of participation in these practices amazed me, and urged me to answer the question, what is particular about these repeated performances of carnivalesque behaviour? As an outsider, in terms of both my age and my position of authority, I found myself unable and unwilling to engage in examples of such behaviour myself. Unlike the students, I wasn't living away from home for (what was for many) the first time, busy with new freedoms and new friends. I'd enjoyed myself at university. Was this any different? Was I just... older? Was this worth researching?

As part of my research training I attempted to find out, writing an essay about the collections of empty alcohol containers that some students, male and female, displayed in their rooms. In the process of examining the literature on students I was surprised to discover very little material on undergraduate culture, in any field, let alone folklore. This stood in contrast to the mass of studies on learning, teaching and education in general. This shocked me, but I didn't dwell on it. I completed the research training and returned to crystals. Whilst I was adapting to the challenges of life amongst undergraduates, my fieldwork brought me into contact with magical items, magicians and spiritualists. The academic literature on belief had encouraged me to engage with reflexivity; I often thought about my own vague beliefs when I attended a weekly class with a local magical practitioner. At this time I was particularly interested by Susan Greenwood's (2000) anthropology of magicians in London in which she argues that the only way to observe, understand and study magic is to engage with it on its own terms (*i.e.* believe in it). Still finding it hard to sleep, both from noise at night, and the potential of noise occurring, I started carrying a piece of amethyst with me, even placing it under my pillow. I had read somewhere that amethyst aided sleep. I couldn't tell whether it helped, but the sleeping pills I was prescribed by the doctor certainly did.

One night in January 2006, I put on my heavy orange dressing gown, took an old, rusty pair of compasses and delineated a circle on the floor of my living room in Sorby. I placed candles, statues, shells and stones at what I imagined the cardinal points to be, and read my own Tarot cards in the centre. Suitably, I turned The Tower as I ad-libbed metrical phrases in what could only be described as an improvised ritual of despair. To me, at that time, everything outside of the circle felt untethered, in freefall: sleeping, my personal life, especially my health. I was smoking and drinking to excess. I had begun to use the sleeping pills recreationally. My career as a researcher was not going well, I couldn't understand where I stood in

relation to magic. Was I a magician? PhD student? Pastoral care worker? Disciplinarian? Insomniac?

Sorby Hall of Residence was named after Henry Clifton Sorby (1826–1908), a gentlemen scientist and resident of Sheffield who experimented extensively with crystals in his long career. Almost a century after 'the father of microscopical petrology' died (Humphries, 2004a), I was struggling to understand how to 'view' crystals in a building bearing his name above the door. My own academic work was obviously at odds with my Dr. Strange night-time experiments; that was clear the morning after my ritual, which, in a way, had worked: I couldn't be a researcher in the mould of Greenwood, I couldn't square the magical otherworld. Crystals were not the right subject matter for my thesis, not in the wilds of Sorby's Tower, at least. Falling from the battlement, I quickly improvised a more expansive ritual, metaphorically extending the radius of my circle so that it encompassed the whole of the University of Sheffield. Indulging my growing interest in undergraduate culture, I switched my PhD topic and began to look at students. In a personal, autobiographical sense, perhaps I hoped to attain a sense of control over my environment simply by measuring and understanding it.

Dannat's manipulated footage of Sorby going down, reversing its trajectory and coming up again, down, up, back and forth, is analogous to the production of this thesis, both in my mind, and again in the mind of the reader. The tower comes up and it goes down; it disappears and then it forms again, on these pages. This recalls one of the magical texts I collected, describing an aspect of The Tower and the two figures cast down from it:

> That is to say that they might well, and indeed will, resume their work, for a topless tower is as unfinished as an unsuccessful existence is unfulfilled.
>
> (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996, p. 1021)

If this process is destined to recur, I can only hope that such a task, however Sisyphean, will provide, from time to time, a decent view.

1.1 The research area

My research strategies have evolved alongside the production of this thesis, but my research area has remained fixed since I discarded that lump of amethyst. This thesis seeks to understand the distinctive means by which students at the University of Sheffield identify as a group. Instead of asking the question, 'What is a student?' (and answering it with 'one who studies'), it asks, 'How can students "be students" when they are not engaged in the act of studying?'. What follows should be considered a folklorist's reply to that question, in that it examines the folklore of

students as a means of arriving at an answer. This reply hinges on how one defines 'folklore' and 'student': both terms are, of course, broad and open to diverse readings. The definition of the first term, folklore, has been vigorously contested for much of the last fifty years, and this debate, if academic journals are any indication, shows no sign of settling down: folklore is a discipline that needs to wrestle with its own self-image. If that were not enough, beyond questions of what 'folklore' is, there are the complexities of the student folk group at the University of Sheffield, which is neither singular nor monolithic, consistent nor contiguous, but is as broad, deep and varied as its tens of thousands of constituents imply.

Much of this complexity can be explained by the recent history of the second term, student, which has deepened in meaning after the changes HE has experienced moving from an elite to a mass participation system. In the last twenty years the student body has become more diverse than ever in terms of age, socio-economic class, gender, disability and ethnicity, amongst other factors, and the University of Sheffield is no exception. Indeed, one could contextualise the impetus for this project within the wake of HE expansion, arguing that student culture has become so complex that only a study of this depth could hope to comprehend it. Yet any investigation of culture, at whatever time, is complex, with its own set of particular problems and limitations. Rather than let this introduction get bogged down in such arguments, I have decided to illustrate the intent of this thesis by describing an instance from my fieldwork, and leave the precise articulation of relevant terms until after my literature review.

In Intro Week 2006, at the very beginning of the new academic year, I accompanied a mass bar crawl, organised by the Junior Common Room (JCR) of Tapton Hall of Residence. The vast majority of Tapton residents participated, teams were organised, led by second year students bearing whistles. All the other halls of residence were involved, with their own organisational teams, routes and dress codes. The students from Tapton wore fancy dress and drank in several pubs on the way to a popular nightclub. There was an excited, celebratory air to proceedings, given an energetic edge by the alcohol consumed and heralded by the terrace-like chants, taunts and jeers exchanged between the members of different halls. It was a time for introductions: to Sheffield, 'Tapton culture', other students, and to university life in general. As we walked between pubs it felt like the students were claiming the dark city like explorers.

At one point I was walking and talking with a group of students when we were joined by a female second year in an assertive, almost aggressive mood. Dressed as a fairy, complete with wings and a wand, she told the students that they were going to have the times of their lives at Tapton and then advised them on the year ahead. She reminded them that they would only be students, especially first year students, once, and not to waste that opportunity, 'Go out every night,' she said, 'drink as much as you can, go out all the time, have a good time!' The Fairy Godmother

mentioned that it didn't matter about work or lectures, to miss them if necessary, 'first year doesn't count, you only need 40% to pass and none of it counts towards your final mark. It's a free year.' She made it very clear that she expected to see everyone at the hall bar every Monday night as that was the time Tapton got together before going to a nightclub. Rather than miss out on this through the year, she extolled debt as a financial option. The overwhelming subtext was, 'this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Don't waste it'.

This is, of course, a representation of what was expected of a resident of Tapton, and if it was overemphasised in this instance, it was done so as initiation, not as misrepresentation. It was also obvious that the first year students already knew the message, had anticipated it and its uniform, dressed as they were in an array of costumes, many of which had been brought with them, from their home towns. The rest of their lives had arrived: striding though the streets of Sheffield drunk *en masse* as pirates, bananas, spacemen, they were highly conscious of their position in the life cycle and what licence that position afforded them. I knew from attending community forums that some local residents felt that no such license existed, and that student noise, littering and drunken behaviour was unacceptable and unwarranted, even in Intro Week. Such is the tension of the urban process that human geography has termed 'studentification' (Smith, 2005). It is also an apt illustration that there are other points of view, that the experience was contested and not part of a unitary 'Sheffield' culture.

It should also be stressed that while some students stayed inside the hall that night and others doubtless did something else; the majority of new students were present and correct on the crawl. For it would have been considered unusual not to be with their new cohort, having a good time, going out and consuming alcohol. Indeed it was these three things that the Fairy Godmother evoked as being central to the student experience that they were about to embark on. It was clear that academic work possessed a low priority; for the first year at least, work was considered in opposition to 'being a student'. I heard this message many times in Intro Week, often at night, at events such as this, after academic departments had put on their own daytime 'orientations'. Intro week was a festival of excess that emphasised bodily pleasures, especially those delivered, accompanied or augmented by the consumption of alcohol. This fancy dress bar crawl exemplified it, and the older students revelled in their status as psychopomps, herding their charges from pub to bar to nightclub, initiating new recruits into the performances of undergraduate culture. Another year, another hall: this was the same territory I recognised from the night-time transformations of the decaying corridors of Sorby.

How best to describe these midnight pleasures? The costumes, the shouting, the taunting between halls, the message to misbehave, were all redolent of the carnivalesque, as discussed. As an initiation into student life, it appeared to have the features of a rite of passage, ably conjuring the sense of the liminoid as

described by Victor Turner (1979). Yet 'structure' was clearly present, the social order was firmly in place, the second year elders had their whistles and issued stern adjurations to drink and have fun. The experience was also defined by transaction, its trajectory commodified; as we visited each bar and finally the nightclub, the establishments were all too happy to accommodate. Free 'cocktails' and glow sticks were offered, loyalty cards issued and stamped. The streets were littered with adverts, offers and free tickets to do it all again Monday night, Wednesday night, Friday night. This was not culture on the margins and the interstices. There was little subversion: the only students not doing what was expected of them were those who had remained at home and avoided the night-time economy.

When I wrote up my notes I was unsure what to make of the evening. What was this, other than a drunken, ludic trawl in pirate garb and tutu? Should the terms liminoid and 'rite of passage' be used with more caution? Or is that a judgemental criticism, an overly literal application of the political and spiritual claims made by Bakhtin and Turner? What does the evening tell us about HE and its expansion? And then what of the students themselves, their own experiences, performances and memories? This tension, between the carnivalesque, commodification, youth and rites of passage, performance, pleasure and community encapsulates the thematic potential, and thus excitement, of this work.

This thesis looks at a large group contextualised in a broad field, its themes are numerous, yet as I hope I have demonstrated, complementary and interrelated. In order to present and demonstrate a cogent argument I have followed the accepted format for a thesis. A literature review follows this short introduction, before a third chapter outlines my conceptual framework, research questions, methodology and ethical considerations. I then proceed to detail the results of my fieldwork over four chapters before presenting my conclusions in the final, eighth chapter.

2 Literature review

Steven Zeitlin (2000, p. 3) identifies two approaches to conducting folklore research: expansive and delimited. The first position 'explores other disciplines freely', while the second maintains tight disciplinary boundaries. I will delay discussion of these boundaries until Chapter Three, but will comment that this literature review would number a few pages had I restricted myself to writers discussing HE from the perspective of folklore alone. Even so, student culture is not a typical subject, whatever the field. The writers that do discuss the 'life of students' do so in the context of the relationship between the university as institution and the student as learner (Hartshorne, 1943; Kelley, 1958; Grace, 1962; Gardner, 1965; Whisnant, 1971; Bess, 1973; Clark, 1973; Hatch, 1973; Cowley and Waller, 1979; Rhoads, 1997; Foley *et al.*, 2000; Tanaka, 2002). This has spurred me to read widely across various disciplines in order to find material relevant to the research area: the distinctive means by which students identify as a group outside of the official university.

The process this research has followed has also affected my reading: because I located the topic through a period of what could be termed 'exploratory' fieldwork and not through engagement with academic discourse (see Chapter One), my reading developed in an inter-disciplinary, reciprocal relationship with my fieldwork. This has embedded my understanding of student culture in the wider history of HE and youth culture. It would be impossible to summarise the relevant literature in the space afforded; indeed, I have come unstuck many times attempting to do just that. As a consequence this chapter is a *reading* of an expansive approach to the literature and not, as such, a full account. It is divided into two sections: the first describes contextualising narratives after establishing a theoretical orientation, the second discusses explicit studies of student life.

In order to be as concise and clear as possible, this paragraph serves as clarification on the terms employed here and throughout the thesis. I have used 'university' (with a *miniscule* 'u') to refer to universities in general and 'University' (with a *majuscule* 'U') to refer to the University of Sheffield. I occasionally use 'Sheffield' to refer to the University (usually in contrast with other universities), referring to the city of Sheffield either explicitly or through context. The University of Sheffield Union of Students is referred to as the 'Union', again with a *majuscule* 'U', while Sheffield Hallam University is shortened to 'Hallam'. In order to refer to the research area of this thesis I often use the term 'student culture', 'student life' or even 'students' as a convenient shorthand. When using the third person I have gravitated towards the epicene 'they' in place of 'he' or 'she', although I have chosen 'he' in preference to 'she' whenever I have felt it necessary to use the singular. This preference arises from the fact that I am myself male.

2.1 Putting students in their place

This section presents three connected postwar narratives of youth as the context for the research. They are the development of a youth consumer culture (2.1.1), the expansion of HE (2.1.2) and the establishment of a post-industrial alcohol order (2.1.3). All three are, to an extent, part of a larger, singular narrative: the postwar advancement of global capitalism, which I describe in this introduction by discussing three of its characteristics. The first is the continued expansion, from the 1970s onwards, of Chicago School economic liberalism (hereafter 'neoliberalism') and its prominent, world-changing role in globalisation (Stiglitz, 2007). The second is the transition of the dominant mode of production from industrial to post-industrial and the affect that this and other tenets of post-Fordism have had on diversifying daily life and work (Wigfield, 2001). Third is the development of communication and representational technologies that have remodelled humans and human society under pervasive mediation (De Zengotita, 2005). These three characteristics – neoliberalism, post-industrialism and pervasive mediation – are presented as aspects of a society that has shifted from what Karl Marx (1864) termed the formal subsumption of labour to capital to what Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt (2000) have termed the real subsumption of society to capital.

This sees the totality of contemporary life organised according to capitalism: leisure time, work time, the domestic sphere, the work sphere, the private and the public; a subsumption that amounts to a social and personal reorganisation (Bauman, 2001). In so doing it confirms 'a tight, direct connection between the consumer economy and the individual' (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 1). In the post-industrial west this reorders society and social relations:

> Engagement with the world of personal enterprise, flexibility and mobility is now *compulsory* for those who desire even moderate success; every bit as compulsory as traditional work once was.
>
> (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 24)

This engagement amounts to 'the capitalist takeover of social desire' as Franco 'Bifo' Berardi (2009c) describes it, in that the worker's needs, traditionally opposed to the interests of the capitalist under industrial enterprise are now realigned through real processes such as the 'flexibilisation and fractalisation of labour' (2009c) so that they now invest 'their creative, innovative and communicative competencies in the labour process' (2009b, p. 78). Effectively, this transforms 'subjectivity or individuality in relation to collective life and social solidarities' (Steinberg and Johnson, 2004, p. 460) and is an intensification of the loss of traditional structures under personal reflexivity and the 'pure relationship' discussed by Anthony Giddens (1991, 1992) and Ulrich Beck (1992). Michel Foucault's (1977) discourse on power is thus extended to the 'biographical project of the self' which becomes a form of governance that sees the 'authentic' self subject to continual self-

surveillance and perpetual, aspirational reflexive transformation (Rose, 1990). Berardi (2007, p. 77) memorably describes this as a 'cyber-panoptikon inserted in the fleshy circuits of human subjectivity'.

In tandem with these transformations, indeed, in a close, dependant and ultimately inextricable relationship with them, is the intensification of technological mediation and representation. In 1991 Giddens (p. 24) commented that 'Today the printed word remains at the core of modernity and its global networks', going on to conclude that,

> [T]he media do not mirror realities but in some part form them; but this does not mean that we should draw the conclusion that the media have created an autonomous realm of 'hyperreality' where the sign or image is everything.
>
> (Giddens, 1991, p. 27)

This is in reference to Jean Baudrillard (2007), who claimed just that in 1983. Sometime on from Giddens' comment and after the advent of the internet, mobile phones, digital cameras and personal computers, Baudrillard has begun to appear prescient. De Zengotita has persuasively suggested that the removal of 'reality' (by which he means accident and necessity) from life is a consequence of modernism, which has filled it, via media technologies, with an incredible, dizzying wealth of representations. People live by performing experiences suggested by these representations, an intensification of the situation described by Erving Goffman (1959) and William Shakespeare before him. While 'such insights are usually seen as metaphoric and, therefore, not the stuff of serious social analysis' (Quantz, 1999, p. 506), some writers, notably Berardi have integrated them into the single narrative of the subsumption of social life to capital. Drawing on the work of Paul Virilio (2006), Berardi (2007) questions how neoliberalism has affected 'the thinking and feeling organism's capacity for the conscious elaboration and affective assimilation of signs and events' (p. 82). Through over-communication and constant choice, Berardi suggests that subjectivity itself has become alienated from both itself and other people, which has in turn provoked a range of human pathologies (Berardi, 2009a). Steve Winlow and Stuart Hall (2006, p. 7) identify something akin to these pathologies in the violence of 'the consumer-driven night-time leisure scene fraught with anxiety, insecurity and hostility'.

These tenets of the real subsumption of society to capital, which I typically refer to as 'subsumption' have occurred in the last forty years, since approximately the end of the 1960s. It is the basic narrative that the literature on student life 'understands itself' by, rarely in opposition and often in agreement. As discussed, I present three connected historical narratives as the context for my research (youth culture, the expansion of HE and UK alcohol policy). They are constructed from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, and are all embedded within this broader story of global

capitalism. Before detailing these narratives, I will further explore the ideas and themes common to all, beginning with culture, which is understood as a 'living, active process' (Fiske, 1989b, p. 23) that creates meaning from our social experience. Because culture is fashioned by society, which is organised in terms of power, culture processes are related to power, and culture is therefore political. Antonio Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony describes the historical processes by which political and social elites maintain their position. Pleasure, and the manufacture of desire is one of the mechanisms by which hegemony maintains control through capitalism and consumer culture. This reading owes much to the Frankfurt School, specifically Theodor Adorno's (Horkheimer *et al.*, 1973) depiction of the masses as dupes of a manipulative and ideological culture industry.

A key (perhaps *the* key) quality of hegemony is its ability to absorb critiques by offering a space for resistance (Bratich, 2008). One of the processes by which it goes about this is termed incorporation: the appropriation of critiques in order to neuter their power, thus ensuring stability of the hegemony. Incorporation is the 'process of adopting the signs of resistance [that] incorporates them into the dominant system and thus attempts to rob them of any oppositional meanings' (Fiske, 1989b, p. 15). Capitalism therefore incorporates or contains texts, styles and activities for approved consumption in line with the social discipline propagated by social elites. This adds a sense of reciprocity to economic and cultural processes that keeps pace (and indeed relies upon) modern constructions of identity (Giddens, 1991).

Incorporation is often connected to commodification, the hallmark of the real subsumption of society to capital (Hardt and Negri, 2000). Commodification is defined as the displacement of use values by exchange values, alongside the entrenchment of exchange values in daily life (Gottdiener, 2000). A commodified shoe is no longer worth its use value of being a shoe, but its exchange value of being a *Nike Air Jordan 1 'Black Toe' 'OG'* (the commodification of sports shoes being a hegemonic incorporation of black American street fashion). This is related to Marx's allegory of fetishism to describe the relationship people have with commodities: 'The whole mystery of commodities, all the magic and necromancy' (Marx and Engels, 1967, p. 67)). Of course, this is not to say that people are culturally powerless under capitalism and hegemony as Adorno may lead us to believe. John Fiske (1989b, 1989a, 1994; Fiske and Hartley, 2003) has been credited as highlighting the constituent cultural power of the people (Bratich, 2008) but has been severely criticised in his reading of cultural activity as resistance, which he saw everywhere (Garnham, 2000). Fiske both underestimated the power of systemic 'preferred readings' of cultural texts and overestimated the discourses available to stratified audiences in adapting their own meaning of texts (Curran *et al.*, 1996). While his work shows us that cultural activity has the potential to be resistant, it also has the potential to be meaningless and unconscious (Cook, 1992) or 'habitual and unreflexive' (Garnham, 2000, p. 111).

I was trying to be reflexive with hegemony as I sat in Sorby polishing my crystals, listening to the late-night rumbles of student culture. One night, at three in the morning these took the form of an electric guitar amplified at full volume. I went up to discover four students dressed in uniform from a Skool Disco night, lying around drunk and smoking. I told them in no uncertain terms to be quiet and the guitarist laughed and offered me the spliff that hung limply between his fingers.

The concept these students were most interested and involved in was pleasure, which, as discussed in Chapter One, led me to Bakhtin (1968) who expends a great amount of energy extolling carnivalesque excess and bodily overindulgence via food, alcohol, sex and their corollaries of shit, piss and birth. He relates pleasure to power through a utopian vision for humanity, which owes little to Sir Thomas More (as Rabelais alludes to (Dentith, 1995)) but much to Cockaigne and its roots in a society of scarcity (much like the Soviet Russia he wrote from). The pleasures of the carnivalesque are decidedly bodily, rooted in consumption, abundance and the market place, befitting subsumption. This celebratory physicality is a carnivalesque reversal of the pleasures of the lecture hall, on which Peter Narváez (1994, p. 289) comments,

> Educational institutions conservatively maintain... power relations by cultivating *plaisir* or contemplative pleasure, rather than the physical enjoyments of *jouissance*.

These terms, *plaisir* and *jouissance* are employed by Roland Barthes (1975) to describe forms of pleasure. *Jouissance* indicates orgasm and is used by Barthes to refer to thrilling, bodily almost out-of-control pleasure, such as one would receive from sex or bingeing alcohol. *Plaisir* is used to indicate contemplative, mental pleasure, of the sort that would be received from appreciating a work of art. Richard Middleton (1983) has noted how they seem to operate in a dialectic fashion, working at the same time, in a relationship with each other, with the pleasure received from *jouissance* always having a touch of *plaisir* and *vice versa*.

Fiske (1989b) politicised this reading of pleasure to critique popular culture and hegemony by suggesting a means of interpreting and variegating pleasure in relation to culture, society and power. He saw three forms of pleasure: productive, evasive and hegemonic. Productive pleasures resulted from producing alternative meanings from culture and constituted the resistant readings that Fiske was criticised as seeing everywhere. Evasive pleasures were those that avoided the influence of the dominant social system. Fiske found evasive pleasure in the actions of those who sought independence from social expectation. Traditional evasive pleasures were those associated with sex, drugs and rock n' roll: pleasures that avoided the discipline of society. They were usually sensual, individual and associated with orgasm and the loss of self (or the socially-constructed and regulated self at least), and in that definition were in debt to Roland Barthes'

jouissance. Evasive pleasures were the foundation of productive pleasures as they demonstrated that there were other ways to experience the world. A third form of pleasure, hegemonic, described the pleasures of conforming to the rules of society.

For some time I attempted to apply Fiske's threefold analysis of pleasure to students, although it frustrated me. Was the guitarist's outstretched spliff a resistant action against my authority or was the student trying to share an evasive pleasure with a passing stranger? When I asked another student for their opinion she commented that smoking marijuana was not rebellious anymore, and was 'something that poor people did'. Others told me that the student was just being a student. The incident was unclear: was taking drugs an evasive or resistant pleasure? The guitarist himself could not remember it the next day. I was later told that he did not 'give a fuck about anything'.

Fiske's ideas have been 'thoroughly pilloried' by other writers (Bratich, 2008, p. 33) for his ability to find 'resistance' in the most banal of actions. I concur with these criticisms but affirm here what Jack Bratich (2008) suggests in his recent rehabilitation: that Fiske's ideas were of their time, and in that applied to the era *before* the real subsumption of society to capital, the era that saw its development. In the words of Jeremy Gilbert (2008, p. 26) they seek to explain the 'defeat of the radical promise of the 1960s' and should therefore be read in that context. This is why I had such difficulties relating him to the guitarist's spliff. As such I have used Fiske's analysis of pleasure to understand the three narratives that establish the historical context of student life: the development of a youth consumer culture, the expansion of HE, and the establishment of a post-industrial alcohol order. All three, to varying degrees, relate the pleasure-seeking, leisure time of individuals and groups to the containing forces and hegemonic processes of mediated consumer capitalism. All these narratives are connected with the defeat of the New Left, and the abandonment of the promise of the 1960s, which makes them suitable subjects for interpretation alongside Fiske (see Bratich, 2008; Gilbert, 2008). Essentially they help form an interpretative perspective that asks: how did we get here?

2.1.1 Dealing with youth

One of the significant outcomes of the second world war was the formation of a youth consumer culture in the West, which adopted American approaches to youth in contrast to continental attempts at mass organisation and even regimentation. In his book on teenagers, Jon Savage (2007, p. 465) concludes,

> The postwar spread of American values would be spearheaded by the idea of the Teenager... living in the now, pleasure-seeking, product-hungry,

> embodying the new global society where social inclusion was to be granted through purchasing power. The future would be Teenage.

Adolescence is intimately bound to the development and entrenchment of the mass media. De Zengotita (2005, p. 79) describes the teenager as the 'creature and creator of pop culture, a citizen of a separate society', going on to suggest that:

> If 'childhood' emerged as a category because people needed time to learn to be modern adults, 'adolescence' emerged because, the more elaborate popular culture became, the longer that process took. With the rise of recorded music, film, then TV and all the rest, the field of representations got so dense and extended that you had to, in effect, learn to learn to be an adult – that is, you had to be an adolescent first.

Buried in the heart of this mediated learning process is the link between rock n' roll and consumer capitalism (Svenonius, 2006), an economic relationship adopted by Western European youth culture in the late 1950s and 1960s, contributing societal changes that were, in the UK, real and epochal (Wmffre, 2008). The growth of this consumer culture and its flowering into mediated, western popular culture during the years *c.* 1962–1972 is understood by this contextual narrative as the definitive movement of postwar cultural history, for it emphasised Fiskean evasive and productive pleasures in a so-called counter-culture that remains an influence, through the processes of containment, on youth culture to this day. This has led various writers to suggest that 60s protests were 'essentially non-ideological', a kind of 'street theatre' (MacDonald, 1994, p. 25) in lieu of the real transformation, that of societal acceptance of the pursuit of pleasure as the purpose of life. In so doing the 60s cemented 'the tight genetic connection between youth and post-war consumerism' (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 5) that contributed towards the erosion of traditional social bonds. A key example of this is the change in the attitudes of youth (and especially students) to authority (Thomas, 1997, 2002), influenced by the American stylistic resistance code commonly termed 'cool' or 'hip'. In the UK this was largely adopted from mediated musicians, film stars and other culture heroes (Pountain and Robins, 2000). Cool has since been contained as a brutally effective marketing style, an example of the elite incorporation of 1960s popular culture that demonstrates the real subsumption of capital, as discussed by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2005). Alongside this narrative is the expansion of HE, usefully characterised by Martin Trow's (1973, 2005) threefold modelling of HE provision as elite, mass and universal. Trow describes the mindset of an elite HE system:

> When enrolment rates are 4 or 5% of the relevant age group, students naturally see themselves as part of a highly privileged minority... part of a small privileged institution with a clear set of common interests embodied in common values, symbols and ceremonies, modes of speech, and lifestyle.

> All that affirmed the communal identity of the academic institution against the rest of society.
>
> (Trow, 2005, p. 33)

The development of the youth consumer culture and the congruent trends in HE expansion during this key period, c. 1962–1972 caused a permanent shift in the cultural orientation of student life away from internal HEI elite cultures and towards the burgeoning youth consumer culture (see Hatch, 1973 for commentary on this shift). This can be interpreted, as it was at the time, as part of the student protest movement that 'both reflected and continued changes in values, acceptable forms of behaviour, and attitudes to authority... [by] previously voiceless groups, such as the young' (Thomas, 2002, p. 297). These protests were connected to (though not caused by) the realisation that '[u]nlike previous generations, they no longer had to behave, or even dress, like their parents, and could instead choose to partake of, or contribute to, the commercial products of a youth culture' (Thomas, 2002, p. 292). This is not to say, of course, that students orientated their identity solely towards youth culture, but rather that they orientated themselves away from the institution and saw themselves as a 'separate and distinct group in society' (Hatch, 1973, p. 255).

Although some of the student protests were anti-consumerist in their rhetoric, both Nick Thomas (1997, 2002) and Esmee Hanna (2008) warn against interpreting them on such grounds alone. The goals of many of the UK protests were, in the large, concerned with gaining more representation in universities, and, crucially, in changing halls of residence regulations that restricted the domestic mixing of sexes, not to mention the pleasures of 'fornication' and 'late functions' (Thomas, 1997, 2002; Silver, 2004). This was especially pertinent to Sheffield, where some halls were purposely designed to promote 'vigorous young men' (Chapman, 1955, p. 375). Fiske's understanding of pleasure thus provides an insight into the apparent contradiction between the role historians have afforded consumer capitalism in enabling student protests and Herbert Marcuse's (1964) fêting of students as being sufficiently removed from capitalist society to be capable of challenging it. Many students were, in fact, lobbying their universities to remove restrictions that hampered the production of 'popular culture', with all its evasive and productive implications.

Not only does this demonstrate the considerable moral and social powers that HEIs have traditionally held over student life, it also directly highlights the conflict between older strategies of youth management and the desires of the postwar American-influenced youth culture. This conflict was recognised by the Latey Report of 1967 which recommended that the age of majority be reduced from 21 to 18, thus removing the *in loco parentis* status that universities used to justify their domestic regulations. This was 'based upon the assumption that those between 18 and 21 need someone to look after them... we have been convinced that they do not' (Latey Report quoted in Thomas, 2002, p. 294). One of the reasons for this decision

was, as discussed, the Western adoption of a youth consumer culture and the economic, cultural and political empowerment this brought the young. In the long-term, of course, this adoption has significantly contributed to the real subsumption of capital (see Hardt and Negri, 2000; Boltanski *et al.*, 2005) and demonstrates the moral and intellectual complexities of the twentieth century. This has led Winlow and Hall (2006, p. 186) to describe the 60s as 'a series of fake revolts, an incorporated and domesticated dynamic force created by and harnessed to consumer capitalism'.

Since, as I have discussed, student culture firmly became orientated to youth culture in the 1960s, it is worth concluding this narrative with some comments on contemporary youth studies in the UK. These divided, in the 1980s and 1990s into youth cultural studies and youth transition studies (McCulloch *et al.*, 2006). The former group were criticised as being too involved in the 'stylistic art of a few' (Gary Clarke, 1982, p. 1, quoted in MacDonald and Shildrick, 2007, p. 340) and became less prominent in respect to the latter group, which tended to look at 'young people in worsened economic conditions' (MacDonald and Shildrick, 2007, p. 340). The transitions approach has consistently maintained the role of class and other social structures in establishing and maintaining identity and lifestyle (Roberts, 1997; McCulloch *et al.*, 2006; Roberts, 2009). The debate has been invigorated with the recent advent of post-subcultural studies that stress 'the agency (to varying degrees) of young people constructing their own cultural identities through participation in particular and distinctive lifestyles' (MacRae, 2004, p. 58).

All agree (Aggleton, 1987; Roberts, 1997; Arnett, 2004; MacRae, 2004; McCulloch *et al.*, 2006; MacDonald and Shildrick, 2007; Roberts, 2009) that the life stage of youth in the UK has, since at least the 1970s, been elongated with wider age spans involved in youth activities, some describing adulthood as an emergent state (Arnett, 2004). Secondly young people have become more individualised, possessing less certain futures and greater risk (as per Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992). Not only does this prolonged period of youth/emergent adulthood entail greater dependency on parents, it 'alters the post-war settlement' between the welfare state and young people (Allen and Ainley, 2010, p. 54). Young people do not spend their childhoods learning and then transform into working adults upon reaching the age of 16; they must either carry on learning or training (or else be a NEET[1]) until they are into their 20s. Sue Ruddick (2003, p. 354) comments that risk and impermanence in relation to employment has been transformed from 'a liberating moment, a great refusal in the late 1960s and early 1970s, to a virtual requirement in the 1990s'. Such a period of dependency is intimately connected to the expansion of HE (ironically considering the Latey Reports' comment concerning adulthood discussed above), the development of shared housing biographies and, as per Giddens' (1991, 1992) work, a reliance on friendship over family (Heath, 2004). All can be tied into the narrative of subsumption discussed in 2.1.

[1] Not in Education, Employment or Training.

Some commentators (summarised in Ruddick, 2003) disassociate youth from risk, nonconformity and hedonism and instead describe 'cultures of youthfulness' that promote youthful bodies amongst adults. Such a trend can be seen in the prevalence of cosmetic surgery, and is concomitantly observed in the projection of sexual desire onto children. While women become increasingly sexualised (and sexually subsumed by consumerism (Power, 2009)), men are hypermasculinised. Ruddick (2003, p. 353) thus places conflicts and representations of youth at the centre of globalised modernity, commenting that

> [C]ontemporary culture... has been marked by an increasingly aggressive packaging of youth-oriented pastimes and artefacts centered around the construction, adornment and testing of the body. The linking of extreme sports to the marketing of contemporary business technologies stands in sharp contrast to the signifiers of power for business elites a century ago.

Needless to say, youth and youthfulness are relentlessly mediated, which has led De Zengotita (2005, p. 80) to relate emergent adulthood (or 'young adulthood', 'kidulthood', 'adultesence') to the optionality he considers a key property of contemporary life:

> [T]here is so much more to absorb... so many different *ways* to be, so many different lifestyles, so many different versions of the world. Haunted by the possibility of buyer's remorse, we dawdle on the brink, trying this, trying that.

Such a mindset has been described as 'psychological neoteny' and has been related to the sheer pace of contemporary life 'because people need to be somewhat child-like in their psychology in order to keep learning, developing and adapting to the rapid and accelerating pace of change' (Charlton, 2007, p. 237). Emergent adulthood prolongs participation in youth consumerism and encourages the ritualisation of going out as a form of community (Heath, 2004), and is thus connected to the development of the night-time economy described in 2.1.3. Indeed, current areas of debate in youth studies remain centred on the role of class in determining leisured stratification, especially in the night-time economy (Hollands, 2002), with recent research demonstrating that older social divisions (such as class and place) are significantly related to new forms of cultural and social hierarchy, like neds, chavs, goths and skaters (McCulloch *et al.*, 2006). This last insight goes someway towards breaching the gap between youth cultural studies and youth transition studies.

Throughout these fields students are typically discussed in their relation to the night-time economy, which the literature broadly agrees is the significant focus of contemporary youth culture (Hollands, 2002; Chatterton and Hollands, 2003; MacRae, 2004; Winlow and Hall, 2006). This can, again, be associated with the cultural events of the 1960s, and can be seen as the progressive containment of

evasive pleasures that has led to young people ascribing a 'huge significance' to the night-time economy that replaces 'politics, the community, the school and the workplace as the principal location for the establishment and maintenance of group identities and self-identities' (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 8). Again, this has seen a further encroachment of capital into social life with friendship no longer enacted in the work or home, but in the business of the night-time economy: 'seeing friends means going out, and going out means seeing friends' (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 57).

2.1.2 Corporate life

The second historical narrative to situate student life is the expansion of HE. Although the foundation of the University in 1905 is part of this narrative, this section will largely consider the postwar situation throughout which the UK experienced the most sustained, rapid expansion of HE in Western Europe: from 130,000 enrolments in 1962, through *c.* 400,000 in 1973, *c.* 900,000 in 1981, over 2.1 million in 2000 (Trow, 2005, p. 4), to 2.4 million in 2008 (HESA, 2010a). In respect to Sheffield, Helen Mathers' centenary histories of the University (2005) and the Union (2007) have been invaluable in establishing the chronology and social context of this dramatic expansion.

From the 1950s into the 1960s Sheffield comprised around 2,000 students (Mathers, 2005, p. 140), by the end of the 1950s the majority of these were aged 18–21 and lived away from home (p. 177). By the time of the Robbins report in 1963 expansion had begun in earnest and continued through the 1970s and 1980s before its largest period of growth, the 1990s. From 1991–1995 the undergraduate population in Sheffield increased by 41% (and postgraduates by 72%); a similar period (1990–1996) saw funding per student fall by 28% (p. 318). Full time overseas students increased by 53% between 1990–95, further boosted by partnerships with overseas institutions and strong participation in the Erasmus Programme (p. 328–331). In total, the 1990s saw a 75% increase in students, from 9,406 to 16,841 (p. 377). Growth steadied in the 2000s, with total undergraduates rising from 14,239 in 1996 to 17,775 in 2007 (HESA, 2010b). Also within the city, Sheffield Hallam University (Sheffield City Polytechnic before the 1992 Higher Education Act) grew from 20,066 students in 1996 to 31,090 in 2008 (HESA, 2010b). In terms of enrolment, Hallam is now the eighth largest HEI in the country, while Sheffield is the eighteenth (HESA, 2010b).

This narrative of expansion is characterised in Sheffield and the UK by three themes: the intensification of market forces within HE (2.1.2.1), the broadening of the social background of those students able to engage with it (2.1.2.2) and, as a consequence of both of these, the changing role of HEIs in providing accommodation for what are known as 'mobile' students (2.1.2.3).

2.1.2.1 Intensify

While Mather's histories of Sheffield are framed as celebrations ('centenary histories'), the majority of contemporary writing on HE is characterised by regret, written with deep misgivings over the drop in funding per student capita (which fell c.66–75% between the 1979 and 2004 (Trow, 2005, p. 41)) that has led to an American style system displaying 'diversity in costs and quality as well as in forms and functions' (p. 43). Writers deplore the league table stratification that has occurred amongst HEIs, an example of which can be found in Sheffield where Hallam (a former polytechnic college) is seen as less prestigious than Sheffield, a member of the elite Russell Group. This stratification has been accompanied by the entrenchment of a consumerist framework, heralded by the introduction of student fees and their relationship to value-for-money (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005).

Trow (2005, p. 40) effectively identifies this regret as simple grieving, a necessary step in the adjustment of moving from an elite to a universal provision of HE.[2] I would argue that Trow neglects to contextualise the expansion of HE within the wider context of neoliberalism and the subsumption of society to capital, a narrative that many of the UK writers object to (see, for example, Olssen and Peters, 2005; Canaan and Shumar, 2008). Trow does not recognise the centrality of education to UK society and politics, a point made by Martin Allen and Patrick Ainley (2010, p. 8) who discuss the 'unprecedented primacy education has taken in successive governments' as the government's chief economic policy (the 'knowledge economy'). Such a view embodies HE within the larger education system and the economy in general.

The commodification of HE has generated a huge amount of literature discussing its effects on both institution and student. Briefly, education is now framed as a preparation for employment post graduation (Harvey, 2000), the academic culture has become commercialised in terms of research[3] (Willmott, 2003) and teaching (Lambert *et al.*, 2007), leading to the charge that education has become 'a mechanical and instrumental affair' (Allen and Ainley, 2010, p. 3). Much of this ethos is management driven, as befits a managerial culture (Whitchurch, 2006) which pushes universities into a state of competition at every level, externally (amongst other institutions for students and funding) and internally (between departments and members of staff). An internal market has been in place in Sheffield since the late 1980s (Mathers, 2005) and vigorous external, local competition with local providers' of student services, especially for housing and entertainment has developed since the 1990s.

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[2] An elite system has participation rates of up to 15%, a mass system 15–40% and a universal 40%+ (Trow, 2005). According to government data the first year UK participation rates rose above 40% was 2001/2002 (Heywood, 2010).
[3] Where there has always been a long history of sponsorship and involvement with local industry at Sheffield, evidenced by the names of its buildings: Firth, Mappin, even Sorby (Mathers, 2005), there has recently been allegations of corruption over corporate involvement in research funding (Washburn, 2005).

Indeed, the economic opportunities for these providers has increased in line with expansion. This has led to the commodification of student space and lifestyle (Smith and Holt, 2007). In terms of scale, alcohol is the chief commodity consumed by the student market and its provision has become a competitive business, with great rewards to those who are successful (see 2.1.3). Following the decline of the steel industry in the late 1970s and early 1980s the University has had a key role in the economic regeneration of Sheffield (Mathers, 2005, p. 385). By the late twentieth century Mathers (2005, p. 218) describes the University as having taken over the houses of the great industrialists, just as the shopping malls and entertainment complexes have converted their factories. One does not have to labour this metaphor to see the interplay of globalisation, consumerism and the knowledge economy, not to mention the gains and sacrifices of advanced capitalism.

The market has penetrated HE to such an extent that it has caused a debate as to whether students should in fact be called 'customers' (Eagle and Brennan, 2007). This debate is connected to academic standards, concerns about plagiarism, slipping degree standards, leniency to high-fee paying overseas students, 'helicopter parents',[4] obsession over degree tables and performance, increasing complaints and demands for work to be remarked (Baker, 2008). The reframing of students as customers has been used as a corrosive metaphor by many researchers, especially in respects to 'credentialism', the act of treating a degree as a commodity that can be exchanged for a job (Willmott, 1995), which is again reminiscent of Marx's commodity fetishism. Given the extent of expansion, such credentialism can be described as paradoxical especially in the face of economic recession. Applications for HE reached record levels in 2009, leading Allen and Ainley (2010) to suggest that HE is facing a 'credibility crunch'. Removing the cap on tuition fees can be interpreted as a means of avoiding this eventuality, at the cost of returning HE to its pre-war relationship with society.

In any case the advent of an HE consumer culture (and the loans that pay for it) has been accompanied by increasing debt,[5] the acceptance of which has become a cultural standard (Scott *et al.*, 2001), alongside, for many students, part-time work (Washburn, 2005). Debt and financial concerns are directly related to anxiety (Cooke *et al.*, 2004c). Research has consistently shown that mature students and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds entertain greater debt than traditional students (Gorard *et al.*, 2006). Robin Humphrey (2006) compared students from advantaged backgrounds with those from disadvantaged backgrounds and found that the latter were more likely to be in paid employment and have less time for socialising and non-academic activities. This was echoed by Cooke *et al.* (2004b), especially in the final undergraduate year when 30% of advantaged students were employed compared to 50% of disadvantaged students.

[4] A parent who continues to hover over their children, and meddle in their education. The OED cites the phrase from 1989 in the USA and 2006 in the UK.
[5] According to a survey of 2,000 students in 2007, 'Students who started university in the UK can expect to owe more than £17,500 by the time they leave' (BBC News, 2008b).

The consumer culture is also accompanied by increasing debt for universities (Shepherd, 2007), Sheffield being no exception, especially after suffering the loss of a £45 million nurse training contract to Hallam (MacLeod, 2005).

Teresa Dale (2006) studied the effects of neoliberalism on the student experience in her Ph.D. thesis, concluding that market forces and philosophy have transformed the attitudes of students, who were found to be increasingly isolated, calculating, consumer-orientated and above all ambivalent towards both their education and social lives. Following Zygmunt Bauman (1987), she found that students were both repressed *and* seduced by the introduction of market forces into HE. Winlow and Hall (2006, p. 185) comment that

> [E]ducation was simply another site of atomized instrumental competition... not once in our interviews was it expressed as an opportunity to stretch the intellect and widen social experience... [M]arket driven... individualism is also spilling over from work and education into commercialized leisure and friendships, a realm that once offered respite from it all.

Other writers discuss an erosion of trust between student and teacher and less thinking, or 'risk-taking' (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005, p. 272–273), as befits the competing, self-interested individuals of the free market, who just want accreditation (Canaan, 2004; Olssen and Peters, 2005). Similarly, Stephen Ball (2004) comments on neoliberalism's effect on social relationships in education, especially in terms of performativity, authenticity and commitment. Such conclusions echo Ronald Barnett (1999) who recognises that the 'super-complex' university is emotionally challenging and has commented that the university's 'inner callings [have been] emptied out to be replaced by the callings of others' (2003, p. 71). In response researchers have called for increased community participation via teaching, despite the pressure to bring in funding via research (Morrison, 2001)).

2.1.2.2 Girth

Widening Participation (WP) is a policy initiative whose purpose is derived from the Robbins Report in 1963: to broaden the social background of those students able to engage in HE (Dearing, 1997; HEFCE, 1997; Department for Education and Skills, 2003, 2004). WP effectively problematises the definition of 'student' by dividing it into two categories: non-traditional and traditional. This dichotomy is a simplification: 'non-traditional' being a synonym for many potential inequalities (notably sex, social class, ethnicity and disability) whilst 'traditional' often remains conveniently undefined (Gorard *et al.*, 2006). It is only through discussion of traditional and non-traditional students that writers discuss student life outside of its articulation with the institution (see 2.2.4).

Of the inequalities that WP was designed to address, sex is no longer thought of as relevant. Like other HEIs Sheffield has experienced the 'feminization of HE' (Allen and Ainley, 2010), which dates to the early 1990s when the number of women taking full-time undergraduate degrees overtook men. In 1995/96 Sheffield had 7,300 women and 6,900 men, for 2004/05 the ratio was 10,700 to 8,200. One interpretation holds that lower class males remain uninterested in HE whilst lower class females are seeking higher qualifications (Brown *et al.*, 2004). Despite this, Morrison *et al.* (2005, p. 153–154) found gender discrimination against women in both the classroom and residences. They perceived that women 'were viewed as acceptable and even "equal" as long as they "did the same things as men"'. While men were expected to conform to masculine stereotypes, their interpretation placed women in a double bind, socially they were expected to behave in a feminine fashion, yet in institutional sense feminine characteristics were not valued.

In any case, WP was never concerned with women as much as other inequalities. No one is confident that it has, in fact, worked: the 'most advantaged 20% of young people are up to six times more likely to enter HE than the most disadvantaged 20%' (Brennan and Osborne, 2008a, p. 180), a cause for concern shared by the last government report to address the issue (National Audit Office, 2008). Since older students, those from a racial minority and/or from poorer backgrounds tend to go to less prestigious institutions (Reay *et al.*, 2001; Brennan and Osborne, 2008b; Allen and Ainley, 2010), Sheffield might expect to receive a smaller proportion of non-traditional students than less-prestigious, newer universities such as Hallam. The University, however, performs well in comparison to other elite HEIs, having the highest rate of state school educated students in the Russell Group (84% in 2003 (Mathers, 2005, p. 386)). Most of these are not 'disadvantaged' however: while Sheffield has recently met its 'recruitment benchmarks from disadvantaged groups'[6] (McCall *et al.*, 2009, p. 45) only 18% of students for the years 2000 and 2004 were drawn from poorer social classes (Mathers, 2005, p. 376–386).[7]

The key concept in understanding the relationship of social class to HE is 'student mobility' or 'residence', as there is a direct relationship between non-traditional students (particularly those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds) and local HE study (Gorard *et al.*, 2006; Holdsworth, 2006; Elliot and Brna, 2009), suggesting that residence is an elite practice undertaken by traditional students (Holdsworth, 2009). Despite many exceptions, this general trend is supported by research (Slack and Casey, 2002; Cooke *et al.*, 2007) and Universities & Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) data (Papageorgiou, 2008) which indicates that low-income students stay at home as a debt-avoidance strategy (Patiniotis and Holdsworth, 2005) and as a consequence, 'experience specific problems with integrating socially' (Gorard *et al.*, 2006, p. 118).

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[6] An odious phrase if ever there was one.

[7] Despite the then Sheffield Vice-Chancellor (VC), Gareth Roberts being a major architect of the Dearing Report that suggested WP as a policy initiative.

Mobility dictates two key principles upon which elite HEIs, like Sheffield, market student life (Holdsworth, 2006; Holdsworth, 2009). The first is a students' ability to make friends, the second is a student's ability to maximise pleasure. These are the dominant elements of the mediated university experience, often expressed in terms of hedonism, one of the important ways in which elite universities are both thought of and marketed. Quinn (2007, p. 128) sees HEI marketing strategies as evoking a typical student that is 'young, white, hedonistic, able-bodied, heterosexual' and notes that the 'pleasures of learning' are rarely present in such mediations. Interestingly, a debate about university and mobility was carried out sixty years ago (Eden, 1959), with many of the same discourses about students 'missing out' on making friends by living at home. Pleasure and hedonism were notably absent, which is telling in light of the narrative explored in 2.1.3.

That is not to say that universities have only recently become sites of pleasure, but rather to comment, following Quinn (2007), that this has intensified. Alcohol, youth culture and 'independence' thus intersect with discourses on mobility and residence, defining, in their own way, the mediated 'student experience', whether it is actually experienced or not. Considering the evident importance of mobility to HE marketing strategies, one would expect the concept of residence to be central to elite HEI policy discussions. This has not, however, been the case, something which Harold Silver (2004) finds puzzling, as he views residence as a central 'tradition' of HE in the UK.[8] The reasons for this absence are discussed in the next section.

2.1.2.3 Centres of pleasure

The planning and organisation (both socially and architecturally) of pre-war residences was strongly associated with a university's institutional identity (Silver, 2004; Raymont, 2005). Sheffield, one of the six civic universities established in the first wave of HE expansion, began managing its own halls of residence in 1924 (Chapman, 1955, p. 291). At that time, design, construction and participation in student residences were associated with national concerns about student health (Vernon, 2008) and deeply connected to holistic notions of an education that was moral, gendered, fostered *esprit de corps* and ultimately a strong identification between student, institution and town (Raymont, 2005). This is the traditional, elitist model of an HEI that developed close ties with the student, as seen in the plentiful accounts of Sheffield life collected by Mathers (2005). Indeed, in 1919 'corporate life', as it was known, was spoken of by the then Vice-Chancellor (VC) of Sheffield as reaching 'its highest part in the daily intercourse' provided by residence (Mathers, 2005, p. 95).

[8] Specifically in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland, as in much of Europe, the concept of residence was not as emphasised (Silver, 2004).

As discussed in 2.1.1, it is the terms of this 'intercourse' that became the source of contention for students in the 1960s and 1970s. Yet throughout this time, despite the unwelcome moral regulation, residences in Sheffield remained full (as they did in the rest of the UK) as expansion ensured enrolment outstripped provision of housing throughout the postwar period up to the early 2000s (Silver, 2004). The 1980s saw a shift from provision of 'residence' to 'accommodation', where 'the planning of student residence partly as control, partly as a function of liberal education... disappeared' (p. 131). Silver characterises this as the 'abandonment of a tradition' marked by three features: the absence of residence from any discussion of what a university is, the rise of private student accommodation providers such as Unite from the mid-1990s and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) of universities with private companies in constructing and managing student residences.

Nicholas Beyts (2007) is one of the few writers to discuss PPP developments aside from Silver; viewing them from a neoliberal perspective he highlights their financial 'sense' in aiding student recruitment. Such a view has also appeared in the press (O'Connor, 2009) with commentary on 'a growing appetite for student property from institutional investors' when '[m]ost key university towns reported nearly 100 per cent occupancy in halls'. Other reporters were not so complimentary and discussed the 'soaring cost of student accommodation' and the huge profits that some private providers were making (Grimston and Hastings, 2009). It is noted that Academy Schools are also financed under PPP arrangements (Allen and Ainley, 2010). Following Helen Horowitz (1984) and David Whisnant (1971, p. 86), who view the campus as 'an educational metaphor [for] the dominant value system', it is impossible not to recognise the subsumption of capital in education, spatially from lecture hall to residence and temporally, from primary school to HE.

Silver's description of residential provision in the UK is similarly problematised by other commentators (Blakey, 1994; Raymont, 2005), yet his characterisation of it as an 'abandonment' does not convince. While the financial pressures of expansion alongside the extension of neoliberalism certainly monetised the provision of residence in accordance with Silver's narrative, he ignores the reorientation of student culture to youth culture in its unmarked disappearance from HEI institutional identities in the 1970s/1980s. Silver fails to mention that no-one wanted 'corporate life' anymore, especially the students whose involvement in universities had long been 'calculative rather than moral' (Hatch, 1973, p. 255). Undergraduates sought to escape from the power relations and moral regulation endemic in schools (Grimston and Hastings, 2009) and wanted to partake in the pleasures of youth culture afforded by mobility.

One might assume a simple connection between the bleak, market-focused literature on HE expansion and the pleasure-seeking, carnivalesque behaviours of the students I encountered in Sorby and Tapton. The spliff-toking, nihilistic guitarist and the commanding hedonism of the Fairy Godmother were, for example,

both concerned with consumption, the pleasures of locating their identity in the products of the night-time economy. The literature on students and HE largely avoids making this connection however. There are two reasons behind this, firstly, the link between students and pleasure is longstanding and predates the postwar realignment of student culture to youth culture.[9] This has made the construction of a coherent narrative that accepts both subsumption and the perennial connection of students with pleasure problematic (see Chapter Six for an attempt). Secondly, the protests of the 1960s over moral regulation have cast a shadow over many writers (Hatch, 1973), who have been mostly content to let young people 'have their fun'. Within education much of the contemporary writing on student pleasure and culture comes from the perspective of WP and is discussed in 2.2.4. There has been little recognition of the final narrative of subsumption: the development of a post-industrial alcohol order.

2.1.3 Calculated hedonism

This contextual narrative is concerned with alcohol consumption, a topic rarely out of the media (Daykin *et al.*, 2009), where it is often linked with students and pleasure, as per Holdsworth (2009) and Quinn (2007). This mediated discourse is part of the alcohol business: a global trade dominated by a few (often collaborating) corporations that generate billions of pounds of profit[10] from branded products embedded in the lives and identities of consumers on the basis of innovative and pervasive marketing strategies that public health literature struggles to keep up with (Jernigan, 2009). There is a complex network of capital subsumed in the alcohol discourse, itself pregnant with data, claim and counterclaim that makes it impossible to summarise in the space afforded in this review. In the context of neoliberalism and pleasure, the following narrative describes the shift from traditional patterns of consumption to contained, post-industrial drinking.

Alcohol use in the UK is high (Rehm *et al.*, 2003), as it is for most of northern Europe, where both young people and adults are 'far more likely to consume alcohol in relatively heavy sessions' (Plant and Miller, 2001, p. 514). Globalisation is converging European patterns of drinking towards these standards, where 'drinking is promoted as a lifestyle in association with recreation, fun and partying and other evening activities' (Rehm *et al.*, 2003, p. 154). In the UK alcohol is the 'economic and cultural backbone of the night-time economy' that relies on young people as important consumers (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 105). The health implications of these trends (accidents, violence and risky sexual behaviour (Standerwick *et al.*,

[9] There has been little historical interest in UK student pleasure or culture however, although it is discussed, for example, in histories of student pranks (Reeve, 1977) and institutional histories (Mathers, 2005).
[10] 'The 26 largest alcoholic beverage companies had a total net revenue/turnover of $155 billion in 2005, and a total operating profit of $26 billion' (Jernigan, 2009, p. 7).

2007)) are considerable and have generated a significant interdisciplinary response which has, in turn, provoked the formation of pro-alcohol pressure groups such as the UK-based Drinkaware. The extent of youthful drinking is paradoxical: concerns 'appear to be at least modified, if not actually countered, by the prevailing positive view that young people have about drinking' (Plant and Miller, 2001, p. 515). Such an attitude could be seen as a direct result of advanced capitalism (Winlow and Hall, 2006), which encourages the gratification of desire by consumerism, which consumes and orders leisure time (Bauman, 2001).

A notable trend in both the literature and the media has seen extensive reference to the concept of 'binge-drinking', despite there being no consensus on a definition (Herring *et al.*, 2008). The term has been used to refer to anything from 10 units per drinking session (Jefferis *et al.*, 2005) to drinking to get drunk (Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, 2004). Despite the differences, it is clear it refers to a single session leading to intoxication (Plant and Plant, 2006) and that this is not, in itself, a novel way of drinking: 'It has been the pattern in the United Kingdom for centuries' (Plant, 2004, p. 905). It is thus culturally tolerated, especially when not associated with youth (Marchant, 2006), which the majority of concern is directed towards (Herring *et al.*, 2008). Excessive consumption has been identified with UK students since the middle ages (Cobban, 1999).

Even the youngest contemporary undergraduate will likely have tried alcohol at school, where instances of bingeing are rising (Hibell *et al.*, 2009). UK students are not as well observed as students from the USA, where research has focused on college binge drinking. As Hammersley and Ditton (2005, p. 494) point out, the 'focus of concern is different' in the USA because the age of majority for alcohol consumption is 21, so much undergraduate drinking occurs away from any legal regulation. As a result research from the USA is orientated towards reducing and eliminating alcohol 'misuse' or 'abuse', using such strategies as peer advocacy, positive modelling or the social norms approach (Turner *et al.*, 2008). The single American-British comparative study determined that Scottish students consumed and binged twice as much as students from the USA (Delk and Meilman, 1996).

Jan Gill (2002) presents an overview of 18 surveys collecting data on alcohol use by UK undergraduates since 1974. Despite problems of comparison, the surveys concur that 'significant numbers of both male and female students are reported to exceed sensible weekly consumption guidelines' (p. 115). Of the recent surveys, a mean of 52% (±8%) of males exceed 21 units a week and 43% (±7%) of women exceed 14 units a week. Comparison with General Household Survey (GHS) data suggests that male students are twice as likely as the general population to exceed weekly safe levels and women three times as likely, prompting the comment, 'these women appear more similar to their male cohort than do women in the general population' (p. 118). This is remarkable as general female alcohol use has, in any case, increased more markedly than male alcohol use (which has also increased) since 1992 (Smith and

Foxcroft, 2009). A study undertaken by the University Health Service (King *et al.*, 2007) found that Sheffield students considered themselves binge drinkers and often regretted the amount of alcohol they consumed.

An extensive government report issued in 2003 was composed of focus group interviews with 123 young people (Engineer *et al.*, 2003), and highlighted the fun young drinkers derived from engaging with episodes of disorder whilst drunk. Discourse analysis on Scottish student drinkers (Guise and Gill, 2007) indicated the extent to which binge drinking was positively presented and socially encouraged by young people. A conclusion of all these studies is that people, especially young people, believed that binge-drinking was a highly enjoyable, largely positive, traditional activity that had long been acculturated into UK society:

> Young binge drinkers enjoy drinking alcohol and being drunk. Few feel that their drinking habits are something that they should change, even when they have been involved in various forms of risk or disorder as a consequence. Indeed, episodes of risk and disorder are often viewed as part of the excitement of getting drunk with friends.
>
> (Engineer *et al.*, 2003, p. v)

The commonality of this belief prompted Van Wersch and Walker (2009) to emphasise that binge-drinking is '*the* way to socialise and to have fun' (p. 131) and ask, in the face of engrained belief in its attractions and the acceptability of its consequences, 'Is there an alternative to binge-drinking as a form of fun and social enjoyment, and if yes, what is it?' (p. 132). Students were not seen to differ from young people in terms of their attitudes to alcohol consumption (Guise and Gill, 2007), understandably considering a) the pervasiveness of youth culture and b) the expansion of HE (thus diminishing differences between students and those young people not in HE). Students spoke of binge drinking as an enjoyable activity that helps socialising, that 'lessens inhibitions and takes place within socially acceptable boundaries' (p. 903).

Szmigin *et al.* (2008) believe that framing binge drinking as a negative habit is ultimately simplistic, following an argument that alcohol is pleasurable, a form of cultural escape that facilitates social bonding and engenders mutual feelings of pleasure and excitement. In other words bingeing is not without purpose, it is 'calculated hedonism' and while it may appear excessive, it is controlled from the perspective of when, where and with whom drinking occurs. Indeed, many 'binge-drinkers' limit its adverse consequences so that they interfere only at weekends. Long-term consequences were not always taken in to account by young people however who 'balance the physical risk of drinking and the impact on their social and cultural credibility of losing control in a drunken state with the desire to have fun and a good time with their friends' (p. 365). While this illuminates the intentions and strategies of binge-drinkers, it is in itself a simplification of larger

processes at work. For, as the following discussion argues, this hedonism is 'calculated' from more than one perspective.

Fiona Measham and Kevin Brain (2005) summarise a series of writers that interpret the literature on binge drinking as moral panic on youth, a variation on the perennial 'binge and brawl' phenomenon that links 18th Century gin fever to the 'lager louts' of the 1980s (see also Jayne *et al.*, 2006b; Szmigin *et al.*, 2008). Measham and Brain argue that such a view is simplistic by identifying developments in the last 10–15 years that 'suggest a new culture of intoxication' is developing in the UK (2005, p. 265). Of essential importance to this development is the hypothesis that

> [T]he shift from alcohol to dance drugs and dance clubs for a significant minority of young people in the late 1980s and early 1990s concerned the alcohol industry enough for them to reconsider and recommodify alcohol as a psychoactive product to appeal to young adults.
>
> (Measham and Brain, 2005, p. 266)

Coupled with a process of normalisation towards illicit drugs occurring beyond the dance floor and changes to the demographics of drug use, Measham and Brain (2005) argue that altered states of intoxication have become a weekend leisure goal. Accompanying the shift towards post-Fordism, the UK is thus seen to have moved 'from an industrial to a post-industrial alcohol order' (p. 267). Their argument relies on change in the relationship workers have with leisure and alcohol on the one hand and the commodification and commercialisation of the night-time economy on the other. It thus follows the subsumption of society to capital discussed in the previous two narratives. The authors demonstrate it with four transformations, which I have adapted:

1. The range of high strength alcohol beverages introduced from the early 1990s on, *e.g.* high-strength beer, 'alcopops', 'shots and shooters'.[11]
2. The strength of beers and wines increasing by up to 50% in the last 10 years.
3. Alcohol products being advertised as lifestyle markers.
4. The transformation of drinking establishments via the creation of café bars, dance bars and themed pubs.

To which I add, from Paul Chatterton and Robert Hollands (2003, p. 106), a fifth:

5. The rebranding and remodelling of cities to include 'scripted' urban areas centred around a series of 'machines for drinking in'.

These transformations map directly onto the social discourse on the night-time economy and have led the media and government to describe some British urban

[11] 'Alcopops' (known as Ready To Drink (RTDs)) are premixed alcoholic drinks, 'shots and shooters' are alcoholic drinks intended to be rapidly ingested. A shot does not contain a non-alcoholic mixer whilst a shooter does.

areas as no-go zones for over 35s past 10 o'clock at night. This is in contrast to traditional patterns of public alcohol consumption in the United Kingdom which were largely male, pub-centred, community-based, and non-age specific (Hollands, 1995; Kneale, 2001; Douglas, 2003). Development of the night-time economy has been situated within neoliberalism, the decline of industry and the increased importance to youth of entertainment, leisure and consumer culture (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003), in other words, the real subsumption of society to capital.

Behind this new culture and economy of intoxication lies a key point often stressed by public health literature: the price of alcohol has steadily fallen in the UK since the 1970s in relation to increased 'sessional consumption', as indicated by the GHO survey and others.[12] This has resulted in a cultural change, recognised in Government alcohol strategies (Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, 2004; Department of Health *et al.*, 2007), which ultimately amounts to an apparent pursuit of 'determined drunkenness at both the individual and social level' (Measham and Brain, 2005, p. 269), ably facilitated by the night-time economy, which, in turn, has been encouraged by liberalisation of the licensing laws.[13] That the government's response to closing-time violence was to stagger closing-time itself, gives an indication to the importance of the night-time economy (Plant and Plant, 2006), and the willingness of the government to allow alcohol-industry personnel (bouncers) to police the majority of it (Hobbs, 2003).

In conclusion, three themes emerge from the literature on alcohol. First is the 'relationship between drinking and constructions of gender, class, ethnicity, age' (Jayne *et al.*, 2006a, p. 465) which are related to social stratifications of activity, time and place (Hollands, 2002; Chatterton and Hollands, 2003). In these terms, mobile, traditional students are part of the elite users of the night-time economy (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003), that are, nevertheless, at an early stage in their biographies of identity 'refinement' and stratification (MacRae, 2004).

Second is the prevalence of alcohol-related disorder and violence, an accepted face of the night for those engaged in the 'drudgery of seeking pleasure' (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 93). This has been explained as a consequence of the traditional, lower class masculine and industrial habitus (see 2.2.3) meeting the individuating forces of late modernity in the absence of defined roles. A tenet of this violence is the safety and power people feel from being in a crowd, the discussion of which bears the influence of the literature on football and Bakhtin's carnivalesque (Giulianotti, 1995). Although students are thought to be non-violent (Chatterton, 1999), they have also been shown to engage in violence, theft and disorder: of 1215 undergraduates at UK HEIs, 58% self-reported minor criminal acts during the previous term, mostly alcohol or drug related, while 10% engaged in anti-social behaviour, typically

[12] This resulted in increased hospital admissions and rising disorder (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003; Measham and Brain, 2005; Plant and Plant, 2006; Winlow and Hall, 2006).
[13] Contrast this with the transformations the temperance movement enacted on city centres by removing the alcohol industry (Kneale, 2001).

vandalism and damage, with male, traditional, white, young, mobile students as statistically the most likely to offend (Selwyn, 2008).

Thirdly, since 'drinkers are consumers who are often badly behaved' (Jayne *et al.*, 2006a, p. 461), economic deregulation of the night-time economy has brought about increased regulation in terms of policing, security, CCTV and bouncers (Winlow, 2001; Hobbs, 2003; Winlow and Hall, 2006). Such presences shadow the forces of 'social regulation', demonstrating

> [T]he twin processes of seduction and repression which characterize consumer society. Here, the market is left free to seduce consumers while the consequences of deregulated consumer excess result in the repression and demonisation of those identified as flawed consumers.
>
> (Measham and Brain, 2005, p. 278)

Fiske's threefold reading of pleasure is irrelevant and outdated in the face of this containment of excess as hedonistic hegemony. There is no evasion in the *jouissance* of binge drinking, which frames students as identity-cruising consumers, subject to the obligatory pressures of being young and having fun in neoliberal drinking machines that come packaged with public morality and private violence. Again, this makes for bleak reading, although there are some glimmers of hope with the suggestion that 'carnival and transgression' still exist in student life, and that some student experiences 'encapsulate a do-it-yourself ethic, a step outside the corporate controlled spaces of studentland' (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003, p. 146). It remains to be seen, however, whether the carnivalesque behaviour of the Fairy Godmother and her costumed troupes is anything more than a style, encouraged by a thriving and competitive economy. The latest qualitative treatment of youthful drinking, Winlow and Hall's *Violent Night* (2006) is damning of the economic policy that has encouraged a self-serving and destructive alcohol culture to emerge amongst the young. While largely focused on lower class youth, it does include students in its analysis, but does not differentiate between traditional and non-traditional students, or discuss mobility. In any case, the authors dismiss the possibility 'of a life rich in the beautiful joys and tribulations of the affective community', found through pleasure as an 'illusion' (p. 186).

2.2 Studying students

While the previous section described three strands of a narrative that situated student life in the social and economic context of contemporary society, this section considers writers who discuss the detail of student life. Aside from Mathers' histories of the University (2005) and Union (2007) there has been little writing on Sheffield students. A recent exception is the report by Somer Finlay and Richard

Jenkins (2008)[14] produced to 'discover what "community" and "belonging" mean to students' (p. 5). Both Mathers' histories and Finlay and Jenkins' report will be considered in Chapter Four, alongside my own findings. This section is concerned with the disparate literature on student life drawn from a variety of disciplines: folklore, cultural anthropology, education research, sociology, human geography, youth studies and sports studies. It is presented here according to five general themes: the first understands students from a temporal perspective (2.2.1), the second from a spatial (2.2.2), the third considers applications of Pierre Bourdieu's social theory (2.2.3), the fourth explores other social and cultural aspects (2.2.4), while the fifth considers rites of passage and liminality (2.2.5).

Before this, I discuss several dedicated works on student life written by folklorists and anthropologists in the USA. Although the content and detail of these American studies are not relevant to this study, their themes, methods and approaches are. With this in mind, two differences between the UK and American HE systems necessitate brief comment. The first is the 'Greek system' of sororities and fraternities, which have no counterpart or equivalent in the UK. Fortunately these are compartmentalised in the literature, either treated as closed worlds inaccessible to the researcher (Moffatt, 1989; Nathan, 2005) or subject to exclusive study (Rhoads, 1995). The second difference is the minimum age for purchasing alcohol, which has already been discussed in 2.1.3.

Simon Bronner is a folklorist whose *Piled higher and deeper: the folklore of student life* (1995) is a compendium of the folkloric genres that American students engage with. Bronner makes little attempt to contextualise students within HE or American society and is by and large concerned with performances that have been documented by others, the majority of them official, in that they occur within the public sphere. Aside from his personal recollections, no students were directly observed and ethnography was not carried out. His book thus amounts to a discursive list of textualised performances taken from a diverse range of sources. Unfortunately, other American folklorists looking at HE, such as Elizabeth Tucker (2005, 2007), have followed his methodology.

Bronner catalogues student folk tales and shorter forms, such as riddles, jokes and chants, standard examples of *blason populaire* usually concerning university and regional rivals. For Bronner student folklore is a form of emotional, cultural education that serves to negotiate the passage from adolescence to adulthood. Consequently he interprets the private, individualised aspects of student folklore as a means of articulating and coping with stress and fear, an explanation reiterated by Tucker (2007, p. 73) in her study of American student ghostlore. While this is undoubtedly a function in legends that deal, for example, with death by drug ingestion, it is not necessarily the only or most important reason to participate in a

[14] Commissioned by the University of Sheffield Student Services Department, who have given me permission to reference in this thesis.

legend, as both Bronner and Tucker seem to suggest. Greater consideration of the pleasure-orientated values of student life is required, as demonstrated by the anthropologies of student culture (Moffatt 1989; Nathan 2005).

Michael Moffatt (1989, 1991), a cultural anthropologist, considers anecdotal and archive evidence no substitute for ethnographic observation. He spent two years in halls of residence at Rutgers University in New Jersey, in a participant-observer relationship with their students. He encountered an 'elaborate, vigorous form of modern college life – not the "student life" of college catalogues, but an earthier set of mentalities and behaviours' (1991, p. 44). His anthropology focused on sex, which he believed lay at the heart of the 1980s college experience (1989, p. 48), a topic he accepted he had a strong interest in (1989, p. 181).

'Rebekah Nathan' (2005) , another cultural anthropologist, conducted similar research at an unidentified university in the USA. She remains anonymous due to an ethical decision stemming from her methodology: Nathan posed as a student and did not identify as an academic, despite living in student residences for the academic year 2002/03. Her goal was to describe 'the undergraduate experience' (p. 16), with particular attention to 'how student culture articulates with the institution of the American university' (p. 5). She saw Moffatt as her 'historical reference point', essentially updating his findings without his emphasis on sexuality, which she characterised as his 'male gaze' (p. 4). She further noted that Moffatt did not attend classes, was identified (largely) as a researcher, meaning most of his data was 'solicited within a professor-student relationship' (p. 169), certainly a valid criticism. Nathan, however, can perhaps be challenged for neglecting actual freshman (*i.e.* first year) residences, choosing instead to live with returning students as her presence in a freshman dorm would be 'too much of an exception' due to her age (p. 169). Although she does not acknowledge it, and indeed titles her book *My freshman year*, this decision has inevitably affected her research.

Bronner, Moffatt and Nathan discuss the three elements of the narrative in which I situate contemporary student life, with both Moffatt (1989) and Bronner (1995) emphasising youth culture, and Nathan (2005) the commercialisation of HE. Alcohol and the night-time economy, although discussed by all three writers as being an essential element of student life, is not given the importance I have allotted it, perhaps because of the legal and cultural differences between alcohol use in the USA and the UK.

2.2.1 The time of your life

Folklore in the UK has a long tradition of thinking of children as a folk group (see for example Opie and Opie, 1959). Despite this there have been no attempts to

extend this perspective beyond the beginning of the lifecourse: no specific, directed work on adolescents, or young people, even the middle aged. The American folklorists and cultural anthropologists of HE all consider students as a temporal group within the lifecourse, assuming that mobility and youth are the key qualifiers for membership of the student group (and thus denying consideration of students who do not fit this model). Within the confines of this mobility Bronner (1995) introduces the notion of a ritual year in relation to student festivals and ceremonies. In so doing he discusses an important concept often remarked upon in other literatures: that the student 'life cycle' from orientation to graduation can be mapped onto van Gennep's (1960) theory of the rites of passage. As a result Bronner applies Victor Turner's (1969) discussion of liminality to the student experience, as Turner did himself. Since such an interpretation lies within the sights (if not the boundaries) of folklore and has been adopted by many writers on education, it is examined in detail in 2.2.5.

The American folklorists and cultural anthropologists of the student experience divide the student calendar into three separate cycles. The first and most basic is the week. Nathan (2005, p. 114) reports that Monday to Wednesday/Thursday, or Tuesday to Thursday was typically considered the working week, and Thursday/Friday through to Sunday/Monday the weekend. Moffatt (1989, p. 184) terms Thursday night through Sunday afternoon the 'long student weekend'. The second cycle takes place over the full year, which Bronner describes as geared to transition, from orientation/initiation in September/October, through autumn events such as Halloween and sporting competitions, over Christmas, exams and subsequent spring festivities, to graduation, either to the next academic year, or to adult life. The third cycle concerns itself with the differences between the years of enrolment in university. Essentially this is tied to the balance between work and play. Academic work is not seen as a central feature of being a first year student (Moffatt, 1989, p. 32). Moving out of university housing, either at the end of the first, second or third year is an important event for students, who begin to think of themselves as adults.

An hypothesis is offered by American sociologists W. H. Cowley and Willard Waller (1979, p. 377) who describe the 'college generation' of four years as short, meaning that 'traditions age rapidly in the student world' due to the 'telescoping of social processes'. This sense of temporality effects behavioural norms which are transmitted from one year to the next: 'control through indoctrination' (p.380). Thus the temporal structure of the student group is both dynamic (in that its composition changes by a significant proportion with matriculation and graduation at the beginning and end of every academic year) and conservative in its hierarchical organisation, with years preceding years.

There is much work on the temporality of alcohol consumption from the literature on health. Studies have found that consumption declined over the period of

undergraduate studies though levels were persistently high when compared to the general population (Gill, 2002; Cooke *et al.*, 2004a; Bewick *et al.*, 2008a). No difference was found between the intake of male and female students in this respect. Nathan (2005) similarly suggests a strong relationship between alcohol and fun in the earlier years of university that gradually diminishes as studying and work become more important as a student advances through their career. A variation in weekly alcohol intake between levels of study was also found in respect to University of Gloucestershire students in my MSc dissertation (2010). In relation to Sheffield this is supported by a late 1990s study which indicated that students in halls of residence drank less in their final year, 'probably due to the pressures of examinations and finance' (Hannay, 1998, p. 552). The same study showed that undergraduate alcohol consumption was above that of local residents and related to student mobility and peer group pressure.

Discussion of the structuring powers of student mobility is found in the work of Elizabeth Kenyon (1997, 2000), a sociologist who found time to be of 'central importance' to the student and local residential communities in Sunderland who each developed 'distinctive temporalities' (2000, p. 26). The student community 'formed over one week at the beginning of the academic year, rarely existed for more than 12 weeks at any given time, and dispersed equally quickly at the beginning of vacations' (2000, p. 28). Students experienced time through the formal university teaching timetable and the 'informal regularities of extra-curricular student life' (2000, p. 28), which amounted to a 24-hour lifestyle, modulated to an extent by the timetable of the local population, in that the town centre 'belongs to the locals' at the weekend (2000, p. 29). The week is thus divided and regimented into drinking nights and rest nights (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003). This is supported by evidence from alcohol research (Gill, 2002), which adds the concept of 'times of extraordinary drinking': abstinence before exams, excess in Freshers' Week (Jennings, 2008)), on assignment 'hand-in' dates and after exams (Guise and Gill, 2007). My MSc dissertation (2010) identified Mondays and Wednesdays as drinking days for traditional students and the weekend as a time when non-traditional students drank. Piacentini and Banister (2009, p. 317) believe that

> [A]lcohol effectively reflects and marks a separation between students' two very different lives whilst at university; the more serious, structured, academic life and the hedonistic, unstructured, social life, which is expected to accompany this.

Kenyon (2000) also comments that images of time past and time future were seen as more significant periods of residence, with students seeing their time as local residents as insignificant in the context of their wider biographies. This was manifested by low investment in relationships with homes, property and local residents, which links directly to the concept of 'studentification' introduced in the next section, and habitus in 2.2.3. Such a sense of time also structured students'

involvement with alcohol, hedonism and excessive drinking, with students reporting the 'need to "make the most" of their years at university' (Piacentini and Banister, 2006, p. 149), with the belief that 'heavy drinking will cease once students graduate' (2008, p. 314).

2.2.2 Digs

Sheffield does not have a campus in the unified sense of the term; faculty and administrative buildings, the student union and libraries can be found within the city itself, an area approximating 1.2 x 0.8 km. When student residences are included, this grows to 2.6 x 1.2 km, from privately owned halls of residence in the city centre to the Villages in the west. As discussed in Chapter Three, approximately 75% of University students are mobile and follow Julie Rugg, Janet Ford and Roger Burrows' (2004) description of a student 'housing biography'. This is a 'relatively benign' way to 'learn housing' (p. 21–22) in that it is supported emotionally and financially by the HEI and parents. It begins with an expectation of leaving the family home, a visit to the HEI, an initial stay in HEI managed accommodation, followed by one or two or more years in an HMO with four or more student friends in the private rented sector. Throughout this period, returns to the parental home 'are expected, occur without undue consideration and do not need to be negotiated' (p. 32). The student housing pathway 'offers a template for a style of shared housing that continues to be evident after graduation' (p. 31). It is noted, however, that there is a 'differential exposure to risk within the student housing market', depending on parental affluence and the local context (Christie *et al.*, 2002, p. 209). Such practices are intimately connected with the emergent adult or post-adolescent practice of 'sharing as a lifestyle choice' (Kenyon and Heath, 2001; Heath and Cleaver, 2003) which is seen as an 'organic development' of the student housing biography (Rugg *et al.*, 2004, p. 32).

The consequent patterns of urban occupation and migration are described within Human Geography via Darren Smith's (Smith, 2005; Smith and Holt, 2007; Smith, 2009) concept of studentification, which explores the cultural, social, economic and physical impact of students upon areas. Sheffield, as a city with a prestigious HEI can expect to experience high levels of studentification due to its higher levels of student mobility (Smith and Holt, 2007). At the time of the last census in 2001, Sheffield had the fifth largest student population in the UK (after London, Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds). Netherthorpe (the ward within which the University of Sheffield and the majority of its housing is located) has the 13th highest student population of any ward in the UK (6,998 student residents, 14.51% of the total residents). In some areas of Netherthorpe, students make up over 75% of the local population. To give some perspective, there are only 103 out of 8850 wards

in the whole of England and Wales where the percentage of resident students is above 5% (all statistics taken from Hubbard, 2008, p. 326–327).

> The problem is not students in the community – indeed this is something we all welcome. The problems arise precisely when students cease to be in the community because their numbers increase so much that they outnumber the resident population – and the community finds itself in the students.
>
> (Tyler, 2005)

While a comment such as this appears to encapsulate the tensions of HE expansion, it is specifically tied to student mobility, something that has been common to the majority of students at Sheffield since the second world war. Indeed, Broomhill was first called a 'student ghetto' in 1977 (Mathers, 2005, p. 255) and has remained a contested area,[15] as seen on locally run websites (that of, for example, the Broomhill Action Neighbourhood Group, 2010), despite Sheffield topping a national survey measuring good relations with the local community in 1999 (Mathers, 2005). While 'ghettoised studentified areas provide a certain kind of symbolic capital' (Smith, 2005, p. 86), their 'student populations have been accommodated, and serviced by retail and leisure providers, in unplanned and unregulated ways' (Smith, 2009, p. 1796). Student transience contributes to displacement of local schools and pubs due to the young, seasonal and transient nature of the local population. The night-time economy's influence is evident and has produced unpleasant effects for local government and residents: noise pollution, vandalism, refuse and litter problems. These were framed as natural 'lifestyle' choices by a National Union of Students (NUS) commissioned report on studentification:

> Some social tension comes from young versus old lifestyles: these tensions are not exclusive to students... Many students are living away from home for the first time and are on a learning curve, developing the skills to behave as responsible tenants and neighbours.
>
> (King, 2006, p. 9)

'Responsibility' is a concept mitigated by alcohol (see 2.1.3), the currency of the night-time economy, which encourages loud and uninhibited drunkenness. Such behaviour is not welcome in the lecture hall, prompting David Whisnant (1971) to comment that the spaces students inhabit are subject to varying degrees of authority and codes of behaviour: from faculty buildings through the students' union to the hall of residence. The literature on studentification comments that behaviour in the streets of studentified areas is poor. This development corresponds with the deterritorialization of public and private space (Sheller and Urry, 2006) and the dislocation of domesticity (Hollows, 2007), and is often understood through the concept of habitus, discussed in the next section.

[15] Indeed, I was introduced to the literature on studentification by a local resident.

2.2.3 French theory

The majority of research into student life in the UK stems from sociology rather than anthropology, although it is couched within the boundaries of a number of disciplines, from Human Geography to Sports Studies. This research derives its theoretical orientation from the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984; Bourdieu and Nice, 1990; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Jenkins, 2002), particularly his related concepts and treatments of capital, social fields and habitus. Capital refers to an individual's accumulated, exchangeable wealth and resources. It can be physical (derived from the body), economic (in the form of money or services), cultural (represented by knowledge, skills and education) social (found in reciprocal social networks) or symbolic (found in prestige and honour). For example, having a gap year between A-levels and university and filling it with a combination of paid, overseas and voluntary work can be interpreted as a middle-class strategy towards increasing one's economic, cultural and social capital (Heath, 2007). A traditional student uses their cultural capital to 'move easily into, within, and through HE' (Patiniotis and Holdsworth, 2005, p. 84). In this last example, HE is a social field, a setting in which a person is situated, their position being a result of interaction between the field, the person's capital and the person's habitus.

Habitus is a complex concept used to refer to an individual or group's accumulated social and cultural behaviours, the dispositions, tastes and inclinations inherited, fashioned and adopted from other members of the group or those who have gone before (typically from family, educators and the broader community). As a concept it mediates between structure and agency in that it allows space for individual agency but recognises outside influence, making it a 'system of structured, structuring dispositions' (Bourdieu and Nice, 1990, p. 52). Of the UK HE scholarship that relies on Bourdieu's notion of habitus, non-traditional students are often cast as the 'other' against a traditional student habitus, as Lusk (2008) does for mature students, Chatterton (1999) for economically disadvantaged students and Holdsworth (2006) for non-residential, non-traditional students (Holdsworth comments elsewhere that the application of Bourdieu in an HE context is 'almost *de rigueur*' (Patiniotis and Holdsworth, 2005, p. 84)).

Bourdieu thus provides the conceptual means by which writers describe student culture as unitary in the face of WP. For example, in discussions of older students (Lusk, 2008) and students who live at home (Holdsworth, 2006; Holdsworth, 2009) Bourdieu is used refer to a 'master/mainstreamed' culture (Lusk, 2008, p. 109) defined by residence and location and focused on socialising. This influences the stereotype of the 'typical student' defined (in part) by the media (Holdsworth, 2006). Alongside research on disabled students (Duquette, 2000) this indicates that a national, mainstream student habitus is perceived by non-traditional students, despite (or indeed because of) WP initiatives. Literature on what the 'mainstream'

habitus is, or who traditional students are was described as scarce in the late 1990s (Silver and Silver, 1997) and remains so in late 2000s (Lusk, 2008).

While there are frequent references to a central 'mainstream' student culture (Ravetz, 1996; Kenyon, 2000; Chatterton and Hollands, 2003; Patiniotis and Holdsworth, 2005; Holdsworth, 2006; Piacentini and Banister, 2006; Cooke *et al.*, 2007; Lusk, 2008; Selwyn, 2008; Holdsworth, 2009), there have been no significant attempts to describe it since the 1970s (Kingsbury, 1974). Most reference a 'stereotypical student life of alcohol and late night partying' (Cooke *et al.*, 2007, p. 9), excessive alcohol consumption (Piacentini and Banister, 2006) or a 'clichéd... rock and roll lifestyle' (Kenyon, 2000, p. 37). Some recognise the influence of tradition: 'Memories of students past (whether fictional, real, ancient or contemporary) created an image of a lifestyle' (Kenyon, 2000, p. 38) which traditional students, seek to 'create and reaffirm' (Kenyon, 2000, p. 38), and others, often non-traditional, reject (Holdsworth, 2006; Cooke *et al.*, 2007; Lusk, 2008; Christie, 2009).

The centre of this mainstream student culture is identified by Christine Lusk (2008) and Clare Holdsworth (2006; 2009) as being thought of (especially by non-traditional students) as being in student residences, accessed by the act of leaving home to go to university. This assumption of mobility goes against the current trend for localised HE study, and yet contributes to a view of university life constructed by 'a small number of elite universities in England [who] continue to structure discourses about mobility' (Holdsworth, 2009, p. 1856). Such a view is in line with the narratives of subsumption outlined in 2.1, for it emphasises increased mobility, independence and individualisation in contrast to local structures, mutual support and social responsibility. Mobility is intimately linked with 'projects of the self and transitions to adulthood' and is 'synonymous with freedom, autonomy and independence' (p. 1857).

Both Chatterton and Holdsworth identify the 'residential tradition' of HE in England and Wales as the framework for developing the physical spaces that support the habitus of student life. Chatterton, whose work on the 'exclusive geographies' of University of Bristol students (1999) informed his later thinking on the night-time economy (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003), sees student venues and houses weaving 'distinctive time-space patterns through certain areas of the city' (p. 129), patterns that are embedded and subsumed in the night-time economy and the student housing market. Together they allow 'an identifiable student's way of life to be developed which is internalised and embodied' (p. 119).

Being a student occurs in this area and is supported by a range of student publications, flyers, internet sites and other media. Not only does this framework promote the habits, fashions and activities that students are interested in, it also enhances safety by eliminating potentially violent non-students. This last point is pertinent because the consumption of alcohol is such a prominent feature of the

student habitus that both nightclubs and pubs have developed their own provision for student entertainment, thus avoiding antagonism between students and 'locals' (note how the terms imply that students cannot be locals). Experiencing the infrastructure that supports this often means following a particular spatial and temporal trajectory, from, for example, home to pub to union to night club to fast food outlet to home. Pub crawls are a particularly ritualised example of this. The student career through second and third undergraduate years follows a process of 'unlearning these rules', of distancing oneself from the 'typical' first year student and discovering other places outside of 'studentland' (the term Chatterton and Hollands (2003, p. 126) give to the student habitus, and which I adopt in this thesis). As a traditional, elite HEI, Sheffield would have a 'strong regulatory framework for student life' (Chatterton, 1999, p. 130). In the wake of expansion, Chatterton hypothesises that

> [C]lass-based strategies will evolve to maintain the value of a university experience. Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) describe this process as 'creative redefinition' in which the middle- and upper-classes are likely to colonise the residential student experience at Britain's older universities as a strategy to distance themselves from a less socially valuable stay-at-home university experience.
>
> (1999, p. 131)

My MSc dissertation (Cheeseman, 2010) indicated that a residential, traditional student drinking culture was firmly in place at the University of Gloucestershire, a non-elite university, indicating that Chatterton's hypothesis relied more on student mobility than academic prestige. It found two distinct alcohol cultures distinguished by four factors: temporality, levels of consumption/bingeing, participation in drinking routines (see 2.2.4) and social background. The first culture was composed of traditional students and binged to very high levels on a Monday and/or Wednesday whilst participating in drinking routines. The other culture (who drank on Friday and/or Saturday) tended to consume and binge less and participate less in drinking routines than the mid-week students. All indications suggested that student drinking on Friday/Saturday was part of the general weekend alcohol culture. The two key variables were student mobility and participation in sport, which both significantly increased intake and effected temporality. There were also many examples of working class students partaking in the predominantly middle class student culture, as other writers have found (Patiniotis and Holdsworth, 2005; Cooke *et al.*, 2007).

Needless to say, the night-time economy is subsumed throughout this studentland, and is indeed a partial creation of it, as 'mainstream corporate nightlife operators' target traditional students as a 'strategy of attracting "cash-disposable" groups' (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003, p. 126). This process, alongside and in tandem with HE expansion, has brought a 'mainstream outlook' to student life, which has

become ripe with 'commodification, theming and branding' (p. 127). A 'broad national infrastructure comprised of magazines, books, CDs, web pages and music tours has developed' (p. 135), all orientated to student spending, which is higher than comparative age youth spending, and culturally significant in that it occupies the middle period of the key emergent adult consumer culture.

Because attendance at HEIs is decided, in part, on the pleasures that the local studentland supports, HEIs, Students' Unions and corporate nightlife operators have 'packaged and commodified [themselves] on a scale and intensity not seen in the past' (p.141). For example, Scream pubs, a brand operated by Mitchells & Butler, are targeted specifically at students, while students' unions have transformed their nightlife provision with heavily scripted spaces of the sort discussed in 2.1.3. Sheffield was one of the first universities to do so:

> By the late nineties there were six popular club nights running every week, and in 2000 the Union won the award of 'Entertainments Venue of the Year' for its 'excellence in the club sector'.
>
> (Mathers, 2007, p. 89)

Little material exists on 'traditional students' outside of their involvement with the night-time economy, with the notable exception of Sparkes *et al.* (2007) who have produced an ethnographic account of the culture of sports students at an HEI where the study of sport has been and remains an academic focus. Bourdieu's concept of habitus was relied on, but its application to the student body was broader than the standard traditional/non-traditional dichotomy. An 'in-crowd' was identified, access to which was only via 'participation in a range of overtly hegemonic behaviours' that 'feel original to the novitiate but are an imitation of others who have gone before' (p. 297). Initiations, hazing and other associated behaviours were all given as examples of these hegemonic activities, which the authors termed 'structured and structuring' practices. One of these was simply, 'Excessive alcohol consumption and associated behaviours are obligatory' (p. 308). Sparkes *et al.* also drew attention to the value that physical capital and the materiality of the body played in the acquisition of other forms of capital in the social field.

2.2.4 The social whirl

Not all writers on student life have relied on Bourdieu and habitus. While there is a tradition of anthropological research into education in the UK, it is not found in relation to student culture, but rather on classroom interactions and the curriculum, both of which have received ethnographic attention dating from the late 1960s (Delamont, 1986). There has been anthropological work on both the

transition of students into teaching anthropologists and the institutional hierarchies of universities (Mills and Harris, 2004), but targeted ethnographic research on students (or at least the experience of students that does not intersect with the university agenda of learning and teaching) is notable by its absence.

The USA has Moffatt's and Nathan's ethnographies of student life, alongside Bronner's compendium of folkloric forms and also boasts a tradition of investigation in the field of undergraduate folk speech and slang (Dundes and Schonhorn, 1963), where studies have tended to be lexicographic, and have commented on intragroup variation (Brenneis, 1977) and cultural detachment from the institution (Hummon, 1994), as per 2.1.1. Describing slang as reinforcing the social identity or cohesiveness of a group, Connie Eble (1996) characterises student slang as ephemeral: in her surveys of the college lexicon Eble found only 10% remained in use over a seven year span, a figure which decreased to 2% over a fifteen year span. Such findings were echoed by Nathan (2005) and Cowley and Waller's (1979, p. 377) 'telescoping [of] social processes'.

In the USA Helen Horowitz (1987) has systemised nineteenth and twentieth century students into normative student typologies, dividing them into privileged 'college men', non-affluent 'outsiders' and unorthodox 'rebels'. Elaine Keane (2008) has used a similar method of categorising students in her work measuring the social and academic commitments of contemporary Irish HE students in the wake of WP initiatives. She suggested that the relationship between academic and social commitments was proportional. For example, WP students largely looked at HE as a privilege, consciously 'mainlining' their academic concerns and 'sidelining' their social ones. Wanting a good degree (not friends and a 'good time'), WP students effectively compartmentalised their lives and kept social activities away from university. Traditional students tended to equal their commitment to academic and social experiences, while a few mainlined the social and sidelined the academic. Keane also discovered that students used their own social typologies to describe the behaviour of their cohort, something affirmed by Hollands (1995; 2002) who observed that students typify each other in a manner somewhat reminiscent of the youth cultural studies discussed in 2.1.1:

> ...the 'Sloanes', the 'intellectuals', the 'arty' crowd, the 'jocks' or sports students, the 'lads' (and increasingly the ladettes), the beer boys and the good time girls, the radicals or the eco-warriors, the skaters, and the entrepreneurs, among others.
>
> (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003, p. 131)

The American cultural anthropologists of student life describe 'friendliness' as the dominant 'code of etiquette' between students; consequently, students' social life consists of thousands of 'ever-changing ego-centered friendship networks which each of them constructs' (Moffatt 1991, p. 53). Nathan found that 'constant

interactions' in 'small, ego-centred groups' constituted students' general social experience. These networks of typically 2–6 friends were personal with no two students sharing the same group. Enduring university friendships were formed early and drew on residence rather than shared academic subjects. Moffatt observed this process, and commented that when a student arrived at university, all the input, from the architecture of the residences to the events run by older students and the authorities, encouraged the attitude of friendliness and the formation of a friendship group. As the year progressed these tight, intense, small groups did change, though several key friends remained.

'Idioculture' is a term coined by the sociologist Gary Fine (1979, p. 744) to describe the distinct culture that small groups develop as they share experience. While of use in understanding group dynamics, these idiocultures are indeed aesthetic systems, 'and are a product of artful communication'. What connects these groups is a sense of togetherness, which folklorists have studied through the stories they tell each other. These texts, written or oral, become a construction of community (Laitinen, 2005), a term that has troubled folklorists in its use. Burt Feintuch has commented that it is hard to actually find groups of people in which 'there is responsibility, integration, and obligation' (2001, p. 149) and sees a 'longing for community' in lieu of its actual presence in many folk groups. Such a longing is a counterpoint to the fragmenting, individuating and atomising processes of modernity (Giddens, 1991). Cowley and Waller (1979) point out the similarities that student life shares at different universities and the speed that cultural forms pass between them.

There has been one study of friendship at an HEI in the UK: Rachel Brooks (2007a) interviewed 11 students from the same school who had attended a range of HEIs and all agreed that the nature of their friendships had changed whilst at university. Brooks found two sorts of friendship, close, 'equal' ones made in the residences and competitive ones made in academic departments. Student mobility was thought of as key to the former friendships. Thus, while the 'deep' residence based friendships appeared to be emblematic of 'friendship under late modernity' (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1992) they coexisted with competitive friendships emblematic of the neoliberal marketplace of HE. In this manner Brooks saw university friendships operating in a manner comparable to Bauman's (2003) description of friendships as 'networks' allowing for connections, disconnections and reconnections. Brooks' study, however, augments Bauman's temporal aspect with 'a spatial dimension, in which the nature of relationship with friends varies according to context' (p. 703). As such students were adjudged to have close, trusting relationships based on housing, and competitive, self-centred relationships in relation to study. Such a finding corresponds with Holdsworth's analysis of local students having difficulties making friends as they were hampered by 'incorporating a student habitus while living at home' (2006, p. 495). Holdsworth also comments on the declining rate of 'friendliness' through the three years of academic study, as 'real personalities' and

competitiveness emerge in the second and third years, findings which argue for the relevance of the temporal aspect of Brooks' networked interpretation of friendship, and concur with Moffatt's (1989) work in the USA.

There has been some work on student involvement in activities and clubs, once thought of as the mainstay of student life (Kingsbury, 1974) but in decline at Sheffield (Mathers, 2007). While radical politics is not often associated with the typical student identity, Hanna argues that it has been supplanted by a sense of 'social responsibility' that is non-political and connected with the environment and neoliberal ideas of 'CV-volunteerism' whereby students volunteer for projects in the hope of increasing their employment prospects (Brooks, 2007b; Hanna, 2007, 2008). The University's and Union's official histories (Mathers, 2005, 2007) both document the acceleration and commercial development of the University's night-time economy, in line with the post-industrial alcohol order described in 2.1.3. Indeed, the social significance of 'going out' has been found to be very high for students, Hollands (1995) commenting that it surpassed that for the general youth population. He suggests that the 'ritualisation of nights out' was an attempt 'to construct a modern equivalent of "community", or more correctly, "communities"' which 'both reflect and stand in for the loss of traditional identities' (p. 18).

In a series of articles, Maria Piacentini and Emma Banister (2006, 2008, 2009) place the excessive consumption of alcohol at the heart of the contemporary student experience and identity making. Although some students chose not to engage in the university drinking culture, doing so ('anti-consumption') was seen as a stance that led to embarrassment, stress and pressure to drink (2009). Participation in the culture was marked by 'ritualised behaviour', similar to that commented on by Sparkes *et al.* (2007). For male students this often took the form of drinking games, complete with songs and special equipment. Female students, whilst partaking in drinking games placed more emphasis on getting ready. In all of these activities alcohol was seen as the 'facilitator' for a range of behaviours. My MSc dissertation (2010) identified a variety of 'drinking routines' such as 'pre-drinking', 'fancy dress', 'drinking games', 'shot-slamming' and 'torpedoes',[16] that were typically participated in by traditional students bingeing alcohol on Mondays and Wednesdays.

These rituals and routines are recorded in the preponderance of personal experience narratives centred around the student consumption of alcohol (Griffin *et al.*, 2009). These stories have been noticed by health researchers (Szmigin *et al.*, 2008), most notably Guise and Gill (2007) who point out how individual students will often use 'we' instead of 'I' when discussing alcohol. Recent research (Griffin *et*

[16] 'Pre-drinking' refers to the practice of consuming alcohol at home before visiting licensed establishments, 'fancy dress' to the wearing of themed costume, 'drinking games' to ludic group play designed to facilitate the consumption of alcohol via schemes of reward and punishment, 'shot-slamming' to the rapid oral ingestion of spirit measures and 'torpedoes' to the rapid oral ingestion of bottled alcoholic drinks made possible by the positioning of a straw to act as an extra-oral air conduit.

al., 2009) has focused on how these stories help construct gendered and sexualised identities, and often focus on courting risk, losing control and 'passing out', and are sometimes accompanied by mobile phone videos of the events. These stories serve as post-consumption events, falling after the rituals described in the previous paragraph (Piacentini and Banister, 2008), and serves to bind friendship groups, or idiocultures, together.

2.2.5 Secret passages

Many writers discussing the student experience of HE describe it, often in passing, as a 'rite of passage' (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003, p. 126, 131; Holdsworth, 2006, p. 505; Sparkes *et al.*, 2007, p. 297) or as 'liminal' (Chatterton, 1999, p. 125). Some, largely folklorists and anthropologists, qualify this with reference to Arnold van Gennep (1960), who first theorised the rites of passage, and Victor Turner (1969), who expanded the theory with discussions of liminality and communitas. This is complicated by the association of rites of passage with structuralism, no longer the dominant theoretical perspective in anthropology. Turner has, for example, been described as 'hopelessly embedded in modernism' (Quantz, 1999, p. 505). Despite this, writers on education have continued to use rites of passage and liminality to discuss student culture.

Descriptions of student life being a 'bubble' apart from the real world are traditional, elite, concerns of the literature (Kingsbury, 1974) that persist today, and have been interpreted as devaluing the student experience for non-traditional students (Lusk, 2008). On considering the temporal and physical evidence discussed in 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 along with the material on habitus in 2.2.3, it is obvious that traditional residential students are thought of as leaving one defined state and entering another, becoming 'increasingly socially, spatially and temporally divorced' (Kenyon, 2000, p. 37). It must be noted however that this border is porous and can be crossed many times. Cooke *et al.* (2007, p. 16) urge caution, suggesting 'university-based living arrangements do not necessarily mean integration into university life and study'. Holdsworth (2009) makes the point that non-residential students have to cross another kind of border every time they attend university, and that this journey, even if it is on a bus, is more momentous than one made by the residential students, as it means making a daily transition from another social class and a conflicting habitus.

Accordingly, writers commenting on HE outside of folklore and anthropology have often attempted to apply van Gennep's and Turner's ideas to their specialist areas with varying degrees of success. Rites of passage, for example, have been used as a model to explain the bond between institution and student, with specific reference to university retention rates (Tinto, 1987). This was criticised as it assumed that the

institution has a uniform set of values to which individuals must accustom themselves (Tierney, 1992). Other writers have chosen to use notions of liminality to discuss the process by which students attain academic literacy (Gourlay, 2009; Palmer *et al.*, 2009). Some apply the phrase 'rite of passage' without full explanation (Holdsworth, 2006). Following Gibb (2004, p. 10), I see such discussions as 'mystifying social relations' by introducing terms that have no relevance beyond metaphor, often amounting to nothing more than vague interdisciplinary relativism. There seems to be little awareness of current anthropological work, and an assumption that 'rites of passage' means something concrete and observable. That is not to say that discussions of rites of passage and liminality are not relevant to this research project, just that their application in the literature is often overused and misplaced.

Van Gennep's theory is, in short, that social occasions marking the transition between 'one defined position to another which is equally well defined' (1960, p. 3), such as becoming an adult or getting married can be categorised as rituals with a three-fold formalisation: separation, transition and incorporation. Bronner discusses how these stages relate to the student cycle as a whole (1995, p. 205–206). Both Moffatt and Nathan feel such a connection is warranted, indeed the title of Moffatt's monograph, *Coming of age in New Jersey: college and American culture* (1989), directly alludes to Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), and thus in turn to van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage* (1960), first published in 1909. His findings do not however, attempt to systematically relate student culture to Mead and van Gennep, but they are broadly sympathetic with the notion of university as an adolescent rite of passage. In contrast Bronner's explicit relation of each year of university to a stage in the rites of passage seems prescriptive and literal. In this he follows the work of Thomas Leemon, whose *The Rites of Passage in a Student Culture; A Study of the Dynamics of Transition* (1972) was based on three months spent in an American fraternity house in 1963. Via an exhausting interaction-analysis he extracts the stages of separation, transition and incorporation, and concludes that fraternity life and structure were complex rituals that effectively facilitated coming of age. His structuralist work does not contextualise university life in general society and was criticised at the time as an overly literal adaptation of van Gennep (La Fontaine, 1974).

Victor Turner (1969, 1974, 1977, 1979, 1982; Turner and Bruner, 1986; Turner, 1987) greatly expanded the rites of passage framework by focussing on the central stage, transition, which he described as liminal, 'a state or process which is betwixt-and-between the normal' (1979, p. 465), wherein different rules of behaviour apply, and are licensed by society. Liminality means less structure, which, combined with less differential status between ritual participants, often results in communitas, a feeling of intense solidarity and community spirit, 'a transformative experience that goes to the root of each person's being and finds in that root something profoundly communal and shared' (1969, p. 138). This emerges 'where social structure is not'

(1969, p. 126) and is composed of immediate and spontaneous forces that, conversely, maintain social structure, via the rituals that create communitas. The transition, and the type of liminality, can be defined in terms of status, either elevating it on completion of the passage, or reversing it. Indeed, Turner (1969, p. 156) refers to university as a rite of status elevation, which is precisely what some UK writers on the expanded HE system suggest it is not (Allen and Ainley, 2010).

Discussing students from the USA, Nathan comments that 'those who share the ritual experience of lowliness, homogeneity, and comradeship establish strong, almost sacred bonds' (2005, p. 146–147). Bronner describes university as a liminal period, 'a bridge between aspiration and occupation, freedom and responsibility, parents and community, dependence and independence, adolescence and adulthood' (p. 71). He holds the opinion that aggressive hazing facilitated students' rites of passage more effectively than contemporary replacements or adaptations. This demonstrates the seductions of van Gennep's and Turner's ideas: they are loose, vague terms that can be used as an excuse for offering opinion. By, to use Gibbs phrase, mystifying social relations, they act as a cloak that allows the writer to comment on social situations in the absence of direct fieldwork. Bronner, for example, offers his opinions on hazing in the face of overwhelming evidence on its abusive, damaging and dangerous effects (Nuwer, 1999).

Furthermore, van Gennep and Turner are chiefly referring to 'tribal and early agrarian societies' (1979, p. 492). Any full scale transcription of their theories to students is thus suspicious and mired in structural attempts to uncover the 'rules' of life. Many writers use liminal as a synonym for 'different', 'strange' or 'transitional'. Tucker (2007) is particularly guilty of this, branding residential halls, attics, basements, elevators and bathrooms as liminal (p. 36–38) and comparing Ndembu youth to American students (p. 50). Towards the end of his career Turner (1979, p. 493) recognised the problems of applying liminality in non-traditional contexts and suggested the use of the term liminoid in its place: 'Liminoid phenomena, unlike liminal, do not so much invert as subvert quotidian and prestigious structures and symbols'. Turner identifies liminoid phenomena with the emergence of capitalism, and comments that they can be individually or collectively performed and are often associated with leisure, play, interstices, margins and 'carnivals, parades, spectacles, circuses' (p. 492). Ronald Grimes (1990, p. 145) notes that this has the effect of 'scattering' liminality across the secular landscape, 'its remnants are everywhere'.

In this, Turner comes close to reconceptualising Fiske's system of pleasures, complete with reproductive pleasures as subversive reversals and evasive pleasures as communitas, occurring, for example, in the nightclub, which he discusses as a liminal site (1969, p. 138). This last observation is expanded by the anthropologist Jeremy Northcote (2006), who describes nightclubbing, specifically its features of dancing and the consumption of alcohol, as an informal and urban rite of passage.

Yet while rites of passage may be relevant as a conceptual tool here, is it, in the face of emergent adulthood, the most useful frame through which to understand nightclubbing and, by extension, student life? The instances when an anthropologist has done so in the UK have not convinced, if solely because they have not recognized the rhetorical power of the terms of the discourse (Dutton, 2005a, 2005b).

Ruddick (2003, p. 336) describes the Western view of adolescence as a rite of passage as a 'century long enduring mythologly]', a nineteenth century biologism no longer tolerated in reference to women and people of colour. Others have claimed that 'It has been received wisdom, since the Middle Ages if not earlier, that youth are prone to disorder' (Schlegel, 1998, p. 533). There is a wealth of material from a variety of disciplines that seeks to understand adolescent behaviour in terms of, for example, group dynamics (Abrams *et al.*, 1990) or personal growth through risk taking (Lightfoot, 1997). Implicit to many, though rarely explicit, is the concept of play, which Brian Sutton-Smith (1997, p. 143) defines as a biologism, as something that both animals and humans engage in:

> [Play is] not a figure of speech, not a trope, not a metaphor; play is at first a kind of biological, prelinguistic enactment with its own claims on human existence, no matter how metamorphized it is in other claims.

Non-anthropologists tend to confuse playful student behaviour with structuralist rites of passage theory. Piacentini and Banister, for example, (2008) firmly describe the residential student experience as liminal with reference to Turner and transitional with reference to van Gennep, and their research (based on student-led focus groups) describes 'being a student' as a time when one engages with excessive alcohol consumption before reaching 'adulthood proper' (p. 314). While their work contains some excellent analysis of drinking rituals, its characterization of 'student life' as a liminal state mediated by alcohol rituals on an extended rite of passage to adulthood is inter-disciplinary research at its worst; missing an opportunity to explore the role rites of passage have had in influencing the manner in which students and non-students conceive of being at university.

Transgressive drinking behaviours and rituals are not, of course, unique to being a student and are present in a Home Office Research Study on binge-drinking amongst 18–24 year olds (Engineer *et al.*, 2003) and another on young people of a similar age (Griffin *et al.*, 2009). These studies are key, for they present a series of behaviours associated with students (such as traffic sign stealing) and link them with the bingeing of alcohol, suggesting that being at university on a liminal rite of status elevation is not the most important factor in engaging in these behaviours, but that being young and drunk is. However, it is clear from Neil Selwyn's (2008, p. 11) work on student crime, that students themselves actually believe that such behaviours are integral to being a student, that 'drunken transgressions' are

'appropriate and perhaps aspirational' (this recalls Sparkes *et al.*'s (2007) study of the hegemony of drunken behaviour on the part of sports students). Selwyn goes as far as to situate minor crime and disorder at the heart of the student habitus, suggesting that it articulated something of being middle class in an 'un-real', removed world, engaging with discourses of masculinity and youth while saying something about 'students' wider position within society' (p. 14).

Whether this has anything to do with rites of passage is a matter of interpretation. When one considers Winlow and Hall's (2006, p. 96) definition of going out, it is clear that such behaviours may be better located in the incorporation of pleasure, alongside ideals of freedom, self-determination and the subsumption of social life to capital. The use of rites of passage effectively mystifies the following:

> [Going out is] the central business of purchasing and consuming pleasurable experiences, seeking sexual encounters, soaking the psyche in the coherent ideology that equates neo-capitalism with freedom, prosperity and pleasure and engaging in the practices of consumerist identity formation and display.

David Le Breton (2004, p. 4) believes that the minor offences described by Selwyn have nothing to do with rites of passage and are 'related to experimental behaviours and... demonstrate a playful exploration of the world'. His work on French adolescents has attempted to demonstrate the validity of 'individual rights of passage' in the context of risk-taking. These rites do not alter social status, and have no value 'except for the person who braves [them]' (p. 13). This is important because it removes 'rites of passage' from the structuralist agenda and refocuses them on 'the revelation of identity' and 'ontological change pursued with a greater or lesser degree of lucidity' (p. 14). In locating the rite in observable, 'ordeal-type behaviour' cast in individual opposition to the family, Le Breton uses rites of passage to describe measurable phenomenon and avoids applying a general transition framework to a general time of transition, as Piacentini and Banister do.

In relation to the argument presented in this thesis, two conclusions can be drawn from this discussion. Firstly, rites of passage should not be used as an alternative explanation (or excuse) for well documented and attested influences on student life, such as the expansion of HE and the establishment of a post-industrial alcohol order. Explaining excessive alcohol consumption with reference to university as a 'rite of passage' or 'liminal state' will not do without detailed exposition. What is the rite and where is the passage? Such terminology should not be reduced to a vague synonym for aging. As Le Breton has demonstrated, it is possible to use rites of passage to understand or illuminate specific, observable incidents, such as 'ordeal-type behaviour'. This understands anthropological discourse as just that: discourse. Secondly, and following on from this, it is important to be aware of the ways in which writers, the media and students themselves use 'biologisms' of youth to justify or frame behaviours.

This has been an exhaustive literature review, that has, at times risked repetition in its attempt to discuss student culture from the glimpses afforded from the writers that have engaged with it. I structured these literatures by dividing the chapter in two, discussing general contextual narratives in the first half (2.1) and specific considerations of student life and culture in the second (2.2). The contextual narratives were concerned with the postwar advancement of capitalism, specifically in relation to youth culture (3.1.1), the expansion of HE (3.1.2) and the development of the night-time economy (3.1.3). For ease of comprehension I divided the second narrative into three sections, the first discussed the monetisation of HE (3.1.2.1), the second WP (3.1.2.2) and the third residence and accommodation (3.1.2.3).

The second half of the chapter considered writers that had directly dealt with or investigated student life. The first section discussed the unique temporalities of university, especially in relation to mobility (2.2.1), whilst the second extended this view into spatiality, specifically student housing biographies and the concept of studentification (2.2.2). The third section addressed the significant emphasis writers on student culture have placed on the sociology of Bourdieu (2.2.3) whilst the fourth considered writers who did not. These tended to look at relationships, both in and out of the night-time economy (2.2.4). In the last section I dismissed the use of rites of passage and liminality in understanding student culture, seeing them as mystifications of processes better explained by other means (2.2.5).

In conclusion, it is noted that there has been little indication of what 'mainstream' student culture is beyond its articulation within the night-time economy. While this economy has rarely been the focus of writers' concerns in relation to students, it has nevertheless dominated discourse concerning students, especially traditional, mobile students at HEIs. It is thus integral to temporal, spatial and cultural descriptions of student life. Considering this and other issues emerging from the literature review, the next chapter formulates research questions, and establishes an appropriate methodology to investigate them.

3 Methodology

This chapter discusses the production of this thesis in terms of theory, fieldwork, methodology and ethics. The term student, problematised in Chapter Two, is defined (3.1.1), as are the disciplinary concerns of folklore (3.1.2) and the research questions (3.2). A framework is constructed as a means of answering these questions through a consideration of methodological approaches, fieldwork and sources (3.3). Participatory consent is discussed and other ethical issues explored (3.4) before the production of the text is addressed in a discussion of representation (3.5).

3.1 Definitions

As discussed in Chapter One, this thesis hinges on the terms 'student' and 'folklore', which are both defined in this section. By doing so, it unpacks the 'good Anglo-Saxon compound' (Thoms, 1996) that is 'folklore', firstly by identifying students as the 'folk', and secondly by identifying their 'lore' from a disciplinary discussion of folklore. In doing so this thesis agrees with Alan Dundes' (1977) commonplace definition that the folk are any group of people connected by one thing. This is not to confer authenticity or relevance to any group that can be connected by one thing, but to underline that all groups are eligible for folkloric study, none are more 'folk' then others, there are no special groups or 'privileged forms' (Abrahams, 1993, p. 390). This liberating viewpoint broadens folklore's scope to almost any subject and group of people in the world. To temper this potentially destabilising freedom, the researcher needs to be clear of what theoretical positions he intends to engage with.

3.1.1 Who are the folk?

The folklorists and anthropologists of HE in the USA took students who were full-time, living away from home and of a similar age as their remit (Bronner, 1995, p. 22–23; Nathan, 2005, p. 170), and more specifically, those aged from 17–22 (Moffatt, 1989, p. 62). Similarly, when I use the word 'student' or 'undergraduate' without further qualification I refer to non-international undergraduate students aged between 17–20 at the time of their first year of study,[1] living away from parents or family in full-time education at the University of Sheffield. This orientates this research away from non-traditional students, though does not necessarily exclude them. The purpose for doing so is to focus on the research area: the distinctive means by which students identify as a group outside of the official university

[1] This age range is derived from HESA who still classify mature students as those aged 21 or over at the beginning of their undergraduate degree. This definition was used within universities before age discrimination legislation dissolved any legal distinction between age and student status (Department for Trade and Industry, 2006).

agenda of learning and teaching. This necessarily negotiates discourses of what it means to be a stereotypical, mainstream student, 'a creation of contemporary folklore, and one that is often evoked in popular discourses about student life' (Holdsworth, 2006, p. 511). Since these discourses are thought to be structured by elite universities around the practice of student mobility (Holdsworth, 2009), and yet the actual culture of traditional students has received little academic attention (Silver and Silver, 1997; Lusk, 2008), this study attempts to address a gap in the literature. Also, by focusing on residence, it negotiates a traditional subject that has been omitted from the contemporary policy discourse on HE (Silver, 2004).

While my formulation of student may occlude the experience of those undergraduates living with parents/family, (who tend to be from a lower social class background (Forsyth and Furlong, 2003; Patiniotis and Holdsworth, 2005; Holdsworth, 2006)), it does not explicitly exclude non-traditional students. To illustrate this point I have obtained (by data request from HESA) the following statistics considering full-time, undergraduate students aged 20 and under studying at the University of Sheffield for the academic year 2008/9:

% living in parental/guardian home:[2]	5.2%	
% with a lower socio-economic classification:[3]	21.5%	
% social class split of those living in University properties:	Higher	78.2%
	Lower	21.8%
% social class split of those living with parent/guardian:	Higher	58.3%
	Lower	41.7%
% social class split of those living in rented property:	Higher	81.0%
	Lower	19.0%
% social class split of those living in private sector halls:	Higher	75.8%
	Lower	24.2%

There were less than 52 students in the 'own residence' category, the cut off for percentage calculations.

There is thus, at the University of Sheffield, a similar proportion of economically disadvantaged students living in University properties as there are attending the University as a whole. It is noted, however, that this figure is small (*c.* 22%) and accords with the discussion in Chapter Two on the social composition of elite universities. The figure is not, however, negligible, which supports my assertion

[2] Term time accommodation percentage calculations exclude 'not known' and 'not in attendance at this institution'.
[3] Socio economic classification percentage calculations exclude unknowns.

that the traditional student experience is available to lower class students should they be willing to entertain significant debt and engage in student mobility (Cheeseman, 2010). This raises the issue of how students from lower classes negotiate the normative student residential identities I am interested in, a question that evokes the debate in youth transition studies between structure, agency and identity. Rather than interrogate the experience of specific students, this research attempts to interrogate the mainstream student experience at the University of Sheffield. It could be claimed, following Allen and Ainley (2010), that this research is an investigation into the middle class student experience.

The criteria for the definition of 'student' given above consistently implies over 10,000 students for each year that my research has been active. The student life of such a group is necessarily complex, whatever the focus on cultural norms. This sense of size and diversity is further problematised by the temporal nature of university life: students are typically undergraduates for three or four years depending on their course of study. This means the group is inherently dynamic in that its composition changes by approximately a third every year. Students are, furthermore, members of many other self-defined groups other than 'student' and occupy many other identities. Attempting to discuss normative experience for such an extensive group will thus require careful conceptual formulation.

A previous investigation into student identity in the UK concluded 'that students individually exhibit a range of identities which are encompassed in the concept of "self"' (Sharp, 2001, p. 1). The study commented that student identities 'evolve' over time and place and are influenced by social, academic, demographic and residential factors. Such temporal and spatial variation demonstrates the difficulties of attempting to generalise about the individual, let alone the group. Indeed, any investigation into the mentality and identity of a large group is problematic, as it destabilises the role individual members play within that group, thus presenting problems of access for the purposes of research. Such a project would not have been undertaken were it not for the frequent appeals students themselves made towards the 'typical mentality' or cultural category of 'student'. Conversely, a sense of this is seen in non-students (and the media) stereotyping 'students' and student behaviour. This thesis thus attempts to illustrate and understand what it means to belong to this group and appeal to this identity. Such a project is not foreign to folklore, having been theorised by Dorothy Noyes (1995), who insists that it is impossible to arrive at a 'neat definition' of any group (p. 449). She suggests that this is because 'group' actually has two functions in folklore, as 'the locus of culture' and the 'focus of identity'. To avoid confusion they should remain separate:

> I will propose that we distinguish between the empirical network of interactions in which culture is created and moves, and the community of the social imaginary that occasionally emerges in performance. Our

> everyday word group might best serve as shorthand for the dialogue between the two.
>
> (p. 452)

This concept provides the theoretical framework for my definition of the student group. Firstly, the aforementioned complexity of the student community can be envisioned with Noyes' articulation of social network theory. Building on Richard Bauman's (1972a) assertion that the performance of folklore need not depend on shared identity, but regular interaction that often comments on similarity and difference, Noyes proposes the suitability of social network theory to describe this aforementioned 'empirical network of interaction'. This allows an emphasis on location, and not just in terms of the description of interactions. Network 'segregativity' and 'integrativity', of maintaining public and private boundaries, (1995, p. 460), segue into Chatterton's (1999) and Smith's (2005) concept of studentification. Crucially however, by defining network ties primarily by interaction, they 'disappear with disuse: they are not like the apparently eternal ties of shared identity' (1995, p. 459). This fits the dynamic, temporal student population in terms of lifecycle discourse. It also accommodates difference, in that smaller, networked groups can be defined within the larger student network.

> [T]he network as both field procedure and organizing metaphor is better adapted than more bounded notions of group to get at the social grounding of expressive practices.
>
> (Noyes, 1995, p. 465)

This general, networked interpretation remains a consistent and central component of my explanatory mechanism, although I do not use social network theory to empirically define the student group, but to harness it as a conceptual tool. The focus of this thesis has been on the second part of Noyes' (1995, p. 452) definition of group, namely that which occurs within that network, the 'social imaginary that occasionally emerges in performance'. This emergence is taken as the network imagining and by extension creating, or performing, their shared community. Noyes' theory of group also provides a means to conceptualise what belonging to a group means for those who do not belong to that group. For example, some people view contemporary students as a politically radical group (Tahir, 2008). While the composition of the dynamic student network has long changed since the protests discussed in 2.1.1, the political consciousness that was displayed then has been, to some extent, stereotyped in the popular imagination (Thomas, 2002). This illustrates a key point, that the imagined identity of a group can be, and often is, borrowed, developed and even distorted by other social networks. As Noyes says, 'imaginings are not limited to their first imaginers' (1995, p. 466). Stereotypes form, which, in turn, shape the original group's identity in a reciprocal, dialectic process. Thus Noyes' framework allows consideration of the borderless potential of the imaginary, and therefore accommodates mediated images of the student.

The production of the social imaginary also reinforces the social network in a mundane fashion. For example, a student sit-in protest is preceded by preparations and meetings, organisation before the performance of the action, followed by discussion and repercussions, all of which has the potential of strengthening and expanding empirical social networks. Such performances can thus be seen as a necessary part of maintaining the social network, just as interaction amongst the network results in performances of the social imaginary. As Noyes (1995, p. 471) claims, 'The imagined community offers a focus for comparison and desire, and, at the same time, is itself subject to re-visionings in the light of everyday experience.' The two exist in a 'dialectical tension', conversing or even arguing over time. This thesis is thus an attempt to explore the student group in Sheffield, to understand the social imaginary of what identifying as a student means there. The next section will attempt to define the nature of these experiences in their relation to folklore, the discipline to which this research is primarily orientated.

3.1.2 What is folklore and how should it be studied?

As discussed in Chapter One, there is no simple answer to this question, particularly as those best placed to answer it (folklorists), enjoy debating a range of opinion on its matter and practice. This thesis is not the place to discuss this range, so I will restrict myself to referencing the aspects of folkloristic thought that have specifically influenced this research. These are summed up by my definition of folklore: an awareness of tradition performed in time and space. Awareness refers to reflexivity, essential to any methodological discussion (3.1.2.1). Tradition is often used as a synonym for the process of folklore and is central to the discipline (3.1.2.3), as observed and assessed through performance (3.1.2.2). Time and space underline folklore's attention to both temporality (in terms of both the lifecourse and the ritual year) and notions of place, from spatiality to community and belonging.

3.1.2.1 Reflexivity

In the context of this thesis reflexivity is taken to mean 'the effect of the scholar's own historically and culturally situated subjectivity on the practice of fieldwork and ethnographic writing' (Berger, 2002, p. 64). According to this definition, subjectivity intersects with the research at two points, within the fieldwork, and within the production of text. Taken together, this introduction of the researcher's self into folkloric research has been compared with the 'discovery' of feminism, race, transnationalism, displacement and diaspora in terms of consequence and significance (Stoeltje *et al.*, 1999, p. 158–159). It can have the effect of explicating, not only the researcher in relation to their subject, but also the 'situated and interested

character of our knowledge production', in other words, the discipline itself (Ritchie, 2002, p. 445). Accordingly, reflexivity has been displayed by folklore scholars from the 1990s on (Brady, 2002) in what could be interpreted as a reflection of similar debates that took place within anthropology in the 1980s (Ruby, 1982; Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Turner and Bruner, 1986), but is better thought of as a continuation of the same debate through the disciplines that engage with ethnography. Américo Paredes (1977) is an important precursor to this debate in folklore, especially in regards to the many roles fieldwork hoists on the researcher.

By negotiating reflexivity my research attempts to avoid the methodological problems presented by adhering to thought characteristic of the 'unembodied mind' (Clark, 1997; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). This is the method and intellectual approach favoured by positivist inquiry, similar to that described by Schön (1983) and advocated by technical rationalism. Mark Johnson characterises this as a 'god's-eye-view about what the world is really like' (1987, p. x), one that does not process the elements of reality it deems unverifiable, such as emotion, desire, intuition, and the unarticulated; all of which have no place in a positivist account. Reacting to this, researchers have attempted to 'put the body back into the mind' (1987, p. xiv) and integrate rationalism with emotion, intuition and experience. Consequently I am concerned with my own emotional and intuitive reactions at certain stages of my research, not as an attempt to excuse their influence, but to include them as equally valid interpretations and processes, however selective (see Hollow, 2009). Thus my use of narrative and personal biography in Chapter One.

It is more suitable to describe the researcher's interaction with the world as a dynamic process, not one easily frozen or dissected, close to what David Hilditch sees as a 'free-form interactive dance between receiver and perceived' (quoted in Clark, 1997, p. 171). In a wider sense, this approach is in line with the narrative turn that many of the social sciences and humanities have experienced in the last twenty years (Heikkinen *et al.*, 2000). This assumes, in line with one of its architects, Jerome Bruner (1991), that narratives not only describe but construct life, and that without them we would have no frame of reference to interpret life. Indeed, positivist research is viewed as incapable of capturing 'modes of experience' by its attempts to transcend the historicity of the experience studied (Iyer, 2003).

3.1.2.2 Tradition

Folklore, as defined by Thoms (Thoms, 1996; Roper, 2007) and practiced by other nineteenth century folklorists, was initially a search for primitive 'survivals', and thus implicitly carried an understanding of tradition that grew out of the Enlightenment, but was defined in opposition to it (Bendix, 1997). This understanding has not, unfortunately, adapted well to modernism, causing some

writers to question the 'authenticity' of popular forms that derive their genesis or style from capitalism and/or technological mediation. Richard Dorson's (1976) phrase 'fakelore' (coined in 1950) is the classic example of an attempt to define the 'legitimate subject for elite, academic knowledge' of tradition (Warshaver, 1991, p. 221) as that which derives from the 'authentic' pre-modern. This has prevented, to some extent, the discipline fully engaging with some tenets of postmodernist theory, especially as those that relate to mediation and representation.

Many folklorists have, however, reacted against this limited understanding of tradition. Noyes (1995), for example, suggests that a sense of tradition is encouraged through the repetition and formalisation of performance. Whether this can be seen in the inherently and unusually dynamic social network of students is of major interest to this thesis, and yet contemplating that very same characteristic presents problems in terms of fieldwork. As there are no long-standing members of the student group, with ex-members long dispersed, my consideration of tradition is necessarily orientated to what can be determined from the contemporary situation, with historical detail very much a subtext, provided from archival research or interview. This may not be a problem, in that tradition can be, and to an extent must be, interpreted from a contemporary perspective. Henry Glassie (1995, p. 409) employs a present consciousness to traditional behaviour which he defines as 'volitional, temporal action' that often supplies 'the means for deriving the future from the past'. This implies an awareness that one is performing, or acting a negotiation of time, implying a sense of duty to the past manifested in the present.

The significant majority of studies on tradition have done so by researching individuals (Jones, 2000). In contrast, this thesis examines a collective, communal negotiation of tradition. In respect to this, I agree with Vladimir Hafstein (2004, p. 307) who insists that 'the act of creation is a social act'. In the same way, then, that Jones (2000, p. 120) is concerned with an individual 'who intentionally selects elements of what he or she conceives to be a tradition in order to fashion an identity articulated through various media', I am concerned with a similar mindset in relation to the identity of the group. In terms of time, tradition is understood as passing through people and texts. In terms of space, tradition is understood as consistencies and similarities between people. Repetition is a consistent property of both planes (Georges and Jones, 1995; Bronner, 2000; Jones, 2000). Such an attitude and awareness of tradition may be easier to ascertain in the dynamic student group, certainly in terms of customary behaviour. While this may not necessarily be a conscious enactment of tradition in Glassie's sense, it may not necessarily be *unconscious* behaviour, in that it does not, in any sense preclude reflexivity. In the case of undergraduates concerned with negotiations of the 'typical student' one might expect them to be highly reflexive, but not in terms of volitional 'tradition'. Therefore, from a theoretical perspective, the negotiation of tradition by the social imaginary could be analysed in terms of both conscious enactment of habit and values, and customary 'that's what we do' behaviour.

3.1.2.3 Performance

Noyes (1995, p. 452) suggests that identity is performed, an idea that (re)entered academic discourse with Erving Goffman (1959), and was first situated in folkloric discourse by Richard Bauman in 1971 (Oring, 1994, p. 211), just before the publication of *Toward new perspectives in folklore* (Paredes and Bauman, 1972). That collection, especially Ben Amos' paper, suggested that folklore is actuated and accessed through performance, a concept that lies at the heart of the 'performance related approach', emphasising context over text. '[L]ong in gestation' through the 1960s (Abrahams, 1993, p. 379) it was expanded throughout the 1970s (notably by Richard Bauman's Verbal Art as Performance (1977)), but criticised for subordinating tradition and textuality. This led to Stephen Jones' (1979) famous challenge that folklore was 'slouching towards ethnography' and thus forgoing its item/text-based disciplinary history in favour of anthropological techniques. This challenge was not answered, indeed the discipline has intensified its relationship to performance to such an extent that Lauri Honko (2000, p. 11) has depicted it as operating under a 'performance paradigm'. An awareness of reflexivity and the role of the researcher is integral to this paradigm: no longer do researchers collect or 'extract' data from their subjects, but record the enactment of performances as a participant in that very performance (Finnegan 1992). One consequence of this stress on context, however, has been increased attention on smaller groups, even individuals:

> Although the study of performance initially marked a break with item-centred approaches, striving instead to reinsert folklore into the social fabric of communities, somewhere along the line this social emphasis yielded to appreciation for individual talent.
>
> (Hafstein, 2004, p. 309)

Since my aim is to investigate the performances of a large social network with the ultimate intention of analysing their culture in the context of HE, I am attempting to redress this situation. Honko (2000, p. 15) believed that just as performance relativised text, the next paradigm should relativise performance, 'It is impossible to accept one performance as the only representative one'. By building up a deep corpus of performances, the folklorist should be able to identify 'thickets' within it, which would in turn facilitate interpretation. Honko states (p. 3) that 'the existence of "variants" is the ultimate proof that we are dealing with true folklore', an intensification of Barre Toelken's (1996, p. 7) comment that 'variation within a tradition, whether intentional or inadvertent, is viewed here simply as a central fact of existence for folklore'. Variation and repetition are thus seen as marking engagement with culture.

Terry Gunnell (2006) urges further attention to the physical, spatial and psychic dimensions of performance. From this basis he suggests an alternative direction to Honko's relativisation of text, calling for an analysis that treats performance as

theatre or drama and not as pieces of text. Such a spatial interpretation is more in tune with Noyes, who avoids the idea of textualisation. She states that 'the community of the social imaginary... occasionally emerges' via three forms of performance, 'repetition, formalization, and "consensus"' (1995, p. 468). By this she means the repeated timing of performances, their sense of distinctness with an eye towards reproduction, and the unquantifiable, binding symbolic forces that they produce within the network. This concentration on experiential effects, amplified by intoxication and drawing its intensity from context, is reminiscent of Turner's communitas; as is apparent from Noyes' discussion of her fieldwork (1995, p. 471).

In conclusion, repetition is the key theme to emerge from this disciplinary discussion of folklore. Volition, formalisation and routine, observed via the reflexive, experiential, dramatic lens of performance are the means by which 'folklore' recognises itself. In this way I have unpacked some of what was implied by my initial, simple definition of folklore: an awareness of tradition performed in time and space. The research questions are formulated in the next section, which marries this theoretical orientation with the investigative aims of the research.

3.2 Research objectives and questions

The residential nature of my employment and the immersion of the resulting experience have orientated my research towards qualitative methods. Ironically enough, Denzin and Lincoln (2005), editors of a handbook discussing qualitative research, follow Richardson (2000), in using the crystal as the defining metaphor for qualitative research. The diffuse quality of this metaphor may be extended to my own experience: although the text of this thesis presents a somewhat linear, unitary account, its construction has not been so. For example, I had been living in Sorby for over six months before I decided to study HE. All of this time I was observing students and similarly, for much of the time spent writing this text, I have been living and working amongst students. My reading, my fieldwork, the writing process have all informed each other. There was no literature review in isolation, no period of reading before embarking on fieldwork to solve the research questions it in turn suggested. As such, I have followed Harry Wolcott's (2001) dictum that writing is thinking. This thesis, its supporting ideas, its theoretical standpoints, fieldwork and conclusions, have been constructed together.

That is not to say a qualitative approach was adopted without a firm rationale. The nature of my research, as an investigation into HE and student mobility framed via Noyes' formulation of 'the group' is not suited to quantitative research. I am not attempting to experimentally measure the 'causal relationship between variables', but to explore qualitative aims, namely values and the social construction of reality (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 10). Ultimately, this thesis comes from the

philosophical standpoint of interpretivism, exploring the complexity and depth of phenomena, believing that the whole needs to be comprehended in order to understand the particular (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). As such, it is critical of positivism, and suggests that there are multiple realities and that these realities differ across time and place. In Noyes' terms, 'reality' is often imagined or imaginary, so my research is best suited to a methodology that privileges the representation of experience, and not its statistical measurement.

My research is exploratory in that I am not responding to specific works of scholarship, and am attempting to define an under-researched aspect of the field, all suitable to the spectrum of qualitative research techniques (Flick *et al.*, 2004). Within this spectrum my strategies are ethnographic and thus

> ...involve the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research.
>
> (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p. 1)

The end product of this research could be termed an ethnography, 'the descriptive study of all traditions in a particular group or region' (Brunvand, 1998, p. 406). To avoid the sense that this research is complete or all-embracing, and to emphasise my folkloric concentration on performance, I prefer to describe this thesis as harbouring ethnographic intent. As a term taken from anthropology, some qualification is needed with reference to that discipline. My sympathies lie with what George Marcus (1994, p. 399) has termed 'modernist ethnography', which does not attempt to 'enact discovery in the classic sense' but seeks those subjects that 'have been heavily represented, narrated and made mythic by the conventions of previous discourse'. While there have been few ethnographies on students as a group, they have certainly been 'heavily represented', not least of all through notions of 'the typical student', in both the popular imagination, the media and writing on HE. Indeed this thesis seeks to question the terms of this heavy representation and ask whether there is, in fact, a normative student experience, traditional or otherwise. The writers on UK student life seem to make an inordinate amount of cultural assumptions, often from their own experiences. When Chatterton and Hollands (2003, p. 142) comment

> [T]he bricolage, traditions and rites of passage of studenthood are being appropriated, sanitised and sold back to students by corporate nightlife operators eager to cash in on this lucrative market.

They do not define these traditions and rites, nor reference other writers who discuss them. From the context they are connected with alcohol, music and the 'business of socialising', but what are they exactly and how do they operate? The

literature on youth culture and alcohol all concur that 'going out' is the locus of student identity. This is supported by the HE literature that addresses WP, which suggests that the pursuit of pleasure in the night-time economy is integral to the mobile student experience. Is this what 'being a student' at Sheffield means? In order to approach this subject in the most cogent and procedural manner I have formulated the following research questions:

⇒ How do students define 'going out' and what place does 'going out' have in University of Sheffield student culture, past and present?

⇒ How can 'going out' be interpreted as a performance?

⇒ What can be said about students and HE from these repeated performances?

The first question is designed as a means of investigating the general structure of student society in Sheffield. The second question is designed as a means of accessing the social imaginary generated by going out, not of asking what being a student is 'all about', but asking what students claim being a student is 'all about'. By examining these performances, I aim to explore, not the dominant culture, but the central territory, the ground that students represent and share when negotiating their social imaginary. Conversely, it is suggested that these performances may thus provide a means for students to enact, however infrequently, the community and generalised identity of being a student, a means of belonging to the wider culture and its notions of 'typical students'. In this manner the second question bleeds into the third, which interrogates student life in the light of recent change to HE.

3.3 Fieldwork

This section continues the methodological discussion by referring to the fieldwork I have undertaken in order to construct this thesis. I have begun with a reflexive consideration of my place in the field, before a discussion of the ethnographic work I conducted between 2005 and 2010 (in terms of 'being there', interviews and performance). I then discuss the fieldtexts I assembled during the course of this period: material from the student press, University archives, and the internet. I have given proportionately more attention to the last, and included a brief discussion of computer mediated communication (CMC), as it plays a large part in student life and consequently this thesis.

3.3.1 The researcher feels at home

The poverty of research on student culture, whether traditional or not may be related to the methodological difficulties involved in its execution. I have found it hard to gain access to university students, identify participants, gain their trust and initiate a research dialogue. This has been especially true of traditional students, or at least those who consider themselves part of the majority culture, who perceive themselves as having no distinct characteristics that might necessitate attention. I found a solution to this by both living and working in halls of residence. While this has been essential to my fieldwork, it has also been a financial necessity; if it were not, I would have only lived a year in halls of residence rather than three. When I have discussed the length of my residency with older students, especially final year students, they have sometimes expressed pity, often framed in reference to their own lives, as in 'I couldn't have done that'. These comments took place in conversations discussing the intensity of halls of residence and the enveloping and often exuberant experience of living in them.

Of course, I was not a student in the same sense as my research subjects. Born in 1977, I was 9 to 11 years older than the majority of those who moved in to Sorby with me. My three years of fieldwork were sometimes difficult but, I did, after all, get paid for them, and could have left at any moment. As a member of staff I was in a position of authority, which required maintaining distance in order to effect disciplinary pressure. Paradoxically, however, my role also involved student welfare which necessitated being approachable. My relationship with students was further complicated by a further 'disciplinary pressure': my decision to study them. In terms of 'participant observation', a key ethnographic strategy (and famous oxymoron) that is usually translated, in one form or another as 'being there' (Simpson, 2006, p. 127), I was certainly an outsider observer in terms of my relationship to authority, but more importantly in terms of my age. Although I had been a student before, and was studying an aspect of my own culture, I was not at the same stage in the lifecourse, and was, in effect, performing fieldwork across time (Reed-Danahay, 1997).

Although I attended a different university for my undergraduate degree, one with a recognizably different culture, there were still parallels between my memories and the experiences of the undergraduates in Sheffield. I soon realised that attempting to understand them through an exercise in sympathy would not, however, be good research. I have had to be as reflexive as possible with my own memories and opinions of being a student. More often than not I would magnify the differences belied by my fieldwork which is, in any case, 'always imbued with questions of otherness' (Stoeltje *et al.*, 1999, p. 159). If anyone was the other, it was me, a marginal figure in undergraduate culture, a researcher at the fringes (Barkalaja, 2001). While I was an insider with some groups, I was just as frequently an outsider; in some places identified with my job, in others, such as the Union, relatively anonymous. I

soon came to the realisation that I would have to define the boundaries of my research to address these issues and prevent ethical misunderstanding.

These considerations made the process of fieldwork complicated; the attention to reflexivity continually modulated behaviour, Hilditch's 'freeform interactive dance'. Once I had become established in my job for example, it became, in some senses a boon to my research; as a marginal figure, apart from but involved in the dramas of student life, I was, to an extent, trusted. Because I was known by students, I did not always provoke a suspicious reaction to questions or comments. Such a situation has convinced me of the lasting value of Paredes' (1977) research. His negotiations of the pitfalls of imposing stereotypes, becoming familiar with the folklore of the research group and understanding the different identities the researcher has to adopt is an exemplar of embodied research. Such considerations are reminders that fieldwork is a performance, in the words of Margaret Brady (2002, p. 243) a 'dialogic interaction', a joining with the 'other' that leads to the 'textual performance we have known as ethnography'. Consequently I have used reflexivity not to dismantle 'scholarly authority' (Clifford and Marcus, 1986), but in an attempt to remind myself that there is always a 'fourth wall' in research.

3.3.2 Being there

I undertook ethnography between October 2005 and July 2008, in a variety of situations and locations, discussed below. Ethnography is often described as a means of appreciating the difference between what people say and what people do (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994). It is thus well-suited to understand some of the issues discussed in 3.1.2.2 (especially those investigating volition and action). It must be emphasised that, as a research strategy, it was not adopted as a means of uncovering essential truths about students, but as a way of representing their culture. For further discussion of truth and representation see 3.5.

I lived in Sorby Hall of Residence from October 2005 to June 2006. During semesters I was the Residential Tutor for approximately 70 students of mixed gender: two male corridors and two and 'a half' female corridors. By December 2005 I had started to make fieldnotes on my surroundings, by Easter I had decided to change my PhD topic from crystals to students, by the end of the 2005/06 academic year I had begun to develop this thesis, which in turn informed the fieldwork process. Some of my time in Sorby could thus be described as exploratory ethnography, in which I defined the general area of my research. Before that though, I was simply a residential worker, not a researcher, and in that I had cause to define my identity in a less academically reflexive fashion, analogous in some ways to the position Chou Chenier (2002) found herself in. In the process of doing so I laid the ground to get to know the students I met and worked with, and still count many as friends.

Aside from general, passive fieldwork in the hall, I engaged in planned fieldwork sessions with four groups from Sorby. The first was the portering and security staff. The second was a large group of students, easily divided into two gendered groups, and the third and fourth, two additional male groups. The fieldwork consisted of a year of residence with these groups followed by semi-regular meetings and interviews up to the graduation of most of these students in July 2008. These four groups, especially the largest group of approximately 20 students, comprised a significant part of my fieldwork, following students throughout their university career. In my second and third years this also involved working with these students from the perspective of their residence in the private accommodation sector.

On Sorby's destruction I moved to live in Tapton Hall of Residence. By this point I had codified my research strategies and had begun to form parts of this text. I decided to spend my time in Tapton by examining the hall as a community. This decision was also predicated by the terms of my employment; from September 2006 to June 2007 I had no direct role inside the hall, and was instead a Residential Officer for self-catered students living nearby. Not having direct responsibility in the building meant my job had potentially less interference with fieldwork, which put me in a better position to observe the whole of the hall. One notable consequence of this was periodic, targeted fieldwork with certain members of the JCR, the body of elected students charged with representing the students in the context of the hall with responsibility over aspects such as entertainment, Intro Week and the annual Hall Ball. I also focused on a group of female students as I felt there were too many males in my initial focus groups. Again, members of staff were involved with my fieldwork, as were general students from around the residence. Intensive, targeted fieldwork was also performed throughout Intro Week, and at other key times in the student calendar.

In my third year of fieldwork, from September 2007 to June 2008 I remained in Tapton though the terms of my employment changed, and I began to be directly involved, once again, with the students whom I lived with. As a consequence I limited the amount of residence-based fieldwork I performed that year, but continued my work with the new AEC committee that replaced the previous year's JCR. The name change was necessitated by wide-scale organisational restructuring that accompanied University changes to residential provision. My fieldwork in Tapton was targeted to observe the consequences of this.

Throughout this research period, 2005–2008, while my residence and employment orientated me towards the places and people nearest to me, the actual scope of my fieldwork was much broader, and encompassed many sites within the University and the city of Sheffield at large. The Union was a particularly important location, as were the 'student areas' of Crookes, Broomhill and Crookesmoor, and the pubs, nightclubs and scripted areas of the night-time economy. Fieldwork regularly encompassed these locations, and others as they appeared in the students' lived

experience of Sheffield. My ethnographic strategies ranged from passive and exploratory ('just being there' and reacting to situations) to planned and exploratory (going to a specific place and/or time to see what happened) to targeted (working with a specific group/situation to inquire about a certain topic).

To record and document my experiences in the field I made and collected an assortment of field texts in a range of media. Following Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000) I saw the process of making field texts as an interpretive one, that recorded not only my experiences, but, taken collectively, my reaction to these experiences in time. My field texts were thus a reflexive record of the research process. They included diary entries, letters, emails, notes, documents (such as leaflets, flyers and minutes from meetings) and even items 'that trigger[ed] memories of important times, people and events' (2000, p. 114). To this I added photographs, video and the internet. In tandem to this process of recording fieldwork I collected student-made items, in an attempt to access what Michael Owen Jones (1997) terms 'material behaviour'.

3.3.3 Freshers

After I had moved into Tapton in 2007 I discovered a novel in the Oxfam bookshop in Broomhill entitled *Freshers* (Sampson, 2003b). Set at the University it tells the fictional story, in first person perspective, of Kit Hannah's experience of adjusting to student life. He is an 18-year-old full-time, non-international first year undergraduate student living away from home. Kit, comes up to Sheffield late, experiences half of Intro Week, gradually makes friends and enemies, falls in love, and gets wrapped up and frustrated by the lives of his new friends. Although Kit is determined not to subsume his identity to the student body, the concept of university as a rite of passage is consistently represented as a theme. None of the locations used in the novel are fictional, all exist, or have existed in Sheffield. The author, Kevin Sampson, attended Sheffield in the 1980s, and lived in a hall of residence (Sampson, 2003a). Setting his novel contemporaneously in the early twenty-first century, Sampson undertook research amongst staff and students (Sampson, 2003b, p. vi), though based much of the emotional pitch of the novel on his earlier experiences. Broomhill features extensively, as does the Union, and areas of Sheffield, not least of all Ranmoor House Hall of Residence. As a first person narrative, presented as a diary, most of the detail is psychological. Sampson (2003a) has indicated that he intended his novel to help students through the trials of Freshers' Week and university.

It is not, however, 'ethnographic fiction' in the sense that Peter Clough (2002) discusses fiction as a product of research. Indeed, *Freshers* is Sampson's sixth novel of seven to date; he writes as a career author and does not have explicitly

ethnographic or scholarly aims, though it could be argued that his aims are socially aware and class conscious. I have made the decision to use Sampson's work sparingly, not as an ethnography, as indeed, it could be argued it is (see for example Denzin, 2002), but as an ethnographic source. As such I gave it to students and asked them to read and then comment on its relevance to their experiences, using it more as a tool to structure an interview rather than a source of information in itself. Some students didn't get round to reading the book while others passed it on to their friends, and so I was able to interview people that I had not met before. Generally, the text served as a starting point for discussion and was especially useful in convincing some students, who did not see their experiences as a suitable topic for research, to agree to an interview. In some interviews it was hardly mentioned, in others it was more prominent, mostly as a point of comparison to the student's own experiences. I used it as a means of introducing concepts I was embarrassed to ask about such as sex or identity redefinition.

3.3.4 Interviews

The immersive nature of my fieldwork led me into thousands of conversations with my ethnographic participants. After attaining permission from the student(s) I would often notate the gist of these conversations, including certain quotes, in my fieldtexts. I also carried out 69 formal semi-structured interviews with groups or, more commonly, single participants. The 69 semi-structured formal interviews ranged in focus, touching on topics such as drinking and material culture, pranking, community relations, health, chanting and the University's accommodation strategy. I interviewed students, portering and security staff, community forums, police officers, shop owners, bar owners, bar workers and various University staff. In all cases I notated comments, using quotation marks to indicate a verbatim transcription. In addition to these interviews I conducted 23 recorded interviews with 28 participants. These ranged in length from 30 minutes to three hours, with the average time being one hour. They were generally informal and semi-structured around a few questions, deployed when the conversation came to a natural break. Six of these participants had read the novel *Freshers*, which was used as a basis for discussing life and experience at Sheffield. Four interviews were with representatives of the University, six were ex-students and the remainder students at the time.

Recorded interviews are quoted as they are transcribed, with [...] marking the omission of words and 'noise', such as hesitation. Rather than detail the full scope of my interviews, recorded and unrecorded, I have, instead done so at the relevant point in my discussion. As with my approach to my literature review, the interviews are thus embodied and situated in the text. When quoted or referenced, interviewees have been anonymised. When undertaking an interview I attempted to

take into account its timing, location and setting, as I was aware that such matters would affect the participants. I relied on a variety of settings, a result of always offering the participant the decision as to location (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). As a consequence recorded interviews took place at my flat, in offices, in student rooms, pubs, coffee shops and the Union.

3.3.5 Performances

The performances of student life seemed to be orientated towards non-verbal drama, or at least the oral element did not appear to be codified. Most were certainly *ad hoc*. So while Honko (2000) was concerned with the oral text, the broad nature of my research area, its performances and Noyes' theoretical framework orientated me away from textualisation. I therefore attempted to match my recording techniques to the performances I studied. In most cases this involved a combination of the fieldwork strategies I have already outlined, although I also deployed cameras, recording both video and film. The vast majority of the performances were associated with, or took place concurrently to, the consumption of alcohol. Going out was, as predicted by the literature, the dominant performance of student life, and was most visually enacted by students dressing up in costume together, usually to a theme, and going out drinking to pubs, bars and clubs (more rarely to a party). There were many variations of this, one of the most frequent were those surrounding the wearing of t-shirts and bar crawls.

Chanting and other forms of *blason populaire* were regularly observed throughout my fieldwork, as were pranks and 'rough play'. Some performances, such as pranks, were subversive in nature, and tended to be planned without my involvement, and even if I was informed of them, filming was not welcomed by the students. I have, however, referred to student-generated films and pictures of their pranks in the writing of this text. The same problems were present for instances of 'rough play', chants and some aspects of material behaviour, such as bottle collecting. This typically meant that I accessed these through interview, as I was rarely present when students were actively involved in them.

In analysing these performances, my approach has been influenced by narrative analysis, 'the ways in which people make and use stories to interpret the world' (Lawler, 2002, p. 242). This assumes that people produce 'storied' accounts, and that the social world is indeed 'storied' and lends itself to such accounts. Related to Paul Ricouer's (1973, p. 103) belief that human action is 'an open work, the meaning of which is "in suspense"', narrative analysis is associated with notions of temporality, suitable, perhaps for research on the lifecycle. I was able to organise and agree the filming of going out with two groups on several occasions. I was not however, able to build up a 'deep corpus' of films; technical complications compounded by the

chaotic, many-centred nature of the performances themselves, and the task of getting consent from all participants was too time-consuming and complicated to make this possible. As a consequence I did a significant amount of fieldwork without the camera, but that, in turn, presented a problem; because there were many performances taking place at the same time, I often missed aspects of them, got distracted by others, or the friendship group I was following splintered off or dissipated. As a consequence I found it hard to focus on a single group of friends and often returned with a general impression of the network as a whole. This of course was significant data in its own way, but frustrating as I wanted to situate performance within specific groups and understand how they varied over time.

In order to achieve a sense of massification, I designed and sent out a link to a web survey in June 2008 to all students in the University requesting information on costumes, pranking, drinking games and chants. This was repeated in June 2009 and gathered 2,163 respondents in total. I designed the survey to complement my qualitative, ethnographic fieldwork by asking questions about the extent and variety of performances. While the responses I received formed a useful guide to ascertaining variation in the performances I was interested in, they proved too much in terms of data analysis and so I have only included them in footnotes to this text, and then sparingly. Finally, I designed a survey concerning empty bottle collecting which I administered at Sorby in December 2005, and then again at Tapton in April 2006, collecting 30 respondents, 15 male, 15 female each year. Again, I have not quantified the resulting data in this thesis.

3.3.6 University archives and student press

In order to provide an historical perspective this thesis draws on both the University archives and student press. Archival material relating to student life is, in fact, sparse (as commented by the University Archivist, Matthew Zawadzki) and often connected to the centenary history (Mathers, 2005) for which memorial contributions were solicited from alumni. Other relevant material was found in the records of the various halls of residence and the Registrar's Office, although these again were not plentiful. In the course of my fieldwork I helped contribute to the Archives by making the acquaintance of Peter Slater, JCR President of Tapton Hall of Residence in 1973, the same place that I lived in for two years as a member of the SCR, and site of a significant amount of my fieldwork. After interviewing Peter and his wife Alison, also an ex-resident of Tapton, they agreed to loan me their papers relating to the hall for copying by the University Archives. Aside from some ephemera these were chiefly composed of *The Tapton Newsletter* a weekly publication, comprising three to eight typewritten sheets of editorial, reader and JCR contributed news, features, opinions, reviews and poetry, dating from 1971–

1974, a period in which Peter Slater often served as editor. The collection is a significant resource: over 100,000 student-generated words.

Students at Sheffield have issued their own publications since 1893, before the University received its charter in 1905. *Darts*, published by the Union, was first issued as a fortnightly news sheet in 1943, and in printed newspaper format from 1946. Students had full editorial control of *Darts*, and it took, at times, a political stance. By 1961 it aimed to present 'news without bias', 'draw subjects for articles from the University itself', be written by 'mainly undergraduates' and 'strive to represent student opinion' (Boneham, 2007, p. 141), ideals that it achieved in varying degree in its long history. In 1997 it was rebranded as *Steel Press*, continuing with *Darts'* schedule of term time fortnightly production. It September 2008 it underwent another rebranding and became the *Forge Press.*[4] Aside from *Darts/Steel Press/Forge Press* the Union have published a *Union Handbook* and, more recently, a *Student Directory* at the beginning of each academic year in addition to a fortnightly *What's On* information sheet that feature listings and events. Aside from these I have used and referred to articles and news stories from both print and online media, most typically *The Times Education Supplement*, and the Education sections of *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and the *BBC News* website. *Talking Stick*, the bi-monthly publication of the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International has also been referred to. When referencing a textual source with no credited author, I have always done so in a footnote.

3.3.7 Computer mediated communication

Folklorists are beginning to embrace mediated technologies, with discussion ranging from photocopiers (Dundes and Pagter, 2000), through SMS text messages (Haase, 2005) to the internet (Millington, 2003). CMC can be synchronous, as in chat, or asynchronous, as found in email and discussion forums. Social networking sites, such as Facebook, are enabled with forms of both synchrous and asynchrous communication. There is general consensus that CMC shares properties of both orality and textuality (Inkster, 2000), but in different proportions depending on the type of CMC (boyd, 2005). The advent of higher connection speeds has allowed internet users to communicate via non-textual means, such as music and video, often self-generated. As a form of play this activity is typical of CMC (Danet, 2001), and is also seen on photo-sharing sites, where the image becomes a form of communication (boyd and Heer, 2006), comparable to its use in conventional photographic albums (Langford, 2001).

[4] Note how these 'rebrandings' both occur during the subsumption period, where everything is impelled to be remade, remodelled and reborn.

In producing this thesis I made no use of synchronous communication, some use of email, some of video (typically from YouTube) and made use of two forums, The Student Room and Sheffield Forum, both publicly accessibly websites, the former a UK-orientated discussion forum for students, and the latter a Sheffield-orientated discussion forum. Considerable use was made of Facebook, the aforementioned social networking site. It is designed to provide users with an online identity and facilitate communication amongst them, a 'cross between a yearbook and a community website' (boyd and Jenkins, 2006). When an account is activated, each user receives a profile page to which they can add pictures (including photographs), a variety of applications (of varying purposes) and information detailing, for example, what they are currently doing (their 'status'), along with their interests and cultural tastes. Friendship networks are formed with other users who may then leave comments and messages, both public and private, on profiles. Users can form, join or 'like' groups to mark communal affiliations a 'low-involvement way to make identity statements' (Stutzman, 2006). Events and meetings are also organised and publicised through the interface. There is no limit to the number of photographs a user can upload, and indeed Facebook has become the largest photo-sharing site in the world, with millions of images uploaded every day (Facebook, 2006).

Obviously, there are connections between the formal and informal links between profiles on Facebook, and Noyes' social networks. Recent studies suggest that 95% of British undergraduates have a profile (Madge *et al.*, 2009), statistics that have been confirmed in interview with the company, who state that almost 75% of student users log in everyday, the average user doing so six times (Hass, 2006). Such high levels of participation is remarkable and (potentially) statistically significant (Golder *et al.*, 2007). In Sheffield students have been heavy users since the network was opened to them in October 2005, at the beginning of my period of fieldwork, a year before the network was opened to non-students in the UK. I have been a member since October 2005, and have, throughout my fieldwork, regularly used Facebook, both as a social tool and as a means of ethnographic investigation. The high levels of student participation created a vast amount of data, which I have accessed in a qualitative sense only, never relying on it as the only source of my data, but using it to complement and provoke my fieldwork in three dimensions.

The most prominent theorist of social network sites is danah boyd.[5] Her work with Jeffrey Heer (2006) on the comparable site Friendster discusses profiles in terms of identity performance, where profiles were interpreted as 'conversational anchors', loaded with culturally situated information designed to display identity and provoke interaction. Photo-sharing is seen as a non-textual means of 'constructing context, marking identity, and sustaining dialogue with varying levels of public visibility' (2006, p. 10). Elsewhere boyd (2006) comments that 'it is often difficult to tell if photos are a representation of behaviours or a re-presentation of them'. In any

[5] She has spelt her name all in lower case to demonstrate her affiliation with online culture.

case, they are a prominent, if not the most prominent component of profile identity performance, with users updating photos regularly to convey information about themselves and others. They were noted to have conversational properties, in that,

> Following any spectacular event, it is common to see a shift in photos whereby everyone who attended uses a photo from that event to signal participation. Including event photos is simultaneously a signal of friendship structure to outsiders and an expression of appreciation to friends.
>
> (boyd and Heer, 2006)

Profiles themselves provide ample ground for research, as identity performances and in aggregate, where they 'construct a social context, expressing social norms and appropriateness' (boyd and Heer, 2006, p. 10). It has been commented that projected identities are often sexual, wild and inappropriate in respect to the adult world of employment (Peluchette and Karl, 2010). As with social networks, there are clear parallels between this sense of performance and Noyes' use of the social imaginary. There is, indeed, a strong correlation between the physical and digital worlds, as described by boyd and Heer (2006), who describe how people physically discuss what has happened on social networking sites. Conversations frequently cross the physical-digital divide, starting online and ending at a club or bar, or *vice versa*. There are, however, significant differences between identity performance online and the enaction of community and identity in the physical world. Nevertheless, as a resource Facebook provides significant access to student performances (with, recursively, Facebook as one of those performances itself). Its use as a research tool may be extensive but it is contingent on strict ethical justification, as detailed in the next section.

3.4 Ethics

Even after this research project passed the University Ethics Review Procedure, it required careful further consideration. Noyes (1995, p. 454) discusses the process of fieldwork in terms of social network theory:

> The first stages of fieldwork are a trajectory through a social network, from the margins toward the center. Initially we are often sent to the high-status marginals of a network: its 'brokers,' those accustomed to dealing with outsiders and representing the inside to them. If we show ourselves at all open, the low-status marginals also gravitate towards us – eccentrics, alcoholics, 'street corner philosophers.'

My experience was somewhat different. As a student at a different stage of the lifecycle I was certainly not a member of the student network in the same way that the undergraduates were. As an employee I always had a reason to be present in the halls, and was never considered a 'stranger'; I was indeed part of the larger community. This was especially true of Sorby, where I enjoyed a high profile, but less so in my second and third years of fieldwork. Although I was considered by many to be trustworthy, I remained an authority figure of sorts; while this was less apparent outside the halls, it was certainly something I had to negotiate inside of them. This was particularly so in relation to activities that the University, of which I was an employed representative, would disapprove of. There were instances in the early stages of my fieldwork where, for example, I would have liked to have been present but was excluded, either by myself, or by students. To avoid potential conflict of interests I was careful to embark on fieldwork with groups or situations away from the responsibilities of my job.

Careful planning could not totally eliminate the problems stemming from this complication. In the context of lifecycle research my age accentuated such issues; my solution was, simply, devoting time to the field, and establishing trust between myself and my participants. Realistically, of course, there was no way I could overcome the barriers put in place by age and gender. I also had to contend with the so-called 'scholarly' authority of the ethnographer in the field over the folk or cultural 'other', an issue addressed by the Writing Culture group of anthropologists (Clifford and Marcus, 1986) and, in relation to folklore, Margaret Brady (2002). Explaining my research to my participants was not straightforward. When I told students that I was engaged in a folklore Ph.D., the vast majority immediately assumed that I was concerned with traditional song and dance. When I documented Halloween costumes it was accepted as a natural extension of my research in that Halloween was seen as 'folkloric' but attempts to explore the 'mundane' details of student life were often met with confusion, derision and to some extent, disbelief. I interpreted this as a result of both folklore's popular (and to some extent disciplinary) image, as well as a general lack of research into student culture that manifested itself as a belief that it was 'not worthy of scholarly attention'.

Such difficulties were magnified when I engaged in fieldwork outside the halls, at the Union, or in the streets. For example, a particularly good costume would often attract photographs from many people the person wearing the costume might not know. Similarly I would want to take a picture and perhaps discuss the costume or the event, but once I began to explain the nature of my research I would sometimes get brushed off with a 'why are you interested in that?' or, more typically, a shrug followed by 'do what you want'. Gaining consent, especially informed consent was a problem. This was amplified by alcohol, especially in the context of consumption in the night-time economy, where students did not have the time or desire to read and sign a release form, let alone discuss my research process.

Aside from those who wished to be credited for a film or video they had made, I have anonymised all the names of my participants, keeping the same gender, using the same pseudonym consistently with that person throughout. This includes members of staff, even if they agreed to speak on behalf of the University. All names have been taken from *The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names* (Withycombe, 1950) simply because I had a copy in my office, and its explicit focus on English and Christian names avoided the problem of attempting to match a 'culturally suitable' name to participants from minorities. Informed consent was agreed with all those that I quoted, by way of consent form, written correspondence, or prior agreement (such as agreeing to take my survey). Because I had not always been consistent in recording informed consent for photographic images, I have decided not to include any in the text of this thesis.

More problematic, of course, are those individuals for whom I have not gained informed consent, but whose actions have contributed in some way towards this thesis. The aforementioned inebriated verbal consent is an example of this, as are those individuals in a hall of residence or other student location who are not directly part of the groups I explicitly arranged to perform fieldwork with, but who have, by virtue of their presence and occasional contact, contributed towards my understanding of student life. Short of emailing the entire student body I arranged location-based consent. In the case of residence-based fieldwork I requested general consent from the students of Tapton in a general meeting and sought explicit consent from their student representatives, the JCR in 2007 and the AEC in 2008. When performing fieldwork in the Union I requested permission from the management, who granted it (and took it upon themselves to occasionally display an announcement). I also discussed consent with the Union President for 2007 and 2008. When engaging with students in public areas, such as the street, I did not seek consent to record their actions.

Describing an act as public and therefore admissible to the thesis was a fairly simple task in the streets of Sheffield, doing so online was not as simple. As boyd and Heer (2006, p. 9–10) suggest:

> In everyday spaces, context informs people of the degree to which an environment is public. Online, one must assume that everything is public. Yet, public online connotes an entirely different form of public than its physical equivalent. Public expressions in the park are ephemeral and the audience is known; online, neither applies. Additionally, hearsay in offline environments is not the same as a perfectly copied conversation online. Persistence and exact copies are not something that people think to negotiate when they think about the nature of being public, yet these are features inherent to public expression online.

Amy Bruckman (2002) pleads for an uncompromising stance: no quotation or use of material without consent, unless the information is officially, publicly archived. Susan Herring (quoted in Jankowski and van Selm, 2001) suggests that only private forms of CMC, such as personal email and private chatrooms require consent. Everything else should be interpreted as performed in a publicly accessible area and thus open to analysis and citation. Even pseudonyms are acceptable for use. Of the four publicly accessible sites that I use in this thesis, Sheffield Forum, The Student Room, WordPress and YouTube, I have only requested permission to use those recordings found on the last site, as the first three are publicly archived while users may remove their content from YouTube.

Facebook is not as clear cut. Some of the pages I have accessed in relation to students, such as certain groups and events, were accessible to anyone with or without an account. Other areas have been accessible to members of the University of Sheffield only, while some content was accessible only because I was friends with certain students. This is pertinent as Facebook culture, indeed online culture has its own behavioural norms, which have raised questions regarding fair use and privacy (Hass, 2006). Part of this was due to the 'gating' of University networks that defined social borders within the limits of a student's expectations (Golder *et al.*, 2007). In its first few years Facebook 'felt' like a small community, and so 'many students post online what in times past they would have only admitted to their closest friends' (Wilson, 2006). This is, however, not a static situation, and I have noticed that during the course of writing this thesis increasing numbers of students have begun to block their profiles to those who were not their friends. I have decided to admit anything from Facebook that is accessible from a non-networked user account, as such pages are effectively public to anyone with an email address. I have also used content set to public within the city of Sheffield network before the concept of these regional networks was removed in 2009. Since those students connected to me via friendship on Facebook were aware of my status as a researcher into student culture, and many of them were actively engaged as research partners, I have submitted evidence from them, suitably anonymised. When I felt such use was in anyway sensitive, I have asked for consent.

3.5 Representation

Writing this thesis has forced me to repeatedly address the connection between the research process and the world. The validity of this connection has often troubled me, and the repeated engagement of elucidating this connection has verged on the moral. Accepting that the relation of language to the world is contested I have adopted the position that language can only be successfully compared to language (Rorty, 1980), that representation of the world does not primarily reflect, rather it creates, in that it produces another object. Text is pregnant with multiple versions

of the world, created by both the author and the reader, and is thus susceptible to more than one analysis. To temper this rampant multiplication of meaning I subscribe to Umberto Eco's (1992) *Intentio operis*, which supposes that while a text will always be understood at some variance to what its author intended, readers will not interpret it randomly or perversely.

A number of text forms have been discussed in this chapter; fieldtexts, interviews, scholarship, a novel and a thesis to name but a few. These words are the sum of a vast amount of representations, on behalf of writers, on behalf of students, on behalf of myself. A great deal of translation has thus been undertaken, between recorded interviews and their transcriptions, performances and their depiction, and finally between my field texts and this research text (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Hopefully the quality of exposition reflects my quality of thinking, and is seen to be clear, lively and incisive.

The ethnographic process contains elements of mimesis, 'an attempt to collect, record, analyze, and interpret the culture, the craft, the voice, the life of an other' (Mortensen, 2005, p. 117). One strategy I have relied on in relation to mimesis is the inclusion of voiced quotations from my ethnography, in order to let my collaborators speak. When quoting others, especially from Facebook or emails, I have retained spelling and punctuation errors. Since there are many of these I have not bothered marking them with [sic]. Any errors in the main body of the text are, of course, my own. Voiced quotations have been criticised as something of a sop towards inclusion (Clifford, 1988), but attempts at greater levels of participation, such as students critiquing this text, have only been marginally successful, mainly due to lack of time. In any case, voiced quotations should never carry the burden of proof; interviews are also interesting for what is not said or done (Manning, 1992). As such I have used the principle of deconstruction to understand, or expose, the limits ideology places on what can and can't be said, assuming that people act from within an ideology, and are bound by its principles (Feldman, 1995). Since I have not relied on semiotic techniques such as content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004), conversation analysis (Have, 1999), or other discourse analysis methods (Gee, 2005), deconstruction should be situated in my general interpretative approach.

During the production of this thesis I have, at times, represented performances, images and events by attempting to

> ...surpass the linear aspect of writing by which we experience a person or scene through the limitations of the synchronic order of words in a text and, instead, to create a moment in which what is described appears before the mind's eye.
>
> (Mortensen, 2005, p. 110)

This is not to suggest that words can convey such situations in full, nor capture the full depth of tactile, olfactory or sounded sensations. Perhaps because I have chosen not to include photographs, I have significantly relied on rhetorical tropes such as metonymy and metaphor, synecdoche and irony. I have not seen this as a problem: since academic writing became a subject for rhetorical analysis (Gusfield, 1976), skilful deployment of these tropes has become an essential aspect of writing research material, including the thesis (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004). I have strived to make the text comprehensible, following my dictum that research texts should instruct through clarity, fictional ones through obfuscation. The text has not, however, been sanitised to produce a 'clean argument' and has elements of what George Marcus (1994, p. 390–391) terms 'messiness':

> The mark of experimental, critical work is its resistance to this too easy assimilation of the phenomenon of interest by any given analytic, ready-made concepts. Such resistance is manifested in a work's messy many 'sited'-ness, its contingent openness to the boundaries of the object of study.

This confronts some of the criticisms levelled at ethnography as attempting an essentially impossible and meaningless task. David Silverman (2004), following Harvey Sacks, suggests researchers should restrict themselves to those things which are observable. I temper this with Hufford's (1995, p. 58) observation:

> [O]bjectivity [is] merely the name of a rhetorical style. If we obtain the appearance of objectivity by leaving ourselves out of our accounts, we simply leave the subjective realities of our work uncontrolled.

At base this research relies on unrepeatable, immeasurable and ultimately unverifiable evidence. Everything can be substantiated by that evidence, but that evidence is in itself flawed, in that it returns, inevitably, to me, to my observations, recordings, conversations and interviews; to my participation. As Geertz (1988, p. 140) says, 'all ethnographical descriptions are homemade... they are the describer's descriptions, not those of the described'. Ultimately, the only thing backing up my analysis is 'my word', my own sense of fidelity to the text. This does not, however, mean that I agree with Clifford (1986, p.6) who believes ethnography is a fiction that invents 'things not actually real'. Such a viewpoint ignores the 'ethical intent' (Mortensen, 2005) of the researcher in their attempt to 'recreate, to present reality' in contrast to fiction which attempts to imagine it. In a novel, the narrative audience typically accepts the reality of the characters in the story, but the authorial audience, the people holding the book, do not. In research texts there is no distinction between what the narrative and authorial audience believe exists (Rabinowitz, 1977). This distinction allows research and fiction to work towards the same purpose: as Sampson (2003a) wanted his novel to depict the felt realities of Freshers' Week, so do I.

Furthermore, in reference to Silverman, we do not live in a world that is strictly observable, we live in worlds that are directly influenced by the imaginary. Indeed, much of this thesis deals with the interplay between the mediated image of the student and Noyes' social imaginary, played out in a wealth of performance and representation. This brings us to a working definition of truth for the purposes of this thesis. The persuasiveness of a text to influence its readers' own interpretation of reality, or even potential interpretation of reality, may be the best indicator of its relevance. In other words, truth may be the potential actuated by a competition of rhetorics.

To summarise, this thesis is concerned with understanding how students identify as a group outside of the official University agenda of learning and teaching. It is particularly concerned with describing the centre of this culture, however far that takes the research into performance, image and stereotype. Following the literature review it has identified non-international undergraduates aged between 17–20 at the time of their first year of study, living away from parents or family in full-time HE as the target group. However, by negotiating Dorothy Noyes' (1995) division of group into 'social network' and 'social imaginary', it attempts to incorporate students who do not fit this definition by recognising that group identity is performed. Since tradition is found in repetition this thesis examines the common, recurring performances of students in order to answer its research questions. In so doing it explicitly questions the role of 'going out' in the night-time economy, suggested by the literature review as the locus of student culture. The result is this research text, derived as a result of engaging in ethical, exploratory ethnography using a variety of methods, texts and representational strategies. This is divided over the next four chapters, which situate going out and other student performances in their cultural and social context.

4 Time out of mind

To understand student culture at the University of Sheffield one must understand the student experience of time, and the ways in which time structures the experience of being a student. This chapter begins with a consideration of the mediated nature of student life, in an attempt to demonstrate the many ways in which students conceptualise being students, from before they actually visit university to long after they have registered. It considers representations of students within the popular imagination before discussing the impact of these representations on the process of going to university and attending Freshers' Week (4.1). I then define students as 'adults who play' and describe the ways in which their experience of temporality is regulated by cycles generated by what I call the work and play clocks (4.2). In the next section I discuss the student ritual year (4.3), before considering going out, and the temporal influence of the night-time economy on the week (4.3.1). Finally, I discuss the experience of intense periods of work at the end of semesters, especially as they relate to the 'work place' known as the Information Commons (4.3.2).

4.1 Tasting Freedom

Students, in one form or another, have claimed a place in the popular imagination since at least the nineteenth century (Reeve, 1977) and probably longer (Cobban, 1999). Being a student and going to university has thus been 'heavily represented, narrated and made mythic' (Marcus, 1994, p. 399). My participants were subjected to these representations long before they made the decision to become students, if indeed, they ever 'made' such a decision, since for many it was, as Trow (1973) suggested, a matter of course. Student days had been anticipated long before my participants arrived in Sheffield and began to live them 'for real'. University experiences had been discussed by teachers, amongst friends, in families and depicted in the media. Throughout these representations, student mobility was assumed, as per Holdsworth (2009) and Quinn (2007); few of my participants had imagined attending their local university. Indeed, the idea that someone might not leave home to attend an HEI was alien to the majority, some not even comprehending that students did stay at home, whilst others did not understand why students would 'choose' to stay at home.

> Who doesn't want to leave home? Why would you do that? Who'd miss out? [On what?] On meeting people, having a laugh, going out, halls... Sheffield... you know university.

'Meeting people, having a laugh, going out' were not thought to be exclusive to student mobility, but they were assumed to be intensified by it. Some students had feared not enjoying university and all knew that not everyone 'became a student' successfully, with many telling me that they had been concerned that this would happen to them. Many had been afraid they wouldn't like the course, yet more were concerned that they wouldn't make friends and fit in. Such things are not meant to happen at university, for while there is no archetypical experience, there is a general student type, to which a large group of behaviours are expected to correspond. Wicked friends, messy nights out, alcohol, irreverence, fun, flirtation, sex, banter, spontaneity, randomness, *real life*. All my participants were aware this was what they were expected to experience at university. This is articulated in Kevin Sampson's (2003) novel *Freshers* by the protagonist's mother, who often phones him up to discuss whether he's had sex yet.

Nathan (2005) believes her ethnography of a single university is relevant to others in the USA, restating the anthropological argument that culture is widely learnt, shared and contested. My participants assumed the same principle, especially when I asked questions about stereotypes, the popular imagination or representations of student life. One undergraduate wrote to me:

> I'm thinking along the vein of the stereotypical lifestyle that seems to be expected of university students; *i.e.* binge drinking, sleeping until the afternoon, communicating and organising social lives via networking sites such as facebook, living in halls of residence, cooking and eating sometimes bizarre meals *etc.* I wonder how much of this is a self fulfilling prophecy as such in that this is the life many students default to because it's what is expected of them.

When students arrived in Sheffield they were already attuned to enter and replicate a student culture, not only because of the national (and to some extent international) youth culture from which they derived their identities, but from this image of the student in the 'popular imagination'. This nebulous concept has received attention from folklorists (Pettersson, 2002a) who have had problems defining it as anything beyond the necessarily oblique (Jenner, 2005). It could be compared to Noyes' (1995) social imaginary on a national scale, 'embedded both in cultural history and in the mass media' (Klinkmann, 2002, p. 60). Within this, signification occurs so that items or motifs can become synonymous with a place, group or even time. This is where the traffic cone lives, along with the behaviours described by the student above. Of course, not everyone connects each of these behaviours with students, but that is the point, the popular imagination is collective, a 'shared frame of mind' (Pettersson, 2002b, p. 14) that is ultimately ambivalent and protean.

It is easier, perhaps, to describe what the popular imagination does not take the student to be. The hard-working, studious, serious-minded, threadbare scholar is rarely represented. The popular imagination prefers the ludic, prank-playing, alcohol-guzzling, celebratory youth. Because of this, I would argue that along with the excitement and fun, a mediated sensibility of loss, of potential squandered runs through the projections of what it means to be a student in the UK. This can be detected in, for example, the last sentence in the extended quote from the student above – 'self-fulfilling prophecy', 'the life many students default to'. Similarly the media is full of ambivalent commentary:

> In theory students and universities should be leading the way with food grown locally using ecologically sound and seasonally sensitive methods. Instead, student food is synonymous with mould-infested horror stories and nasty takeaways.
>
> (Wyke, 2008)

While it is difficult to verify Neil Harrison's (2006, p. 386) claim that 'Over the last 20 years the media has increasingly portrayed the student experience as socially exciting', the contemporary situation is certainly confirmed by even the most cursory stint in front of the Channel Four soap-opera *Hollyoaks*. The *Timesonline* student's guide to the University of Sheffield claims that the Union bars 'are packed out all during the day with students eating and drinking' (Waller, 2007). Such behaviour is connected to the 'new kind of cultural capital' represented by youth (Ruddick, 2003, p. 353–354) which sees contemporary culture as being 'marked by an increasingly aggressive packaging of youth-oriented pastimes... around the construction, adornment and testing of the body'. The fourth chapter of *The Virgin University Survival Guide* (Fitzhugh, 2004) is simply called 'Hedonism' and impels students to 'Get out there and make the most of everything that's on offer' (p. 59).

Becoming a student means claiming the pleasures of the body, which, for many young people means ratifying the sexualisations of 'raunch culture', most apparent from the three students in my study group that entered the *Miss Student UK* competition in an attempt to win a flesh-baring appearance in *Nuts* magazine. Mobility entitles and enables society to objectify student youth. The popular imagination both denigrates and celebrates this. *Bloody students* is a phrase I heard time and again in my research: on the media, from those who work with students and from students themselves. A knowing wink that evoked a relaxed cultural agreement, both amused and disappointed, jealous and accepting, it returns to the theme of potential squandered in the light of experience:

> For many, our university years are just an alcoholic blur of tedious arguments over the division of restaurant bills, 'humorous' reminiscing over Postman Pat and sitting, drunk, in people's bedrooms listening to other

> drunkards using words that they don't really understand to spout ill-informed opinions about things that don't matter.
>
> (Sanghera, 2008)

At the extremes, these years of consumption breed monsters, either of hedonism, '[students] ruined our village, they raped our village... trashed the fence, smashed it down, they turned the picnic benches upside down' (BBC News, 2008a), or of laziness, of spending a year in bed, watching telly and occasionally playing a game of drunken leapfrog (Buxton and Cornish, 2008).

The students I interviewed and spoke to were aware of these stereotypes and attitudes. All of them must negotiate aspects of an identity that is both extolled and criticised, but has, crucially, been represented to them many times before. One need only ask Google 'how to be a student', and it will direct you to 79 articles in the Guardian, written by Harriet Swain from November 2007 to October 2009 on topics ranging from 'the art of beating exam nerves' through 'the art of boredom' to 'the art of drinking'. Students looking forward to going to university (since it is always the mobile student experience that is represented), are thus preparing to enter (another) 'desert of the real' (Baudrillard, 1993), where every thought, gesture, pose and standpoint is already a copy of a copy of a copy. As Holdsworth (2006; 2009) has demonstrated, this leaves local, non-mobile students forever comparing themselves to an oasis.

Those students who do leave home for university, visit an ironic mirage. That is not to say that new students know exactly what to expect from university or are not excited to be there, but to comment that young people are keenly aware that becoming a student means negotiating stereotypes they have already been subjected to. Although few are familiar with the term, students are cultural experts in the hyperreality of day-to-day life, having long been engaged in the photo-tagging identity workshops of Facebook, and subjected to the daily nips and tucks of celebrity culture. Nowhere does De Zengotita's (2005) description of the modern self as being 'flattered' by the media seem more apt than adolescence, where a multitude of options and possibilities of being are presented that, in their multiplication, leave no room for the self to actually think.

By the time that Intro Week (or, as it is more typically called, Freshers' Week)[1] comes around, many new students are already 'Facebook friends'[2] with those they will be living and studying with. In terms of Noyes' articulation of the 'group', the social network begins to form in approximately May, when conditional offers are issued and housing requests begin to be processed, and prospective students turn to Facebook to locate their potential friends. As another student year joins the

[1] Intro Week is the official title in Sheffield, Freshers' Week is a re-adoption from the USA.
[2] Not 'real friends', but 'Facebook friends': a comment on the varied connective functions that Facebook hides under the term 'friend'.

network, they inject the social imaginary with a fresh shot of boundless enthusiasm and ironic display, a paradox that neatly reflects the ambivalence the popular imagination holds students in. This produces a fatalistic hedonism: if everyone believes students are going to waste their potential over the next three years, then why not enjoy wasting it?

The terms of this pleasure taking will be painstakingly documented; photographs paper-over undergraduates, with many carrying over 2,000 images of themselves on Facebook over their time at university. Indeed, one of the first things students, especially female students, do upon decorating their room in the first year is put up photos of all their friends from home. In the second and third year this display is transferred to their new accommodation with the addition, (and sometimes replacement), of friends from university. It has become reasonably common to take a photo of the whole display, upload it to Facebook and tag everyone in it, usually provoking a group conversation.[3] Nathan (2005) comments on similar displays on students' walls in the USA (minus the interconnections via Facebook, which was in the process of launching when she published her anthropology), remarking that the content of the photographs are always highly stylised. In the case of Sheffield few were likely to be portraits, most were records of nights out or experiences. All featured alcohol somewhere: girls raising a cocktail, boys a pint of beer, or simply cans and bottles on tables and surfaces in the background. A trawl through a student's Facebook images will confirm the persistence of alcohol in representing 'the time of one's life'. The bottle and the camera are both defining metaphors and twin totems of the student experience: one never appears without the other.

4.1.1 Welcome to the rest of your life

Freshers' Week has become an annual 'mediated event' that focuses on extreme representations of alcohol consumption (Koole, 2008; Malvern, 2008; Morrison, 2008; Steel Press, 2008; Davidson, 2009; Geoghegan, 2009), sometimes positive, sometimes negative, an orgy of youth consumption that has been described as the most 'famous rite of passage' we have (Morrison, 2008). Indeed, for all that is claimed about rites of passage and university (see 2.2.5), Freshers' Week does seem to encapsulate many of the features Turner and van Gennep discuss, as echoed by Kate Fox (2004). Certainly, it is a time much anticipated by parents and teenagers. As such it contains 'remnants of the past and pages of the future' (Adam, 1995, p. 119), representing the past of being a teenager and the future of leaving home:

> [T]eenagers... complain that time passes slowly and that they are ready for life long before it is ready for them. Modern life suffers from a condition that

[3] For example, 'This is almost as good as my wall at uni, photos are arranged in a crazy diamond shape!'

> might be described as postmaturity: life is lived in slow motion because everything can be anticipated and planned for.
>
> (Gillis, 1997, p. 51)

The media both feed and fuel the huge amount of excitement generated around this festival; the effect is dizzying before the week has begun. Students are told they are vulnerable, away from home for the first time (Koole, 2008; Prancehall, 2008), under pressure to make friends (Koole, 2008; Davidson, 2009) and must rely on alcohol as a social lubricant (Koole, 2008; Morrison, 2008) to get through 'the most permissive moment of your life' where 'relationships are fluid in a way that they never are again' and everyone acts under a license to misbehave (Malvern, 2008), even though the consequent 'tumult of drinks for a pound [with] fancy dress as standard' (Koole, 2008) 'has become a homogenised industry, with one student pub crawl mimicking another' (Davidson, 2009) which ultimately serves to imprint a bingeing culture on student life (Steel Press, 2008).

The traditional view of Freshers' Week as a time to 'make friends, sign up for societies and clubs, and register for lectures' (Geoghegan, 2009) is not an accurate portrayal of this 'mythical' week, but then, what could be? As I have attempted to demonstrate, the clamour of societal and media projections serve to illustrate the diversity of experience and outcome in this chaotic time, which explodes through a surfeit of structures imposed by the formal and informal stakeholders of student life: friendship groups, older students, landlords, departments, family, societies, the night-time economy. If it were not for the boundless enthusiasm of the students, old or new, to view its organisational complexity as joyous possibility, the week would collapse under its own weight. Volunteers and extra workers are taken on throughout the University to help staff the festival, which has no central or defining moment, aside from the personal ritual of saying goodbye to family. This short, quick ceremony is when students are at their most controlled and managed in the whole week. For first years it is a respectful balance of potential embarrassment and disguised poignancy; a moment that many will attempt to hold in private, although privacy is impossible in a festival that pretends to upend social relations. For Freshers' Week is both free and scripted, carnivalesque and restrictive, potentially transforming and yet somehow limited in its sodden vision of student life.

Suitably, for a festival that acts as 'a crash course in everything about university, minus anything to do with your chosen degree' (Fitzhugh, 2004, p. 13), it extols the pleasures of the body and is resplendent in laughter, tears, flesh, vomit, facepaint and fancy dress. Social structure is present even in the most carnivalesque moments, demonstrated by the Fairy Godmother discussed in Chapter One who demanded the respect that age brought her and used the opportunity to instruct new students to 'go out every night', a commandment that was willingly absorbed. Reversals of authority are present too: I remember telling a student to stop climbing up the face of Sorby to which he replied 'watch, and you might learn

something' before going ahead, despite me. 'Messiness' is lauded and is observable everywhere. This is a key student term that will be returned to throughout this thesis, it means the products and disposition of bingeing: broken glass, smeared clothes and spilt fluids, vomit, screams, jumps, staggers and stolen kisses. 'Vitalizing moments' abound, especially in the nightclub where students report remarkable feelings of togetherness: 'drunk and on the dance floor, two in the morning and everyone is going for it and packed in together even if you don't know anyone it really feels like you do'. Watching these moments as an in/outsider is both overcoming and alienating; the atmosphere is seductive and electric, and yet as a (sober, older) observer one feels both unwilling and unable to surrender oneself, like a tired eunuch at another orgy.

As discussed in Chapter Two, attempts to describe university as a rite of passage are flawed by over-literal adoption of van Gennep's and Turner's terminology, and a tendency to see the 'rite' as a biologism and not terms of a discourse that can aid explanation but not stand as explanation. However, if anything can be compared to the traditional, three-fold rite of passage for a group of people, then Freshers' Week is it. Separation from home and parents occurs first, followed by transition and what feels like liminality on the dance floor, producing a sense of gradual incorporation into the student body. It feels good to 'become a student' and such powerful emotions act like a magnet; anyone with an interest in student affairs wants to get their message/service/brand seen and recognised. As an initiation, the week's activities influence behaviour over the coming year. Strong relationships are made at university, with friends and institutions, but also products (Fournier, 1998). Market influences are thus strong and pervasive. Flyers, promotions and student workers are everywhere, pushing the night-time economy at every opportunity. The queue of cars waiting to offload luggage and students are bombarded with the paraphernalia of nightclubbing (dummies, glo-sticks and flyers) while nightclub staff infiltrate the residences and slip initiations to false 'Official Freshers Welcome Parties' under every door. Fast-food chains blanket leaflet, *Red Bull* and *Vodka Kick* girls come out air-kissing, ice cream is distributed for free, while aeroplanes are chartered to drag brand names across the sky. Dislocations of domesticity abound with companies such as *Student Aid* circulating products designed to

> ...encourage audiences to connect with big brands like Unilever, Kraft and Britvic. For example a welcome parcel for 55 universities offers brand/ products placement directly into over 150,000 student's bedrooms.[4]

Most students do not have the time or inclination to connect with half this material: they are interested in one thing, having a good time with each other. This is an expensive business and many students, especially first years, spend huge amounts of money, often justifying the expense with 'you only have one Freshers'

[4] Taken from *Student Aid*'s promotional material.

Week'. Yet businesses are aware that they have a whole year's worth of student spending to 'capture'. As a consequence, many, including the Union, recruit students to act as 'reps', many of whom are paid on their ability to direct custom and form opinion. Student 'pathways' such as West Street and the Union concourse become littered with touts all speaking the alternately relaxed/hyper language of youth culture. These sideshows are all part of the fair for students who are focused on making (or remaking) friendships. Residence is the key factor in relation to friendships, for first, second and to some extent third years, Freshers' Week is largely experienced alongside those you live with, either by choice (for second and third years) or chance (first years). This places an inordinate amount of power in room allocation, which will be discussed further in Chapter Five. As discussed, many students will have begun this process of residence-based socialisation over Facebook, months prior to Freshers' Week.

For new students there are two ubiquitous conversations, the time-honoured *What course are you studying?* which serves as an ice breaker that carries the potential to widen social networks. The second is *Did you go to any festivals this summer?* which measures commitment to music, youth culture and the night-time economy through the widespread social phenomenon I term 'the festivalisation of European youth'. Just as many have attended music festivals that summer many are talking about them on Freshers' Week. It is dizzying to conceive that similar events and similar conversations are happening across the mobile student experience, the whole country over. As an example, I overheard a conversation in Tapton where a student phoned or had phoned his friend at another university and was discussing their shared experiences, despite their different locations. The points of agreement were obvious (and in tune with the mediated representations of student life): wicked mates, amazing clubs, decent pubs, fit girls, drunken antics, fancy dress, good banter – bring on more!

Amongst first years arriving at the residences, the pace of bonding was impressive, and friendships were often formed on the very first day. One student told me:

> You know Edmund? It's like I've know him for years, like whatever we do... I know exactly what he's going to say. [Yes.] And he says it and I think... you funny bastard 'cos I knew you were going to say that exact thing.

This comment was said towards the end of Freshers' Week, not seven days into their acquaintance. The joyous recognition of already familiar behaviour is reminiscent of the mediated signs and symbols of studentland, that have been observed and performed with varying degrees of knowing irony and drunken enthusiasm. Youth knows itself. By the third week I recorded a homemade poster, advertising a student party. The students had scanned their forearms, on which '1B for life' had been written in marker pen. There is indeed, some truth in the rhetoric, as the students who had designed that poster are still firm friends now, and may be, like some of my

participants who met their partners in this first week, together 'for life'. The friendships formed in Freshers' Week are intense, residence-based, declarative, performative and fierce. Similar behaviour is witnessed all over Facebook where territorial groups extolling the virtues of one corridor, hall or accommodation block over another abound.

This illustrates the speed with which social structure, social hierarchy and routine establish themselves. Friendships happen quickly, typically from the accident of room allocation. As discussed in Chapter Five, they are made in the night-time economy, which manages to connect with multiple audiences, serving the small friendship group while simultaneously addressing the larger, imagined group. This is at the heart of its power and explains its importance to students, for going out both strengthens individual friendships and also allows individuals to imagine themselves as part of a student body, Noyes' social imaginary at work. Despite the pressure, Freshers' Week often delivers on its promises, making it a good time to live through. One particular moment evoked this for me: when, at the end of the students' second night the weave of men and women on the dance floor spontaneously formed a great circle as *Angels* by Robbie Williams played over the sound system. For once the overbearing familiarity of that song wasn't mawkish or sentimental, and provoked the spirit of the moment, the correct accompaniment to the *Old Lang Syne*-esque dance that developed. The whole room, indeed the whole of Sheffield transformed into a utopian school disco, without stratification or exclusion, angelic bodies linked, drunkenly gazing inwards towards an imagined centre: the future.

4.1.2 How does it feel to feel?

When the hangovers from Freshers' Week have cleared, students go out and get drunk again, and again, and again. This is not overemphasis, but a ritualised, regular, weekly occurrence. As discussed, university is associated with alcohol in the popular imagination, and the traditionality of student consumption is a 'fact' that many students mention, just as the traditionality of bingeing is often appealed to by consumers (especially young consumers) of the night-time economy (Engineer *et al.*, 2003; Guise and Gill, 2007; Van Wersch and Walker, 2009). Of course, many students are familiar with the pleasures of alcohol, and have been drinking long before they attended university. It is not only the pleasures *per se*, but their framing amongst new people and places in Freshers' Week and elsewhere that amount to a package that cannot be attained elsewhere. In 7.2.1 I argue that the experiential effects of bingeing contextualised within the mobile student experience conspire to deliver a sense of authenticity, of the real, that ultimately serves to confirm alcohol's prominence in mediated representations of the mobile student experience. It is the principal element in the commodification of student life, which, as argued

in Chapter Two, has seen student culture become a product to be purchased along with one's education.

Many students (and young people) reject this commodified 'monoculture', commenting: 'I don't want university to be another round of getting pissed and endless drinks' or 'I don't want to be the stereotypical student' or 'Going out all the time doesn't interest me. Been there, done that'. However, this rejection is complex, and should not always be interpreted as resistance against the alcohol culture and is sometimes better interpreted as consumer angst over commodified student life. For example, the greatest fear some students have upon arriving at university is that they wont enjoy consuming the part that's 'meant to be fun', believing, due to the processes of mediation described above that the contents won't match up to the packaging. Many will verbally reject it, whilst being seduced by it. The three students quoted at the beginning of this paragraph all eventually embraced the commodified student culture. One started working in alcohol promotions selling sugary shots from holsters slung around her hips, another withdrew from HE and another failed their degree, commenting: 'I guess I was more interested in going out at the end of the day'. These cases are extremes, but they demonstrate the potent seductions of the night-time economy.

Students who deviate from the stereotypes dictated by commodification are, in effect, deprived of alternative representation. For example, in a discussion of Kevin Sampson's *Freshers*, a student explained, as many did, that when he came to Sheffield he didn't like to do the 'things that other students did'. Jonah was not a drinker, and did not find friends quickly. However, he thought Sampson's description of Freshers' Week was very good:

> I think he captured really well like how quickly you find places and how quickly you get into your routine and like still when I'm wandering past Bar One on the way to a lecture now I'll think like – I'll kind of – like I never really did this, I can't remember what I did, but like in that first week when you know they've gone to like maybe their first lecture or got their time table or something and they just go and chill out in Bar One for the afternoon and you, I've, I've almost had this false nostalgia from that like 'cos [laugh] it's just reminded me of like that first week and... like, just the beginning of that sense of belonging.

Such a comment was a familiar theme in many of the interviews I undertook using the novel (or 'imaginative ethnography') as a basis for discussion. Note how Rabinowitz' (1977) distinction between narrative and authorial audiences is corrupted here: in a novel, the narrative audience accepts the reality of all the characters, but the authorial audience, the people holding the book, do not. The student is not treating *Freshers* like a research text, where there is no distinction between narrative and authorial audiences, rather he is accepting the accordance of

the novel to the world, to the extent that he believes the novel's representation of group experience are more typical than his own. I suggest this is because the alcohol culture depicted in the novel is the only representation of student life that he is aware of.

The poverty of group (and to some extent personal) identity from those who did not describe themselves as 'typical students' or commented that they 'didn't do what other students did', like Jonah above, evoked Gubrium and Holstein's research (discussed in Silverman, 2004). These ethnographers interviewed pharmacists who had abused the drugs they administered and recorded a standardised narrative of inadequacy, addiction and recovery. The addict was seen to transfer his addiction to the endless articulation of recovery produced from attending AA meetings. Gubrium and Holstein suggested that the actual experience, the actual voice of these pharmacists was subsumed. For students a similar subsumption has occurred, one of capital into everyday life, where the student as consumer has risen as the central territory of group identity, leaving a no-man's-land around it. 'Becoming a student' could be described as the obligatory process of measuring up against this central territory. This is something that all first years willingly do, whether traditional or non-traditional (as Holdsworth (2006, 2009) suggests).

Many students are thus frustrated auto-ethnographers, unable to make sense of themselves; few, if any believe that the map is not the territory, and many can't quite understand why they find the route hard to follow. Rejecting the alcohol culture from the beginning of the first year is hard work and there are no maps available to guide the way. Rather than interpret this as a discussion between centre and periphery (where some students are always 'better students' then others), it is better to see it as a reciprocal dialogue between individual and group identity. This is demonstrated when students do feel they have embodied emblematic or stereotypical student behaviours, which typical provokes a reflexive comment that they have 'followed the map' too closely: 'that was quite a studenty thing to do,' or 'I did quite a studenty thing last night, wasn't like me at all'. Like Paredes' (1977) migrants jokingly performing 'the Mexican', or even Sartre's (1957) Parisian waiters acting the role of Parisian waiters, students 'play' with their identity, as ably demonstrated by this Facebook group which suggests an element of role-playing and a recognition that 'truth' is concerned with presentation:

> Fuck lectures, work, washing up, cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, tidying your room, curfews, not going out on a school night,[5] not having house parties...I'm a student and if I don't want to do it now I won't fucking do it alright. Im going out and then I'm going to sleep for two days so fuck off. And after that I'll probably spend the rest of the week on facebook.
>
> –'nice one-so totally true to me now'

[5] 'School night' refers to Sunday–Thursday, when a student may be expected to 'work' the next day.

–'This group is very true, nice one'
–'well this group is fucking amazing end of chat, and the description is the best thing ive heard since i was born basically. Respect to the creator'
–'pretty much mate'
–'mate is it me or do u just get drunk and make stupid groups?!'

However, there is a strong distinction between performing the group identity as above and articulating one's personal identity. For many, going to university and becoming 'a student' is not as important as the chance this presents to redefine and reshape one's personal identity. This was ably described in an interview, when I asked a student whether she had changed in the last few years:

> Personally I haven't changed at all, even though I'm thought of in a completely... like it's more, at school everyone thought of me in one way, but I had changed a long long time before that, but everyone kept thinking of me in the same way and like when I came here it allowed me to be the person I really was because no one already had any firm opinions about me.

An excellent articulation of the social construction of reality! Indeed the relationship of the student experience to reality and identity has long been a concern of the literature, typically framed in terms of the unreal 'student bubble' (Kingsbury, 1974). While it may seem, from my discussion of the mediated 'desert of the real' in 4.1, that this is a perennial metaphor of 'being a student', I would argue that the metaphor needs modification, to convey a paradoxical sense of restriction suggested by the poverty of group identity available and the relationship of this to neoliberalism, consumerism and the night-time economy. The mediated market has taken the notion of the bubble, with its connotations of identity-play and dream-space, and turned into a 'mating pen' where students are impelled to continually 'make the most of life', to live it to the maximum, as a 'last chance to be' before entering the world of work. The night-time economy wants you to live, live, live, and impels you to 'get yourself down to the bar and start making some memories...'[6] because time is running out. No longer then, is the bubble a space to think or experiment within before 'the grayer actualities of adult life in the real world begin to close in on you' (Moffatt, 1991, p. 46), but rather a highly regimented, high-octane pleasure zone. It is almost as if the air has been sucked out, and the bubble has descended as a coating, a sticky film, on its inhabitants, like the residue from a long, messy night out.

[6] This specific phrase is taken from student-produced literature for Freshers arriving at Tapton. The phrase 'making memories' is everywhere in studentland, especially in advertising materials. Becoming a student is like entering a desire factory that promises to generate good times only if the individual is willing to put the effort in.

4.2 Adults who play

This section develops a description of the general 'disposition' of students at Sheffield through a consideration of the temporal and spatial influences that shape it. As such, it considers the mindset that dominates the traditional student habitus. This particular mindset is not claimed by everyone at Sheffield, obviously, although it is recognisable to everyone at Sheffield, with the majority of mobile, traditional students having shared it, not least because they have travelled through the temporal and spatial influences that form it and come from the youth culture that orientates it. As a 'disposition' it could be called many things: a mindset, a persona, condition, transcript, outlook even archetype or psyche, depending on the disciplinary orientation one subscribes to. It is analogous in some ways to Noyes' social imaginary in that it is concerned with the 'central territory' of student life, although rather than describe the social network imagining its identity, it describes the shared outlook of individual actors within the network. As such, it both contributes to and results from the social imaginary, emerging from and shaping the flow of student life.

I arrived at this disposition from undertaking a temporal analysis of university life and the 'clocks' that govern it (Mills, 2000), from the historical epoch that shapes a cohort of students (which is remarkable, perhaps, for CMC and other mediated technologies), to the social clocks of 'norms, values, rules and responsibilities about the time at which life events are expected to occur' (Mills, 2000, p. 2). In an age where life is increasingly experienced in a reflexive and individualistic manner (Giddens, 1991), university is a remarkably cohesive time for traditional, mainstream students, as they are dominated by an educational and institutional calendar (Adam, 1995) and general agreement that leisure time (Poel, 1997) is to be experienced via participation in the night-time economy (Winlow and Hall, 2006). Thus it can be said that the clocks of studentland are dominated by 'cultural, social and institutional constructions' of temporality rather than 'natural or biological' time (Mills, 2000, p. 2).

The dominant clocks in students' lives are the work clock and the play clock. In student discourse 'work' refers to academic work and is usually experienced by the demands of the work clock. Just like paid part-time work,[7] a student does not engage in academic work unless such activity is scheduled by the work clock (lectures, essays, projects, reading for class, *etc.*). While academic work is quite strictly defined, play is much more nebulous as students frame any activity not on the work clock as 'play'. Some of these play activities are relatively spontaneous, although many are structured by the demands of the 'play clock', which is governed by the night-time economy and 'going out'. The important point is that 'staying in', 'going out' or any other activity not thought of as work (even 'doing nothing') are

[7] Paid part-time work is typically referred to as 'my job' or 'work work' to avoid confusion with work.

often elided by students as 'play' by their merit of being 'not work'. While it may seem simplistic to divide student's temporal activities into a binary such as 'work' and 'play', it must be stressed that this has been adopted as an explanatory mechanism after it has consistently emerged from both interview and ethnography, even though 'play' actually means a variety of activities, united by the perception that participation in them is voluntary. As discussed in 4.5, such a dichotomy remains consistent with American anthropologies (Moffatt, 1989), UK student tradition and the consumerist distinction between work and leisure.

Together, these clocks, work and play, function in a dialectic that produces the time cycles that structure studentland, governing not only the disposition of student life as discussed in this section, but also 'the process of being a student' by which an undergraduate becomes a graduate (see 4.3). While Freshers' Week is packed with bodily and social thrills, it is also a practical and adaptive time, and is structured around an introduction (or re-acquaintance for second and third years) to the work and play clocks. The dictates of these clocks act as structuring forces: the demands of both are tangible to students, most notably in the way they interact with the formation of social networks as those networks experience place. This process is further explored in Chapter Five, although summarised here. Essentially, the work clock is largely experienced from an individual perspective, whilst the play clock is experienced from a group perspective.

A student's subject of study does affect this, of course, but modularisation and the accreditating nature of HE always ensures that work is the responsibility of the individual, whose assessment, at many points, treats students as individuals. Play does the opposite: it requires students to network in order to experience it. As described in 4.3, the work clock operates a long and deep perspective, cycling through three years before completing, whilst the play clock is immediate and insistent, loudly impelling students to 'make memories' from the very first day of Intro Week. Both clocks have the potential to structure groups, yet the play clock, typically via the night-time economy, makes it its primary business to do so, while the work clock never makes the formation of social networks compulsory outside of 'group work' scenarios. The work clock thus 'synchronises individuals' whilst the play clock 'networks groups'.

The nature and quality of friendship distinguishes the bonds between students at work and play, and is discussed further in Chapter Five. The play clock typically forms friendship groups via the mediation of architecture. The physical form of student residences is therefore integral to the shape of the student networks. The residences form friendship groups, not only for having what Moffatt (1989) famously termed 'friendly fun' (casual fun at home) but for enjoying the delights of the night-time economy. It is here that the distinction between mobile and non-mobile students is apparent. The latter's experience of university is not as sequestered, in both a temporal and spatial sense, as that of traditional, mobile students. Students

who live at home are excluded from the play that occurs in residences. They are also, however, excluded from traditional-student use of the night-time economy, as the groups that use this economy are formed by the architecture of the residences and not the classroom or laboratory.[8] Non-traditional students also have a greater variety of clocks to deal with, and cannot 'turn off' or ignore the family clock, as mobile students can. Traditional, mobile students have fewer clocks and spatial territories to negotiate, which inherently changes the structure and nature of their relationships both to family, and to friends.

As demonstrated by the Fairy Godmother in Chapter One, student representation of the clocks often frames the relationship between work and play as antagonistic while in terms of actual practice the situation is more complicated. Outside of exam periods, for example, students never discuss the content of academic work, even with friends from within the same subject. When they do, they risk being criticised: memorably I was sitting in the living room of some second year female students who started talking about philosophy to each other. Another student got up and left, saying, 'I can't take this, it's like a fucking Maths lecture in here.' Rather, it is far more acceptable to discuss academic work in terms of the work clock: of lecture timetables, assignment deadlines, of the amount of time spent doing work. In contrast play is discussed in depth, in terms of both activity, meaning and timing. There is no doubt as to which clock and which activities are preferred: play. When students are engaged in academic work, especially private study, they tend to discuss it in terms of this desired state of playful 'not work'. Often students will know very little of their friend's 'working lives', a situation comparable to non-student workers (Winlow and Hall, 2006). When students are engaged in play they frame work as a necessity that must, unfortunately, be attended to. Such findings are echoed by the anthropologists and folklorists of the American student experience (Moffatt, 1989, 1991; Bronner, 1995; Nathan, 2005). In Sheffield the after-effects of the play clock (in terms of hangovers) are often measured out against the dictates of the work clock:

> This morning at 9am I had to sign myself and Henry up to our Family Law seminar group. We had decided to opt for a Tuesday afternoon slot. Unfortunately yours truly did NOT get up in time...not mint.[9] As a result, I signed us up at 9.30am, which meant that our preferred group had already been filled...not mint. However, the replacement group is by no means a shitter. It is on a Monday afternoon at 13.30pm. The only stumbling block really when I think about it (and this is a stupid reason, considering that I am in my third and final year of my degree) is the fact that CARNAGE[10] is

[8] This pattern strongly emerged from my ethnography in Sheffield and was the key finding from my statistical work on alcohol use at the University of Gloucestershire (2010).
[9] Slang meaning 'good'. Likely derived from something being in 'mint condition', itself related, of course, to the minting of coins.
[10] For more details on Carnage (an organised pub crawl) see 7.2.

> always on a Sunday night. Nevertheless, I have made a 9am lecture after CARNAGE before, so there is no reason why I can't make an afternoon start.

Since private study is typically performed on a computer, Facebook is used concurrently, thus creating much self-representation of 'having to work' or 'being at work' in the form of Facebook status updates. This is recognised by students, who employ meta-commentary in status updates to demonstrate it: 'Manuel is [generic essay completion comment]'. Sometimes the contrast between work and play is framed to underline their incongruent surrealism: 'Hazel is debating whether to defend one step ontological dependency, and what to wear for the pirate party'. Most of the time, however, work is framed as drudgery and play as reality or reward, represented by the products and activities of the night-time economy: 'Dilys is work work work (Pub. Club. Sleep)', 'Bianca can taste the alcohol at the end of this essay'. Overindulgence in these products is rarely criticised: 'Mildred is recovering from a 6 day hangover but it's so been worth the pain!!'.

If Bakhtin's carnivalesque is treated as *style*, in the sense of a mediated, representational strategy then it becomes a valid description of the student disposition, not only in its celebration of excess and bodily pleasure, but also in its conception of work and play as a duality:

> It could be said (with certain reservations, of course) that a person of the Middle Ages lived, as it were, two lives: one that was the official life, monolithically serious and gloomy, subjugated to a strict hierarchical order, full of terror, dogmatism, reverence and piety; the other was the life of the carnival square, free and unrestricted, full of ambivalent laughter, blasphemy, the profanation of everything sacred, full of debasing and obscenities, familiar contact with everyone and everything. Both these lives were legitimate, but separated by strict temporal boundaries.
>
> (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 129–130)

A fascinating moment in my fieldwork occurred when I attended a third year poster presentation. By chance one of the students was a member of the cohort that I followed through university. Seeing her perform her academic self was revelatory: a totally different persona. As she sipped the complimentary wine she informed a friend, in an aside, that she had saved as much as possible 'for later'. It was as if the student was swapping masks in front of me, the wine mediating between the world of work and the world of play. While much has been written on making work playful, most students, indeed the vast majority of my participants, saw such work, while not necessarily dull in itself, as negating play, which in turn is viewed as the epitome of fun. This does not discount the reality that many work hard at their studies, just that students view their primary, desired state of existence as being social and at play.

Since, in western culture, play is about 'pleasure, voluntariness, friends, the outdoors and not work' (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 190), it is integral to consumerism which implies work time and leisure time. This should not be considered unusual: consumers tend to base their perceptions of themselves on their leisure activities, and not their work (Crane, 2000). This accords with Winlow and Hall (2006), as well as Chatterton and Hollands (2003, p. 74), who, referencing Willis' (1990) concept of symbolic work,[11] comment that:

> [I]f youth is a social group more likely to be excluded from productive work, meaning and identity for them, it might be argued, is as likely to be undertaken on and around the products of material production.

Most students at Sheffield are aware that they are attending a 'good university' but all are aware that the value of a degree has been devalued. Thus, in a consumer society where 'life can be clearly compartmentalized and judged according to the instrumental utility and potential benefits and pleasures of each sphere' (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 29), it is no surprise that students value play over work and draw their identity from leisure time, dominated, as it is, by the play clock and going out. Some have implicitly come to the conclusions discussed by Allen and Ainley (2010). I encountered many students who saw university as a dull necessity, not an education, but a preparation for employment, and play, especially 'going out' as the be all and end all of 'being a student', of 'what it is all about' (for a further discussion of student conceptions of 'essential reality' and going out, see 7.2.1). Indeed, the student disposition does not always 'get' the 'core values of academia', which is especially apparent in, for example, student perceptions of plagiarism (Flint *et al.*, 2006, p. 153), which is, for some, a playful act of 'beating the system'. Not only does this indicate instrumental self-interest, but it also betrays the postmodern turn, where knowledge itself is disvalued.

In an education system based on universal access to HE, where university attendance (for traditional students) is viewed as an obligation (Trow, 2005), a necessary step in order to secure employment (Allen and Ainley, 2010), education itself becomes an obligation, and something which cannot be experienced voluntarily, like play. Students at Sheffield did not seem to treat education as something to be consumed, but rather as a 1930s church they are obliged to attend for three years. It will probably do them good in the next life, which is why they continue to purchase indulgences. Occasionally they hear a good sermon, and privately many enjoy the hymns, but students want to spend their time 'voluntarily'. That they see their participation in consumerism as voluntary is an indication of how deeply consumerism has embedded itself in creating choices in the fabric of day-to-day life. It is under the skin of the students, kept there by the sticky film of the bubble.

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[11] The everyday creation of identity from the social world (as opposed to the work world).

Whilst in church, many students see themselves as not praying as hard as they should, or would like to. This could be interpreted as a challenge for the clergy (learning and teaching). It is also a sign that the subjunctive potential of salvation via education has not totally dimmed. It is not a process to be completely suffered, there are private joys to be had in contemplation. In a public sense however, there was very little student representation of the *content* of work, aside from those students involved with the Centre for Inquiry-based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences (CILASS) who presented themselves as motivated by the prospect of contributing to the research community, something that, despite some disciplinary variation, there is little evidence of student membership or knowledge of at Sheffield (Levy and Petrulis, 2007). After all, when you must attend church every week, it is hard to understand that the figures depicted in the windows are engaged in spiritual warfare.

In negotiating the toll of the bell, students thus conceptualise themselves as 'adults who play', capable of assuming serious adult personas, when necessary, but more at home in ludic spontaneity. For there is no question that students feel they are no longer children, and should not be termed adolescents. They are not going to church for their parent's sake alone. Indeed both residential and non-residential students feel they have matured, that they are adults, who have long been ready for the world, as discussed in 4.1. However, students, especially mainstream, traditional students constantly talk about, engage with and represent play: 'Being a student? I dunno... it's about fucking about, really, isn't it?'. Adults who play attempt to cross the disjunctive divide between what Sutton-Smith (1997, p. 129) describes as an 'economic, social, cognitive, and affective child identity' with 'the adult identity' that produces 'the inevitable struggle between the generations... in Western Society'.

As discussed in Chapter Six this disposition has traditional antecedents that imply student mobility: the carefree student, on a rite of passage, without adult responsibilities. It is a persona that the night-time economy has taken full advantage of (indeed legitimises), and one that coincides with constructions of masculinities and femininities. At the same time the disposition absorbs the rhetoric of 'life-long learning' and the knowledge economy, because this associates learning with work and money. It is a carnivalesque persona in that it assumes that non-students lose the ability to be an 'adult who plays', able to cross the long divide between the church and the marketplace, or the lecture hall and the nightclub.

In the elevation of university into a once-in-a-lifetime 'chance' to maximise fun', 'play' and 'going out all the time', students implicitly describe adults as 'non-players' who don't know how to have fun and don't know how to use the night-time economy, which of course does not hold, particularly in the face of the 'emerging adult' thesis. Such a reading owes much to the advertising rhetoric of the night-time economy and the mediated image of the student, both of which celebrate an ethic of play that defines itself in opposition to the Puritan ethic of work as formulated by

Max Weber (1930) which sees work as 'obligatory, sober, serious, and not fun, and play [as] the opposite of these' (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 202). This is influenced by both religion (and thus has a direct connection to Bakhtin's carnivalesque dichotomy of work and play), but also capitalism. Mainstream students thus idealise themselves as perfect consumers of fun and pleasure, possessing the rights of adults and the attitude of children. This should be expected given the commodification of student life and HE in general, but comes as a surprise to many new students, who often reflect on their different expectations of university:

> I actually did think university was going to be all getting involved... discussing ideas... useful things. In fact it's been drinking, sleeping in till 3 and dressing up as robots.

The students I've interviewed have discussed their academic work with interest and passion, and yet this interest is often framed as potential. While students may not actively inhabit the persona of the student who 'loves their education', they recognise its existence and believe they could have 'been that person if they had chosen differently'. This implicitly concurs with De Zengotita's (2005) notion of 'flattered selves', and adds a subjunctive aspect to contemporary student identity, one that is completely lacking from the instrumentalist students depicted in Winlow and Hall (2006). The ubiquitous comment, recorded many times, is:

> I love my subject. If I spent more time on it, I know I'd get really into it.

Such a comment has also been heard by members of staff I have interviewed, who have the impression that students' attitude towards work is 'very pragmatic and instrumentalist factored through a complicated social world',[12] reminiscent, in a way, of the 'pragmatic learning strategies' discussed by Brenda Little (2006, p. 59–60). This concurs with the 'spartan efficiency' that Nathan (2005, p. 121) observed of students in the USA.

Adults who play, the disposition of studentland is, in effect, a reframing or reclaiming of the mediated sensibility of loss discussed in 4.1, a logical, positive representation of one's own culpability in the loss of the subjunctive potential of education to the forces of consumerism. This is a reversal reminiscent of the carnivalesque style: no longer is it a pity or a shame that students 'waste the potential of both their youth and their minds', rather it is a shame that non-students lose the ability to have fun, play and 'enjoy' their youth. This was what students referred to when they assumed that I was doing a PhD in order to have a good time, or to 'give me another five years of fucking around', as one put it. Such an idea is indeed mediated amongst undergraduates: an advert in the student press for FindAPhD.com ('The world's largest database of PhD projects') proclaimed *More*

[12] A private conversation with a Head of Department.

thinking time = More drinking time! Many students thought I'd cheated the system, a grand trickster, in a loop-hole of more, more, more.

To share this disposition the student must orientate themselves to the play clock and refrain from censuring the pleasure of other students, for engaging in *pleasure without censure* is integral to the mobile student experience. Indeed, I propose that this phrase exemplifies emergent adulthood. For adults are not meant to play, they recreate or have diversions whilst 'deny[ing] that this kind of play may have the same meaning for children' (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 7) while children are allowed to be unproductive and play for 'play's sake'. 'Get a job!', that traditional put-down to students (ironic in that many students have 'jobs') is, in part, a recognition that students play in a way reminiscent of children and unlike 'proper adults'. And indeed they are encouraged to do so, for the naughty curate dons the robes of the night-time economy to sell indulgences that release students from the strictures placed on adult play. As such, rhetorics of childhood and adulthood are relevant and exemplified in the following quotation from Sutton-Smith (1997, p. 123):

> The adult public transcript is to make children progress, the adult private transcript is to deny their sexual and aggressive impulses, the child public transcript is to be successful as family members and schoolchildren, and their private or hidden transcript is their play life, in which they can express both their special identity and their resentment of being a captive population.

Within the disposition of studentland, all of these transcripts, with the arguable exception of violence, are public and apparent. However, if Western cultural identity needs both a self and an other to exist (Fournier, 2008), this casts students as ambivalent tricksters: subsumed by part-time work and debt, trading off a future world of employability against the unfettered playful pleasures of the moment, without censure from parental figures, employers or dependants. As discussed in 4.1, everyone is familiar with the representations of 'what goes on at university'. Despite parents being aware and accepting this in spirit, many of my participants commented that their lives would be notably different if they were living at home. This accords with the frustrations of many local residents with students. Being able to receive pleasure without censure, of being an adult who plays is, by and large, conferred by the freedom of mobility. Key to this is the role that University authorities have played in withholding their moral regulation of student behaviour, which as discussed in Chapter Two is part of the contextualising narrative of the empowerment that youth consumerism brought with it.

I found there to be little playful censure from financial concerns, with both debt and parental support a constant feature of student life. The most significant barrier to prevent students from indulging in play is their own consciousness of the future catching up on them, which, as argued in 4.3, is dependant on the position of the

student in the time cycles of HE. Progressing through the academic years is an exercise in refining the disposition, of developing the super-ego, encouraging self-censure and restraining desire, of ignoring an ego that is disposed to seek pleasure. Being an adult who plays thus explains the paradox of demanding extrinsic 'value-for-money' from education whilst looking for 'intrinsic here-and-now satisfactions', a situation predicted as early as 1994 by the literature on massification and the student experience (Haselgrove, 1994; Duke, 1995). It also expands Teresa Dale's (2006) description of students as being both repressed and seduced by HE (following Bauman, 1987)) by suggesting that students are repressed by the marketisation of HE and seduced by the commodified night-life. Such a schizophrenic situation is characteristic of the twisted mediations of subsumption (Berardi, 2009a).

In conclusion, I have defined the student disposition as 'adults who play'. I began by explaining the strictly defined and obligatory work clock in contrast to the perceptually voluntary play clock. I discussed how the work clock is set by the University which synchronises individuals (see 4.3) whilst the play clock is governed by the night-time economy which networks groups, and is closely related to the networks formed by housing and residence, for which student mobility is the key participatory factor (see Chapter Five). I then discussed student representation of work (only acceptable in terms of the clock) and compared it to the frequent and detailed representations of play, suggesting Bakhtin's (1968) carnivalesque as a suitable stylistic analogy. I acknowledged that this was representation, and that a student's commitment to work increases through university (see 4.3). However, via the Bakhtinesque analogy of going to church I suggested that students view work as a joyless, instrumental act, one that bears the imprint of rapid HE expansion, consumerism and a broken knowledge economy. In turn, and in sympathy with other young people, students are fascinated by the promise of hedonistic leisure play, and thus possess a trickster-like ability to alternate between work-selves and play-selves. I then commented that this disposition has roots in traditional HEI culture (see Chapter Six) and absorbs the subjunctive loss of potential in education. Finally, I discussed the sequestering of this disposition which is both known and yet hidden via the processes of studentification. Pleasure without censure is accorded to students and the disposition is sanctioned from afar, by subsumption, although it is not necessarily licensed by the local community.

4.3 The ritual year

This section explores the relationship between the work and play clocks that produce a variety of time cycles that structure the experience of university. Students are introduced to the realities of these cycles during Intro Week, and spend the first few weeks adjusting to their demands and learning their intricacies. In terms of overall structure, the work clock dominates the standard three years of

a degree, operating the largest cycle, which replicates itself three times, beginning in Intro Week of the first year and ending with Graduation of the third year. The demands of work gradually increase as a student progresses through these three cycles. In opposition to an employee, paid specifically for their measured time, the student lives under the ambient pressure of work, rarely free from it. This is, of course, stressful, as there is always something to be done. This pressure contributes to the 'adults who play' disposition, in that it perversely encourages an emphasis on the playful, as one will never live up to the demands of the work clock, if one listened to its toll, which is insistent, and will, as some students have commented to me, 'take your soul'.

The first year is commonly known as a 'free year' due to the exam pass criteria for advancement to the second year being set at 40%, the attainment of which not affecting, in any case, one's final degree result. As the Fairy Godmother made clear in Chapter One, the message passed on to first years from their elders is to take advantage of this as much as possible. This synchronises individuals' relationship to work and emphasises the networking abilities of the play clock. It has become fashionable to say *Fuck it, 40%*, especially on Facebook, where a Group of the same name provokes comments such as:

> I'm sorry Mr. Exams, but it is simply too nice to be sat in revising. I'm going to sit on the grass in the sun and think, Fuck it, 40%
> – 'same. but with a nice cold pint :'-)'
>
> if i'd have done more than the bare minimum all year then i'd be a lot less fucked now
>
> 4000 words on phytoremediation? how about 2000, 3 days late with possible plagiarism. Im off to drink vodka.
>
> I got my first 40% this January, I feel like a proper student at last.

This is the adult who plays rationally choosing to let it all hang out: collectively, just as much a statement on credentialism (why learn if you don't need to?) as it is a representation of social success (justified through the evasive seductions of the night-time economy). The ubiquity of the first year *Fuck it, 40%* trope is underscored by a private regret that is rarely aired online or in public, which is, of course, associated with the sensibility of loss discussed in 4.1 and 4.2. Despite its significant hold over student life, the *Fuck it, 40%* issue is not well known by University authorities.[13]

[13] I discussed this with the Vice-Chancellor at a meeting with staff, he thanked me and stated this was the first time that he had heard that examination criteria had any effect on the 'alcohol culture'.

The second year cycle moderates the extent of play in that the mark students receive in their end-of-semester examinations (and continuous assessments) contributes to their final degree classification. However, there is a significant continuation from the attitude of the first, which, as I argue in Chapter Five, is again concerned with place and architecture, as most students move out of university accommodation and into private housing. With its focus on final results, dissertations and projects, coupled with the prospect of graduation and further studies/work, the third year is pulled by the demands of the work clock over play (or rather, in the third year ominous echoes from the future begin to drown out the ticking of the play clock).

Independently of the three-year cycle, the work and play clocks also shape the contours of each individual year, although they have been out of step with each other since the work clock adopted a two semester system in 1994/95, whilst the play clock maintains the Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays. The work clock thus builds up to two exam periods, one in January and one in late May/early June (see 4.3.2), while the play clock cycles through a three term structure. The first term is characterised by extreme sociability and friendliness from Intro Week, through Halloween, a major student festival, before ending with Christmas. After a brief celebratory reacquaintance at the beginning of the second term, play resumes after exams, while the third term works in the opposite fashion, beginning with play, and ending with an intensive exam period, with perhaps a week of play at the end, exam schedule allowing. Some subjects involve continuous assessment and are occasionally out of step with this seasonal flow of play and exams. There is also a significant difference between the general work timetable of science and engineering degrees compared to arts degrees, with the students in the latter subjects enjoying fewer compulsory lectures and workshops. Subjects with intensive workloads, such as medicine and engineering, tend to retain traditional play events, such as the Medics Bar Crawl or the Dental Revue. The play clock of arts subjects is not as socially cohesive (though no less social), perhaps because the students spend far less time together at work. This leaves more time to engage in arts activities such as drama, or contribute to producing events in the night-time economy. All students, however, are subject to the weekly cycle, the most dominant and important time frame in student life, discussed in 4.3.1.

There have been several attempts to extend the student ritual year outside the confines of the academic September to June calendar, with intra-university events designed to appeal to the student market. Some of these have used the American 'Spring Break' festival as a model, such as Spring Break UK, which went ahead in 2008 but was cancelled for lack of interest in 2009. Others have focused on the student sports market, such as SportsVest, which successfully operated two 'tours', one in Easter 2009 and another in Easter 2010. The most successful, however have been 'Summer Break' which mimics Spring Break hedonism (*'ITS NO HOLD BARRED MAYHEM. THROW THE RULE BOOK OUT THE WINDOW AND GET WASTED'*) and

'Beach Break', which follows a festival format (bring 'Camping Gear, A full on fancy dress outfit... Food and Booze'). These events indicate that the mobile, student identity is extending beyond the confines of the academic year, and is beginning to interact with the festivalisation of youth. There have also been several 'Pop Tarts London' events which transplant the Union night to London (with 'two key components: 1. Classic Cheese... 2. Stupidly Cheap Drinks'). The target audience here is not students, but workers seeking to re-establish student networks and perform an imaginary laced with cheap vodka and nostalgia.

4.3.1 Tasty bodies

The dominant timeframe in student life is the week. This is organised by the work clock in terms of lectures and assignments and by the play clock around the events of the night-time economy. The weekly play cycle is the most regular and dependable in student life, maintaining the central ritual of 'going out', week after week, from first to third year. The gradual formalisation and commercialisation of this weekly calendar, clearly seen in the student press from the mid 1990s on, approximately corresponds to the development of the consumerist framework in HE in general, as discussed in Chapter Six. This formalisation is based around nightclubs (or sometimes bars or pubs) offering what are referred to in youth culture as 'nights', themed entertainments run by promoters and designed to attract customers. They are targeted to youth subcultures, whilst simultaneously responding to their fashions, habits and customs. The night-time economy thus encourages the performance of 'going out' by providing a stage on which the consumers perform. This is the key definition of what 'going out' means, above all else, it is a performance hosted by the theatres of the night-time economy.

Such a performative definition suggests both the experiential effect of enacting going out and the realities of hosting its performance. Unlike Winlow and Hall's (2006, p. 93) 're-branded, extended and re-contextualised version of old-fashioned pub crawling' it explains the allure and the appeal of going out, hinted at by the definition given by Szmigin *et al.* (2008, p. 364):

> 'Going out' is a world of heightened experiences of fun and friendship, and also of risk and danger. It holds the promise of fulfilment (sexual and social) and is defined by the attendance or avoidance of, different bars and clubs.

This distinguishes it, for example, from going to the pub: there is more participation from the consumer, and from the night-time economy, more scripting. One cannot 'go out' alone, whilst one can certainly visit the pub alone. In anthropological terms, the distinction can be explained by viewing going out as a group ritual, as 'formalized, symbolic performance', 'action intended for an audience

(even if the audience is oneself)' and 'acted in a manner to be seen or heard and "read" by others; therefore, it is also a text, a dramatic text' (Quantz, 1999, p. 506). When young people go out this audience is made up by the actors themselves, performing together in small troupes. The night-time economy is, essentially, a collection of stages helping and encouraging these troupes all improvise the same play. Its performance is mediated by the consumption of alcohol, which is soaked up by the actors almost like applause. As further discussed in 5.3, this play has a basic plot which begins in objectivity and ends in liquidity. The former does not simply mean sober, and the latter intoxicated. The terms are used generally, and ambiguously, to describe the style, state and situation, the general tone of the performance. In definition the two extremes are comparable to Paglia's (1991) Apollonian objectivity and Dionysian dissolution. One defines, decides, projects, looks, controls and excludes while the other dissolves, breaks free, and runs out of control. As per the discussion of *jouissance* and *plaisir* in Chapter Two, neither state is definitive, but both work in a dialectic, objectivity always having a touch of liquidity about it and *vice versa*. As discussed in 5.5 both objectivity and liquidity privilege their own cultural capital, the former I call 'cool', the latter 'banter'.

As Noyes (1995) infers, performances have a long temporal life: they begin with preparation, flower in performance and recur through reminiscence. Objectivity is at its strongest in preparation, when deciding what to do, where to go, and who to go with. The night-time economy promotes its stages on each day of the weekly cycle, though students do not typically perform all week long. The night-time economy recognises this (and also, in a dialectic, structures this) by stratifying its theatres in a fashion designed to attract the largest number of performers spread over the entire week. This is achieved by emphasising either liquidity (typically via the *jouissance* of binge drinking) or objectifying, cultural taste (typically via the provision of musical entertainment, style and atmosphere). The resulting stratifications can become exclusive, as is well documented in the literature (Hollands, 2002; MacRae, 2004).

Studentland is however distinguished by its preference for liquidity. It has an emphasis on events that dampen the importance of cool objectification, thus making the performance from objectivity to liquidity as easy as possible to engage with. There are three reasons for this, which are examined in full elsewhere in this thesis. Firstly, it is because the student night-time economy has culturally evolved out of the student carnivalesque (as discussed in 6.1), secondly it is to ease social stratification, which is better disguised under liquidity (see 5.4), and thirdly it is because the experiential effects of liquidity, accompanied by the altered state of consciousness (ASC) that bingeing provides, feels like 'reality' to students (see 7.2.1). Because of this, theatres that emphasise liquidity proliferate over theatres that strengthen the objectivities of cultural taste (although performing 'going out' inevitably encompasses both).

For students in Sheffield, by far and away the most important 'stage-provider' is the Union, the centre of student life. Within Sheffield there are several more nightclubs: the biggest being Kingdom/Embrace,[14] followed by The Plug, Corporation and many others. All run nights designed to appeal to students ('student nights') which usually restrict entry to those actors carrying an NUS card. In addition there are many venues, such as pubs and bars, that do not provide stages for going out. Some, for instance, operate in a symbiotic relationship with the nightclubs, calling themselves 'official pre-bars', which, in the language of the night-time economy, means 'the place to drink before going to the nightclub'.[15] The central attraction of the evening, the nightclubs, assist and direct actors by providing an advertising campaign, a theme, ticketed entry, a bar selling alcohol, drink offers, loud music, a dance floor, late opening and other performers ('the crowd'). These variables are subject to endless permutations through which objectivity and liquidity are monetised. The products of the former are 'quality' alcohol, food and entrance fees connected to the entertainment. In contrast, liquidity relies on maximising the volume of alcohol sales. As a result, brands and types of alcohol possess more cultural capital than others, and are promoted as such.

Discounted drinks are essential on those nights that emphasise the performance of liquidity. The reason the Wednesday night event at the Union was named Juice[16] and advertised with fruit is due to prevalence of alcopops and offers related to them, the implication being that alcohol was simply 'juice' for those attending. On nights that emphasise liquidity, alcohol is, indeed, as cheap as juice. For example, a group of students who enjoyed binge drinking on Wednesdays at Skool Disco complained that the nightclub had increased the price of the 'quad-vods'[17] from £2 to £2.40. With free entry to the club, a statistical binge could be achieved for less than £5, and an experiential binge for £10. At the weekend, in more 'tasteful' establishments these prices would quintuple.

The variety and range of stages provided by the night-time economy in Sheffield is vast and impressive. To give an idea the following list of nights, all contemporary with each other, was put together by a student magazine (Shafique, 2009):

Monday
-Bedlam at Embrace
-Frat Party at Plug
-Oddball, No More Heroes, The Pit at Corporation
-The Latel at Sheffield Uni
-Pounded at Hallam

[14] This large nightclub changed its name from Kingdom to Embrace in 2008 after an extensive refurbishment.
[15] Students often 'pre-drink' at home before going to the 'official pre-bar' before finally heading to the club, linguistically marking the centrality of the nightclub to the performance of going out.
[16] This night was rebranded to ROAR in September 2008.
[17] Four shots of vodka served in a pint glass with a mixer. These became illegal during the course of the research, which the club circumvented by serving a pint glass containing two shots and a mixer, alongside another two shots. The consumer simply mixes the two together to produce their own 'quod-vod'. Bingo!

-SHAG at Leadmill
-Overdose at DQ

Tuesday
-The Tuesday Club at Sheffield Uni
-Tossers at Vodka Rev
-American Pie at Babylon
-Uplifting Tuesday at Cubana Tapas Bar
-Paparazzi at Soyo
-Billionaires at Crystal

Wednesday
-The Official Hallam Pre-Party at Crystal
-Boing Boing at Hallam
-Total Rehab at Leadmill
-Vodka Nationwide at The Carling Academy
-Skool Disko at Corporation
-Jagerbomb at DQ
-ROAR at Sheffield Uni
-Reservoir Rocks at Babylon

Thursday
-Fuzz Club at Sheffield Uni
-The Pin Up Club at DQ
-Subtile at Corporation
-Koochi Koo at Static
-Shameless at Leadmill
-Reminiscence at Sheff Hallam
-Jump Around at Plug
-We Love To Hump at Redroom
-UniSEx at Bar 23
-Love Sexy at Embrace

Friday
-Flirt at Hallam Uni
-Rewind Disco at Plug
-80s Soul, Funk & Motown Classics at Crystal
-Space at Sheff Uni
-Full on Fridays at Walkabout Inn
-Antics at Leadmill
-Superfly at Static
-Funky Fridays at Cubana Tapas Bar
-Drop at Corporation
-Redroom Live at Redroom

-Robofunk at Static
-Pet Sounds at O2 Academy
-Love To Be at Embrace

Saturday
-Sonic Boom at Leadmill
-The Last Laugh Comedy Club at Sheffield City Hall
-Threads at DQ
-Reservoir Rocks at Corporation
-Sheffl at Hallam Union
-Clou9nine at Static
-Brasilica at Cubana Tapas Bar
-Saturday at Embrace
-Shuffle at Plug
-Junction 33 at Redroom
-Hot Pants at City Hall Ballroom
-80s soul, funk & motown classics at Crystal
-Pop Tarts at Sheff Uni

Sunday
-Industry at Players Bar
-Live music at Cubana at Cubana Tapas Bar
-The Last Laugh Comedy Club at Sheff Uni
-MMMBop at Babylon
-Charged at DQ.

Of course, the cycles described in 4.3 also effect student involvement in these weekly shows of the night-time economy. In general, however, students orientate their sense of time from this weekly calendar of nightclub entertainment, planning their week around specific nights. For the majority, a sense of regularity in what they do is of paramount importance. When Juice was mistakenly advertised on a Saturday, confusion was expressed on Facebook. In contrast to research undertaken in American universities, the Sheffield 'weekend' is dispersed amongst the working week, depending on one's entertainment choices. For this reason, outside of exam periods, the play clock can be said to take priority over the work clock and sociability is often prioritised over work commitments. I have heard debate amongst academics on whether early morning lectures on Thursdays should be set-back due to the popularity of Juice/ROAR on Wednesday night. This recognises the limits on productivity that the consumption of alcohol can impose, especially in respect to the regulation of sleep patterns to late nights and late mornings.

Outside of the Union, student nights are never staged on Friday or Saturday, as the night-time economy can rely on non-students to perform for higher prices. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and to an extent Thursday are thus heavily promoted as

student nights in the city of Sheffield while Friday and Saturday are typically subsumed in the general weekend night-time economy. Even a cursory examination of the websites of student nightlife promoters[18] suggest that the division of the week into student and non-student nights is a common, national phenomenon. Monday through Thursday, the city (*i.e.* non-Union) will, depending on the day of the week, target their nightlife provision towards students from either Hallam or the University of Sheffield. For the latter the most important are Kingdom/Embrace[19] on a Monday, which attracts a large general student crowd, Skool Disco at Corporation on a Wednesday and Jump Around at Plug on a Thursday (these latter two nights encourage fancy dress). All of these nights emphasise liquidity.

In contrast, during the week, the Union alternates nights that valorise liquidity and those that emphasise objectivity. On Mondays it offers a night designed to appeal to first year students, followed by The Tuesday Club which is orientated towards the cultural appreciation of dance music. On Wednesdays it attracts a large sports-orientated crowd, while on Thursday it runs a night orientated towards the cultural appreciation of guitar music. Year by year all vary in popularity, which illustrates the highly competitive nature of the economy. Indeed, the Union's Thursday night did not run in 2009/2010 due to falling ticket sales which led to its rebranding in 2010/2011. At the weekend the city's night-time economy caters primarily to non-students, with establishments offering nights designed to appeal to both objectivity and liquidity. The Union caters for liquidity exclusively at the weekend.[20]

While there have been several attempts to promote Sunday, none have been particularly successful, outside of Carnage, an infrequently held mass pub crawl discussed in 7.2. This is down to the profile Monday retains as the beginning of a week of work (even the adult who plays feels guilty drinking the communion wine on a Sunday night). Nevertheless promoters occasionally seek to expand the reach of the economy by extending its temporal reach to Sundays. The advertising literature for a (failed) attempt at doing so is redolent of the pleasures of the body over those of cultural taste:

> MMMBOP! at Babylon
> Every Sunday 9pm till 2am
> Calling all 90s Lovers
> Expect classic 90s party tunes, cheap drinks, crazy games, give-aways and sexy people
> Dedicated to the decade of your youth, when Tony Blair was the next big thing, mobile phones were the size of a loaf of bread, internet connection was

[18] See, for example www.live2flirt.co.uk, www.roughhill.co.uk or www.totalstudents.co.uk.
[19] The night-time economy does not, note, encourage Hallam and University students to attend the same event. For example Kingdom/Embrace run a Hallam orientated night on Wednesday and a University night on Monday.
[20] In addition there are monthly and fortnightly events at the Union and elsewhere designed for groups that do not fit normative standards and do not warrant a weekly event due to lower participation, such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) sexual orientations, or old indie music fans.

> as predictable as the weather, Britney & Gazza were still sane, petrol was 50p a litre, and VK was, ...er £1.50 a bottle.[21]
> ..Drinks Madness.... Becks bottles & VK bottles are just £1.25 all night!
> Double vodka & Redbull £1.99 all night!
> A Free shot with every advance ticket!
> ...Plus big screen Wii.. Other crazy games every 30 mins with Champagne to win.. Sweets/ Glowsticks/ facepaint for freeeeeeee!
> No longer must you wait 'til Monday for cheap drinks and sing-along dancefloor hedonism...
> Free gift for everyone.. Free shots flying around everywhere.. Free shots with every advance tickets!.. Magician.. Photographers.. And more!
> Official pre-bar at Revolution

Every message attempts to assure students that they do not need any specialised cultural knowledge to attend this event ('Dedicated to the decade of your youth...'), and attempts to guarantee that bodies will be washed with alcohol and sensory experience. Many of the above routines are commonly found in the weekly nights offered by the Union and private providers. This is all part of the set and intended to facilitate the performance of 'going out'. In many ways, these routines and their liquid performances have come to represent the mobile student experience, especially in the third, monophonic phase of student culture (see Chapter Six). In contrast, nights that emphasise cultural objectivity are focussed on the music. The Union's indie night advertised itself with a simple: 'Fuzz Club & Bleach: 2 Rooms of Casio Disco, Oxfam Rock, SK8, Punk, Anger' while the Tuesday Club preferred a detailed cultural exposition:

> NICKY BLACKMARKET is one of the original pioneers of drum and bass, and is considered a heavyweight ambassador for the scene, around the world. Co-owner of the famous Blackmarket Records, he has pushed Drum and Bass from day one and alongside artists like Ray Keith has built himself a reputation as the Jungle VIP!

Of all the nights offered by the Union, The Tuesday Club is the only one which accepts and actively advertises its events to non-students. While alcohol has a low profile in both the advertisements and the events themselves, the music The Tuesday Club promotes is associated with the consumption of drugs such as marijuana, ketamine, MDMA, cocaine and mephedrone. Claiming that the night privileges objectivity over liquidity could thus be interpreted as disingenuous, as the consumption of these drugs certainly promote bodily pleasure and *jouissance*. Such an interpretation would, however, be missing the point, as going out is *always* a performance that begins in objectification and ends in liquidity. It is within this familiar trajectory that The Tuesday Club emphasises objectification over liquidity.

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[21] Note this commentary on the price of alcohol.

This is also relevant to the Union's 'alternative' music night on Thursday. Students have commented that many of the regular attendees seem to be from middle class backgrounds, and, when prompted, have agreed that there is a general link between class, wealth, taste and music, as Chatterton and Hollands (2003) suggest. However, that is not to say that the reverse of this is true, and that nights that validate the body and liquidity are solely populated by students from lower or lower-middle class backgrounds, but rather to suggest that these nights are more accessible to any student, from any background. Physically 'being there' and responding to the array of lights, familiar music, nightclub games, costumes and cheap drinks is enough. They are thus closer to the 'central territory' of being a 'typical student', not in possession or desire for any specialised cultural knowledge. In contrast social stratification is easily recognisable on nights that stress objectification (because the cultural capital of objectification, cool, is itself concerned with discernment and recognition). On nights that valorise liquidity and the body stratification tends to be disguised (often literally).

This section has described going out as a performance that begins in objectivity and ends in liquidity and the night-time economy as hosting these performances on its stages. By stratifying its provision of stages within student culture the night-time economy temporally dominates the weekly play cycle, which, aside from those periods discussed in 4.3.2, dominates the student's experience of University. This stratification is understandable in terms of the performances the stages help facilitate. Some of these focus on the objectifications of youth culture, while most enable and hurry the journey towards liquidity. The weekly play cycle is thus structured around the temporality of stages that sometimes promote objectivity but typically emphasise liquidity.

4.3.2 Festivals and temples

Only in the twice-yearly, once a semester Exam Period is the weekly sound of the play clock muffled, during a remarkable 'Work Festival' where all the rules and norms of being a student are stunningly subverted. Such an interpretation follows Alessandro Falassi (1987, p. 3):

> At festival times, people do something they normally do not; they abstain from something they normally do, they carry to the extreme behaviours that are usually regulated by measure, they invent patterns of daily social life. Reversal, intensification, trespassing and abstinence are the four cardinals of festive behaviour.

Within the biannual festival periods (one in January/early February and one in late May/early June) student discourse is dominated by discussions of the work clock, of

passing exams, and even publicly considers the content of work, something that does not happen at other times. The night-time economy loses much of its regular student custom, and the desperate, almost pleading tone for business is clear:

> 2-4-1 tickets!! £1 Vodka,£1 Shots!!! F**K EXAMS!! 2-4-1 Tickets, £1 Drinks. F**K YEAH!!! LETS DO IT!!!!GUNGE TANK SPECIAL![22]

> MIAMI BEACH PARTY! EXAMS ARE SH*T[23]

The nightclubs will remain largely empty until the exam festival draws to a close, when they suddenly flower in a brief orgy of consumption and celebration before slowing down for the summer holidays (at which point some of the city providers pitch their midweek business to students from universities outside of Sheffield, returning home for the summer). In the Work Festivals the libraries are occupied, with students routinely referring to themselves as 'living' in the library, their lives transferred to revising, or, as is often the case with first year students, learning for the first time. Students often 'give up Facebook' for a period of weeks, and deny themselves alcohol and, to some extent, sleep. Male students grow what is known as a 'revision beard' (both on the face, and for some students, on their body):

> [M]y revision beard... is coming on a treat. Every year during the revision and exam periods I don't shave, mainly because I can't be arsed and also to demonstrate how mint my beard growing capabilities are. However, as well as the facial hair, the pubic region has the potential to get slightly out of control if you don't keep your eye on it. At the moment I am inbetween the two extremes of nicely trimmed and absolutely horrific.

Such periods are maintained by visions of 'normal behaviour': 'Last year I got through my exams by trying to focus on how I'd feel after they were over and planning how I would celebrate'[24] (compare to the Facebook status in exam period 'Harriet can taste the alcohol at the end of this essay'). This work hard, play hard, boom bust pattern is exemplified by the building that was designed to accommodate it: the Information Commons (IC), an 'integrated-study space' open 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

On its opening in April 2007, the IC had an immediate effect on student culture at the University. 'Have you been to the IC yet?' became a consistent topic of conversation, matched by heavy student use, many of whom were not previously using the Main Library or computer rooms, none of which were purpose-built for technology. The IC's popularity is a consequence of its design, in terms of appearance, function and operational rules. A recipient of a RIBA Regional Award

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[22] Embrace advert on Facebook, for a Monday night in June 2008.
[23] Plug advert for a Thursday night in May 2008.
[24] Email from Sheffield Students' Union entitled 'Exam Survival Newsletter' (15/01/2010).

in 2008, the building is colour-coded and contemporary in its furnishing, ambience and appearance. Its 8,000m² contains 100,000 core volumes and over 500 computers, a range of formal and informal seating arrangements, a café, several classrooms and a shower. Talking, mobile phones and the consumption of food and drink are allowed in certain areas, while behaviour in silent study spaces is self-regulated by students.

The freedom afforded by its relaxed rules of behaviour privilege the values of student culture, while its opening hours accommodate the play clock. Such an environment provides a stage for student performance that had not previously existed, at least overtly, in a work-orientated space. This has two interesting effects; firstly, in an institutional context, it increased the association of student culture with the university at large, and secondly, in a local context, it reframed the act of academic work in a library, shifting the balance between work and non-work, placing an emphasis on the performative, social elements of both. The first effect is clearly demonstrated by the pride exhibited when students discuss the IC, both on and offline. Such an identification can also be inferred, indirectly at least, by the symbolic place the building has come to occupy in student culture:

> Its 24/7, big green and you know you would live here if you hadn't already put down a deposit for your next year's accommodation. COME ON PEOPLE IT HAS A SHOWER SOMEWHERE INSIDE IT!

That students are suggesting willing occupation of a work-orientated building in private student discourse is notable. This statement was made during the first Work Festival for which the IC was in operation, and yet its popularity continued once the new academic year began. The shower has, after a fashion, become emblematic of this. While university buildings have long been interpreted by students in a metaphoric sense (Hatch, 1973), it is the shower in the IC that has really captured the student imagination. The sheer incongruity of body-washing in a library/work space has made it iconic, not as an image but as an idea: 'that place is good, serves my needs so completely, it even has a shower'. In 2009 I attended eight student-led campus tours of the University to prospective students. Of these, all eight visited the IC and seven mentioned the shower, one commenting that 'I've used the shower myself after an all-nighter'. I interviewed this student afterwards and she commented that although she knew about the shower, she hadn't even seen it, let alone used it, or even worked there after 10pm. In fact she only mentioned it because it was a good story and 'the sort of thing people want to hear'.

This is an excellent example of the pitfalls of representation and 'reality', and a better illustration of the ways in which the IC captures the imagination of students, both old and new. This is because the shower blends discourses of work and play in a way that is not oppositional, as much of the rhetoric surrounding the night-time economy phrases itself. That is not to say that work and non-work are always

integrated holistically within the IC. There are many complaints that too much 'non-work' occurs, especially Facebook use. Beyond the computer monitor, views of the balance between work and non-work shift, sometimes from the same individual:

> Had the IC been built when I was a fresher, I would either be on my way to a distinction or (probably more likely) have failed med school completely. I love it so much, it's even featured in my dreams.

Some have compared the design of the building to a nightclub and in the evenings, students are known to work or check email whilst dressed to 'go out'. On the one hand this exhibition of 'going out' in a work-orientated space suggests the aforementioned 'pragmatic learning strategies', but also displays an integrated attitude to work and play. Such practices have, perhaps, contributed to the IC becoming a sexualised place, as commented on in 'IC Girls' (dentmistry, 2007) a YouTube video parody of people-watching and flirting within the library. Conversations with the concierge team on the front desk confirm that students have occasionally been caught having sex or even streaking.

Students also visit the IC during or after a night out, often to visit friends. They also do so *en masse*, in order to 'be somewhere strange whilst drunk'. Such actions can be situated within a number of play-orientated routines familiar to traditional libraries, but expanded in the liberal environment of the IC. Hide and seek, paper aeroplane competitions in the atrium, textbook 'Jenga' and free-running have all been recorded, although there appears to be more virtual, online engagement than actual. Some reports are intriguing, certainly in a performative sense:

> we hired a group room and had an I.C rave. unfortunately no-one came in. to be honest no-one really looked up from their computers, even though we were dancing to smack my bitch up on the chairs, shameful.

Framing the IC as a library that successfully blends work and play is a rather instrumental interpretation of the building, however. The IC, for all its successes is not medicine for the schizophrenia of the adult who plays presented in 4.2. Rather than blending work and play, the IC is better conceptualised as a building that accommodates a variety of lifestyle and work patterns, from intensive study in Work Festivals to general computer use (and the work and play that accompany it) at other times. In itself the building does not challenge student conceptualisations of work and play, rather it accommodates them both. This is well illustrated by the following 'overheard in Sheffield' article in the *Steel Press*:

> Guy 1: You have to work on either the purple top floors or the blue bottom floor of the IC.
> Guy 2: Why?
> Guy 1: They're the ones that fill up quickly with people who want to work.

Guy 2: Oh. Yeah, I can see that.
Guy 1: Otherwise you get lumbered with the UGG boot crew at about 2.30pm, having rolled out of, well, someone else's bed five minutes earlier. They'll be all about you, just gabbling.

(Baird, 2008)

One could comment that the IC is an excellent product of our distended, neoliberal times in that it operates efficiently with social commitments, paid-work commitments, the work clock and the play clock. While it appears to offer new alternatives to the work-play dichotomy (blending discourses, having flexible spaces *etc.*) it also legitimates an extremely traditional study pattern: cramming, a method whose educational merits have been debated since at least the nineteenth century (Jevons, 1877). The IC is thus a beguiling combination of innovation and conservatism, full of ideas about how to structure private study and yet supporting very traditional study habits (indeed, in Work Festivals one wonders how many first year students are cramming to scrape a *Fuck it, 40%* performance).

The much-vaunted shower is again the centre of many folktales and personal experience narratives about cramming, often in its contemporary guise as 'pulling an all-nighter'.[25] This can be defined as a form of traditional studying behaviour that involves staying awake in an attempt to do as much work in the least time, usually in preparation for an essay or a piece of coursework (Gold, 1998). Most students have a story about an all-nighter, the telling of which is a socially acceptable way of discussing work, as it relates to the work clock in the form of time and deadlines. While all-nighters largely take place in Work Festivals, they are also timed to coursework deadlines. The following are a series of statements taken from undergraduate tour guides, each presenting the IC to new students:

I know a student who actually lived in here for a week doing his dissertation.
You can sleep all day and work all night.
You can pretty much live in there.
My housemate spent 48 hours in there.
This is where you'll live when you come to revision.
If you study all through the night there are showers.
It's soooo comfy.
If you prefer all-nighters like me you'll spend your entire revision here.
All the floors are colour-coded so that's good if you've had a heavy night and forget where you are.
I am so proud of it.

[25] Is it a coincidence that 'all-nighter' uses the language of the night-time economy? The OED has a 1967 reference from the *Melody Maker* which uses the phrase to mean a club night with bands that lasts all night. It first appears in reference to all-night cramming at the University of South Dakota in 1968–70.

Until the opening of the IC in 2007 all-nighters occurred in domestic spaces, but they are now communal experiences, pulled by students 'together', in one space:

> iv managed probably around 11 hours... its only fun overnight though, there's more unspoken camaraderie between people in there also, being in there during the 'evening rush', and then still being there when the 'morning rush starts, now thats fun!

As the student press commented, 'we all know the library is a place for play as well as work, so it's just as well that the IC's café is now open longer, brilliant news for all-nighters' (Weir, 2007). Indeed, the IC has effected the nature of these intensive, immersive study episodes, enhancing their performative aspect and integrating them with a range of play routines suggested above:

> Me and my housemates are currently having a sleepover on the top floor of the IC, we are in pyjamas and slippers and have brought out duvets and pillows. Love it

Of course these routines irritate and interrupt other students and staff and contribute to making the IC an acquired taste. Again, they are discussed more than enacted; a working atmosphere is, on the whole, self-regulated by the students, especially in the silent study areas. The building is, however, 'loud and social', and as a result some students choose to work in Western Bank, the 'traditional library' with enforced silence and opening hours. These students, when questioned, refer to their decision not to work in the IC as being down to its atmosphere. Fascinatingly, some identify with 'alternative music' as per the Tuesday/Thursday night constructions of taste discussed in 4.3.1, so much so that Western Bank is sometimes referred to as the 'indie library'.[26] Many of these students are studying Arts subjects, which have greater amounts of coursework with deadlines that fall outside Work Festivals, when the IC is more loud and social. In any case the IC is viewed as the mainstream library, and is associated with constructions of the body, as befitting its sexualised, people-watching open-plan ludic atmosphere. Note that this is not straightforward class stratification, as both constructions of taste and constructions of the body are themselves stratified, as discussed in Chapter Seven. It is rather a cultural division between those who are willing to identify with the mainstream student identity (the IC crowd) and those who are not (everyone else).

While this is, of course, a simplification, it is an interpretation that has arisen from conversations and interviews with students. The IC has certainly attracted many students who did not and would not regularly attend a 'traditional' library, especially out of Work Festivals. Students, whether they identify with the mainstream or not, have integrated it into their physical and metaphoric geography

[26] 'Indie', short for independent, meaning 'a style of music not typically found on a major music label'.

of Sheffield. Indeed some students believe that it has 'now become as much a focus of University life as the Union, which probably says something about us' (Duncan, 2008). The process of integration has been negotiated through the repeated communal performance of work (including immersive all-nighters) and non-work (play routines, fashion and sex), amounting to significant student engagement in a place identified with the university. This problematises the student experience of work, however: by accommodating perennial cramming behaviour the IC legitimises an approach to learning in favour of a *Fuck it, 40%* mentality.

Yet, in the competitive context of contemporary HE the IC is a distinct advantage for Sheffield. Its presence legitimises the commodification process; it appears expensive, it satisfies student 'value-for-money' demands, its 24 hour access encourages the 'squeezing' of learning and fits well into discourse on the 24 hour society, capitalism and the commodification of time (Hassard, 2002) that makes hard, intense work cool. Indeed the IC has been conceived, at least in an institutional sense, in response to this. No mistake that the alumni magazine *Your University* (Kate Horton Public Relations, 2007b) ran 'Sorby's date with destiny' (p. 6) side by side with 'Information Commons welcomes first users' (p. 7). At time of writing, the Times Higher Education's Student Experience poll placed Sheffield first in the country for best library facilities.

In any case, many students enjoy pulling all-nighters and cramming, both in Work Festivals and to meet deadlines outside of them. In the latter case it is noted that the student creates a personal Work Festival of their own, marked by Falassi's (1987) description of festival behaviour: reversal, intensification, trespassing and abstinence. Indeed, students enjoy 'getting in the zone' and experiencing pleasure and adrenaline from this intense, risky behaviour. As a means of working, all-nighters are conducive to flow experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975), which have long been associated with festivals (Turner, 1979) and indeed nightclubbing (Northcote, 2006). Students know, of course, that they do not necessarily present the best way of working: 'Harriet is channelling her inner fresher. Yeah, that means an all-niter. Yeah, it's a crap essay. But she feels like a rebel.' In this case, Harriet had not done the work required in the time allotted, yet she has purposely left everything to the very last night in order to increase both her sense of urgency, and her pleasure in completing the work. Such a finding has been observed in other studies of cramming.

> [S]tudents cycle through a pattern of calculated procrastination, preparatory anxiety, climatic cramming, nick-of-time decision-making, and finally victory to be celebrated.
>
> (Brinthaupt and Shin, 2001)

Again, this can be related to the massification of HE. When attending university is an obligation, something a student must do in order to gain a certificate, then

students, not surprisingly, do not have the motivation to expand their work. While there is an element of traditionality to this behaviour, it must be seen as a challenge to the University to empower its students to take control of their work in more productive and creative ways than fitting it into the smallest timescale possible.

To conclude this chapter, I will underline its general theme: that student identity is actuated by interaction with the night-time economy via the performance of going out and consuming alcohol. I have demonstrated this by examining mediated student experience and the popular imagination (4.1), Freshers' Week (4.1.1) and the negotiation of student stereotypes (4.1.2). I then described students as conceiving of themselves as 'adults who play without censure', and described the way that time, in the form of the work and play clocks structure their experience of university (4.2). I discussed these clocks in terms of the general ritual year (4.3), before detailing the weekly play cycle and its temporal structure in the night-time economy (4.3.1). Finally, I have described students' attitude to academic work, and the Work Festivals that are experienced in the IC (4.3.2). Thus, using time as a loose theme I have described the experience of 'being a student' at the University of Sheffield. The next chapter will use place as a general theme to do the same.

5 Having it

While the previous chapter examined the ways in which the work and play clocks structure the rhythm and disposition of student life, this chapter examines the spatiality of the student experience at Sheffield, paying particular attention to the relationship of friendship to the environment. Alongside the temporal analysis presented in Chapter Four, it thus attempts to describe the structure of student experience in time and space. The first section considers the manner in which architecture influences the formation of social networks, distinguishing between a student's close friends and their acquaintances (5.1). The role of Facebook in representing friendship is discussed (5.2), before the performance of going out considered (5.3). The dominant role of the night-time economy in student life is then explored (5.4), especially in its relation to friendship and 'banter' (5.5). This is followed by a discussion of the influence friendship has on the student experience of space (5.6) before a consideration of how the rules of university are unlearnt (5.7). Finally I consider those students who do not fit in with, or are not covered by the model I have presented (5.8).

As the environment of student residences are of paramount importance in my explanatory model, I have not, in this chapter, considered the particular influence of the Village, which opened in September 2007 and had, by September 2010, replaced the hall system of old. Instead, I have discussed the workings of student society and culture in general, and considered the influence of the Village on these processes in Chapter Six. This is partly for the sake of clarity and also because the Village is reasonably new, and remains 'in development'.

5.1 Places making friends making friends making places

University provides all students, whether traditional or non-traditional, mobile or non-mobile with three inter-related outcomes:

- ⇒ The opportunity to study and gain an accredited degree.
- ⇒ The opportunity to expand one's social network.
- ⇒ The opportunity to involve oneself in the extra-curricular life of the university.

In addition, mobile students enjoy two substitutions:

- ⇒ Sheffield for their prior location.
- ⇒ A student residence for their old home.

These substitutions significantly affect the three inter-related outcomes, especially the latter two. For mobile students, who amount to 75% of undergraduates (see 3.1.1), moving to Sheffield implies a complete reformation of the social network, whilst living in student residences implies swapping family for a group of students. These two transformations are at the heart of the mobile student experience at Sheffield, indeed they are the structural key to understanding the central territory of studentland, and the source of anxiety that non-mobile students have in accessing this territory and having a 'typical experience' (see 2.1.2). Mobility actually *limits* the student's social environment by removing the family and other social networks and replacing them with students alone. Optionality, that hallmark of contemporary life (Giddens, 1991; De Zengotita, 2005) is actually reduced, both spatially and, as discussed in Chapter Four, temporally. However, as a result of this, the experience of going to Sheffield, and by implication, all mobile universities, is immersive, intensive and above all, unitary. In terms of the life course, a mobile student's social environment is never likely to be as particular or well-defined again, not until, at least, that student starts a family, which for many students is something that will not occur for at least a decade.

Winlow and Hall (2006) believe that contemporary youth no longer form and experience relationships in the reflexive late modern manner that Giddens (1991, 1992) and Beck (1992) describe. Instead they suggest that friendship has been subsumed and that youth, including students, are increasingly instrumental in their choice of friends, befitting the atomising and competitive pressures of market forces which have shaped the night-time economy as a site to exchange friendship and identity. My fieldwork only partially concurs with this, and in fact supports Brooks' (2007a) limited study of friendship at HEIs. In general Sheffield students have, as Brooks suggested, two groups of friends, 'the people they live with' whose relationships resemble the 'the transformation of intimacy' that Giddens (1990, p. 123) discusses, although with much less individuation, and 'the people they know from elsewhere' whose relationships largely accord to Bauman's (2003) description of casual, causal instrumental ties. I have called the first group 'families' as they are arbitrary, involved and long-standing, and the second group 'acquaintances'. In terms of social network theory I am therefore differentiating on the quality and character of bonds between those at the centre (the family) and those at the periphery (acquaintances). Throughout this section I have relied on both the work of Giddens and Winlow and Hall in order to explicate my findings.

As discussed in Chapter Four, architecture mediates the formation of these relationships, which makes their description, in terms of student 'families', particularly interesting, as fieldwork was carried out in the period the University shifted from a 'traditional' hall of residence provision to the Village. In addition to the two types of friendships described above, I also discuss, primarily in Chapter Six, a 'sense of community' that was apparent in these old halls, but is not found in

the Village.[1] While this is distinct from friendship, it is related to it, and is conjured by Giddens description of 'pre-modern cities' where

> ...most urban encounters preserved a collegial character and were dominated by interactions with peers, kin or other familiars. The private has here not yet become a fully concealed or separated domain...
>
> (Giddens, 1991, p. 152)

It must be remembered however, that this 'collegial character' was not constant for all halls, and was intimately related to shared social space, the hall's calendar of events and internal social organisations, such as the JCR and SCR, as discussed in 6.1.1. The key point is that halls with a low sense of overall community contained large families with strong bonds, but a high level of instrumentalism between these families and *vice versa*. This is a generalisation and it must be emphasised that, in comparison to the Village, the nature of relationships in each hall bore greater similarity to each other whatever the local sense of hall community. Therefore I generally compare the halls as a group with the Village as a whole, although, of course, the distinction between families and acquaintances is found in both.

In both halls and the Village, environmental, architectural elements such as connecting fire doors or fire doors in corridors, staircases and 'short cuts' have an astounding influence over the formation of residence-based 'intense' family-type relationships, with many students not knowing or not even speaking to students 'behind the fire door' for example. Male and female spaces are typically created, as mixed corridors and flats are less common. As discussed in 6.2, the Village has seen an intensification of the role of architecture in family formation, although for both halls and Village the process remains the same and is dictated by allocation, which is carried out by the Accommodation Office (once based in Sorby and now found in the Village). At the beginning of my fieldwork this was done on the basis of three questions on the *Application for Residence* form[2] which were dropped with the advent of the Village. Expansion and the drive to save money has ensured this process, which was once done by the Warden in interview, is now processed as 'automatically as humanly possible'. Indeed Sheffield was the first university to digitise this process in the early 1990s, which meant, as a member of staff told me, that by 2003 'allocation could be done without the Warden's intervention'.

That this process could be computerised and as a result effectively fall out of the 'residential dialogue' indicates the remarkable consistency of youth culture and considerable agreement on what constitutes 'friendship' within it. Students arriving

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[1] When I refer to halls, I refer explicitly to the hall of residence system, whilst Village refers to the Endcliffe and Ranmoor Student Villages (see Chapter Six).

[2] The form collected preferences concerned with room sharing, desired facilities and religious beliefs concerning food preparation or alcohol consumption before asking three questions: 'I like to study with background music Yes/No', 'My normal bedtime is Early (before 10pm) Average (10pm-12 midnight) Late (after 12 midnight)' and 'Use the space below to tell us about your hobbies, general interests, and any sports you may be involved in'.

at their accommodation for Intro Week are willingly hypnotised by the swing of the play clock which, as discussed in Chapter Four, subsumes the business of going out in student friendship. Since the majority of students are attuned to this, bathed in youth culture and the mediated expectations of studentland, then allocation really does become a task for a computer, a 'no brainer', a responsibility now taken by the insistent and immediate play clock, which demands engagement from the first Saturday of Intro Weekend. Because the night-time economy serves groups, the nascent family suggested by residence architecture becomes its initial customer base. 'Going out' does not form families, despite its rhetoric, it *cements* them in an efficient ritual of bonding. To begin the process of family formation all a student needs do is be willing to 'go out' with one's neighbours, the first acquaintances one makes. A student's residence based friends typically becomes their oldest friends at university (another reason why the term 'family' is appropriate). As explained further in 6.2 this has been complicated by the Village, which introduces a further subsumption (that of the housing market) into the process. In essence, however, it remains comparable, if not the same.

As '[s]eeing friends means going out, and going out means seeing friends' (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 57), the business of *making friends* in Sheffield is also the business of *making places*. Friendship, for the contemporary student, is as much a spatial as a temporal bond. Family friendships may develop the intensity of reflexive pure relationships, in the corridors and rooms of the residence, but this is an intensification of bonds forged out in Sheffield, specifically in its night-time economy, which is dominated, temporally and spatially by the Union. Student families are inexorably linked with the passage from the residence to the nightclubs of the Union, a journey made countless times, week in, week out, as experience is relentlessly racked up, night after night, in accordance with the constant reflexive dictates to 'make memories'. Thus families develop over the student's university career, from first to third, in a constant temporal and spatial dialogue with the study-bedroom and the night-time economy, from the exploratory to the familiar. They are at their most fluid in the first year, where they can always admit new acquaintances, because at their core is a stable residential unit: the group that lives together and goes out together.

Moving into private housing is thus the crucial transition for any family. The larger community of the residence falls away and the family is sharply defined further by the architecture of the house, and contextualised amongst other families caught in the same process. The key point here, however, is that the decision on who to live with in the second year is actually made either side of Christmas in the student's first year of university. Although there is a glut of student housing in Sheffield, the pressures of the free market urge students to sign up to contracts as soon as possible, to secure 'good houses' with 'good locations'. As a result there is a huge amount of continuity between the first and second years within Sheffield student culture, which, in terms of social network formation, only highlights the

importance of the architecture of the University residences in suggesting the boundary of the initial family. Gendered families are thus the norm, but even students who live in mixed-gender corridors or flats in University accommodation tend to form gendered families, and certainly further define them on gender lines when choosing second year accommodation. This is partly because students tend to avoid living with anyone they are sexually or romantically attached to, and also because the night-time economy stratifies, divides and sexualises men and women.

The transition to third year accommodation allows students their first real opportunity to spatially break away from friendship decisions made close to the beginning of the first year. In the majority of cases the lease is renewed, the family is retained and relationships remain, but in some it is broken, often as part of a student's attempt to 'unlearn the rules' of university, as discussed in 5.7. The students who found happy families enjoy intense relationships that validate friendship. However, they do not operate in quite the way that Giddens and Beck suggested, as the process of simultaneously *making friends* and *making places* in the night-time economy effectively means that individuality, and to some extent, identity is ceded to the group, especially when it concerns 'going out'. This is well illustrated by the following quotation by a third year in a 'family' group:

> I 'have' to go out tonight unfortunately. This is due to severe pressure... for me to not let the side down and also the fact that I lost a best of three on Pro Evo[3] to Lawrence. Since the beginning of last year, a stupid rule has been carved into 946's[4] rules that if someone doesn't want to go out and others do, they have to play one of those people on Pro Evo and if they lose they have to go out. Regardless of what others say, I didn't really want to go out tonight, compared to other occasions where I did all along. As a result, I have a disgusting morning to look forward to tomorrow, as I have lectures at 10am...not mint. I will be there though, even if I'm not there in mind.

Although it is the play clock that implicitly speaks to the group, this sublimation of identity to the group also occurs at home, or indeed whenever play occurs, for adults who play, must, by definition, play together. A family member, therefore, can demand another family member stop working and start playing, even if the family member 'doesn't want to', a reflection of the communion that families achieve, whereby members are (or should be) willing to sacrifice their own desires so the family can be together. This appears to conflict with the definition of play as voluntary, but it is, in fact, a recognition that students' natural state is 'at play', an appeal to the disposition of the habitus, adults at play. Experientially, this makes further sense when one considers that the bonds between family members have been cemented by the play clock. Making friends *is* making places, so home, and the whole concept of domesticity is, in fact, dislocated, families know each other as

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[3] *Pro Evolution Soccer*, a computer game.
[4] The number of the house in which the family reside.

consumers of the night-time economy. Since home occurs wherever the family is, if the family goes out, then members are expected to come along.

Problems occur within families when members consistently don't want to go out, a situation that invariably leads to disruption in the home, as friendship is, to an extent, performed in the night-time economy. Of course, as the university cycle progresses this situation begins to reverse. As per the studies discussed in Chapter Two, going out and alcohol intake decline as a student progresses through university, especially in the final year. Families typically do this in synch, but a disparity usually occurs at some point. This was explained to me by the comment, 'we're third years now, I've had two years of fun, and I just want to get my degree over now. He [referring to a housemate who continued to stay up late drinking and making noise] doesn't understand that and it's difficult to know how to make him understand. I don't want to be nag, do you know what I mean?' This illustrates the angst that some students (and families) experience in telling students to stop playing. It is part of the differentiation that occurs when 'unlearning the rules' of university discussed in 5.7.

Not only are friendships made when going out, but identity is experientially lost and subsumed to the group, as the intoxication derived from binge drinking encourages a journey away from objectification and towards liquidity. Fancy dress, amongst other things, is an analogue for this process (see Chapter Seven), as are episodes of disorder engaged in by groups of intoxicated students (such as, for example, placing wheelie bins on cars). The latter is an example of group polarization, a familiar process where extreme behaviours are adopted as no member is willing to stop play (Abrams *et al.*, 1990). The subsumption of individual identity is also reflected in the family adoption and formation of idiocultures (Fine, 1979), with their own nick names, slang, play routines and group narratives. A student's identity is not totally subsumed to their family, however, whose idiocultures support vague hierarchies and roles, with some members explicitly assuming stereotyped roles of 'mother', 'father', 'grandfather', 'weird uncle' and so on. This typically occurs if families are of mixed-gender (although this is, as discussed, unusual).

In any case, identity is a fluid property for mobile students, who experience the opportunity of redefining themselves upon leaving their old social network (see 4.1.2). Of a student's many 'possible selves' that 'indicate what could be realized given appropriate social conditions' (Markus and Nurius, 1986, p. 965), the one displayed to the family accords with the structural forces that have shaped that family: the play clock, going out and residential life. This self is often articulated as a collection of narratives, told by the individual and, notably, other family members. These are typically accounts of interaction with other students in the night-time economy (see Chapter Seven). Giddens (1991, p. 54) comments that, 'A person's identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor – important though this is – in

the reactions of others, but in the capacity *to keep a particular narrative going*' [his italics]. Students have a word for someone achieving this: legend. To be a legend (*i.e.* the subject of one's own legend, or a legend personified) one must have proved dedication to the values of student culture. Its use is ubiquitous in that everyone I spoke to in Sheffield was aware of the term and most had used it. Legends are often discussed amongst their families and beyond: stories are told of their consistent exploits in the night-time economy. Indeed, most students in families become legends at some time or another, while a few members are legends of established and longstanding repute. By the end of my fieldwork the term had become so familiar amongst students that it had begun to mutate into 'ledge' or 'leg-end'.

Having a family and subsuming personal identity to the group is something that many students find deeply enervating and satisfying. It is the central experience of being a mobile student and is often unlike anything students have experienced before. Indeed, this is a key point, it *is* unlike anything they have experienced before or will again, as the mechanism of friendship is unlike that experienced outside of the mobile student experience. Key to this is the role architecture plays in limiting the 'diversity of possibilities' (Giddens, 1991, p. 87) that friends are selected from. This is encouraged by the voice of the play clock which, by necessity, speaks to groups. As one must be in a group to go out, Winlow and Hall (2006, p. 93) have accused young people of selecting their friends 'as a *means* of facilitating the 'right' type of cultural engagement' in the night-time economy. The difference is that mobile students are not typically selecting their friends, room allocation is. This, perversely, significantly broadens the potential of friendship beyond a self-selection on the basis of the night-time economy. As an example, one of the students I interviewed confessed to me that he 'couldn't stand anyone Black or Indian or anything' before coming to University. He explained to me this was because he came from a 'poor background' and then told me that going out with an Asian student on the same corridor as his own had changed his mind, not only about the Asian student, but about all those from ethnic minorities. Of course, going out remains the key activity in this process, and I doubt whether the student would have had a similar experience had the Asian student refused to participate in going out.

Mobility thus decreases the instrumentalism of friendship formation (*i.e.* the process of selecting friends on the basis of whether they suit your style of going out) without altering the enaction of friendship (going out). Families are thus created by allocation, the night-time economy and some personal choice, a process of establishing relationships that runs contrary (or works in a different way) to what Giddens (1991, p.78) calls self-actualisation, 'a balance between opportunity and risk' that implies 'the control of time' and the 'primacy of personal time' (1991, p. 77). Instead self-control is ceded to the relationship of the residence-based family with the play clock. Unlearning the rules of university, as discussed in 5.6, is an exercise in gaining control of these processes.

Outside of their families students do not experience greater choice in forging 'pure relationships', but typically experience friendships that veer towards instrumentalism, forged, as they are, in the competitive atmosphere of the classroom or the cut and thrust of the night-time economy.[5] Furthermore, because many students gradually 'unlearn the rules' of university, family bonds shrink or dissipate over time, so that, by the third year, some family relationships resemble the ties that bind Winlow and Hall's atomised and competitive individuals. This indicates two possibilities: firstly that students require the restrictions provided by architecture combined with the group call of the play clock in order to form close, dependent ties, and secondly that, amongst young people at least, Giddens' descriptions of relationships in late modernity are not generally relevant, requiring the structural peculiarities of student mobility and university housing to encourage them. Even then they only *resemble* his 'true relationships', as families entail less individuation and more emphasis on group identity.

5.2 Put your face on

A student always describes acquaintances with a qualification to distinguish them from their nascent family, usually with an appellation explaining where those friends came from spatially: 'someone from G floor', 'mates from my course', 'someone I met doing Belly-dancing' or through 'a friend of mine'. Making friends remains making places, yet the places are not always associated with the night-time economy (which cements relationships and does not create them). Acquaintances are thus any two students who know each other, but do not live together or go out together regularly. Constancy in both time and space necessitates familial bonds. As a student advances through university some acquaintances may be admitted to the 'family' (which may necessitate the students moving in with each other), or, more likely, the friends will remain acquaintances. Of course, this covers a variety of personal engagements, of varying depth, from course friends (whose relationships usually have a buried edge of competition to them) to vague face engagements.

Facebook facilitates the maintenance of these networks, and in some cases establishes and effectively constitutes them, and is thus a remarkably effective tool, a rolling list of everyone a student has met at university. All appreciate that the majority of these acquaintances are not friends, in some cases they are potential friends, and in others they are even 'people I don't like', 'people I'm interested in' or 'people I laugh at'. It is a useful application for remembering who people are, and provides students with much material for discussion when meeting these acquaintances in the real world, 'I saw on Facebook that you...' *etc.* Students have an

[5] As discussed in 5.5, there is a distinction between the strong friendship bonds forged within a family's experience of the night-time economy and the instrumental manner in which family groups treat each other family groups within the night-time economy.

endless fascination with its representative capacities, and speak of hours, whole days wasted just looking at other people's lives without communicating with them (known as 'stalking'). Indeed there is a consciousness amongst students that acquaintances will know details about their lives and activities, and no one is surprised or horrified when they do. In some ways this is reminiscent then of the collegial community of the hall and Giddens' (1991, p. 152) pre-modern city, where the 'private has here not yet become a fully concealed or separated domain'. However, this does not generate actual feelings of community as Facebook, especially amongst students, is an objectification, a feast for the eye, as indeed recognised by word-choice: 'stalking'.

Peter Burke and Donald Reitzes (1991) suggest that, in terms of identity at least, perception is more important than actuality. If one feels other people's perceptions are not in line with one's own sense of identity, then one initiates actions to bring them into accord. Facebook becomes a means of doing this, which contributes to the common belief amongst students that 'Facebook is Facebook and not real'. Since students network friendship quickly, often casually, after a vague meeting, and with such heavy participation of site use, of simply looking and stalking people, day-in, day-out, which the site inevitably encourages, the voyeuristic element, of looking at people you have little knowledge of or connection to increases. This contributes to the instrumentalism often seen in acquaintance relationships. Facebook encourages students to treat other students as sources of entertainment, as a collection of funny comments, photos and videos.

Facebook is thus about perceptions, and for students this is focused on the image which, in turn, concentrates power in the camera, the ubiquitous prop in going out. Taking photos is part of the making friends, making places process, as is organising and viewing the resultant photographs online (see 7.2). Through photographs Facebook becomes a reflection of student life as organised by the play clock and the night-time economy. Mental activity is not, after all, photogenic. As discussed in 4.2, work *is* represented on Facebook, but only in relation to the work clock, and then textually, of the individual student's progress (or not) with getting their work done. Play, however, especially in the night-time economy is an activity that has become synthesised with image making. As a group activity it is at the heart of the networking that the site excels at. A student's Facebook self is thus close to the self that is realised by making friends and making places with the family. The individual, however, has much more control over its construction, embedding their page in images, comments and products. As such it is an identity performance, a means of representing oneself as a social brand, a c.v.[6] that bears a social narrative, which, for the majority of students, records its subject's interaction with the night-time economy and going out, which is a means of keeping '*a particular narrative going*' (Giddens, 1991, p. 54).

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[6] This analogy suggested to me by Fay Hield.

For all its connective and communicative powers, much valued and used by students, Facebook has an inevitably calculative effect on relationships, which can, perhaps, be understood via Goffman's (1963) focused and unfocused interactions. These are born out in the exchanges that occur when people encounter each other, when differential power, or the possibility of differential power effects social interaction. Facebook has the potential to dissolve this distinction, to both focus and unfocus these interactions without redress or consequence. This appears, at first, to empower the user who can look at whoever they want, for as long or as little as they want. In fact, however, it also privileges those students in possession of the capital that contributes to the construction of images, most obviously bodily and cultural. This encourages display, the only way in which the subject can manipulate the objectifier. Stalking is thus a reciprocal process, a flirtation with the unknown eye, a form of social surveillance that encourages an overt display that happily bleeds into overt sexualisation.[7] As a form of representation, Facebook thus informs reality and *vice versa*, indeed, as per Baudrillard and De Zengotita, Facebook *is reality*, which is what, perhaps students comment on when they insist on repeatedly reminding themselves that they 'know it isn't real'. Most students recognise it as a distortion, but one that holds power. A student once complained to me about another student's comments, saying 'it was on Facebook, and I know Facebook is Facebook and not real life, but Facebook can hurt...'.

In terms of friendship the more the user engages with Facebook, the more embedded they feel within their social network. Whether they are constructing their profile, or looking at others, they feel empowered, either with knowledge of their network or with the confidence that they are being looked at. Facebook places the user *at the controls* of social life, at the centre of the user's *own* community. If using it is read as a performance then it generates an imaginary, in much the same way as Noyes' schema, that simultaneously creates both a sense of community and a sense of ambivalent power over it. Thus, Facebook is a tool that aids self-determination, and as Žižek (2008) comments, the more a society believes in self-determination, the more the ideology of the market dominates within it.

If capitalist societies are built around accumulation and investment, then Facebook indicates that students are accumulating experiences measured in images, themselves the result of consuming the products of the night-time economy. These are not the by-products of simple pleasure-seeking, these are results, end-products, the actual memories that students have been impelled 'to make' from before they arrived at University, that only feed back into the business of socialising, generating more contacts, more stories, more me repeated in endless interlocking permutations that begin to resemble a hypnotic self-obsessed, never-ending fractal.

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[7] This goes some way to explaining the phenomenon of 'facerape': filling someone's Facebook page with inappropriate material on the occasion of finding a profile that its owner has not logged out of. Such a practice, with its connotations of violence, and 'reality', of revelation, is discussed in Chapter Seven.

In this Facebook clearly demonstrates Winlow and Hall's (2006, p. 193) prescient critique of the night-time economy:

> [T]o extricate oneself from this *simulacrum*, this marketing masquerading as a culture, is to risk a form of social exclusion that is quite daunting to today's young people.

5.3 The arc of the night

Jonathan Roper (1998) describes the performance of a charm as a temporal arc composed of potential sections all present in the performer's repertoire, which the charmer selects as he performs, according to traditional structure yet with the potential for spontaneous innovation in terms of structure and content. Such a model explains traditional variation, as per Honko's (2000) Organic Variation:

> Each time a narrator gives a repeat performance of a narrative in his repertoire he has to make a choice. On the one hand he is able to draw on his memories of previous performances, his command of scheme, and memorised fragments of the narrative. On the other hand the performing situation, the interaction between the narrator and the listeners, and the narrator's own frame of mind all differ from one occasion to the next.
>
> (Kaivola-Bregenhoi, 2000, p. 109–110)

An analogy can be made between this and the act of going out, where the segments of the evening are known and familiar to some or all of the participants and are structured in a temporal arc which the student, or group of students, perform as they go out. This arc describes a spatial and temporal performance, mediated by the consumption of alcohol. The stations of the arc are experienced in a typical, though not arbitrary order: deciding what to do, getting ready, group pre-drinking at home, walking to the union or a pub, onto a nightclub, getting home/fast food, and possibly further drinking/activity at home. Each station implies a specific type of performance, be it posing for photos whilst getting ready, 'taking the piss out of friends' whilst pre-drinking, or chanting and roaring whilst walking to the Union or pub. Similarly, passing from one segment to another is usually accompanied by a performance, often marked by a photograph and typically by consuming either another drink or some food.

The experience of this arc is governed by the tension between the reflexivity of performing and the peak experiences of living in the moment, mediated by intoxication. In 4.3.1 I framed the arc in terms of the temporality of the night-time economy, which supports many of these small-group performances, all staged in theatres that either emphasise objectification or liquidity. In terms of performance,

objectification can be understood in terms of cultural taste, typically music taste. It is also further understood by the process of getting ready and looking good: the creation of the 'shell,' the maintenance of which will pay dividends, both in the night-time economy ('full of strangers who evaluate one another based on first impressions' (Northcote, 2006, p. 9)), and then in the relentless online replication that going out necessitates. This is the style test of youth culture, where failure 'impacts heavily on the psychological security of a self that constructs its identity and achieves its status in consumption' (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 87).

In contrast 'liquidity' can be understood in terms of 'messiness', the key student value that translates to drunkenness, loss of control, poise and image. The arc begins in objectification and ends in liquidity, the achievement of which is much more than simple intoxication and incorporates many skills and qualities. Although the performance of going out is often represented by students as anticipating liquidity ('It's going to get messy'), liquidity is not inevitable and performances do fail. The student friendly night-time economy aims to accelerate (indeed guarantee) the journey, which encompasses the integration, consensus and loss of identity that comes with performing the social imaginary, and also the division and disorder that results from the performance. Thus the Dionysian reference: uncertainty, risk and even violence are accepted elements to the performance, ones that heighten its drama (as such some students become notorious (and celebrated) for getting into trouble).

The large number of other actors also increases the variability of each individual performance of going out. Perhaps an old friend is encountered, or the group make a collective decision to go somewhere else, or someone decides to buy everyone a round of shots, *etc.* Indeed, pub crawls and pub golf are ways of increasing the predictability of the stations of the arc and the levels of alcohol consumption. Bingeing increases the 'messiness' of these nights, provoking chaotic, disorderly and improvisatory performances. This enhances variation ('you never know what's going to happen'),[8] which goes some way to explaining the attraction of bingeing to students: it makes them better performers, less reflexive, and maintains a sense of variety in their ritualisation of identity and community. Students have commented to me that they do the same thing each week, but that it rarely feels predictable.

The 'predictable variation' of the performances highlight their ritual aspect. Once the performance has begun, alcohol consumption is integrated into every stage of the arc, which is tightly bound to the geographical *scripting* provided by the night-time economy (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003). The arc is thus accompanied by an experiential pursuit of monetised pleasure situated within the environment, which typically spills over into intoxication, usually in the nightclub, for which

[8] Yet note that this is experiential: in an example of Newell's paradox, drunk students are 'predictably unpredictable', as Security staff have commented. They will stagger, scream, vomit and shout in regular and manageable patterns.

consumption is timed to achieve an ASC, 'so you go BOOM! on the dance floor'.[9] Although none of the stations of the arc are absolutely essential, the most important element is by far the nightclub, the focus of the evening. The core of the arc and its minimal expression is thus 'getting ready, nightclub, going home'. Much of student culture is essentially an elaboration on this simple, ritual performance.

The night-time economy, by temporally stratifying the week into theatres that emphasise either objectivity or liquidity, varies the performances it stages (see 4.3.1). Even though the actual physical setting of the theatre may not change aside from surface-level 'branding', each day of the week supports a different performance. In the Union for example, 24 hours makes a huge difference to the performance that takes place there. Going to The Tuesday Club will necessitate engaging in different stations of the arc, and even consuming different amounts and types of alcohol then going out to Juice/ROAR on a Wednesday. In both cases the nightclubs are physically designed to maximise the potential of losing the reflexivity of self to the flow of performance, meaning that the actors forget they are performing the journey from objectivity to liquidity. They do this by selling psychoactive drugs (primarily alcohol) and staging theatrics that encourage the loss of reflexivity on the stage. Nightclub culture has developed out of the dialectic between the consumer's performance, and the night-time economy's provision of the stage. Nowhere is the hegemonic incorporation of 1990s rave culture more obvious than on student nights that speed the journey towards liquidity, where neon and glo-sticks are *de rigueur* and provided as part of the entry ticket. The only difference is that there is very little Ecstasy and lots of alcohol. Plug, a fashionable Sheffield nightclub, describes itself on one of these nights as 'the Jump Around raveplex',[10] a devastating synonym for Measham and Brain's (2005) 'post-industrial alcohol order'.

Of course, the profit-orientated night-time economy caters to the largest possible market and so themes its fancy dress events accordingly. The canonical theme for the start of term is 'beach party', where students celebrate the end of summer dressed as if it was high summer, no matter the weather. Nightclub themes tend to be broad, accessible and imply a range of costumes and potential performances:

> It's the first ever Circus Population!
> Roll up roll up!!
> We're bringing in clowns on unicycles, jugglers, circus performers, fairground stalls, cocnut shy, hoopla, and there's even free candyfloss! Woop!
>
> Population Returns: Naboo from The Mighty Boosh!
> Boosh fancy dress positively encouraged! ;)

[9] The student accompanied this statement by miming her head exploding.
[10] Plug weekly email, 15/10/2008.

> *Jump Around!* Country Attire – Dress for the fox hunt at the refined ladies and gentlemen fancy dress party. Think Arctic Monkeys at the BRITS. Think Tweed!
>
> *Jump Around!* Stellar September Entry Price £4 NUS/£5 Others
> Thurs 4th Sep – Mama Mia-Nia £3 entry in 70s Disco fancy dress!
> Thurs 11th Sep – 'The White Party!' £3 discount entry – with UV lights
> Thurs 18th Sep – End of Summer Cocktail Party!
> Thurs 25th Sep – Huge Freshers Neon Do! – Free Shiz for everyone!
> DJ 'Ignoring decency and genres with shiz like: Arctic Monkeys, Dizee Rascal, Vampire Weekend, RATM'

All of these 'sets' are designed to both diminish reflexivity and suggest performance scripts (see 7.1). The key ingredient, however, is alcohol. Indeed, students have commented to me that when they go out and do not drink, for whatever reason (typically medical or financial) they begin to question the validity of the experience and question who is organising this play: 'going out is boring if you're not drunk'. This evokes Gadamer (1975) and the idea of the game playing the player. Once one begins playing, one is taken over by the things that are serious within the game, regardless of how serious (or not) the game appears to those not playing it. Such a comment also relates to the many students who believe there is no point in drinking unless one is bingeing, a phenomenon often remarked on in the literature (see 2.1.3). The consumption of alcohol serves to diminish reflexivity, and the flow-killing realisation that a performance, or worse, a bad performance is in place. Students give these, of course, at every stage of their university careers. They are accompanied by feelings of boredom, not being 'into it', or not wanting 'to be there'. The time honoured student solution to these experiences is to 'get another drink down you', which often lowers inhibitions and helps revellers be less mindful of constructing the arc:

> I was not feeling last night at all. I was in Foundry and bored of dancing – crap music – so I went into Fusion and then I lost everyone. So and then... yeah I had like a conversation with someone I half-knew... bit boring... so I went outside got a drink and went outside and yeah, kept drinking found everyone... and err, was moonwalking on the stage, by the end of the night! Don't know how that happened!

Dancing is freeform, yet limited in its vocabulary, and prescribed by cultural tropes and triggers present in the music. On nights that hasten the journey towards liquidity (which, as explained in 4.3.1 comprise the majority of student nights) the same songs are played week after week, eliciting the same sing-a-long dance routines from groups in performance. This is reminiscent of Rebecca Sachs Norris's (2001) description of folk dance; a shared text that encompasses the relationship between the body and the community. Dancing alone is unusual, as is dancing with another

person, even if they are of the opposite sex. The dance floor is for the small group, and, in a way structures the whole performance, it is where the family physically comes together. Since families tend to be gendered, they typically plan or expect to perform with other families of the opposite gender. Within groups some members may be better at performing going out than others ('Philemon is good to go out with' or 'Philemon gives good banter') while others may be tradition bearers ('Marcus always gets the Rum Rations in, whatever night it is like wherever we are, he always orders a round of rum shots, 'cos like you got to get your Rum Rations!').

The nightclubs and bars are noisy and prevent conversation beyond those very close to each other, thus limiting group participation to ostensive gestures, looks and glances. That does not mean that a larger community is not suggested by going out, and indeed, this is part of its genius: the throng of activity on and off the dance floor suggests a larger, abstract performance through the staging of many smaller, personal performances, which, in their individual journeys towards liquidity and a loss of control suggest a collective experience. Thus a general social imaginary of being a student is actuated by many families performing together. When Kingdom closed down for refurbishments, many first and second years told me how much they missed Monday nights there, and how important the experience had been for them. Why? 'Because everyone was there.' It felt like 'the whole of Uni was all around you', even though, of course this community was little more than a series of brief face engagements. As discussed in Chapter Six, this link between personal experience and the idea of a wider community is the key contribution of youth culture, specifically going out, to student culture.

The performance does not end with bed, of course. Going out *never* ends as all performances, almost without exception, are enthusiastically documented in great detail by students (and, often, night club promoters), primarily through digital cameras, but also through mobile phones, which record and send SMS texts, images and videos. Indeed a particularly messy performance is often restructured in the next few days as photographs are uploaded and tagged on Facebook. Not only does this allow for performances to be disseminated and discussed, but also organises memories when structure has been lost to liquidity. Facebook thus resolves the tension between objectivity and liquidity. The experiential effects of messy bingeing are restructured and remembered online, objectified, which allows the performances to fulfil their role as the locus of student identity. Thus, the arc of the night is restored to the memory of its performers, and presented to its audience, (which is, primarily, themselves). The ubiquity of cameras on the night ensure that nothing is lost to drink-dulled memory, everything is recorded and recycled and lived again. This is most often seen in the common practice of uploading every single photo taken on a night out to Facebook, not just the good ones, but every photo, even those where the flash didn't go off, or someone got in shot and obscured the view. This *verité* tactic is both a time-saving compromise (it is quicker to upload

all the data rather than select photos) and also a purposeful representation of the sheer messiness of the night.

These performances, in their preparation, actuation and recording have all the properties of Noyes' (1995) description of the ways in which group identity is imagined by a social network: repetition, formalisation and consensus. The engagement of students in the performance of going out is remarkable and extensive; going out is simply the performance that defines student life. This is not because it is performed by all students, but because it is the performance that all students agree is central to being a student, whether they agree it *should be* central to that identity or not. This introduces the next section: which argues that participation in going out is in fact obligatory, not voluntary.

5.4 Obligatory kicks

Because of the social imaginary generated by going out the night-time economy becomes what the Fairy Godmother suggested it was during Intro Week: the only site for the making and maintenance of acquaintances. This is also the result of the cultural evolution of student culture discussed in 6.2, which suggests that going out (as an activity developed and supported by the interface of youth culture with the night-time economy) has slowly enveloped, subsumed and intensified traditional student pleasures and activities, and as a result has consolidated all social activity outside of formal education into one activity. This recognises the traditionality of being a student, for, 'going out' is, in many ways a traditional student pursuit, especially when broken up into the pleasures and activities that going out implies, from getting drunk, chanting and speaking in slang through to singing together, dancing, wearing fancy dress, kissing and flirtation. The codification, reification and intensification of going out as a unitary performance in and of itself is a development of the last twenty-five years, and a product of the contextualising narratives, from expansion to subsumption, discussed in Chapter Two.

The present discussion will focus on the suggestion that interaction with the night-time economy amounts to the extent of the mainstream student habitus of studentland outside formal education, by discussing the exchange of social capital as per Bourdieu (Jenkins, 2002). Noyes' (1995) concept of the social imaginary creating group identity is also relevant to this explanatory mechanism, because I have interpreted going out as being both a means of exchanging social capital *and* a performance that generates the social imaginary of the social network. This diminishes the distinction between what is real and what is imagined, accommodating media theory, which, indeed, I rely on extensively in Chapter Seven. Facebook is thus seen as both a representation and an intensification of this.

The journey from objectification defines the borderlands of the imaginary and the capital that is exchanged there. Because making friends *is* making places, friendship lies between the home and the nightclub. The social network grows and cements itself in the journey towards liquidity, which equips the student with skills, confidence and experience, and forms the 'memories' that enable young people to engage with popular discourse on university experience. Participation also trains the student in the advanced pleasures of emergent adulthood. In Sheffield at least, if a student is not willing to 'go out' then a student forfeits their full exchange value on the social field. This is not an exercise in distinguishing between minority and majority cultures, for the culture that engages in going out is diverse and composed of various sexualities, ethnicities and classes: everyone who has been touched by the supple and persistent massage/message of youth consumerism.

The best example of this from my fieldwork comes from the student phrase, 'being good at life'. This is often said in relation to the sensibility of loss discussed in Chapter Four. When comparing themselves to students who were successful at their studies, or when deciding to go out rather than work, students have commented 'at least I'm good at life' or 'we're good at life instead'. The definition of 'life' is of course interaction with the night-time economy, and the implication is that students who do not choose to immerse themselves in this world are not properly alive. Of course there are many reasons why students may not go out (typically personal choice, cultural background or religious belief). As a result of this choice, however, they are not afforded the same social potential as others claim. They simply do not exist as 'students' in the *general* sense of the word.

There is no better way to completely kill a nascent acquaintance relationship then to answer the ubiquitous student question, 'Did you go out last night?' with 'I don't go out', or even worse 'I don't like going out, I prefer working.' Such answers are effectively saying 'I am not an adult who plays', or 'I don't belong here'. It is perfectly acceptable to say 'I had to work,' or 'I stayed in and watched a DVD,' for those answers maintain the fundamental dichotomy of in and out. Because making friends is making places, admitting to not liking going out is tantamount to saying, 'I don't want to have a social connection with you.' I spoke to one student (not from a minority) who, on the first weekend in halls, declined an invitation to go out, saying they didn't like to do that sort of thing. As a consequence he overheard the people around him telling others that he was 'a bit quiet'. As a result many people didn't get to know him at home. And because making friends is making places he didn't properly and fully exist as a student. This phenomenon is commented on in the literature on youth by Winlow and Hall (2006, p. 89):

> Leisure personas appear to be attributed with considerably more significance than other dimensions of life... who [young people] were, it appeared, was who they were on a weekend, away from the pressure and mundanity of work. On weekends they could be with their 'real' friends

rather than the acquaintances at work to whom they presented a one-dimensional, instrumental and rather unsociable person.

The temporal distinctions which Winlow and Hall make in respect to the working week and the weekend do not, however, exist in student life, as student mobility and the economic competition of the night-time economy described in 4.3.1 ensure that the work and play clocks are not temporally distinct (aside from, of course, during the Work Festivals described in 4.3.2). In the analogy presented in Chapter Four, groups of students cross the divide from the church to the nightclub everyday of the week and ask the next day: 'Did you go out last night?'. This lack of temporal distinction between the work and play clocks provokes a visualisation of my suggestion that interaction with the night-time economy amounts to the extent of the mainstream student habitus outside formal education. This visualisation remaps Bourdieu's (1984) diagram of taste along the same cartographic principles that Fiske (1992, p. 30) proposed when he described the 'shadow cultural economy' of fandom. The night-time economy becomes, in effect, the black market of education, a related social field totally distinct in its concerns. The work clock, speaking to individuals, organises the white market in the official spaces of the university, from the student's desk to the lecture hall, while the play clock, speaking to groups, organises the black market in the spaces of the night-time economy. This further explains students' love of the IC, the only 'stock exchange', a porous work space, open to the values of both the white and black market.

The dominance of the black market affects the performance of social capital in the white market. Only time and the subversions of Work Festivals help obviate the pressures of work-based friendships, which come into their own during the third year, when a student has begun to unlearn the rules of university. Work friendships are covertly competitive, a problem intensified in the expanded, monetised environment of HE. Group work does not always help, as it underlines competencies and students resent having to carry underperforming competitors. More importantly, however, work-based acquaintance relationships are riven with a certain sense of embarrassment, a sense, that relationships made at work do not have the same 'honesty' and 'meaning' as those attained by going out. This is partly because they are compared to the powerful bonds resulting from the subsumption of the individual to the family that is evoked by the deep involvement of 'the team that lives and drinks together' (see 5.5), but it is also connected to the central issue of 'authenticity', which, as mediated by alcohol, is fully explored in 7.2. Essentially, students believe they are not engaging their full selves in the white market of work: adults who play cannot exist there alone. Although work acquaintances can develop into the deep friendships akin to the 'true relationships' that Giddens and Beck describe, achieving this *without the involvement of going out* is a lengthy process, and one that is often unimaginable.

My fieldwork confirmed that 'the "going out" personas of friends were... at the forefront of assessments on friendships' (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 54). In other words, the black market projects its values onto the process of acquaintance making, *even if the students aren't engaged in the process of going out.* This is so for acquaintances made at work, and especially so for acquaintances who met through, for example, a society. This is best understood by understanding the 'journey from objectification to liquidity' discussed in 5.3 as beginning whenever students meet. For the terms of objectification, which going out eventually dissolves, are the terms of youth consumerism itself. Going out and the night-time economy infiltrate relationships which have nothing, ostensively, to do with going out.

Students are thus involved in 'a constant style test, where failure impacts heavily on the psychological security of a self that constructs its identity and achieves its status in consumption' (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 87). Outside of their families, and to some extent within them, students are implicated in an enforced process of assessment and *judgement*, whether engaging with the night-time economy, meeting in the classroom, or around campus. This is largely non-verbal, tacit, and thrives in the interplay of image, costume and style. While unconscious and habitual it was occasionally vocalised in interview, one student commenting that, 'the hardest people to meet are into the same things as you... you both kind of you know... look at each other.' Making and maintaining acquaintances is an exercise in coding and decoding the complicated layers of youth culture, heavy with distinction and taste, manifesting themselves in many different ways, from sport to music.

As discussed in 5.1, the night-time economy cements relationships through going out by dissolving objectification. The obvious step for many students engaged in acquaintance-making, even those made according to the work clock, is to take them into the black market of the night. Actually engaging in the night-time economy with acquaintances is never straightforward however, for to embark on the journey towards liquidity a student must first intensify objectification, simply because the night-time economy stratifies its provision of stages. Selecting what to do becomes an objectifying exercise of identity-making, which leaves students in a double bind, on the one hand, they must engage with the black market in order to legitimate relationships, but on the other hand the act of engagement is an act of stratification. As discussed in 4.3.1 student culture has developed nights that minimise these objectifications and hasten the processes of liquidity. Thus, many students will maintain that there is no art to making friends at all: 'you just go out, have a drink, have a laugh', when in fact this apparent ease is the result of a complex cultural evolution. For example, some students nights are specifically designed to neutralise the 'style test' of youth culture, by encouraging, for example, the wearing of fancy dress, the classic means for non-family groups such as societies to go out together. As discussed in Chapter Seven, such nights, indeed all nights that emphasise liquidity, do not banish stratification: they disguise it, dressing objectification in costume, and hiding competition underneath consumption.

5.5 Family fortunes

The family, in its sublimation of identity to the small peer-group, can also be understood as a form of protection against the savageries of the black market. By engaging in the night-time economy with the family, the student can avoid the difficulties presented by the possibilities of friendship in studentland. Since a family is a group of students who live and play together, and the night-time economy is structured around interaction via friendship groups, this is where mobile, residential students have a distinct advantage over students who live at home, who are effectively denied the advantages of 'protected trading' in the black market that the family provide. In terms of social capital, the family can thus be interpreted as a bank, into which students deposit their social capital at the beginning of university, cashing in quick via the proximity of room allocation, the merit of gender and the frenzied dictates of the play clock in Intro Week and the first term. In return the family keeps their capital safe, protecting it from the sometimes exhausting and alienating process of exchanging cultural capital in studentland, and only gambling it as a group. This bank retains deposits of social capital until at least the end of the second year, when it may release it via the process of unlearning the rules, or intensify it depending on the family's housing biography. Obviously this has some implication for the way that acquaintances are made, as the individual cedes some of their sovereignty, and individuality to the family. This has five notable consequences.

Firstly, it solidifies the attractions of the family in contrast to a world of precarious acquaintance relationships. Because a family lives and plays together this only has the effect of increasing the importance of the play clock as a means of regulating a student's social life; as a consequence, the central territory of going out increases its dominance. Secondly, it encourages or intensifies the journey from objectification to liquidity that describes the performance of going out. Many interviewees shared the sentiments of the student who commented:

> I just feel as if I'm really like myself with everyone I live with, I can go out and be really stupid or... and it doesn't matter if I'm ridiculous or whatever... because no one is judging you I suppose.

In this context 'ridiculous' means to behave inappropriately via the consumption of alcohol along the journey from objectification to liquidity which sees adults who play willingly infantilize themselves. The family thus enables the playful adult to become the playful infant, supporting and encouraging the journey to liquidity. This is polarizing group behaviour (Abrams *et al.*, 1990), classic peer group binge-drinking behaviour (Engineer *et al.*, 2003) and an analogue for the ceding of identity to the family. Indeed, being a member of a family is also a defence against the consequences of liquidity in that it allows students to lose control, make fools of themselves and behave in (to use the student term) 'completely unacceptable' ways

to each other without consequence or redress. Because the social capital is 'in the bank', offence cannot be caused in families.

Thirdly, this makes acquaintances who are valuable (or perceived as such) difficult to deal with in the context of 'going out' as they require 'acceptable behaviour'. It is fine to treat a stranger, or group of strangers 'unacceptably', but not an acquaintance worth cultivating. Because making friends is making places, seeing an acquaintance out of their context is often taken as an opportunity to strengthen the relationship. Meeting such an acquaintance will thus necessitate both students to break off from their families in order to speak to each other outside of the performance. Of course students may actually organise to go out with acquaintances, but this will never occur as a consequence of the weekly ticking of the play clock, but rather for a less-regular purpose (such as a society or subject social event). Many students, however, never feel the need to cement acquaintances with anyone beyond their family in the night-time economy, which is, of course, the path of least resistance.

Fourthly, it turns going out into a form of group play whereby families are set in competition against each other. This has profound effects on the friendliness of students and the way they communicate with each other socially, by effectively transferring individual responsibility to the family.

The fifth consequence of 'banking' social capital in the family occurs as a result of the other four consequences, which all encourage a form of aggressive speculation in the cultural capital of liquidity, which, in any case, is highly valued in studentland due to the efforts made to negate the cultural capital of objectification. As a result the behaviours encouraged by the cultural capital of liquidity predominate in the black market of education. This has not gone unnoticed by students, who constantly discuss and rate each others' performance in these markets. Indeed, this capital has its own name, which is used to describe both the code of discourse it represents, and the terms of the 'rules of engagement' it supports: 'banter'. I recorded this term sporadically at the beginning of my fieldwork in 2005, its use gradually intensified and was ubiquitous by 2006/2007. A student's aptitude in banter corresponds to their desirability and renown in the black market. In other words, it is the students' own term for the cultural capital that assists in the journey towards liquidity, and can be compared to 'cool', a long established term for the cultural capital of objectivity. Bodily and economic capital are also valued, of course, but 'giving good banter' is essential; it is both knowing how to deliver a good time, and the act of having a good time.

As a form of cultural capital, banter is complicated to dissect, but is best thought of as the discourse of liquidity. It is thus performative and harbours many of the features of Bakhtin's (1968) carnivalesque, especially in its disregard for authority, its preoccupation with all things bodily, and its fascination with the earthy and the

base. It lacks, however, any utopian sense of a repressed class united by their common humanity, and is instead, intrinsically competitive. It is the language of adult who play-fights, indeed, it represents play as combat. As such it is heavily mediated, especially in advertisements that celebrate the cultural capital of liquidity. Compare, for example, alcohol advertisements that support the cultural capital of objectivity, like the high-art ice-cool conceptualism of *Absolut* vodka or the exotic beautiful party people of *Bacardi* to the brands that emphasise liquidity, such as the pranking lads of *WKD Original Vodka* or the '*Lambrini* ladies' enjoying themselves at the expense of men (Szmigin *et al.*, 2008).

Banter is getting what you want with a wink and a cheeky, knowing smile on your face. It values loss of control over poise, and gratification over reserve. It is quick-witted but not in a waspish epicene manner, rather in a daring, physical sense that is 'disruptive of settled expectations' (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p. 148). Banter thrills in sexual competition, delights in others' shame, and relishes reducing the human to its basic desires. In terms of pleasure, it thus validates the bodily thrills of *jouissance* and mocks the discrimination and taste of *plaisir*. Like Bakhtin's carnivalesque banter gorges on excess. It is thus the language of consumption that accompanies binge-drinking and the buy-one-get-one-free offers of the night-time economy. Banter doesn't care about ideas, feelings or principles, indeed, at base, *it doesn't care*, and nor should it have to, of course, as the team are playing together and their social capital is in the bank.

Banter has culturally evolved from aggressive and often misogynistic 'having a laugh' masculine play cultures (Borman, 1988) and is connected to football culture, where chants project 'an image of the archetypal alpha-male' (Luhrs, 2007, p. 203). While some female families may not engage in internal banter to the extent that male families do, some engagement is obligatory, with 'socially successful' families significantly speculating in its capital. All students will engage with banter when going out in the black market of 'life'; as the language of liquidity, it is also the language of flirtation and desire, of violence, dissolution and orgasm. When filming costumes at the Union I asked a student who she was dressed as, and in reply she almost kissed my camera lens and responded, 'a slut', on a film she knew I was taking as fieldwork (she had just asked me). When women engage in the cultural capital of liquidity they willingly entertain male projections of sexuality in an attempt to conquer them (literally a 'one-upmanship'). 'When are we going to shag?' said a female student to a male, 'I've got a girlfriend now', he said in reply. 'It's all right,' she said, 'let's shag now,' as she dry-humped his leg. This is the call-and-response of banter, a double bluff with reality, I may be a slut, but at the same time, it's *my decision* to be a slut, I'm empowered. As such it explains the willing commodification of female sexuality and identity in the consumer palaces of the night, because, of course, women *know* they are being commodified, women *want* to be commodified (Power, 2009).

The resounding difference between the American student anthropologies and my own ethnography of Sheffield students arises from this market in banter. Moffatt (1989) insists on the primacy of 'friendliness' to undergraduate life. In Sheffield, aside from, perhaps, Intro Week and the first few weeks of term, friendliness is a secondary characteristic. Social capital is in the bank and so laughing at those who are not your friend is a common activity. In the takeaway shops after a night out there are often insults traded between parties, all in the name of banter. When I started my fieldwork I was startled by the rough and tumble of the Union, the jostle and the sneer of the streets, the persistent chanting, the calling and screaming. Groups would stand and point, chant 'Who are you?, Who are you? Who are you?' to anyone who appeared out of the ordinary.[11]

A common practice, upon seeing a group of students take photos of each other in the night-time economy, is to disrupt their photo by jumping inside the frame. Liquidity attempts to dissolve boundaries, and thus banter knows no caution. *Have it!* The black market is unregulated, a free market, where everyone and everything is fair game and up for being used. For its St. Patrick Day celebrations in 2009 Embrace brought in caged dwarves to throw gold coins into the crowd (Hunter, 2009). Nightclubs are exempt from moral interrogation and questioning, as this event illustrates:

> Pornstar feat. Ron Jeremy! The #1 Porn Star of All Time!!! Wow! He IS a living legend & one of the finest swordsman there is... Dress up in your best pornstar outfit. Onstage game of prowess!! Come prepared!! Can you out schlong the schlong king!?! Ladies are you ready!?!? It's going to be one CRAZY night! Mondays are best at Bedlam! Woop! Woop! £1 Sambuca, Tequila, Wild Shots, £1 Vodka Mixer, £1 K2 Alcopops, £1 Salitos K2 Bottles, £1.50 Fosters, Double Vodka Mixer, £1.80 Alcopops (VK).[12]

In this environment, everything is a performance, nothing matters, nothing is real and anything is a potential tool to manipulate in the performance arc. Step up, get on the game, hustle: 'Do you want to share a taxi back?' asked two students who, at the first opportunity leap out and runaway, laughing, without paying. Another student actually got in an unattended taxi and drove it off. *Have it!* All performing the Hustle with their families, a giant, choreographed, disco of banter.

Saying 'no', getting angry or violent results in losing, for these are the times of your life, and you should be in on the joke. There is thus an inheritance from the long-standing tradition of student non-violence (Chatterton, 1999), although there are signs this is changing. Part of this is due to expansion, and the infiltration of the lower class habitus of violence and fortitude mixed with night-time leisure (Winlow and Hall, 2006). The aggressive, almost fevered speculation in the cultural capital of

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[11] A friend pointed out to me that they might as well be chanting, 'Who am I? Who am I? Who am I?'.
[12] From a flyer entitled 'Bedlam Pornstar End of Term Party Ron Jeremy Live PA' held on 10/03/08.

liquidity, however, places this at some tension. The student habitus is no longer immune to violence, there are occasional fights amongst students, assaults which sometimes lead to arrests. I have, myself, been menaced in the course of my fieldwork, in the Union, when a student once threatened to 'bottle me'. The incident was resolved, and was composed of much bluster (I was not, of course, totally innocent). I was, however, struck at how quickly the student resorted to threats.

When students describe trading in the liquidity markets via banter they use adjectives such as 'inappropriate', 'ridiculous' or 'shameful' behaviour. All are an ironic recognition that students are playing without censure, that they are fulfilling the expectations of the habitus in the free market of the night. Indeed, I was once puzzled by the many thousands of students who listed their 'Relationship' information on Facebook as 'Whatever I can get', even when they were already in a successful and committed relationship. 'Whatever I can get' was actually being used to signify an attitude to life; the hustler who's up for anything as long as the price is right. In interview, students agreed that the phrase encapsulated an acceptance of the values of commodification, some found this distasteful, but many embraced it: 'Absolutely. I'm in it to win it'.

Such values should not, of course, be surprising, and are a result of historical processes which have seen humans become valued 'solely for their performance, their contribution to the performance of the group or the organisation, rather than their intrinsic worth as persons' (Ball, 2004, p. 14). Performativity and competition segue into the subsumption of society to capital; De Zengotita's (2005) 'flattered selves' and the global media are not far behind. As above, in the expanded white market of higher education, so below, in the black market of liquidity. Furthermore, because banter is situated in the *performance* of going out, it is excused from reality. This is the mechanism which justifies the 'completely inappropriate behaviour' and illustrates something of a contradiction: how can banter be performed and also represent a reality which makes its participants believe they are 'winning at life'. Has life simply become a performance, or is this a conclusion arising from the perspective of the 'performance paradigm' (Honko, 2000) that this thesis has been written from? In the next section I explore some of the consequences of this dominance of liquidity.

5.6 Soft clock

Students are intimately familiar with the 'deterritorialization of public and private' (Sheller and Urry, 2006), and the cocooning role of technology, such as mp3 players, mobile phones and even hoodies in shaping a privatised space within the public. They have grown up with the internet and computer games which infiltrate and inform the 'real world' and *vice versa*. Since making friends is also making places,

which is, in itself, a performance, studentland is malleable and permeable, awash with the cultural capital of liquidity. This is most obviously noted in the dislocation of domesticity that sees the family 'at home' in the night-time economy, and banter being exchanged in the family residence. This process begins in *Intro Week* and is embedded into the idiocultures that result from mobility, part of the very fabric of Sheffield. Similarly, the physical environment of the night-time economy also appears in student's homes. This is most obvious in the nightclub flyers that both litter university areas and also decorate the walls of student residences, alongside the obligatory photos of friends enjoying themselves in bars and clubs. Some students proudly showed me their 'trophy collections', composed of glasses, bottles, and even plastic menus, 'liberated' from the night. As the Facebook group 'I Like Taking 'Souveniors' [sic] To Remember My Nights Out' ably illustrates,

> Whether it be a house party, pub, bar, or club sometimes I like to keep a momento to remember the fun had. Is it stealing? I don't think so, the legal owner of the object should infact be flattered that the new illegal owner was having such a good time that he/she required a souvenior. Post on the wall objects you have acquired after a particularly eventful night so we can all bask in your brilliance.

Such an attitude explains, to some extent, Selwyn's (2008) habitus of undergraduate petty theft and crime. As a student commented to me, 'it's weird, if you weren't a student and wanted a garden chair you wouldn't steal one you'd go out and buy one, wouldn't you?'. This has traditional elements to it, for students have long engaged in sign-stealing, a practice observed in other student ethnographies (1989, p. 80), and mentioned in historical sources:

> Street signs, silverware, towels, and even bedding from hotels and dining-cars are considered fair plunder and often adorn the rooms in school and college dormitories or serve more practical purposes.
>
> (Johnson, 1912, p. 82)

Non-essential road-works in student areas of Sheffield are scheduled to the summer partly to avoid the significant cost of 'street furniture' theft. The bollard is a familiar, totemic symbol of student life for good reason. One of the families I followed through university were obsessed with sign-stealing and accumulated an incredible amount: in their own estimation, upwards of 200, many of which were very large. This required organisation and an internal sense of competition that motivated them; two of the members carried screw-drivers on themselves at all times. One commented: 'you begin to see the world in a different way, working out, how can I nick that? Like how can I get up there?'. This was justified by their

interest in *parkour*, the vogue sport of 'street-running'.[13] In studentland, possible manipulations are everywhere, as they were for the 'night climbers' of Cambridge, who published recordings of their exploits as far back as 1899 (Reeve, 1977).
Such practices are particularly prone to the easy metaphors of 'rites of passage', of liminal students growing up appropriating the symbols of an adult world. In a similar way, adolescent males engaged in rites of passage have long been noted to make loud, boisterous noise (Lévi-Strauss, 1969; Dundes, 1989; Siporin, 1994). While students roar and shout together, at home and in the scripted areas of the night-time economy, I would argue this is less a sign of coming of age, and more part of the performance of going out. One need only visit West Street on a Saturday night to see 'old men' engaged in both the battle-cries of objectification and the bantering chirp of liquidity. Rites of passage theory *sounds good*, it's poetic, metaphoric simplicity appeals to a human need to find a deep, essentialist quality to the structure of life. Yet this ultimately mystifies and limits, dresses students in liminal loincloths and asks nothing. Instead, I am attempting to demonstrate student culture's grounding in identifiable processes, such as the relationship of architecture to the formation of student families or the influence of the work and play clocks in student life. Thus, I hope to demonstrate its potential for change.

Certainly, of all the spaces students inhabit, the streets are most free from authority, which only contributes to their malleability. Yet it puzzled me how some students would choose to behave in a destructive or anti-social manner, only when they are engaged in going out. At first I thought this was down to the disinhibitory influence of alcohol, but again, I questioned that as another example of an essentialist interpretation. When accompanying a group of students on a night out, one of them ripped a street sign screwed to the wall and presented it to the crowd, who all roared their approval. Many would never consider doing such an act themselves, indeed many disapproved of it later, yet at that time, all of them engaged in the cheering. The students were not intoxicated, but fully engaged with claiming the territory; spatially and mentally they were engaged in the performance of going out. As with any arc there is a sense of inevitability. Close to the beginning of their night, they were defining and objectifying the group. For the performance to continue, it was essential that all the students roared their assent, which they did. In contrast the students who, at the end of their performances, tip over bins or walk over cars, are engaging in infantile liquidity, or, as students term it, 'shits and giggles'. Both of these environmental manipulations access the central territory of student identity, the adult who plays without fear of censure. This is not the liminal awakening of a youth in transition to adulthood, but the logical consequences of the black market of the night-time economy, of students making friends and making places, and in so doing performing their identity.

[13] Some of this thesis was written under the flat-roof of the old NATCECT building on Shearwood Road where I often had to politely request that free-runners cease practicing their 'mad skillz' above me.

As family is cemented and acquaintances are made, a student's identity enters the landscape of roads, routes, takeaways and spots on the pavement. Because 'Sheffield is so compact you can walk anywhere in minutes...' (ACS, 2007, p. 33), for many students the city does not exist beyond the university, town centre, the Union, the residences and the routes between them. In other words the extent of identification amounts to the extent of the making friends making places process supported by the black market, which accurately represents the physical extent of the habitus. Some of the students I interviewed were ashamed of not having visited the Peak District, accessible from student areas even by foot. The countryside is not part of the malleable world of liquidity, its rock faces and vantage points are out of bounds.

Just as I am finishing this text, a dark tower has prophetically risen in the centre of this studentland. This 'landmark new building' has been built as part of the 'Vision 2012' in which the Union tasked itself with becoming 'the outstanding student led organisation in the UK' (University of Sheffield Union of Students, 2008, p. 2). As I argue in Chapter Six, 'visions' are ontological necessities for competition in the subsumed free-market of HE. This black tower is gilded with gold (black and gold are the University's colours) and touched by tubes of neon that glow in the dark. I have always thought the Union ugly and unimpressive, but now, towards the end of writing this thesis it has transformed itself in accordance with its importance to the lives of undergraduates. This tower is a minaret, calling prospective students to Sheffield, and, once they are here to the pleasures of its bars and nightclubs.

The Union, is, without doubt a remarkable business. It has won the 'Best Students' Union in the UK' award from Club Mirror twice, once in 2004 and again 2007, was voted the best Union by the *Virgin Alternative Guide*, won HE Students' Union of the Year in 2008 at the first NUS awards ceremony and was joint first Union in the Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey 2009. Finally, in 2010 it was awarded *Gold* by the Students' Union Evaluation Initiative. In 2007/2008, its events attracted 241,000 customers while the Union's annual report spoke of

> A major refurbishment of our Foundry and Fusion late night venue was important in defending our market share in an increasingly challenging environment. After ten years of events held six nights a week, the investment has revived the venue.
>
> (University of Sheffield Union of Students, 2008, p. 3)

Here is the financial grist that underpins the Union's stunning success: a decade of drinking. For bars make the biggest contribution to the profits: in 2007/2008, total gross income was £10,994,098, with the majority (£8,313,746) coming from Commercial Services. Of this, £4,302,419 came from the bars, which generated clean profits of £1,065,466. These remarkable figures anchor the messy liquidity of student life in Sheffield. Here are the rocks that students swim above, the hard currency of banter that built the black and gold minaret at the centre of the sticky pool.

5.7 Unlearning the rules

Harriet Swain's 79 articles in *The Guardian* on 'How to be a Student' make it very clear that doing so successfully is a matter of impressing people, social climbing and following a set of rules, such as 'Keep the friends you like and dump the rest' (2007). Swain writes from a long tradition that revels in the fine arts of distinction, and yet, like many of these guides, they attempt to diminish the role of experience in favour of social construction. In fact, mobile students do not need any help in learning the rules of student culture, for the rules *are* the process of family formation, the making friends and making places that begins on the first day of Intro Week. There are no reflexive decisions, not time to play the game, since the experience is so absorbing and the play clock so manic and insistent. By Christmas many students will have signed binding contracts on houses in the private sector, contracts which will effectively dictate their family's contours for the next two years.

Giddens (1991, p. 112) speaks of 'fateful moments', when individuals 'take decisions that are particularly consequential for their ambitions, or more general for their future lives'. Going to university is given as an example of a fateful moment (p. 113) and yet, going to university, is, as argued, an obligation for many Sheffield students (Trow, 2005). The most important decision in a student's life is actually made by the computers that decide room allocation. Indeed, the only 'fateful moment' in Sheffield is when students decide who to live with in preparation for the third year, which, for many students is the first structural opportunity to put into action what they have so far 'unlearnt'. At root this is a process of cultural stratification, which typically implies 'unlearning to be a family thrown together by computer allocation' and 'forming a family based on mutual shared leisure interests'.[14] While the majority of families remain together for the full three years, a significant minority break-up or splinter in some way, especially if one or more of their members develops a strong interest in a single aspect of student culture.

'Unlearning the rules' can be mapped onto the black market and the performance of going out. Students, as they go through university, especially through the second year and into the third place greater emphasis on objectification and less on liquidity. This does not change the central importance of the black market, just the nature and pace of speculation within it. By the third year there is, on the whole, less intense trading in banter and less actual involvement with bingeing and more taste, discrimination and objectification in performing going out. Cultural and social activity is thus more defined, from what a student does, to whom they go out with, to where they go. Making friends is still making places, but there is less need to make friends and places at the same relentless pace. Social networks have solidified, and, in some cases are beginning to atrophy, as some students feel they

[14] The exception are students in Medicine, Engineering and, to some extent Modern Languages, who, at some point, typically reform their families to match their subject of study. This is due to the synching of their work clocks, which are longer than the standard three years of an undergraduate degree.

have made 'poor decisions regarding friends', as one student put it (not seeing that her decision was actually made by the accident of room allocation).

Unlearning the rules does not replace the black market at the heart of student life, it merely indicates more involvement in the cultural capital of objectivity rather than liquidity. The resultant cultural stratification is, in many cases, a refinement of a student's involvement in the night-time economy. By differentiating themselves from the fevered liquidity speculation of the first and second years, older students and older families are, in fact, learning how to be better consumers of the night-time economy, preparing, in a way for the emergent adulthood of graduation. This is a process that occurs in other aspects of HE:

> Students in higher education, the hoped-for 'consumer elite' of the future and so the part of the nation promising the most benefits to the consumer society in the years to come, undergo three to six years of training, compulsory in all but name in the skills and usages of borrowing money and living on credit.
>
> (Bauman, 2007, p. 79)

Therefore, the black market still dominates the habitus, despite the belief amongst older students that they have left their 'old ways behind'. This is akin to the cultural stratification that Winlow and Hall (2006, p. 188) describe as 'bricolage', which

> ...allows the individual to regard conformity as something that others are trapped in and the self has avoided, yet at the heart of conformity is this dynamic individualist illusion itself.

Many third year students will thus distinguish themselves negatively from first and second years, especially in their emphasis on binge-drinking liquidity, while their own participation or *reliance* on the night-time economy as a black market has in fact intensified in a process of sophistication. Thus elites are formed within the student body via the cultural capital of objectification, which is akin to the typical means by which the night-time economy stratifies itself, seen, for example in the distinctions of music taste (MacRae, 2004). At university these elites become ordered according to the dictates of the weekly play clock. There is a 'Tuesday Club mafia', an 'indie mafia' and various other groups attached to other nightclubs and bars, all forming 'inner sanctums', as per Sparkes *et al.* (2007).

Of the minority of students that form new families in the third year, not all, by any means, join one of these elite groups. Some, for example, may form a family outside the auspices of the night-time economy, via a particular belief, sexuality or club, such as Christianity or walking. Such groups do not have the same standing as those that are validated by the black market. There are also a significant amount of students who never unlearn the rules, and remain active, aggressive participants in

the banter that dominates the first and second years. Such groups are typically members of sport clubs. As discussed in Chapter Seven, if any students can lay claim to dominating the central territory of being a student, it is those who dominate the sports scene.

The unique qualities of the mobile student experience are located in the arbitrary relation of room allocation and architecture to friendship. In their limitations students ultimately forge deep and lasting relationships that often defy the objectifications of the night-time economy. It is these friendships, made by the essentially random algorithms of a computer programme and forged in nightclubs that equip a student for the rest of their life, or at least well into emergent adulthood, bridging the gap between their 'real family' at home and the individuality of emergent adulthood. This is not always the case, of course. While three of the four families I followed from Sorby kept their 'social capital' in the bank throughout the three years of their degrees, one family did split up in the third year, and I knew of others that did. One of the reasons for this breakup was, undoubtedly, because the students had realised they were 'different people' and wanted 'different things', especially in their experience of the night. The family divided, in the words of Winlow and Hall, because 'the fashionable seek other fashionable individuals to maximise their status and increase the value of their hedonistic 'lifestyle returns' (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 188). There are some indications, discussed in Chapter Six, that such instances of instrumental individuation are becoming more common as the replacement of the hall system by the student Village has made profound changes to the way that families are formed (see Chapter Six).

In any case, there is an echo of the subjunctive potential of education in students' repeated reliance on their families, and their weekly wading in the black muck of the night-time economy. Going out with the family, is, in a way, a means of holding the sheer potential optionality of student life at arms length. It is a way of avoiding having to unlearn the rules, and thus pass into the objectifications of emergent adulthood, of avoiding having to take sides in the cool wars and the endless distinctions of taste, of having to eat the countless sweet, nutritious carrots that consumer capitalism plants in endless 'organic' rows. Yet at the same time, it is the sweetest, juiciest carrot of them all, hedonistic, bodily pleasure, and the night-time economy, wants students to suck on that particular vegetable for as long as possible. This is a double bind, for there are so many options, so many choices in student life that the central territory of going out becomes a means of having a united culture in the face of diversity. This is the pull of the social imaginary, of what Noyes terms 'consensus'.

Youth consumerism has long recognised and marketed the subjunctive, symbolic potential of the dreamspace that nightclubbing creates. For students this potential is tangible, despite, or even because of the aggressive jousting of banter and the sheer bodily violence of binge-drinking. For every pool of vomit there is a kiss.

Memories *are* made. Going out, although riven with individualism, instrumentalism and consumerism, also presents itself as the solution to these problems, for it imagines community, indeed suggests it in the 'pressing throng' (Bakhtin, 1968, p. 255). While Bourdieu may inform my interpretation of the capital exchanges that occur in the night-time economy, this process is only *incentified* through Noyes. For while there are no strangers in student life, as everyone has the shared identity of being 'one who studies', this potential unity, this subjunctive group potential, is only ever *experienced as a felt state*, in performance. This is the vision that the black, gold and neon minaret of the Union calls its students to.

5.8 Here be monsters

None of this, of course, is to say that there are not alternative imaginaries, but rather to suggest that all of them fall within the shadow of the minaret. For students the pervasive and persuasive depth of this shadow is both a cause for celebration and also the root of the sensibility of loss over the subjunctive potential of education: a coming to terms with the prominence claimed by the night-time economy in student life. It is both grim admission of its limitations in terms of education and identity, and joyous, boozy trickster-like celebration of those very limitations: *Fuck it maaaaan!* Either way, going out becomes the only way to become a student, even if a student never goes out. This was brought home in a discussion I had with a group of students who rejected the whole concept of the alcohol culture. Some were abstainers, but all of them, including those who did, on occasion go out, felt an extreme amount of pressure from attempting to 'stand in opposition' to the night-time economy. An older woman was present for the discussion, she had been a student in the 1950s. I asked her what role alcohol played in her experience of university, and she replied none, she couldn't remember alcohol ever featuring in either her friends or her time at university. This may not have been unusual for a female student in the 1950s, yet there was a silence when she said this, as all the contemporary students, including myself came to terms with the gulf that had just opened up in the room. Someone commented that such a state of affairs would be 'unimaginable' today.

Yet there are many outsiders to this model, all of which, I contend, have been deprived of representation by the dominance of the black market, as witnessed in Somer Finlay and Richard Jenkins' (2008) report on the sense of community at the University which discusses 'significant numbers of students' who 'feel excluded from a sense of community' (p. 3).[15] There are references to nights 'overcome by alcoholism and infantile regression' and 'a masculinised culture of abuse and drinking' (p. 17). As I have argued, while it is possible to avoid this culture, students

[15] Although it is noted that much of this exclusion derives from the Village, which is addressed in 6.1.

must define themselves in opposition to it. While some form families according to specialist interests, ethnic or religious lines, others never do. One student from an ethnic and religious minority led what she described as a double life, engaging in the liquidity markets in Sheffield, and hiding this from her real family at home. She imagined she'd meet others from her ethnic minority at University, but never did, so she joined the mainstream of student culture. *If you can't beat them...*

For the students who do not question the primacy of the black market, diversity means negotiating other binaries than out and in. Prime amongst them is the north/side divide (Ford, 2007), which, contextualised in Sheffield, privileges northerners claiming stereotypical 'tough' values (Beal, 2009). There is also the private/state school binary, much commented on by students ('Coming to Sheffield meant that I met people who'd gone to a private school'). Indeed it is a credit to the unitary nature of Sheffield student culture that the University is notable for its lack of a *Rah* scene.[16] The point is, for the majority of students, the role of the night-time economy in student life is not questioned. It is simply accepted as reality.

Aside from divided and disparate individuals and minorities, there are two large blocks of students in Sheffield that do not engage, or 'trade' on this black market. Both to some extent, constitute the cultural other: international students, and students that attend Hallam. Before discussing these groups, however, I shall briefly consider non-student 'locals', with whom there is little friction, especially in comparison to the *passim* references to student-bashing found in the student press of the 1970s and 1980s. This is partly because of expansion and the pervasive infiltration of 'lifelong education' (Allen and Ainley, 2010) and partly because the night-time economy has consolidated going out at the centre of many people's lives, whether they are in education or not (Winlow and Hall, 2006). There is thus more general cultural agreement between students and non-students. In some cases the objectifications of youth culture has made it impossible to tell a student from a local, and in situations where it would be obvious, the stratifications of the night-time economy keep groups apart. Fancy dress, for example, does not occur at the weekend in town, when the local population are themselves 'out drinking'.

International students, especially those from Asia, are well known for not engaging with the night-time economy. As a result they are invisible to the mainstream of home students and have their own habitus. The 2007 International Students' Cultural Evening illustrates this well. One of the biggest events in the University's calendar, at which all the student national societies compete in a variety show, putting on skits, dances and musical performances. In 2007 the evening fell on St. Patrick's Day, which created the wonderful metaphor of the Octagon, the largest University venue, full of International students performing what amounted to a traditional student revue-style show, with very few Home students in attendance.

[16] Rah being the name by which wealthy, privately educated students are known, so-called from the sound of their accents (for an account of the 'Rah scene' at Newcastle University see Hatersley, 2010).

They were outside, weaving in and out of the Union bars, wearing foam promotional Guinness hats and occasionally vomiting pints of the black stuff into the gutter.

Sheffield has a long history of accepting international students, and indeed, a reasonable record of integration. Increased fees in the 1970s brought a series of protests from both Home and International students which prompted what was, until 2009, the longest protest Sheffield students had engaged in. Discussing this with Home students nowadays, all have said that it is 'inconceivable' that anyone would wish to protest on behalf of International students: 'we're paying, so why shouldn't they?'. Such comments reveal how the social imaginary of being a student at Sheffield has shifted from the lecture hall to the nightclub. Indeed, international students, especially Asian students have commented that socialising with Home students is an either or situation. A student from Hong Kong told me that two things happen to students who go to Sheffield, 'either they stay in room and are lonely and always on the internet, or they go out allllll the time and there are many photos on Facebook. They change but they say they don't change. They are drinking and getting drunk all the time.' I never encountered many international students, especially Asian students from this second group.

While the bulk of undergraduate international students are from Asia, Sheffield also sends and receives more short-term Erasmus students than any other UK HEI and is in the top-twenty participating HEIs in Europe (Stevenson, 2008). These students are not as alienated by the black market as many international students, as they share an orientation to the Western youth culture that permeates it. However, all of the four Erasmus students I interviewed couldn't understand the elements of going out that relate to the cultural capital of liquidity. As one commented 'Why the chanting? Why standing and dancing on chairs? Not in France'. Others were perplexed by fancy dress: 'It is so strange! Everyday I see costumes in Bar One. I don't like it, Halloween is okey, but every night? It is not special, it is stupid and very sad. Especially because you are so boring in the day.' Two suggested that the prevalence of costumes was related to the lack of carnival in English life, while a German student put it down to English 'eccentricity'. He was particularly struck by the aggressiveness of the drinking culture, the excess in the street, and the absence of socialising around lectures.

The other group of outsider students are those that attend Hallam. There is very little crossover between the two groups in the day, aside from the annual competitive 'Varsity' sports competition. During the night, however, these students meet in the black market, especially in the streets as nightclubs are largely segregated (in that Hallam students do not tend to visit the Union and *vice versa*, and the nightclubs in town hold 'Hallam' or 'Sheff Uni' events on different nights in order to cater to each group). As these groups of students only meet either in sports competitions or in the streets and interstices of the black market, interaction

between the two is strongly characterised by the cultural capital of liquidity, or aggressive banter, typically in the form of football-style chants:

> During Freshers' Week my flat mates and I attended the community bar crawl. We reached the pub (alcohol prevents me from knowing which one) to chants of 'I'd rather go to Hallam than Ranmoor' and subsequently joined in the halls banter. 'Hallam or Uni' is often the opening line to a stranger on a night out and the direction of the conversation is dictated by the answer they provide.
>
> (Purkis, 2008)

As indicated, anti-Hallam chanting is quite intimately connected to the student cycle, often heard in Intro Week and during the first term, sung on bar crawls and in nightclubs, taught by second and third year students to first years, who are being initiated into the aggressive cultural capital of liquidity. This aggression does, on occasion, spill over into physical violence at Varsity events (Golledge and Hunter, 2009) and also in the night-time economy, when banter becomes 'ostensive' (Anderson, 2010). Friction between the Universities is largely performative, and centred on chanting, which comments on four subjects: sexuality, intelligence, wealth and arrogance. Sheffield students, particularly women, are portrayed as ugly, sexually inexperienced and arrogant, while Hallam students (particularly women), are portrayed as sexually attractive but permissive, stupid and poor.

The chants themselves are a sub-genre[17] of *blason-populaire*, a genre that 'present[s] a stereotype of a particular group or region' (Widdowson, 1981, p. 36). Joanne Luhrs (née Green) describe chants as 'An expression of one group's outlook and self-image, often involving the implied simultaneous detraction and/or detriment of another (rival) group' (Green and Widdowson, 2003, p. 9). Obviously repetitious and highly formalised, chants are eminently suitable for examination under Noyes' framework, as indeed Noyes points out herself (1995, p. 469). Hallam has an integrative chant, *Boing Boing Sheffield Hallam*, while Sheffield has a series of integrative chants for each hall of residence. I collected one divisive Hallam chant, *I'd rather be a poly than a cunt*, which is typically countered by Sheffield students with *I'd rather be a cunt than unemployed.* In contrast I collected fifteen examples of divisive chants by University students, a selection of which are listed here:

> I go somewhere you don't go!
> Uni! Uni!
> I go somewhere you don't go!
> Uni-ver-si-ty!

[17] In fact, 'football chants' have been described as a 'sub-genre' of *blason populaire* (Luhrs, 2007, p. 14), which perhaps makes university chants a sub-sub-genre.

Give us an E... E!
Give us an E... E!
Give us an E... E!
What do you get?
Into Hallam!

Your dad works for my dad,
La la, la la,
Your dad works for my dad,
La la la la la.[18]

Today was going to be the day when you finally learn your ABC,
By now, you should have somehow found a way to count up to three,
I don't believe that anybody could be as dumb as you,
But you are from Hallam.

Your sister is your mother,
Your father is your brother,
You're fucking one another,
The Hallam family,
Der der der der,
[clap clap]
The Hallam family.

This is, of course, a folk commentary on the differential status of both Universities resulting from Hallam's origin as a pre-1992 polytechnic, although, many Sheffield students are not aware of this and simply believe that they are 'the better university'. This stratification explains the preponderance of anti-Hallam chants as all are adaptations of those used at football matches (Luhrs, 2007). Because fans typically taunt each other over their lack of intelligence, wealth and morality, sexual or otherwise (Widdowson, 1981; Luhrs, 2007), there are more chants on these subjects for Sheffield students to adapt. Due to the perceived stratification of the HE system, Hallam students are thus left with a poverty of response. This perfectly demonstrates the highly competitive, instrumental and banter-sodden atmosphere of HE, where students are desperate for identity and find it in the aggressive liquidity markets at the expense of any sense of solidarity, despite the decision both HEIs have made to 'work together where possible and appropriate' (Vice-Chancellor's Office, 2009, p. 2).

When challenged on this, students explain that they are performing, and should not be taken seriously. In other words: 'it's just banter'. As I have attempted to demonstrate in this chapter however, 'banter' is not merely a verbal form, but is

[18] According to personal communication from Patrick Ainley, also chanted by University of Nottingham students to their counterparts at Nottingham Trent University.

closely tied to the movement of cultural and social capital. One student, for example, described female Hallam students as 'dirty skanks', fit only to be 'thrown to the side of the road'. While there is a ribald carnivalesque humour to this, a banter that is 'intended' for integrating the family, there is also a deep sense of instrumentalism that effects how that student relates to both women, and his fellow students. It is indicative of a social identity formed in the black market and consequently awash with liquidity. The most worrying aspect, of course, is that few of the students I spoke to were overly concerned about this sort of statement, often laughing it off with a trickster-like cackle. *This is play, and, at the end of the day, we are all adults, and of course I wouldn't throw a Hallam skank to the side of the road... she's still a Hallam skank though.* Of course, it's this last turn and wink that indicates the trickster belief that underneath the cloak of play, they are, in fact, discoursing the 'truth'. This search for 'raw reality', or the attempt, at least, to touch it, is encoded deep within banter and liquidity, and is discussed in Chapter Seven.

In conclusion, this chapter has modelled the social and spatial relations of students at the University as they pass through the time cycle discussed in Chapter Four. In so doing, it explicitly considered the role of space in both forming and being shaped by these relationships. The family was introduced as a metaphor for those friends at the centre of a student's social network, shaped by residence and repeated journeys into the night-time economy (5.1). Facebook was explored as both a networking and representational tool (5.2) and the term acquaintance adopted for those friends, potential or otherwise, who did not live with or regularly accompanied the family in performing the arc of going out (5.3). I then adapted Bourdieu (1984) via Fiske's (1992) 'shadow economy of fandom' to propose the 'black market' as a metaphor for the obligatory exchange of capital in the night-time economy, occurring alongside the simultaneous performance of going out (5.4).

I then discussed how families, by sublimating, to some extent, the individual to the group are a means of 'banking' social capital, which legitimates a hedonistic and aggressive speculation in banter, the cultural capital of liquidity (5.5). This, in turn, transforms physical space, making it malleable. I then drew attention to the Union's role in establishing this market, using the metaphors of tower and minaret to indicate its central role and influence (5.6). I then discussed 'unlearning the rules of university' as a form of stratification itself and attempted to understand the power of the social imaginary that going out creates. In doing so I suggested that this explained the sensibility of loss concerning the subjunctive potential of education in its subsumption in the night-time economy (5.7). Finally I discussed how this model changes as a student passes through the university cycle and considered those students to whom it does not apply, and yet, paradoxically, cannot escape it (5.8). The next chapter will develop this explanatory model by considering the impact of the Village. It will then contextualise both the Village and the model of student culture suggested in Chapters Four and Five within the postwar cultural evolution of student life in Sheffield.

6 All change

In Chapters Four and Five I discussed student life in Sheffield from a temporal and spatial perspective. This chapter explores the historical context. In the first half (6.1) I discuss the postwar development of what, in Chapter Five, I termed the 'black market' of student culture. This considers the cultural evolution of going out and carnivalesque behaviour in Sheffield over three stages, from the HEI-centred culture (6.1.1), through a 1960–1990 'heterogeneous' period (6.1.2) to the final, contemporary homogenous period of student culture (6.1.3). The second half of the chapter (6.2) understands the development of the Village as a reaction to this cultural evolution. It begins by describing the old hall communities and their relation to the night-time economy and wider issues of studentification. The impact of the Village on the model of student life I presented in Chapters Four and Five is explained, by considering the relationship of the Village environment to the process of family formation and analysing the Village's security provisions in relation to the night-time economy. The chapter thus explores change and consistency in the way student culture has organised and experienced pleasure.

6.1 I thought this was meant to be about folklore?

This section discusses the historical development of the 'black market' in Sheffield, the shadow cultural economy of education, which sees participation in the night-time economy as obligatory. Three distinct periods are identified, with change occurring as a consequence of HE expansion and the general narrative of subsumption. The first two periods were discussed in the literature review, which described a student/HEI-orientated elite culture that lasted until the establishment of a youth orientated culture in the 1960s. I suggest that a third period, dating from the 1990s, saw the institutions of the University reform themselves around student desire as a response to the marketisation of HE. In terms of evolution, it sees student culture develop in a heterogeneous, 'hybrid' manner from the first to the second stage, and in a homogeneous, instrumental manner from the second to the third. In terms of traditional culture, my thesis holds that student life at the University was polyphonic in the first and second stages, and monophonic in the third, which saw its aesthetic forms become consolidated into one: going out.

This conclusion was reached via research in the University Archives, in particular the personal memories solicited by Helen Mathers for her histories of the University (2005) and Union (2007) as well as archived files from the Union, Rag Office, the Vice-Chancellor's office, and that of the Registrar. Interviews were conducted with Peter and Alison Slater, who provided memories of Tapton and

University culture in the early 1970s that were supported and expanded by their extensive papers. Longstanding members of staff were also interviewed, in particular the porters, some of whom had worked with students in University residences from the early 1980s. The student press, in its fortnightly documentation of student life from the late 1940s to the present day, provided a key resource. Indeed, the three periods I outlined above are easily identified by reading the papers, issue by issue and seeing, first the rise of youth culture in the late 1950s, its establishment in the 1960s, its political consequences in the 1970s, its turn towards the night-time economy in the 1980s and the 'going out' culture that has dominated from the 1990s on.

If one thing is clear from the press, it is that student culture develops at pace from the 1960s on. While the concerns of the late 1940s and 1950s are consistent, those of the early 1970s are not those of the mid or late 1970s and utterly out of place by the 1980s. This is explained by the accelerating influence of youth consumer capitalism (as per Chapter Two) which heightens Cowley and Waller's (1979, p. 377) suggestion that 'traditions age rapidly in the student world' due to the 'telescoping of social processes' brought on by the world-making of mobility and the annual action of matriculation and graduation. For contemporary students, the past, or the oral past at least, never extended beyond contact with older students. This made those who had the authority to appeal to 'tradition' powerful, as there were no voices to counter them. When second years presented Tapton culture to incoming first years they were always mindful to emphasise the duty, not to follow, but to uphold tradition. Therefore, leadership, hierarchy and structures that bridge the inherent dynamism of telescoping are essential in encouraging not just tradition, but cultural continuity. Without them, there is less opportunity for what Giddens (1990, p. 38) describes as the 'inertia of habit' or what Glassie (1995, p. 409) contrastingly terms 'volitional, temporal action'.

Either way, student tradition is dependent on structures to bridge the rapid passing of the years, such as the JCR or Union, and is thus easily influenced by individuals in hierarchies. Consequently traditions change: Tapton had a rivalry with Ranmoor, for example, which was presented by JCRs as longstanding, and, indeed there is evidence to suggest it dates back to at least 1998,[1] yet it was remembered as Tapton/Halifax in the early 1970s. In Tapton, the JCR did not know where many of their traditions came from; while the Hall Ball and occasional formal dinners were inherited from the inception of the hall (and involved staff and the SCR), soft traditions such as the 'Grinder Run' had a less certain provenance. This occurred in formal meals when the JCR President would shout 'Grinder Run!' and the JCR and anyone who wished to accompany them would run off to the local pub (The Grindstone), down a drink, and each 'steal' a trophy to return with (which, one year,

[1] Warden's letter to Tapton residents September 1999.

memorably included a Jack Russell).[2] It was timeless to the students, which only cemented their sense of belonging. According to the JCR President, the 'Grinder Run' only went as far back as '2001 or 2002 when the President introduced it. But only I know that'.

If structures that bridge the years are lost or diminished, which, as a consequence of expansion, they were (see, for example, 6.2 for discussion of the 1980s/90s reduction of older students in hall), then the importance of extra-student sources of authority are emphasised in transmitting culture and even 'traditional behaviour'. The media can be interpreted as an example of this (as explored in 4.1), as are the institutions of the University, especially in the third phase of my model, when they become self-interested actors in an internal market formed around satisfying the desires of, and thus accessing the capital of, students. As discussed in 6.1.3, the Union is no longer shaped by students, but has become a body run by permanent staff ('Commercial Services') that seeks to shape student culture by acting 'in its best interests'.

Before the advent of these new hierarchies and structures, student culture developed in a 'Lamarckian' fashion, 'whereby the positive attributes engendered by adaptation to new environments [were] reproduced and multiplied voluntarily' (Stross, 1999, p. 264–265). Year after year students would move up residential, Union and activity/society hierarchies and voluntarily reproduce, or indeed change, the culture of the year before. The involvement of professionals changed the temporal nature of these cultures and increased their efficiency in terms of attracting and directing capital. In terms of evolution, student culture thus became less Lamarckian and more Freudian, in that it has stripped itself down to desire. This is the mechanism by which expansion can best be understood as encouraging the monophonic third stage. As the student body expanded in the monetised 1990s, it was seen as a large market with perceived desires, which were met by centralised hierarchies that developed outside of student temporality. Thus the central territory expanded to dominate the landscape, swamped by the liquid pleasures of going out. This movement is demonstrated in detail in 6.1.1, 6.1.2 and 6.1.3.

Throughout this thesis I implicitly and explicitly criticise the contemporary dominance of these pleasures. My argument could be challenged as moralistic, restrictive and unnecessary: we are all pleasure-seeking animals, let students have their fun. Yet any criticism must appreciate the difference between the first transition of student culture (1960s) and the second (1990s). As discussed in the literature review, the first transition is an analogue for Fiske's (1989b) 'productive pleasures', in that the search for bodily pleasure led to the resistant pleasures of the counter-culture. This is clearly demonstrated by the student press, which begins the 1960s revelling in beatniks and beer and the 1970s in rent strikes and sit-ins. The second transition, however, is a typical Gramscian hegemonic incorporation of

[2] A good example of the malleable world students inhabit.

these very same bodily pleasures via a manipulation of student tradition, as demonstrated in 6.1.1, 6.1.2 and 6.1.3. The brilliance of this incorporation of pleasure lies in its maintenance of the first transition's representational strategies for its entitlement in the face of restriction (see for example Winlow and Hall, 2006; Szmigin *et al.*, 2008). Claiming pleasure is seen as an act of self-determination, of choosing life, of making memories, a carnivalesque celebration of the potential of the body, both social and physical. Some argue that this was politically misguided even in the 1960s (Winlow and Hall, 2006), I only emphasise that by the 1990s its political dimension had long been subsumed to capital.

However, focusing on the similarities and differences between the 1960s and 1990s obscures an older connection between students, pleasure and the carnivalesque. In the first HEI-elite period, elements of the student calendar were organised according to the structure of the carnivalesque as described by Bakhtin: reversals, hierarchical protests and utopian familiarity. Within the yearly student calendar, carnivalesque behaviour was licensed by both the University and citizens of Sheffield, and largely occurred during the annual Rag celebrations, but also at Graduation and other festivals. In some way, it was this annual license to engage in pleasure that was interpreted as an perennial entitlement to pleasure in the transition to the second period, and, in turn, was configured into a complete 'service culture of pleasure' by the transition to the third. The story of the carnivalesque as it passes through these three stages is, to some extent, the story of student culture in Sheffield, for it results in the consolidation of 'going out' that now dominates the contemporary university.

As a narrative of consolidation, it can be told in many different ways in reference to many different subjects: singing, chanting, fancy dress and clothing, drinking, dancing, pranking, speaking and sexual intercourse, even through politics and sports. All are traditional student activities at Sheffield, and all are documented extensively in the student histories and archives. Their consolidation into going out was never an inevitable conclusion, although it has occurred in the wider context of youth culture and the growth of the night-time economy, and is thus part of a much broader social development. Nevertheless, the following three sections are an attempt to understand student culture at Sheffield in terms of this narrative, an interpretation composed of many historical dialogues taking place now and taking place then (Gadamer, 1975, 1976).

6.1.1 We be Sheffield Hokey Pokey!

The HEI-centred culture is marked by the small size of its social network. Between 1926 and 1940, there were between 830 and 887 students a year, and the University 'was so small that the office staff of Western Bank could greet each student by name'

and the Union President knew 85% of the students (Mathers, 2005, p. 126). The 1935/1936 Union diary printed the home address of the VC and important faculty members, should a student urgently need to get in touch. Such a small network facilitated a hierarchy of subjects, where engineering and medical students 'formed a sort of student aristocracy' along with the rugby club, all of which exhibited high participation in the 'unofficial' student culture of drinking, dancing, pranking, theatre and the cinema (Gumpent, 1978, p. 49).

During this period there are many stories surrounding convocations and degree ceremonies, of dunking in fountains, shouting, singing, and playing 'The animals went in two by two' as academic staff processed. This annual, ritual behaviour disappeared after Graduation moved to the City Hall in 1947 (Mathers, 2005). The University grew in size during the 1950s, and although a bar opened in the Union in 1949, many students still gathered in local pubs. Drinking is certainly a traditional student activity, where mobility (McEwan, 2009) has helped mitigate what Measham and Brain (2005, p. 275) have termed the 'traditional norms and values which might have served to limit excessive consumption' long before these 'traditional norms' vanished elsewhere. Despite this, student drinking was limited to licensed, public houses, and, largely, to males. While the UK student culture may have 'ritualized drinking to excess' it was certainly limited to 'upper-class young men' (Griffin *et al.*, 2009, p. 460). Disorder was the exception, witnessed by the extensive, involved and very infrequent coverage it receives in the student press.

Dancing, certainly, in pre-1960s Sheffield was not always associated with alcohol, doubtlessly because excessive consumption would not make a male student an attractive partner for a female. Alcohol was only infrequently allowed at University dances, which were timetabled with agreement with faculty until before the war. Women, always in the minority at the University until the latter part of the twentieth century, speak of having their dance cards 'full', as they would be booked for dances in Firth Hall and at Saturday night informal 'hops' in Mappin Hall. In Sheffield student culture, it became culturally unacceptable to hold a popular dance[3] without alcohol in the mid to late 1960s, a development that paralleled the rise of pop music, and dancing on one's own or in a group, rather than by holding someone else. Indeed, it is worth bearing in mind that dancing did not become an activity a student could engage in on their own until youth culture heightened distinctions of taste in the late 1950s/1960s as a consequence of the stratifications developed in dialogue with the music industry. The 'slow dance', which encouraged sexually orientated touching retained a place in student discos until the 1990s.

Fascinatingly, there are many mentions of the Varsity 'yell' in connection with dances and University events. This was doubtless connected to sports, but was also

[3] Popular dances were designed to appeal to all, while dances such as jazz, salsa or ballroom appealed to enthusiasts.

led by the Union President at dances.[4] This was still being given in the early 1960s, when dances would end with the singing of the University song, and, finally, the yell. I found it recorded in the Union Diary for 1935/1936 as

> VARSITY YELL!
>
> Ikamelayo!————————————Gee!
> Ikamelayo!————————————Gee!
> Ikamelayo!————————————Gee!
> Ah————————————————
> Disce Doce; Disce Doce!
> Ushta Ushta Oy!
> We be Sheffield Hokey Pokey!
> Hip Hip Hip Hooray!
> Sheffield, Sheffield,
> S-h-e-f-f-i-e-l-d-,
> SHEFFIELD!!!

Unlike the contemporary divisive chants recorded in 6.2, this yell has a purely integrative function, doubtless because the size of the student body was small enough to imagine itself as the *totality* of the student experience, S-h-e-f-f-i-e-l-d, itself. Despite the connection to sport and masculinity (this is the *Varsity* yell), which may suggest some continuity of tradition with the later hall of residence football-esque chants, I found no reference to the Yell in the 1970s and 1980s, where I can only assume chanting did not occur.[5] However, the Yell's similar use (at night, at dances and University events) ably demonstrates the longstanding connection between student identity and carnivalesque behaviour.

Performances that integrated the institution with the city of Sheffield characterised the first stage of elite-HEI student culture, in contrast to the contemporary situation, where some of the impetus for the building of Village grew out of extricating students from the city (see 6.2). While there has never been regular fraternisation amongst locals and students, the University, and by association, students, had a close relationship with the city, one which grew out of the significant support, financially and publically, that the local population had contributed towards its foundation. As early as 1921, the University attempted to establish what it termed the 'University Week', to 'establish and promote a University Public Spirit and to 'promote University Publicity among the citizens of Sheffield making 'THE WEEK a leading event of the city life'.[6] This venture would soon became a failure, however, and it was the student's 'Rag', which began a year earlier in 1920, that would be enthusiastically taken up by the local population. This

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[4] See, for example, *Darts*, No. 35, 17th October 1947, p. 2.
[5] Perhaps group screaming only occurs during periods of cultural homogeneity.
[6] From the Archives, US/SUN/3/149 (17/01/1921).

would see the city develop a carnivalesque relationship with students, granting them a festival license to misbehave, prank and indulge in public pleasure in return for providing citizens with spectacle, entertainment and a donation to local charity.

Such a 'Rag' model was adopted across University towns throughout the 1920s,[7] with all developing their own local traditions. It is redolent of, not only an elite HEI-orientated student life, but an elite orientated civic life. Student rags were criticised by socialists as unfair, of students 'being allowed to have liberty to do things that ordinary people would be told they were hooligans if they did' (Saltzman, 1994, p. 106). As a 1930s Sheffield student remembered,

> We got on & off the trams collecting & almost had the freedom of the city. The fellows always seemed to head for Swizz (or Snigg) Hill. There was a Brewery at the bottom where free beer was dished out. They enjoyed the day! For the girls free Bovril at the Tec. in Leopold St.

As a public event, the Sheffield rag was an official celebration that underlined an ideal social order. Its carnivalesque elements were ordained by both the University and the city, the VC inspecting the parade and the Lord Mayor ceremoniously buying the first copy of *Twikker*, the Sheffield 'Rag Mag', which contained a huge amount of advertising from local businesses. A regional celebration, with collections taking place as far afield as Doncaster and Derby, Rag day itself was a grand affair:

6–8am	Early morning collections through the city
10am	Great Rag Procession from Western Bank into city
11.15am	Tour of districts by decorated lorries
2.30pm	Boat race on Don
3pm	Students through city, Balloon race, Fireworks *etc.*
10pm	Grand Torch-lit Procession from Western Bank to Barker's Pool[8]

The year before, 1948, in *Twikker*, the Lord Mayor wrote a letter addressed to the people of Sheffield:

> It is now within our tradition that the University students of Sheffield shall make an annual effort, by means of their Rag day, for the aid of some great human service. May their altruism continue to receive the support of our citizens.

The references to breaking the law, sex, drinking and offending magistrates in *Twikker* were rarely censored by the University, and were only banned on one year

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[7] '[F]or many years after the First World War a rag was held on 'Poppy Day', the Saturday nearest to Armistice Day, to collect money for Earl Haig's Fund' (Reeve, 1977, p. 43–44).

[8] Taken from *Rag News*, dated 29/10/1949.

(1949). Evident in surviving letters and many of the solicited memories of the Sheffield Rag, going back to the 1920s and 1930s and appearing throughout, are references to 'letting rip' and 'letting go'. The disposition of the Rag may have been free, but it was also, however, performative, in that the students *worked* for their donations[9] making fools of themselves, or others in the process. It is clear this annual carnivalesque performance, had as much to do with the student's own view of themselves as the city's view of the University. As Kugelmass (1994, p. 197) comments, 'the license is as much a chance to misbehave as it is to display oneself or one's vision of the world, to occupy public attention... the most precious of human goods.' Students had yet to frighten authority with their potential power, as they would in the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, one student remembers letting off 'a bag of flour backed up by a firework... stuffed up the scaffolding pipe' at a mounted policeman, with 'good humoured' consequences.

Although there was some participation from non-students, especially as Mischief Night[10] often fell in Rag week, the Union and, specifically, the Rag Committee usually took responsibility and liability for all events across the town. Because Rag occurred three to five weeks into the autumn term, there was also a sense of initiation for first year students. The range and depth of pranks veered from organised stunts to opportunistic acts of vandalism. In one year, 1958, across late October and early November, the following stunts are recorded in the Archives:

- ⇒ Ten taxis were ordered for the warden at Crewe Hall.[11]
- ⇒ Four signs were removed from streets and roads.
- ⇒ A bench was placed on top of a bus shelter.
- ⇒ 475 plants were destroyed in the beds behind the Medicine Faculty.
- ⇒ Garden and cellar gates were removed on Ecclesall Road.
- ⇒ A student climbed up the bus 'Information Board'.
- ⇒ Sections of two university halls of residence were whitewashed.
- ⇒ A tower on the main university building was painted by Manchester Rag.
- ⇒ The Queen Victoria monument in Endcliffe Park was painted green.
- ⇒ The boats around the lake in Crookes Valley Park were found moored on the central island, apart from one left in the university quadrangle.
- ⇒ In London, Sheffield students placed red dye in the fountain at Piccadilly Circus and a fake ticking bomb in the toilets of Selfridges.
- ⇒ On the road to Baslow, a group of dental students staged a murder.

This last incident was taken seriously, provoked a police hunt and made the front page of the local paper, the *Sheffield Star*. Once the hoax was revealed, a condemnation of sorts was printed, but the article finished by commenting on two

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[9] See, for example *Darts*, No. 37, 14/11/1947, letters page.
[10] An annual pranking festival typically celebrated on the 4th of November.
[11] The Registrar's notes read, 'The last order (taken by Mr. Marshall at depot) was ordered by a WOMAN who was obviously with other women + seemed to be putting her hand over mouthpiece at intervals'.

Guy Fawkes found swinging from the flagpoles of the newspaper's offices: 'If the Rag Committee would like them back they can have them – provided they pay a ransom into their own fund.' This tolerant, almost affectionate remark is revealing of the extent and depth of the license, even in 1958, when the London events indicate that a national student consciousness was growing. A belief in the validity of the Rag performance remained. Indeed, it is informative that the majority of the archived letters of complaint over student behaviour are concerned with 'beer drinking races', essentially timed, individual pub crawls with limited entrants. Five of these were received in 1951, seven in 1952, one claiming that 'This is not what a University is about'. The VC was still receiving these in 1959, when a complainant bemoaned 'why the fact of becoming a University student should be synonymous with a lowering of moral standards'. A female student came sixth that year, drinking nine half-pints on the course and another in front of the cheering crowds. Ten more complaints were received that year, and more would arrive over the 1960s as the relationship of students to Sheffield began to change.

With hindsight, it is easy to see the approaching culture change. On the 5th of May 1957 the students organised a 'mourning party' following the last 194 tram from Crookes past the University to the terminus, singing the National Anthem and a song entitled 'Death to the Internal Combustion Engine'. The next year a drug reference would appear in *Twikker*, and in October 1959, more than 2,000 students took part in the Sheffield Rag. There were balls at Cutler's Hall, in Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster, a Jazz Carnival at City Hall and a Midnight Film Matinee. At this last event seats were broken,

> ...and even torn out, the proscenium damaged, things thrown at the screen and the whole place littered with filth of every description – flour, peas, potatoes, toilet rolls, beer bottles and so on.

The letter, in the University archives, explained that the cinema was 'accustomed to the usual sort of Rag merrymaking' but had not encountered anything like this before, and had to call in the police. On September 26th 1960, for the first time, Darts published a special 'Welcome to Sheffield!' edition for the new arrivals. The first Freshers of the 1960s had much to look forward to, especially the 'Beatnik Ball' that was held on October 6th, as part of the first ever Intro Week, held before the Rag celebrations. The splendid objectifications of youth culture had arrived in Sheffield, and with them, the liquid pleasures of smashing them up. When, on October 26th 1961, the Rag convened a 'Dawn Patrol' to collect donations wearing pyjamas, its organisers had no idea what they had started.

6.1.2 Wherever the beat is heard

The 1960s began in grey flannelled trousers, sports jackets, shirts and tie, all wrapped up with an 'essential' (Mathers, 2005, p. 234) University scarf. By the end of the decade (after two women were ejected from a physics lecture for wearing trousers in 1965), jeans, Afghan coats, flowery shirts, beads and long hair were 'normal'. Shirts and ties were 'weird' but not forgotten, on the margins where they remained, past the end of the next decade, hiding behind the leather, studs and hair gel, through the 1980s and on into the 1990s where they were reborn in a mediated irony that owed everything and nothing to what had gone before. In terms of cultural evolution, I suggest this movement, from the 1960s to the 1990s, is representative of a period of heterogeneity that student culture experienced in its movement from a traditional, HEI-orientated culture to a youth orientated culture. This movement was not a displacement but rather an 'annual development' that grew with every influx of students and the influences borne from the full width of student mobility. In order to conceive this, I suggest, folkloristic theories of hybridity are relevant.

As a 'conceptual displacement' of creolization (Baron, 2003a, p. 90) hybridity removes the emphasis on diaspora and colonialism found in Roger Abrahams' (1983) seminal work. A hybrid culture is enacted by those who, although without power, aim to establish autonomy, as a result it is an 'insider's culture, defined and expressed beyond the gaze of outsiders', one that remains 'entwined' in the everyday reality of local communities (Baron, 2003b, p. 4). It is characterised by a wide variation and range in language, which is itself a topic of cultural discussion within the community (where innovative use is celebrated), and outside, where it is often stigmatised as 'bad talk' (Abrahams, 2003). Genres are played with, and extensive use is made of both quotation and parody. This is seen in student slang ('the linguistic counterpart of fashion' (Eble, 1996, p. 119), which is closely linked to youth culture. Studies of student slang have indicated its ephemeral, dynamic nature (Hummon, 1994), yet despite the presence of NATCECT in Sheffield, slang use has largely gone unrecorded in favour of other, more traditionally perceived groups. While textualisations have survived in the student press and the papers of Peter & Alison Slater, these do little but confirm the continuing influence of an HEI-elite culture within a dominant youth culture. My suggestion – that student culture develops an homogenous hybrid of elite and youth culture, that gradually orientates itself towards pleasure and the heterogeneity of the black market – can be gradually seen through such textualisations, but with the absence of detailed research, this is best demonstrated via other means.

The following extract from *Darts*[12] is an excellent demonstration of what I mean by a heterogeneous student culture. It describes the attractions of the 'beat scene' yet

[12] No author, 'Darts presents the Sheffield beat scene', *Darts*, Issue 231, 28/11/1963, p. 5.

does so with an elite sensibility, in that it considers youth behaviour in an attempt to address what is 'good for society'. It is one of my favourite quotations from the Sheffield student press:

> At the clubs where the latest groups appear, there is an atmosphere of complete enjoyment. The groups and the audience are free from the stigma of being called immature – they are immature and they enjoy it. Wherever the beat is heard there is a sense of community, a rapport between the groups and the audience, between the stage and floor, which there is not at more traditional concerts. Some observers regard this as unhealthy, they talk in terms of the mass hysteria which greeted Hitler, suggesting that enthusiasm is bad *per se*. This is yet another example of the intellectual stating basic fact and giving it a significance it does not have. Mass hysteria has been the cause of revolutions in Russia and in France, it has made a football club famous and given madmen power. It is foolish to moralise about something which is so much an inherent characteristic of humanity. It is far better that the Beatles, say, should be the centre of such enthusiasm then that no such enthusiasm should exist. As long as Sir Alex Douglas Hume never becomes the object of mass hysteria there is nothing to worry about.

Of course, ironically, politics *would* become the focus of student 'hysteria' over the next two decades, as the group consciousness demonstrated by this piece became aware of its entitlements and collective power. This political awakening placed inordinate importance on the individual's rights; it stressed the self and made the personal political. This did not mean a diet of sex, drugs and rock and roll for all, far from it, rather it implied a 'revolution in the head' (MacDonald, 1994). Desire had been unleashed, and would be marshalled by the progressive liberalisation of the night-time economy. The Rag was a casualty of this as the behaviours it licensed annually in the name of charity were taken over by the weekend rhythms preferred by commerce. The article that the above extract was taken from, for example, was written with the help of two brothers who ran nightclubs in Sheffield, Peter and Geoff Stringfellow. The elder would go on to 'make his name' in the fleshy pleasures of the night-time economy.

Everything made possible by the student Rag, from going wild in costume to public drunkenness would gradually be taken over by business, often businesses run by students or with student involvement (the Union being the classic example). To paraphrase the extract, the beat slowly spread throughout the week, until, by the 1990s, it was heard every night. This economy grew up with students, the ideal consumers of its product due to the structural peculiarities of mobility which *provided* the freedom from censure that was legally *conferred* by the change in students' legal status. This change was first recommended in 1967; by the early 1970s halls of residence in Sheffield were run without restricting a student's right to have

consensual sex or partake in pleasure. The papers of Peter and Alison Slater do not demonstrate, however, a state of liquidity; in fact, they depict a hybrid culture, a hierarchical hall, with a warden, JCR, SCR and various staff, an active press, many committees and 'characters'. While the hall bar was certainly used, alcohol was not consumed outside of it, and was, indeed, still difficult to get hold of. Not always sold at the 'nightclubs' in town, it was restricted to public houses. Likewise, domesticity was not dislocated into the night-time economy (as Chapter Five), and the hall was very much thought of as a self-contained home, a society in miniature, to be managed as such. Corporate life, although not named as such, was still evident.

As a concept, 'leisure' was situated outside the hall, largely at the Union, and 'doing culture' was viewed as 'being part of a wider culture' rather than a 'personal experience'. This emphasis is key to my explanatory mechanism in that the objectifications of aesthetics were still valued over the pursuit of sensation. LPs, for example are regularly feted in *Tapton News* alongside extensive reviews which contextualise them as cultural documents. There is little discussion of how the album made the listener *feel* or *move* their body, as later witnessed in the student music press. In the 1960s and 1970s the self remains tethered to cultural forms and social institutions, although it is obvious that the axis of participation was levelling from the hierarchical orientation of the traditional HEI-centred culture (where students knew their place in a pecking order of subjects) to a personal, horizontal engagement with society.

In the second, heterogeneous phase of student culture this orientation is falling. The self is not yet atomised at the centre of experience, although youth culture is proselytising its new position, a Freud for the masses. The very personal poetry that pervades *Tapton News* is a good example of its ascendance. Yet these poems also read like documents from an alien civilisation: I could not imagine a contemporary student openly publishing verse depicting their feelings to their neighbours. Indeed, when one contemporary Tapton resident drunkenly wrote a blog post on 'feelings' it was swiftly deleted, but not before a friend of his copied and pasted it all over Facebook in an attempt at cut and paste ridicule. This is because in the third, homogenous phase of student culture the inner is relentlessly judged on the appearance of the outer. The objectivities of youth culture have hardened and homogenised the shell, making it completely unacceptable to show weakness, frailty or fragility.

Other elements of contemporary student life are, of course, recognisable in the youth centred culture evident from the 1960s on. While the papers of Peter & Alison Slater demonstrate the heterogeneity of Sheffield students, it was a culture engrossed in claiming its entitlement to pleasure. On October 17th 1970 Darts began to show a topless student 'dolly bird' every week, an unusual decision when juxtaposed with the political causes that filled up the remainder of its pages. By 1973 drugs were part of the Intro Week information, the 'uptight war generation'

had been replaced with 'a cooler more hedonistic one' (Pountain and Robins, 2000, p. 76). Deference to staff decreased, and the University willingly accommodated students and the 'student viewpoint' in fear of aggravating the Union (Mathers, 2007). Drinking 'was a daily event for many' and cannabis and LSD 'easily attainable' if so desired (Mathers, 2005, p. 256). However, there were still many aspects of the pre-1960s HEI-centred culture present. Hall staff, for example, discuss the relative lack of problems they had, cleaners remembering to 'putting a little bleach in the cannabis pot on the windowsill every week' and porters having fond memories of running a monthly 'pub crawl' to show students different areas of Sheffield. Most importantly, the Union had not yet built its nightclubs.

One could write a thesis on the many narratives that describe the transition from this world to the University in 2005, but none are as succinct or as demonstrative as the changing fortunes of the Rag, which also chart the relationship students have with the city of Sheffield. Essentially, as the 1960s pass into the 1970s and 1980s, the Rag declines in importance, its column inches shrink in the student press, dwarfed by the rising importance of Intro Week. In 1967 *Darts*[13] displays the attractions of both, covering Rag over a double page spread ('Nobody wears ordinary clothes so go mad for once and have a laugh') followed by a double-page review of the Freshers' Ball entitled *Psychedelia Hits Union* which proclaimed 'If as Marshall McLuhan says, "the medium is the message" groups like Arthur Brown and Zoot Money represent a new level of communication with their audiovisual acts'. The size of the Rag parade would essentially shrink, year after year, as its profile diminished in the multicoloured light of a national, and international youth culture that was hallucinatory in its appeal and scope.

By 1969 *Darts* coverage of the Rag Parade was much smaller and by 1975 it was only covered once.[14] The local *Sheffield Telegraph* reported 'stunningly unforgettable' floats in 1981 (Mathers, 2005, p. 304) and by 1984 there were complaints about the lack of interest shown in it by *Darts*, which provoked the headline 'Poor Old Rag'.[15] Hall porters reported a complete lack of enthusiasm: 'It became just people sitting on a lorry, in the late 80s... 90s, don't know why it changed. Society has changed'. Indeed, Mathers quotes Paul Blomfield, who joined the Union as a member of staff in 1978, as suggesting that the Rag petered out due to the change in the age of majority, which made the Rag culture of 'being a bit naughty' seem immature (2005, p. 304). While such an interpretation may be valid, it neglects the impact of expansion and forgets that the Rag is a performance, and as a performance, needs an audience.

Effectively, the city of Sheffield withdrew from this role and, as the student body grew and expanded through the 1960s, and into the '70s and '80s, ceased to believe in

[13] *Darts*, Issue 289, 17/10/67, p. 4–7.
[14] *Darts*, Issue 393, 30/10/75, p. 8–9.
[15] See, for example, *Darts*, Issue 521, Issue 521, 1/11/84, p. 7.

the validity of the Rag performance, withdrawing the student's carnivalesque license. To some extent, this was due to the pranks (or, as they were termed, stunts), which were already extreme by the end of the 1950s (see 6.1.1). This can be understood by the terms of escalation, of each year attempting to outdo the last, yet must also be interpreted in line with a growing youth culture, and the beginnings of a national 'student culture', encouraged by participation in the Rag itself. Thus, as HE expands and youth culture begins to gain its own voice, stunts begin to occur in other cities, and especially the capital, London.

It is clear, from the 1960s letters of complaint kept by the offices of the Registrar and the VC that the carnivalesque behaviour of students was wearing thin with the public of Sheffield. In 1965 the Rag is referred to as 'nothing but an excuse for vandalism by 'so-called educated students'. Another complained that 'these students seem to think that once they became part of the "Rag", they receive a license to annoy and harm ordinary people, all in the name of charity'.[16] By the 1980s one participant of the Rag commented that 'we met with opposition and hostility then and I shudder to think what would happen now. You'd all be given ASBOs probably'. For a time, in the heterogeneous 1960s and 1970s, both public license and sufficient levels of student enthusiasm remained to result in some truly spectacular, cunning stunts, that spoke not just to Sheffield but to the growing national student consciousness. This escalation is reminiscent of what Turner (1979, p. 489) terms 'liminoid phenomena':

> Competition emerges in the later liminoid domain; individuals and schools compete for the recognition of a "public" and are regarded as ludic offerings placed for sale on a free market – at least in nascent capitalistic and democratic-liberal societies. Liminoid phenomena, unlike liminal, do not so much invert as subvert quotidian and prestigious structures and symbols.

In October 1967, for example, Sheffield students painted a giant zebra crossing on the M1, the day before it was due to be opened by Barbara Castle. That same year they daubed 'HMS Twikker' in whitewash on the bows of the QEII, and the following year Concorde received similar treatment, before it had even been unveiled. The remnants of a national license can be detected in the letter written to the Chancellor, from HT Fream, Secretary of British Aircraft Corporation Limited, Filton Division: 'While we may privately join in applauding the spirit of adventure which prompted this incident, we consider, for reasons we have given, that the plan was misguided...'.[17]

Over the next decade the public stopped applauding such 'stunts', which corresponded and informed declining student interest, which was intimately related to the expanding student body. The literature on pranks (Moffatt, 1989;

[16] Both quotations taken from US/REG/3/U/3 – RAG – 'Registrars file'.
[17] Dated 22/10/1968 and kept in the University Archives.

Siporin, 1994; Taft, 1994) holds that the size of the folk group is related to the size of the prank, with more elaborate pranks occurring in a smaller communities, where, conversely, more could get involved in the production and dissemination of such activities. In 1980 the M1 stunt was repeated, before being staged again in 1982 on Chapel Walk, like a fading echo. At the same time the cultural emphasis on the self and personal experience, first discussed in relation to the Sheffield beat scene, was accelerating. This would eventually displace the need for a public performance.

When, in October 1966, the VC, Hugh Robson, wrote that the Rag took the form of a carnival 'to offer some entertainment, a distraction to relieve the pain of extracting money',[18] he was partly mistaken, for, even at point, the collecting tins were absent from the Pyjama Jump. This evolved out of the dawn raids described in 6.1.1, officially beginning in 1965, as an event to which students were encouraged to wear their night clothes to the nightclub. Cross-dressing was evident from as early as 1967.[19] The Pyjama Jump would come to dominate the Rag, so that by the 1970s it was 'compulsory' and featured in many of the accounts solicited for the centenary history, many of which discuss casual sex and drinking. While the traditional Rag's fortunes declined, the Pyjama Jump's soared. Indeed, the Jump was presented in the student press as an event of itself, unconnected to the Rag,[20] and increasingly mediated[21] by photo spreads. In 1990, at the nadir of the Rag, the *Sheffield Telegraph* declared Pyjama Jump the largest ticket-only annual event in the world (Mathers, 2005). A Channel Four documentary was made (Schofield, 1995), written and presented by Jon Ronson.

The Pyjama Jump, of course, sprung from the performative carnivalesque student tradition of 'letting oneself go', but it depended on, and was, in some part organised by, the night-time economy. Essentially, students would buy a ticket that would permit entry to all participating nightclubs. The money from ticket sales went towards Rag fundraising, whilst the nightclubs would recoup their lost door fees from alcohol sales: everyone wins, apart from the city of Sheffield which is removed from the equation. The Pyjama Jump is effectively a private, ticketed festival held in the auspices of the night-time economy. The audience is no longer the public, donating to charity in return for student performance, but the students themselves, indulging in the pleasures of the carnivalesque, revelling in their *entitlement* (not license) to 'let rip'.

By the mid 1990s the Pyjama Jump grew to be so popular it became a victim of its own success, judged unsustainable in the eyes of the missing part of its equation: the city of Sheffield. This was not helped by the press which began to print photographs and stories of the inevitable disorder. By 1996, young people were coming to attend from all over the country, ticket sales had reached 20,000, and the

[18] Letter to Roger Lenon, US/REG/3/U/3 – RAG – 'Registrars file'.
[19] *Darts*, Issue 289, 17/10/67, p. 1.
[20] *Darts*, Issue 377, 3/10/74, p. 17.
[21] See, for example, *Darts*, Issue 407, 27/10/76, p. 6–7 and *Darts*, Issue 520, 18/10/84.

Supertram was stopped for safety reasons. In 1997 the constabulary refused to police the event unless the Union paid for it. There was outcry in the student press as the Union refused, and 'single ticket' campaigners ran in elections seeking to bring it back. The last Rag parade took place in 1997, and was not held again, due to lack of interest, from both students and the city. The Rag committee survived as a 'A hardcore of about ten dedicated drinkers'[22] until 2006/2007, when it was 'rebranded' by the Union with the involvement of faith groups and without its carnivalesque emphasis. The Rag thus lives a contemporary afterlife, which sees students 'get involved to improve their CVs' and participate in 'a niche market of challenge events that meets student demand' (Kate Horton Public Relations, 2009, p. 18–19).

6.1.3 The subject-object loop is birthed

The film that Jon Ronson made of the Pyjama Jump is a valuable and important document in the history of student culture at the University of Sheffield, capturing it at the end of its heterogeneous period, as the Union was transforming into a nightclub provider and the night-time economy was solidifying the performance of going out. The featured students reference a system of fees that would soon be out of date ('all those tax-payers, right, who pay our grants, this is what we do with your grant money'), as well as discussing their behaviour in terms of a charitable license ('Well it's for charity... you're actually paying for the night').[23] Yet it also features all of the performances of liquidity that I have observed in my fieldwork. While there is no chanting, there is the singing of lewd marching songs, banter-like roaring and messiness everywhere, fancy dress and dancing in nightclubs. Above all, the students speak of Pyjama Jump as a stage, or a 'night', the 'best night of the year in Sheffield' that serves to cement friends together, 'It was Pyjama Jump that brought it out of everybody... it can bring out the best in people who are normally very shy'. When the interviewer asks the students if they are not concerned about being filmed, one ironically comments, 'Love it, absolutely love it, we want to be able to share our inner feelings'.

As with the article on the beat scene, the film defines a transitional stage of student culture. Suitably, for what will be a hypermediated, internet age, it is a film, and not a written text, and although it documents a remnant of the heterogeneous middle-period, it demonstrates the homogeneity of the coming years, where the black market will establish itself as the only recognised means of exchanging social capital. A student in the film comments: 'You come back in September, term starts in September, and all everyone talks about in September is Pyjama Jump'. When this annual festival was lost, its importance was soaked up by the intensification of

[22] Quotation from an interview with Rag committee members, 2006.
[23] The voiceover later ridicules its participants for not knowing which charity they are drinking for.

the weekly social calendar, initiated by the Union in the early 1990s and in place, both structurally and socially by the year 2000 (Mathers, 2007).

While the Pyjama Jump demonstrates a number of student pleasures coming together in one activity, it does not trace the development of these activities and their gradual slurring into the monophonic, neoliberal pleasure performance that is going out. The stage management of this slurring began in the early 1980s, and is celebrated as a matter of survival in the Union's official history (Mathers, 2007), when Union Officers fought cuts by becoming more commercial. The Octagon indicated the scope of the Union's ambitions. Built in 1983 and co-owned with the University the multi-purpose venue is 'daunting in its size and potential' (Mathers, 2007, p. 64). In 1987 the Union bought the Fox & Duck as an investment, and in the early 1990s held a 'Strategic Review' which decided to fight falling grants and rising debt by becoming 'more luxurious than ever before... to ensure students spent their money there and not elsewhere' (Mathers, 2007, p. 86). Debt, not thrift would become the cornerstone of its approach to 'giving student's what they want'. That is not to say that cheap alcohol was not available, of course. In 1990 the Union ran its first brand-sponsored event, an 'Irish Night' where Guinness was sold for 70p a pint. This was held near, but not quite on, St. Patrick's Day, which would be developed over the 1990s by the night-time economy into an important night in the drinking calendar.

By 1991/92 the Union employed over 300 staff and was treating its students as customers. In 1992 it appointed a Marketing Manager, a key event in the development of the 1990s monophonic student culture, which was overseen by permanent staff in the Union dedicated to 'Commercial Services' and the re-conceptualisation of 'Ents' as a profit generating business. This allowed the Union to plan, and even control its future operations, effectively acting as a structural bridge from heterogeneity to homogeneity. A major refurbishment and expansion was subsequently undertaken in the mid-1990s, as the numbers of students attending Sheffield rose by 50% in the first half of the decade.

These changes were also a reaction to the development of the larger Sheffield night-time economy, which also saw student-orientated establishments such as The Cavendish opening on West Street, an area which had been redeveloped, along with Devonshire Street as a 'scripted pleasure zone', as per the contextualising histories in 2.1.3. In the 1990s nightclubs began running free busses from the halls to the clubs, and back again. Seeing itself in competition with these establishments, the Union invested heavily. In 1994 the profile of club nights begins to rise in the student press, with the size and quality of the advertisements increasing, while pictures of students drinking began to dominate the feature articles. By 2000 the Union was running six club nights a week and had transformed its non-drinking provision into low commitment 'Give It A Go' events.

To accompany this intensification, fancy dress begins to regularly appear in relation to the weekly round of clubs, untethered from annual events such as Halloween, Christmas or Rag. This is at first evident in the photographs concerned with the Union's LGBT night, Climax,[24] and then on other nights, such as Pop Tarts, first advertised as a '70s night'. On the 5th May 2000, Issue 30 of the Steel Press carries a 'School Disco' listing, complete with instructions on what to do ('Get down the Oxfam shop and get kitted out in a nice grey outfit'), by Issue 35 on the 10th November, students going out in school uniform are present in a feature on chat-up lines.[25] As national pub chains began to target the student market, and I began my fieldwork, the Union intensified its night-time provision further, commenting in its 2006 Annual Report that 'We are increasingly dependent on our entertainments programme to drive footfall' (University of Sheffield Union of Students, 2006, p. 101).

Those elements of student culture that cannot be monetised have fallen from prominence. Drugs certainly play a much smaller role in the Union then they did in the past, where they feature in many memories of the 1970s and even 1980s (Mathers, 2007). The biggest absence, however, is politics. Union General Meetings ended in 1991/1992 while the Union's AGM was eventually abandoned in 2006/2007, due, essentially to lack of interest.[26] Party politics were dropped from University elections and candidates won on the basis of having a 'clever slogan' (Mathers, 2007, p. 104). The official history of the Union comments that it became 'increasingly difficult to get students with limited time to attend demonstrations' (p. 106), while neglecting to question the efforts the Union took to get those very same students on to its own dance floors. This certainly illustrates the movement of 'symbolic significance' from the 'world of work, politics and community to the world of leisure' (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 7).

Of course, demonstrations still occurred, and were still reported in the press. Some were poorly attended (Jones, 2008) while others used the tactics of occupation to achieve disproportionate impact, such as the 2009 protest against the University's involvement in Palestine, which inspired a backlash: 'the student-as-consumer theory in action: they had paid for the lecture, and they were not going to let anyone rob them of it' (Robinson, 2009b). A student wrote into Darts complaining that the 'consumerist outlooks, engendered by the advent of tuition fees, render us ideologically incapable of dealing with bigger issues' (Browse, 2010). Even when a consumer issue presented itself, however, such as University food prices, there were isolated complaints but no communal action.

Contemporary students possess little social capital (in Putnam's sense (2000)) or civic engagement, which relies on hierarchies to maintain the tradition of participation. As discussed in 6.2, residential hierarchies such as hall JCRs have

[24] See, for example *Steel Press*, Issue 27, 25/02/00.
[25] The night-time economy developed the concept of a school disco 'for adults' in London in late 1999 (Stuart, 2002).
[26] In 1995, in order to ensure the AGM was quorate, the President got her friends to dress up as chickens and heard students into the Octagon (Mathers, 2007).

been dismantled by the University and Union and their replacements (AECs and CDCs) denied space in the Village because 'it wouldn't be offering the same service to everyone'. A commentator in the student press even suggested that students should not protest at all, 'because we're students' and protesting would be 'entirely predictable' (Robinson, 2008). Of the protests that did occur, all were undertaken by a 'scene' comprised of the 'usual faces' (Christie, 2008). When I attended Union hustings in 2008, I counted approximately 200 students in the audience. The football match in the Union bar certainly had a much bigger, more involved crowd. One of the candidates for President introduced himself by saying, 'I'm not talking about my policies' whilst a candidate for Financial Officer commented, 'I'm not just doing this for my CV, honestly'. When I voted I received a 50p 'thanks for voting' voucher off beer in the bar.

The adult who plays is a creation of historical processes, a habitus formed from the interface of the traditional, carnivalesque Rag persona and the night-time economy. Unlike the second heterogeneous phase of student culture, this homogenous, monophonic culture was *birthed* by institutions. It is youth culture grown up, HEIs equating student desire for pleasure with their 'business need'. The traditional element, the carnivalesque thread justifies the transformations the Union has made: *if we don't do it, then someone else will.* That's the message of the Union's official history, by giving students 'what they want' they are saving them from exploitation in the free market. Indeed, of all the sections of the University, the Union was the first to reform itself around student desire, a trend that has reshaped the whole University, from academic departments, through libraries (especially the IC) to the Village. The third stage of student culture is thus characterised by parities between institutions and desire.

As argued in 6.2 in relation to accommodation, this is not a functional transformation, in that it does ask what students need, but provides for what students want by appealing to their desires. In the official history, the ex-General Manager of the Union, Paul Blomfield, attempts to sidestep this issue by downplaying the Union's role in creating the contemporary culture: 'as the number of students grew, so a distinctive student culture disappeared and their interests became indistinguishable from those of other young people' (Mathers, 2007, p. 87). To comment that this was an inevitable result of expansion is to propose that the 'logic of the market' is undeniable and incontrovertible. The consequence of this is a black market of liquidity and banter, an aggressive free market of desire, pleasure and frustration running below the white-world of education. Of course other solutions were possible for Sheffield, but this path settled itself in the contextualising histories described in Chapter Two. In 2010 Paul Blomfield left the Union and was elected Labour MP for Sheffield Central.

Aside from the friction resulting from studentification (see 6.2), there has been very little opposition or resistance to this evolution. I suggest this is because students

created and assented to it. Because of the traditional, carnivalesque freedoms of mobility discussed in 6.1.1 and the cultural impact of youth culture, the evolution from a heterogeneous to an homogenous culture felt organic and honest, a natural 'revelation' of youthful desire. The cultural capital of banter is very close to the spirit of the Rag, defined as 'something a group of you might do, usually discomfiting someone else, or a group of others. It would be somewhat at their expense, but not vindictively so' (Saltzman, 1994, p. 118). This is the traditional thread that runs through student culture in Sheffield, which explains the disappearance of the Rag by finding its spirit performed everywhere:

> Last year, on Rag Day... Evil-hearted students, with Babylonian abandon, danced naked in the streets, there were chariots, fantastically adorned, women in mad garb, and the men madder than ever. Wild laughter rang through the streets, wine flowed like water, and the pagan revelry was carried on into the night.[27]

No longer annual, but weekly, this is the messy style propagated by the night-time economy, a connection which silences criticism, masking it with tradition as 'a constructed canon, projected into the past in order to legitimize the present' (Ben Amos, 1984, p. 115). Indeed, this is one of the themes of the mediated student experience discussed in Chapter Four, and one of the subjects of the novel set at the University (Sampson, 2003b). Everyone knows 'what goes on' at University, parents and society, accept the carnivalesque: 'enjoy your student days, have fun, you're only young once!' As commented on in Chapter Two, mobile students breed mobile students, and excuse contemporary liquidity, mistaking the heterogeneous pleasures of their own past for the homogeneous prison of their children's present.

One of the portering staff recounted a story from Sorby that illustrates this. Using a digital camera he documented pictures of the damage ('the sheer vandalism') that students had created over the term. When parents arrived to help their children move home he displayed these pictures, hoping to gather support in disciplining their offspring. Instead, the parents asked him whether they could keep specific photos of their own child's damage, as souvenirs. This act of sympathy casts parents as tourists taking pictures of their imaginary youth. It recognises students as the other, but also, suggests that the other can be understood, just as the Calvinist missionary assumes the unconverted native has a soul (Keane, 2007). Following De Zengotita (2005), this is reminiscent of a general relativist attitude to youth: we've been there, we recognise ourselves and we know you're only performing.

In 1966, *Darts*[28] solicited the views of Professor Bernard Crick on the Sheffield students he taught. In a long essay he commented: 'You are all in the grip of a cult of youth', expressing his belief that students do not understand 'the long view', that

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[27] From *Twikker* (1940), p. 40, kept in the University Archives.
[28] *Darts*, Issue 270, 5/10/66, p. 10.

there will be time, later in life, to both do and experience. He insisted that older people are just as culturally relevant as younger people. It is these card-carrying members of the 1960s cult of youth who now take souvenirs of their own carnivalesque projections home with them. Many do not realise that the heterogeneous culture they once knew has disappeared. Student politics only takes place in alumni magazines (see, for example, Kate Horton Public Relations, 2007a), produced to convince potential benefactors to donate.

The night-time economy thus justifies itself (literally in the Union's official history) through the carnivalesque Rag tradition. Giddens (1990, p. 38) suggests that 'justified tradition is tradition in sham clothing and receives its identity only from the reflexivity of the modern'. However, there is no reflexivity in student engagement with the night-time economy: it is now compulsory, 'life itself'. When the rules of university are unlearnt, they are done so reflexively, but this amounts to consideration of *how* a student engages with the night-time economy not whether they engage with it at all. Giddens seems to believe that modernity is capable of exalting choice over habit, and yet this subsumption of social relations to capital has, to paraphrase, created 'choice in sham clothing that receives its identity only from the reflexivity of money'. There is no choice, there is only monophony, the beat of the black market. Student culture has been subsumed.

This is a classic hegemonic incorporation of pleasure, with going out at its heart. In the *Darts* commentary of the same Pyjama Jump that was filmed by Channel Four, a student writes that it was 'a perfect opportunity to claim back that rebellious student territory' from 'our thrusting capitalist society' (Bishop, 1995).[29] This comment demonstrates a belief that I have rarely, if ever, recorded in my fieldwork. It is a remnant of the carnivalesque relationship of students to the city of Sheffield, and exalts the Pyjama Jump as a festival subverting the wider culture. It claims that sexual freedoms, nudity and excess are evasive pleasure in Fiske's (1989b) sense in that they lead to rebellious, productive pleasure. This interpretation is largely absent from contemporary students, who engage with bodily pleasures for very different reasons: because it is reality (*i.e.* the black market) and because it feels authentic (see Chapter Seven).

As discussed in 6.1.2, the 1960s had introduced the self and the importance of *personal* experience. This is at the core of the shift from an HEI-elite culture to youth culture. To return to my favourite quotation from *Darts*:[30]

> The groups and the audience are free from the stigma of being called immature – they are immature and they enjoy it. Wherever the beat is heard there is a sense of community, a rapport between the groups and

[29] The same sentiment is expressed from an elite perspective in the minutes of the Disciplinary Committee held 25/10/1949 when 'A view was expressed that Rag Day was a useful escape valve for the high spirits of student members of the University'.
[30] No author, 'Darts presents the Sheffield beat scene', *Darts*, Issue 231, 28/11/1963, p. 5.

> the audience, between the stage and floor, which there is not at more traditional concerts.

Going out takes this movement further, removing the rapport 'between stage and floor', it closes the gap between subject and object, so that the performer becomes the audience. The axis of participation in society has fallen from the hierarchy of the HEI-centred student culture to the self-enveloped world, where the consumer's desire for experience *is* the product. This is the kernel, the essential core of the homogenous student culture that dominates from the 1990s on, and the principle upon which the Union reorganised itself as, primarily, a nightclub complex. It is both a definition of what going out means, and also a concrete example of the subsumption of social relations to capital. Making friends is making places is going out, where the consumer is friendship group, performer and audience. One needs only to glance at the listing page of the student press to see countless references to this subsumption. To take the example of one listings page in the *Steel Press*:

> Funky 70s disco fever all on a fabulous lighted floor that you have to fight to get on to... Dig out your flares and get on that stage baby... Still the best night in Sheffield... nice big stages to make a fool of yourself on.[31]

Pyjama Jump may have been a solipsistic festival, one that, in its exclusion of the city of Sheffield prefigured this subject-object loop, yet it still held a mirror to the students of Sheffield as a group. As an annual event it possessed a ritual function not matched by the necessity of Intro Week or the routine of 'Christmas Day at the Union'. With its removal contemporary student culture became, as a consequence, an homogenous blur of nights mediated by alcohol, week after week. In this, going out performs a sleight of hand in terms of group identity. Essentially, it creates the illusion of a mass festival, where participants are engaged *en masse*, when they are in fact competing in small family groups in what amounts to an aggressive internal market of liquidity. This is the subjunctive potential of the night, the nightclub as dreamscape, with its strobes, anthems and smoke hypnotising a large group into believing in its own existence. It is the perfect complement to the persistent individuation of HE, and explains youth culture's emphasis on going out. There is a sense of hope in the subjunctive buzz of the dance floor, a unity through pleasure, that is achieved, and indeed delivered by the state of messy liquidity brought on by intoxication. Thus drunkenness once again becomes a short-hand for 'student', as it was back the days of the Rag, before the evasive pleasures of the joint gained a brief handhold in the heterogeneous 1970s, which look more and more like halcyon days.

The history of student culture at Sheffield teaches us that the larger the folk group, the smaller the stage. This means the wider community only exists in the imagination of students performing on the dance floor or bantering in the sticky

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[31] The quotation amalgamates three separate listings from *Steel Press*, Issue 30, 19/05/00, p. 9.

realm of liquidity. It doesn't exist elsewhere, a theme that emerged from the interviews I held with the portering staff was the change in 'the attitude' of students in hall from the 1990s on:

> When I came here I was respected for the help I gave, now there is none. It's changed in last ten years. Society has changed. I was once looked on as a fatherly figure – the University would always hire older, more mature men. That respect has gone now. You know they think 'Who are you to tell me that?' We've allowed society to get like that. It's how we live.
>
> We always had some problems. But I always got on with students. They still ask you for favours and you help them out but then they walk past me the next day and say nothing. I used to go on pub crawls with them and take them for walks in the Peak District. Kids seem shyer of me 'cos I'm a lot older than them. Is it because I'm older? I had a better relationship with them in the past... It changed in the late 90s. One lad spent six or seven years in Uni, six of them in Sorby. He came up and stayed at my house not that long ago. Came to my wedding.
>
> It was a laugh and a joke before, not with this lot. It's got worse [When?] In the last ten to fifteen years. [Why do you think that's so?] I don't know why. Society has changed.

When I interviewed contemporary students concerning damage and disorder there was no mention of the porters, or anyone that would have to deal with their consequences. Not only is this demonstrative of making friends being making places, it is also an example of the community shrunk to the size of the family, to the group subsumed in the business of drinking and playing together. Nothing else matters because nothing else can match the intensity of friendships forged by performing to the beat of the drum. A group from Sorby stole the stone statue of Samuel Earnshaw, cleric, mathematician,[32] and early benefactor of the University, from the hall named after him. The catering staff were unconcerned, telling me, 'Mr. Earnshaw goes missing every year. It's a bit traditional'. But this year Mr. Earnshaw never returned, the students responsible later telling me they dumped him in the grounds after taking a few photos with him, their work done. This is not to criticise those students, but to demonstrate that their attachment to the wider community who did gather meaning from the statue was negligible.

At the heart of this disconnection is the relationship of the family to the night-time economy. Because of the resultant manipulations of making friends making places, halls of residence had become deeply implicated in the business of 'going out'. Not only was this was borne out by my fieldwork, it arose from interviews with current

[32] Originator of Earnshaw's Theorem, which explains why objects do not spontaneously levitate.

and past students and members of staff, alongside archival research. As the above quotations suggest, the dependence began in the 1990s and can be connected to two key changes. Firstly, the codification of the play clock and the narratives of subsumption discussed in this section. Secondly, the composition of social networks in the halls changed in the 1990s, when they became dominated by first year students. This was down to expansion, a lack of investment in housing (nothing built, for example in the 1980s) coupled with the University's longstanding commitment to provide first years with accommodation.[33] Thus at the same time the Union established its permanent 'Commercial Services' hierarchy, older students were removed from the halls, diminishing student hierarchies and pushing the transmission of student culture further into the free market of the dance floors owned by the Union. There were no longer any students who had 'unlearnt the rules' exerting their objectifying social influence on the hall. As one porter commented:

> There were no older students, respectable ones, in hall. That was the change. No one to say what we do, this is what we organise, there's not the atmosphere, the commitment.

By 2005/2006, Sorby, which had long been thought of as a 'nasty building' (Mathers, 2005, p. 195) was merely the shell of a nasty building, a collection of corridors with shared facilities squeezed into nearby Earnshaw. As a consequence Sorby possessed an autonomous culture, with little to no input from the JCR, which had practically melted away. In all of the other halls, apart from Stephenson (see 6.2), JCRs embraced the night-time economy as a means of maintaining their influence and power. By the time of my fieldwork, liquidity had seeped into the residences; JCRs had repurposed the halls as both 'pre-bars' for going out and sponges to mop-up what remained after the descent into liquidity.

As the older students most involved in the hall, the Tapton JCR were not concerned with anything beyond the central territory of going out. Politics, for example, certainly a preoccupation of Tapton in the early 1970s, as the papers of Peter and Alison Slater attest, was not part of hall life. In late 2006 the President of the JCR wrote a diary of his Intro Week experiences that was later distributed in a Tapton newsletter. Its valorisation of liquid 'messiness' is clear:

> The bar is getting quite busy, with people asking, "What's this 'MAIN EVENT" all about?" In hindsight the answer is simple... mayhem on a large scale, chants, complaining security, an introduction to your JCR 2006, beer and banter, a cut head, loads of mess...

[33] Of the beds allocated in 2006/2007, 88% went to first years, compared to 76% in 1996/97. Second and third years received less than 1% of the total c. 11,000 beds in 2006/2007 (Flower *et al.*, 2006).

This 'mayhem on a large scale' is both an invocation of the liquid potential of the 'tribal imaginary' of halls and an example of what, as a community, they can achieve. This imaginary was enacted weekly, as part of the performances structured by the play clock. The hall met in their own bar every Monday, where they would be joined by previous residents and led in 'chanting for Tapton and general hatred of rival halls' by the JCR in a 'pre-club tanking up session'[34] before heading out, *en masse* to the Kingdom nightclub. This happened week-in, week-out, and was the bedrock of hall life, from which the 'Tapton spirit', as residents called their sense of community, developed. Smaller, family-based performances would occur on other days of the week, but Monday was always a day for the hall. In interview, a group described the intense feelings of belonging they experienced when going out to Kingdom,[35] where each hall had their unofficial corner of the dance floor.

In terms of the family, Tapton acted as a large tribe engaged in aggressive group speculation in the liquidity markets. Through these performances 'the Tapton spirit' was situated in the hall, the Union, the nightclubs and routes between them. Social capital was banked, not only in the family, but in the hall as tribe, a collection of families at home and abroad in the black market. Of course, disruption was caused to other residents, both of the hall and the local community. Around this time the student press commented that, 'Yeah halls can be good for partying, but on the rare occasion you want an early night? Not gonna happen' (Purkis, 2007). Working late in NATCECT I would sometimes return through Broomhill to hear groups of students chant 'Tapton Tapton Barmy Army!' as they made the journey up Crookes Road. Luhrs discusses this chant in its original context of football:

> The army are the fans, who can be seen to be metaphorically fighting for their cause, *i.e.* their team... repeated indefinitely at speed, giving them the feel of military marching songs...
>
> (Luhrs, 2007, p. 132–133)

To accompany the cultural othering of Hallam students discussed in 5.8, there was also a system of inter-hall allegiances and rivalries, represented by further chants sung for both integrative and divisive purposes. Tapton could not be Tapton without its bitter hatred of Ranmoor, and the resulting noisy, competitive and sometimes aggressive encounters were 'part of the crack' of going out. As a poster advertising a fancy dress night out explained:

> Tapton Hall Memorandum – 'Tapton Tapton Barmy Army!!!' 'Tapton v Ranmoor v Halifax Barmy Army Bar Crawl to Plug. Report to Tapton Bar at 2000 hours and prepare for battle. Full specification army gear required. We are outnumbered, but we have the spirit, we will not be defeated. Good luck comrades. We're counting on you.

[34] Quotations are taken from the JCR's self-produced introductory literature for new students in 2007.
[35] At time of writing, the Union has since captured the Monday night market.

The 'Tapton Spirit' bonded families, subsuming their 'inter-corridor rivalry'[36] (as students termed it) in the divisive chants of hall identity:

> You can shove your fucking Ranmoor up your arse,
> You can shove your fucking Ranmoor up your arse,
> You can shove your fucking Ranmoor,
> Shove your fucking Ranmoor,
> Shove your fucking Ranmoor up your arse!

This would typically be countered by Ranmoor residents chanting back in unison, attempting to get other halls involved:

> If you all hate Tapton clap your hands,
> If you all hate Tapton clap your hands,
> If you all hate Tapton,
> All hate Tapton,
> If you all hate Tapton clap your hands![37]

And so on, and so on, into the night. As discussed in Chapter Five, the chants, clapping, taunting and general bravado were all reminiscent of the behaviour of away fans (Luhrs, 2007). This was the free market of banter-writ large, a tribal sense of hall community forged both at home and in the nightclub, at the 'pre-club tanking up sessions' and in the messy corridors. Again, although there is a traditional element to chanting at the University (see 6.1.1), the earliest mention I can find of such football-style imports is a feature in the student press dated May 2000,[38] a year after the Union had committed to six club nights a week.

Sorby too had its rivalries and chants,[39] yet Sorby was directionless, having no input from a JCR eager to lead the hall into the battle of the night. Without a respected figure to initiate and direct the 'abuse' of other halls, and without its own bar and dining hall, Sorby lacked Tapton's integration, both at home, and on the dance floor. As a consequence, families tended to be larger and tighter, with less social banking in the tribe and more competition between corridors, all united by their peculiar love/hate for the building, ('a shithole... but it was our shithole'). As one student put it, 'there was something about Sorby that made me go insane.' Although all halls, aside from perhaps Stephenson, believed they were '*the* party hall', Sorbyites believed it fervently, as this was all they had. This truth was carved in its walls, which were more malleable than the streets, and subject to frequent assaults from both male and female students. Windows were smashed, ceiling-tiles broken and graffiti painted as the building was both incorporated into the performances of its residents and punished by an imaginary that desired the liquidity of banter.

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[36] There were many Facebook groups suggesting 'B2 4eva' or '5D might be the best corridor in Sheffield'.
[37] 'Stand up if you hate Tapton' was also sung.
[38] *Steel Press*, Issue 30, 19/05/00, p. 7.
[39] Sorby army! Sorby army!

The next section will contextualise the development of the Village within this 'post-industrial alcohol order' (Meacham and Brain, 2005). Just as this culture of liquidity has a traditional element, an inheritance from the student carnivalesque that has been intensified by the night-time economy, the Village can also be seen as a similar neoliberal intensification of student housing. As such the Village is also an attempt to deal with liquidity in buildings designed to cope with it, unlike halls which were predicated on an older idea of community.

Indeed, one advantage of the older halls was their ability to connect students who had no involvement in the dominant culture. As a result, families with little interest in going out did form in the hall corridors, some of whom were ethnic and/or religious in nature and composed of, for example, Sikhs, Muslims and Christians. I would like to conclude this section on student culture with an anecdote that illustrates the attempts of one of these groups to trade on the black market supported by the halls. In fact, this occurred every Thursday morning at 2am in the lobby of Earnshaw. For every Wednesday evening the majority of students in both Earnshaw and Sorby attended Skool Disco at Corporation, (a nightclub in central Sheffield). All would be wearing school uniform (as it guaranteed free entry) and all would return extremely intoxicated from the 'ridiculously cheap' drink offers (the quod-vods mentioned in 4.3.1).

The Christian Union in Earnshaw saw this as an opportunity to reach the hall, and decided that the best way to do this would be via free cheese toasties. On some nights, up to 200 intoxicated students would stagger around in school uniform shouting, alternately hugging, kissing or shoving each other whilst occasionally heading into the inevitable scrum in order to procure a toastie. When not serving, members of the Christian Union would hover on the fringes and attempt to bring up spirituality with anyone sober enough to listen. At 4am, when the toasties had gone and the students moved on, the Christians would help the porter slowly pick out the bread and cheese that had been mashed into the carpet.

6.2 Redevelop/Remake/Remodel/Restructure/Reform/Repurpose

In 2008 I organised a reunion for students from Sorby at the bar in The Edge, the focal service building for the Endcliffe Student Village. Standing close to where Sorby used to be, the contrast between the contemporary (and empty) bar, and the fond memories of the pock-marked, beer-stained corridors of Sorby[40] were obvious and much discussed. While community is often assumed to deteriorate over time (Gillis, 1997), I accepted what the students said. The Village marked a distinct break with the hall system, and was indeed marketed as such: 'a new living experience'

[40] Sorby did not have a bar. Aside from a large computer room and a small supermarket/off-licence, its facilities had been closed down and/or amalgamated with its neighbour, Earnshaw.

structured around the neoliberal values of 'flexibility and choice'. Spread over two sites, the Endcliffe and Ranmoor Student Villages,[41] to give the development its proper title, comprised 4,191 rooms, 80% of which are single en-suite, arranged in cluster flats housing between three and twelve students. Within ACS it was talked of as the 'biggest and quickest project in HE' and 'the largest project that's been undertaken in HE accommodation ever'.

As part of this project the old halls of Residence were closed: Sorby and Earnshaw at the end of the 2005/2006 academic year, Halifax and Stephenson at the end of 2006/2007, Ranmoor in February 2008, and Tapton in June 2010. While most have been demolished, Stephenson and some elements of Halifax have been repurposed, with their facilities centralised in The Edge. The recent history of Stephenson provides a means of analysing the transition to the Village. Once described to me by an ACS manager as the 'jewel in the crown' of the Sheffield residential package, the oldest catered hall had an attractive environment and facilities that included a library, TV room and tennis courts. Stephenson had long been a prospective student's first choice of accommodation and, since places were allocated on a first-come first-served basis, it was populated by students that had deferred a place and spent a 'year out', and was therefore known as 'a bit private school'. It had a strong JCR, a long-standing warden and an internal culture that supported regular balls and traditions (such as the annual 'beer race'). Of all the halls it relied the least on the night-time economy.

In preparation for the opening of the Village, ACS prevented students from applying to specific halls for the 2006/2007 academic year. Stephenson was purposely populated with international students, as, in the words of one manager, an 'act of sabotage'. Furthermore, halfway through that year the internal structure of the halls changed and financial support for JCRs was removed and centralised in the new Activity and Events Committees (AECs),[42] part run by the Union. Both of these innovations led to a change in the hall community which demonstrated, both the 'invisibility' of international students (see 5.8), and the extent that the elite Stephenson culture relied on the financial support of the JCRs and the social hierarchies that bridged the years (as per 6.1). A significant amount of social capital (in Putnam's sense) dissipated over that year, and by September 2007 Stephenson was fully subsumed into the Village, with no catering facilities, no 'Stephenson Hall' identity, no JCR or calendar of local events, even though it remained almost identical in an architectural sense.

A similar phenomenon occurred in Tapton, where internal structures and funding changed in the period I was engaged in fieldwork there (September 2006–June 2008). This significantly diminished its internal sense of 'hall community'. Instead

[41] The Ranmoor Student Village is located c.500m from the Endcliffe Student Village and shares its design and community ethos. Run under the same administrative and staffing apparatus, it is, to all extents and purposes, a continuation of the same housing project, and is treated as such in this thesis.
[42] In 2008 the AECs changed their names to Community Development Committees (CDCs).

of replacing the social network, as they did in Stephenson, ACS instead targeted the hall's performances. Chanting was singled out as a leading 'cause' for disorder and inter-hall rivalry, after several instances related to Tapton.[43] In September 2007 as the Village opened, ACS banned chanting altogether, instructing bar staff to close bars should chanting occur on University property. This only affected students in the remaining 'chant cultures', Ranmoor and Tapton, which were, in any case suffering under having their JCRs restructured and their budgets controlled by the Union. The last Tapton JCR (and first AEC), while not necessarily condoning disorder, viewed a certain degree of damage and disruption as a necessary by-product of student community. Indeed, they blamed the lack of community in Tapton during 2007/2008 on the ban on chanting, one commenting: 'it creates camaraderie and team spirit, especially in Freshers' Week, you feel part of something straight away'. ACS was charged with betraying 'student tradition'.[44] Consequently the hall lost its tribal sense of community:

> It's subdued, there are so many different friendship groups that don't think of integrating. I am, I'm really disappointed. I've met some really good friends but the spirit of the place is not there.

In its final years Tapton resembled, in some ways, Sorby, with a corresponding loss of respect for the fabric and culture of the hall, demonstrated by this excerpt from a letter sent to residents:

> Latest incidents include rubbish being thrown out of windows, broken furniture, smashed light fittings, vandalism of bathroom facilities, stolen food, abuse of staff, vomit and urine left for cleaning staff to deal with.

Ranmoor, the largest hall of residence, was similarly affected. Its case was peculiar in that it closed halfway through the academic year in February 2008 and its students moved to Village properties, including Stephenson. The following account deserves extended quotation as it succinctly demonstrates the sense of loss that students felt upon moving to the Village:

> There is a distinct lack of community within Stephenson Hall, which is undoubtedly due to the increased centralisation of facilities and the closure of Stephenson Bar. The Edge Bar is sterile and impersonal and disliked by the huge majority of students in the so-called Endcliffe Student Village. In Ranmoor, where the bar was open and functional, there was a very strong sense of community and pride – Ranmoorians were

[43] The Tapton JCR organised a series of covert bar crawls ('The Unofficial Tapton Freshers Bar Crawl 2006') which resulted in 'theft, banter and minor damage'. The animosity from this led to a further incident involving male and female Tapton students chanting and fighting, at which point the University censored its students from engaging in divisive chanting.

[44] Some of the students I interviewed thought the chants had nothing to do with football, and were in fact organic developments of Hall culture.

> 'Ranmoor 'til they die',[45] but there is none of that attitude in Stephenson, where students feel no allegiance to their hall. The demolition of halls of residence and their replacement with 'luxury accommodation' where students live in small flats is slowly but surely killing any sense of community for 1st years at the University.
>
> (Finlay and Jenkins, 2008, p. 20)

As a response to this report and negative student comments, Stephenson Bar was reopened as the 'Endcliffe Lounge' in September 2008, although by this time the old hall community had long since fallen away. Frequent criticism of the Village was also seen in the student press concerning such perennial student concerns as food prices, rent and building delays (Golledge, 2007; Keen and Whyatt, 2007; Kent, 2007; Towers, 2007; Whyatt, 2007; Kasherova, 2008; Whyatt, 2008). Under the Presidency and impetus of Dave Hurst (2008–2009) the Union led a campaign against ACS, holding a rally and publishing a report (Hurst, 2009) criticising the cost of accommodation in the Village, which it presented to the VC. This accused the University of exploiting its students by making them pay for the redevelopment which it suggested had been undertaken not to respond to student needs, but to compete with other universities whilst also expanding facilities for the out-of-term conference trade. Hurst accused the University of building a luxury development, and then overcharging and overextending contracts under the guise of increasing 'choice', claiming that '90% of University Accommodation costs more than the minimum student loan and only 1% is below £3,000' (p. 2). ACS defended the Village (Jones, 2008) by stating that the increase in rent[46] was due to a 30 year lack of investment in student accommodation.[47]

The exchange was fascinating, as it demonstrated the 'super-complexity' of contemporary HEIs. On one level Hurst's protests and complaints were hypocritical because the Union is similarly guilty of exploiting its own students through its relentless involvement in the night-time economy. On another they were paradoxical as the Union operates the residential communities through the AECs/CDCs in place of the old JCRs. On another, they were justified, as many students complained at both the cost of the Village and the 'community' it afforded. Of course, the key point, which was not picked up by either the press or the Union, was that while the Village may have been designed to cater for conferences, it was certainly designed to limit the homogenous student culture I described in 6.1.3. Indeed, the University's Student Accommodation Strategy was couched in terms of 'civic responsibility' from its approval in 2004.

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[45] An integrative Ranmoor chant.
[46] Given as 26.3% over three years catered en-suite and 30.1% self-catered en-suite.
[47] ACS had earlier claimed that the full time student population had increased by 'approximately 275% in the last twenty years with the number of beds... increasing by only 56%' (Flower *et al.*, 2006, p. 3).

The implementation of this strategy, from November 2005 to September 2009 entailed two outcomes. Firstly ACS sold 130 properties with restrictive covenants[48] to generate income and concentrate the University's residential provision in a single geographical area in an attempt to avoid what was internally referred to as the 'Headingley Effect' (the heavily studentified ward in Leeds). This echoed 1960s plans for something like the Village, which envisioned a large 'parkland site' with a chapel, mall and perimeter road in the same location, that were abandoned due to lack of funds and resistance from local residents (Mathers, 2005). Secondly, in the words of the Accommodation Strategy *Interim Review*, the Village allowed the University to 'monitor and influence the behaviours of a larger proportion of the student population with consequent benefits for personal safety, as well as reduced impact on the local community' (Flower *et al.*, 2006, p. 16). Students had become 'a key political issue with active campaigning by residents' groups' (ACS, 2004, p. 15), whilst halls had, as discussed in 6.1.3, become dominated by first year undergraduates and the night-time economy. Essentially ACS were claiming that expansion had caused a lack of hierarchy in the halls that had, in turn, encouraged disorder: 'high level of first year students... has contributed to increasing problems of noise, vandalism and general misconduct' (Flower *et al.*, 2006, p. 3).

The Student Accommodation Strategy (ACS, 2004) was thus designed to assuage two linked consequences of mobility and expansion, firstly studentification and secondly the making friends making places logic which had brought liquidity into the halls. The solution being a controlled consolidation of student accommodation in the Village accompanied by the 'city-living' attractions of a City Campus. The result was identical to the original 'pitch' to the University Council:

> The first product is a Student Village in the safe, leafy suburbs of Sheffield, and the other is a 'city-living' product offering ready access to all the growing attractions of the City Centre.
>
> (ACS, 2004, p. 15)

This second 'product' is now known as the City Campus and is a partnership scheme with a private provider, which owns the majority of the accommodation. This initiative began in 2005/2006, when the University began to supplement the c. 300 rooms it owns in the city centre with private provider agreements. Since 2009/2010 these stand at 820 rooms, based in one building, Opal2, owned by the Opal Property Group. In total c. 1120 are accommodated, with a far greater proportion of postgraduate and international students than found in the Village. Community has never been emphasised in the marketing literature, it is presented, rather, as flats of convenience, close to the main libraries and the centre. The opening of the Village in September 2007 and the consequent involvement of the Union in providing activities and events for residential students has focused attention on the City's

[48] These prevented future HMO or student use.

lack of social space and community. Many of the students who applied to live there, however, have done so on the understanding that they are privileging convenience over community. It therefore tends to both attract and form students who position themselves as separate from the main body of student culture, which explains the predominance of 'invisible' international students there.

Both the Village and the City have, as discussed, been criticised in terms of community as arid, anodyne, 'products' of the market. The irony, of course, is that the halls, were just as much creations of the market as the Village. Of course, ACS made provisions for student life in their new development, which was represented as a 'new start' in terms of student behaviour. This would be a Village of responsible individuals, not liquid masses. Discipline, security and control were built into its design from the very start: a 'proactive... distribution, placement and management of its student population' (ACS, 2004, p. 15).

There was a firm belief that an environment could be constructed that would control student behaviour, which explains the centralisation of social space in The Edge or The Ridge,[49] and the move away from inter-connected 'corridor culture' to the divisions of 'apartment-based living'. Both were, in part, designed to resist the liquidities of the black market. As the Village was the 'largest and quickest' development in UK student housing, no one knew, however, how it would work in terms of student community. There had been research on the relationship of university housing to the 'educational environment' in an American context (Strange and Banning, 2001), but such studies focused on 'living learning communities'. In Sheffield there was little input from academic staff, for, of course, residence had fallen out of the UK HE institutional dialogue (Silver, 2004). Indeed, there was only a vague understanding of what a 'student village' actually described. In contrast, when Ranmoor opened, the hall of residence model was implicitly recognised by all:

> Prof. Allen asked me and a few other ex-Sorby cronies to move into Ranmoor early – I think in August or September of 1968 – and to set up a rudimentary JCR. We were to hand over to elected officials in due course, but in the meantime we were to organise Televisions, Pool tables and the like.[50]

According to the market research ACS had undertaken, students wanted choice, optionality and value for money. They did not want JCR 'cliques' to monopolise the compulsory payments students put forward to cover community. In partnership with the Union, this financial power was ceded to the AECs (Activities and Events Committee), student bodies managed by permanent staff. These committees

[49] The focal building for the Ranmoor Student Village.
[50] From the text of a short address given by Adrian Hall at the Ranmoor House Farewell Dinner on 13/02/2008.

ensured that community provision was standardised with equal access to shared 'Activities and Events':

> The emphasis within the residences is to provide a close-knit community living experience. Every student living in University accommodation is to belong to one of seven communities; four communities covering the Endcliffe Village, one in Ranmoor Village and two in the city centre. Students are to be encouraged to interact with each other as members of their community through a wide range of activities, clubs and events, ranging from quizzes, Volunteering, Give-it-a-Go activities, competitions and fundraising events, to sports tournaments, balls, parties and day trips. Student representatives in each community will be encouraged to help suggest and organise activities for their community, based on the needs of the students within it. A dedicated Development Officer, working between the Union of Students and the University, will also help residents plan events and activities to try to ensure there's something for everyone.
>
> (Flower, 2007, p. 1)

Residential Tutors became 'Community Assistants' wearing colour-coded t-shirts whilst 'on duty', and wardens were recast as 'Community Assistant Team Leaders'. New students were even issued with coloured badges they could wear so members from the same community would be able to recognise them in the streets (*'Hey, you're in the Blue community – so am I!'*). A magazine, *Digs* was produced and written by the Marketing Department of ACS, designed 'to communicate positive stories about the Residences', with space for students to contribute 'memories' of their 'experiences' in the Village. Events involving the night-time economy were permitted 'in proportion' to non-alcohol related activities. The Union's involvement ensured that its nightclubs were the destinations to residential events, and not popular privately owned ones, such as Kingdom/Embrace or Corporation, as had been so under the old JCRs. In a statement ACS commented that what was not deemed 'beneficial to the Union for commercial and operational reasons, [is] therefore not beneficial to our students' (Pavyer, 2007).

As discussed, liquidity would no longer be allowed by the AECs. The impact of this was seen in Tapton, where, at the meeting to establish the AEC for 2007/2008, one person showed up.[51] While the Village is certainly more controlled and sedate, a more considered 'community of choice' has not developed in its place, for both the University and the Union underestimated the persistent hold of the black market over the imaginary of what it is *to be a student*. Who wanted to be a member of an AEC committee that promotes community squash games and walks in the Peaks? The answer, of course, were the Christian students, last seen making toasties to the drunken masses of Earnshaw, whose social capital remained independent of the

[51] In contrast, the election for the previous JCR was attended by approximately 150 students, who cheered and chanted as prospective candidates competed in public speaking, binge drinking and acts of physical debasement.

liquidity markets. As a consequence, in 2008, the Endcliffe CDC (a rebranded AEC) voted in favour of holding Alpha Course events.

Aside from members of the AECs/CDCs, no one, to date has contributed any 'memories' or photographs to the pages of *Digs*. Going out into the liquidity markets remains the performance of choice for students of the Village (which, of course suits the 'Commercial Services' section of the Union, which still offers six club nights a week). Indeed, there is a sense that 'community' has been pushed further into the night-time economy, as there is nowhere else for it to go. Toilet and bathing facilities are mostly en-suite whilst eating and social facilities are centralised in a focal building called, The Edge 'a social space for students and conferences'. In comparison with the halls, the basic 'unit' of residence has shrunk from the corridor to the apartment, which houses at most twelve students, and, as is far more common, five to eight. Daily life is less communal, and in terms of family formation, less predictable, indeed, it may not happen at all. As discussed in Chapter Five, a student's residence-based 'family' are arbitrary, not chosen by the individual but allocated by computer. However, because halls of residence were inter-connected corridor communities, a certain amount of self-selection still took place. Three of the four 'families' I followed from Sorby were made up by students living close to each other rather than strictly side-by-side.

It is this environmental 'breathing space' that has been taken away by the Village, which has intensified allocation by defining family units in secure flats that are physically distinct from each other. Corridor culture has given way to 'apartment living' and family formation has become more precarious. In some cases there is no change and 'everyone gets on', in rare cases families are simply not formed, or, far more commonly, one or two students are excluded from the apartment-defined family. This is perfectly illustrated by the student who commented,

> Before I got there I was so worried I wouldn't get on with anyone I lived with. But one of my [future] flatmates said on Facebook that she liked shopping and going out, so I knew I had a friend there already. When I actually arrived it turned out I had a really weird flatmate. But then everyone I know has a weirdo in their flat!

Since 'shopping' and 'going out' are the bedrock of youth consumerism, this student could have founded her family in any of the apartments in the Village. The 'weirdoes' (which include those who do not like shopping or going out and are unwilling or unable to sympathise with those who do) are thus left isolated and divided in their rooms unable to connect with other students in other apartments, because the Village does not provide any shared space outside the flat. In halls these students could meet, not only physically, but socially, as groups tended to be larger. Indeed one of the groups I followed from Sorby consisted of students who did not enjoy going out and did not 'fit' with any other group on their corridor. While they

did not live next to each other, they all lived near to each other, on the same corridor. Of course, students were isolated in the old halls, but this isolation was always cushioned by the wider hall community.

This can be demonstrated by the spatial orientation of participation, distinct in both the halls and the Village. As soon as a student left their room in hall, even if it was to visit the bathroom, they joined the wider community. In the Village a student leaves their room to enter the apartment, never the whole block, let alone 'a village'. Such a transition is also reflected in staff and social space. There are no longer porters on a front desk, TV rooms or JCRs. Cleaning is now orientated towards inspections, there is far less catered provision, so contact with catering staff has diminished. In the last year of the hall system, 2005/2006, 60% of students were catered whilst 86% of rooms shared a bathroom. In 2008/2009 18% of rooms were catered and 27% shared a bathroom. Staff have thus been removed from the students, and students have been removed from themselves. This community meant a huge amount to hall students, one of whom commented that when he arrived in Tapton in 2005 he wasn't impressed by the building or facilities, but after the JCRs efforts in Freshers' Week he felt as if 'I wasn't living in one room, I was living in a mansion'. While there is plenty of social space in the Village, all of it is atomised in the living rooms-cum-kitchens of the apartment blocks. While the building trade knows them as 'cluster flats', students call them 'twat flats', so named after the 'young professionals' that typically populate them in developments common to ex-industrial areas. Architecturally the Village provides preparation for the decade plus of emergent adulthood students are looking forward to in their 20s. As one student commented: 'it's a bit like living in a giant Ikea flat-pack'.

In a sense the Village enforces a defining, second year-like move into private housing from the beginning of Intro Week, denying (or making it harder) for students to select their families from those close to them. Implicitly then, the design of the Village effects the whole student experience, from first to third year, and indeed into life after university. Should a student, for whatever reason, not form a family, they are effectively forced to unlearn the rules before they have even learnt them. This has a net effect of enforcing the central territory of studentland at the expense of the margins, creating a community of shoppers, night-time economy users and isolated 'weirdoes'. There is no space for communities of racial and sexual minorities, who are effectively separated from each other. Contemporary living is thus objectified, defined in units that, when they reach out for community, do so not to each other, but to the monetised play-fields of the night-time economy or the untethered connectivity of the internet. As a result, instances of harassment and mental health problems are rising. Divide and rule!

Student friendship, which, as described in Chapter Five, had been subsumed to the night-time economy, has now, via the Village been further subsumed to the accommodation market. This is, of course, literally so, in that the £158.7 million

Endcliffe and Ranmoor developments were funded by £17 million of equity and £141.8 million of debt in a PPP deal between the University, Catalyst Higher Education (Sheffield) Plc., Catalyst Lend Lease Holdings Ltd. and HSBC Infrastructure Fund Management Ltd. Debt is omnipresent in neoliberal Britain, not only in the student loans and credit card bills, but also in the very fabric of the buildings students live in. Indeed, rents will be paying off the University's debt for the next 40 years. The contextualising histories discussed in Chapter Two propose that this debt, represented physically by the Village, is also adopted by invisible social structures, which, as I have attempted to demonstrate, has occurred. What you pay for and how you pay for it, is what you get.

Of course, it also needs to be emphasised that friendship still occurs within the Village: students meet and socialise with each other, and a sense of communality remains strong, especially in the larger, ten and twelve person apartments. Social processes have, however, changed, and thus, in terms of residence-based friendships, the subsumption of individual to the group has consequently diminished. This interpretation is supported by the University report which posits the transition from halls to the Village as diminishing residential community (Finlay and Jenkins, 2008). Indeed some of the student comments published there are particularly apposite to this discussion of the central territory and margins, especially those that discuss, for example, a 'flock mentality', '"cliquey" groups' and a 'University social life [that] is hyped up and... is not necessarily going to be an amazing experience for everyone' (p. 25).

The practicalities of making friends and making places has definitely been altered by the Village. Students have commented that 'you can't get away with *anything* anymore, not like you used to'[52] due to the 'masses of CCTV', more 'on this site than any other university':[53] 270 stationary cameras, 80 zooming cameras delivering facial recognition at 200m, all controlled from a central 'Monitoring Station' in The Edge, where data from all cameras is recorded 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Unlike the old halls, the Village, like the University of Warwick (Paton, 2007), now operates a zero tolerance policy towards misconduct. Any behaviour that contravenes a student's residence contract or the *Regulations as to the Discipline of Students*, from smoking in rooms to causing noise will initiate disciplinary proceedings. There is a police station on site, housing a Safe Neighbourhood Team, Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers. In busy times, such as Intro Week, Christmas and the end of the year, the police deploy Mounted Officers and other 'High Visibility Reassurance Patrols' which 'Advise, Remind and Direct'. In comparison, the halls had a night porter on the front desk.

[52] Recorded when a group of Village students had listened to a speech by an ex-member of Sorby Hall.
[53] Staff quotes.

Considering the failure of hall discipline discussed in 6.1.3, the University has, in fact, learnt old lessons, as this Warden's Report from 1944 demonstrates:

> It also became clear that the architecture of the Hall, which precludes effective control of ingress and egress at any time, must be taken into account in developing the disciplinary arrangements.[54]

Yet the emphasis was different in the past: the many Warden's Reports in the University Archives do not focus on discipline, and are more concerned with the promotion of 'corporate life', achieved by establishing a sense of hierarchy amongst the students. Once they had gained a place in hall, students would be encouraged to stay for the duration of their studies, gaining a better quality of room the longer they remained resident.[55] Such a structure is alien to the market logic of the student as customer, who receives exactly what they pay for. The new security provisions are advertised to its residents as a service, which explains, in some ways, the ambiguous relationship students have with the forces of order and control. Many are happy to live under cameras,[56] their ontological security (Giddens, 1991) not threatened by surveillance in the home, as other research has indicated (Dupuis and Thorns, 1998).

Instead, the culture of surveillance infiltrates the student body: in the night-time economy, on Facebook and in the Village, the lens is everywhere. When the making friends making places dynamic of the black market brings liquidity back to the Village, many are happy to complain and direct Security to 'solve the problem', yet the same students have short memories when they themselves choose to perform on the black market. While some retain a 'school-boy's' playful joy in avoiding surveillance (Hope, 2005), many feel that the layout and security provisions of the Village are too effective. The residents of Ranmoor House, who moved into the Village in February 2008, keenly felt the effect of their new environment, in a manner comparable to Moffatt's (1989) mid-80s students, who had to adapt to the enforcement of new alcohol laws. Just as his students believed they had a right to drink, the Ranmoor residents believed they had a right to congregate in communal areas around their homes to engage in the pursuit of liquidity.

The Village has not banished these performances, but has rather pushed them in two directions, inwards into apartments and living rooms and ultimately the body (see Chapter Seven) or out into the interstices and surrounding streets.[57] 'Hidden transcripts' grow according to the intensity of elite surveillance (Scott, 1990); secret

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[54] University of Sheffield Crewe Hall Minutes No. 1 (1944), Eighth annual Report of the Warden to the Board of Management on 4/9/44, (SUA 10/5/2), p. 43.
[55] Minutes of the Ninth meeting of the Board of Management of Crewe Hall and Ranmoor House, held at Crewe Hall on Weds 29th Nov 1950 (p. 2/p. 100).
[56] Indeed, most have never experienced an unrecorded life. I have been told by students that cameras make them 'feel safe'.
[57] Tellingly, the old, repurposed sections of the Halls that retain the corridor culture of old are some of the most problematic areas, retaining their ability to contain 'liquidity'.

places are found, where paranoid students quietly smoke marijuana in the shadow of the cluster flats, for fear of it setting off the smoke alarms in their rooms while boozy liquidity develops a hit and run aesthetic, flying through the walkways and alleys of the Village, roars echoing off the high walls. The borders of the Village are contested areas, hot-spots for trouble, particularly on the routes that lead to the Union. Studentification has been concentrated, as witnessed in the student press (Kasherova, 2008; Robinson, 2009a), police concerns (Taylor, 2009) and the periodic emails from the VC underlining 'serious anti-social behaviour' in the local community, for which, 'alcohol will not be seen as an excuse'.[58]

Broomhill has absorbed much of this overspill, and yet because studentification remains a political issue it is hard to assess recent change. Certainly there *is* noise, alongside chanting, car-walking, urinating and bin-tipping (Robinson, 2009a). I have myself known of students ripping wing-mirrors off cars, upending rubbish and chanting 'you shouldn't have bought a house in a student area' whilst dressed as superheroes, although this, is an isolated, extreme example. Similarly, when the Village received complaints from its neighbours over noise, the CDCs were asked to pass the message on to the students. One commented: 'in my view... if there was more awareness it would likely cause an adverse effect and actually raise noise levels'. Indeed, when the University Health Service carried out a survey on student drinking, 172 of 273 students believed that drinking had a 'negative impact' on the local community (King *et al.*, 2007). Although it is never easy to incorporate young people in the local community (Loader *et al.*, 1998), the Village certainly distances students, only bringing them into contact when they come under the influence of the black market.

As Phil Hubbard (2009, p. 1920) suggests, contemporary student housing projects are related 'to geographies of segregation and displacement': which, if one examines the evidence, is exactly what was intended by the University. This chapter has thus examined how, in terms of student culture, the motivation for the Village has evolved through the contextual narratives discussed in Chapter Two: the impact of youth culture, the expansion of HE and the development of a post-industrial alcohol order. This has traced carnivalesque student pleasures from an annual festival of civic inclusion (the Rag) through the permissive Pyjama Jump to a weekly performance of the self on the nightclub stage.

The traditionality of student pleasure has been followed from an homogenous elite HEI-orientated culture through a heterogeneous central period to another homogenous period based around the 'black market' of going out described in Chapters Four and Five. Indeed, it is suggested that 'going out' is a consolidation of such pleasures (including chanting, singing, costume, dancing and drinking) by a reciprocal dialogue between the night-time economy and student hierarchies, both

[58] Text taken from email sent by the VC on the 28/09/08.

at the Union and in the residences. Finally, while this consolidation is embedded in the subsumption of the individual to capital, which has made a business of the carnivalesque, it is noted that this subsumption manifests itself in a contradictory fashion. This is best witnessed in architectural metaphors, namely the contrast between the heavily-monitored twat-flats of the Village and the black and gold minaret that has risen over the Union. Both represent subsumption, the minaret of the night-time economy and the Village of the accommodation market. Neither tolerate each other. This tension, and others, are explored in the next chapter.

7 Undressing the student

In Chapters Four and Five I described the relationship of student life to the night-time economy of Sheffield, a dependency I illustrated by explaining its temporal, spatial, social and cultural dimensions. 'Being a student' necessitates activity in the shadow cultural economy of education, which I have described as the 'black market'. Participating in this market means going out, actuating the identity of being a student by dissolving the objectifications of youth culture via the consumption of alcohol. In Chapter Six I discussed the historical development of this performance by tracing the removal of carnivalesque behaviours from an annual cycle and public arena to a weekly cycle and privatised arena. This corresponds to the expansion of HE, which has seen the frequency of these performances intensify, as befits a university that has restructured itself to meet (and thus shape) the desires of a homogenised culture. It is noted that, as discussed in Chapter Two, other aspects of this performance have also intensified, most notably sessional consumption of alcohol (bingeing) and the representational technologies that serve to transmit and record performances.

This chapter explores these intensifications and in so doing seeks to understand the motivation for engaging in the performances of student life. While Chapters Four and Five explored the structure of studentland, and Chapter Six its historical development, this chapter seeks to understand the experiential effect of going out, and thus relies extensively on my ethnographic fieldwork. It explores the descriptive term that has haunted the previous three chapters: the journey from objectification to liquidity. In so doing it examines the tension of definition and the pressures of dissolution, paying particular attention to the way their resolution implies stratification. It is stressed, once again, that whilst I frame going out as a journey from objectivity to liquidity, both exist on a continuum, always informing each other, in the same way that Middleton (1983) describes *plaisir* and *jouissance*. As a means of investigating these themes the first section explores costume (particularly fancy dress) from the perspective of integration (7.1.1), performance (7.1.2) and stratification (7.1.3). I then examine the relationship of bingeing to representation and punishment (7.2) before exploring authenticity and the real (7.2.1). Finally, I situate the performance of going out in the wider context of HE and student mobility, paying particular attention to choice and obligation (7.3).

7.1 Body language

Costume has been defined as the means by which 'the body – its appearance, sensations, and boundaries – is managed and understood in relation to other

aspects of a culture' (Wilson, 1998, p. 164). This approach is concerned with understanding the identity of a community through its manipulation of personal appearance (Barnard, 2002). While clothes are a tool in expressing personal identity, this identity frequently demonstrates affiliations with cultures and subcultures (Crane, 2000), an idea that Barthes (2006, p. 8) uses to relate costume to language as both are composed of 'an individual act and a collective institution'. Studies of clothing have taken 'costume' and 'fashion' to be problematic terms, favouring 'dress', although as noted by Laurel Horton and Paul Jordan-Smith (2004), folklorists prefer 'costume'. In their study of the relationship of costume to contra dancers the authors adapted the analysis of folklorist Petr Bogatyrev:

> We suggest that Western clothing in general performs the following functions, each of which is subject to prevailing traditions: (1) practicality, which includes considerations of protection, physical comfort, availability, and cost; (2) self-concept, which includes self-presentation and self-expression within the public sphere; and (3) group identity, which includes public issues of group membership and identity. Each function is emphasized, relative to the others, according to the circumstances in which members of a group find themselves.
>
> (Horton and Jordan-Smith, 2004, p. 421)

With this framework in mind student costume can be divided into four general categories: daily wear, legible sports wear, going out clothes and fancy dress. Following Horton and Jordan-Smith the first two are defined as 'everyday clothes' and the last two as 'clothes worn when interacting with the night-time economy'. Daily wear privileges self-concept over any group identity, despite it often entailing identification with subcultural groups (such as goths or skaters).[1] Simply put, the ensembles of daily wear play host to the manifold divisions of youth culture in which the self is buried. For while the preference for the casual over the formal indicates that people are 'free to be just the way [they] are', (De Zengotita, 2005, p. 176) this freedom forces an objectification of self identity. As discussed in Chapter Five, these personal image choices are also bound up in the making friends and making places process because the night-time economy is also stratified in accordance with youth culture. As a consequence of this, the objectifications of daily wear are retained, heightened and intensified in going out clothes by a functional act of display. Because the night-time economy purports to create sexual and romantic liaisons, sexual objectifications are more blatant and obvious than in daily wear. Flesh is exposed, the body revealed and the level of practicality, especially for women, drops. However, this should not be interpreted as a relaxing or loosening of the objectifications of daily wear. The ensembles of going out are a further hardening, a bristling that transforms the outer surface into a shell, both lustrous and tough.

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[1] Analysis and classification of daily wear is a perennial concern of the student press. See, for example, the 'Typical Bloody Students' column in *Sheffield Steel* (Findlay, 2007).

In contrast, legible sports wear displays low levels of personal self-concept and projects the group identity of 'mainstream student'. It is the twenty-first century university scarf, an identity that students wear to lectures and around Sheffield, or even in the evening, when 'you can't be bothered or haven't got the time to wear decent clothes'. This uniform is based around jeans and trainers worn with 'University of Sheffield' branded t-shirts, sweatshirts and 'hoodies'. Several businesses in Sheffield provide similar items, allowing students to create their own legible clothing, displaying personal identity in the context of a group. Thus, permutations of the uniform are found in hall of residence branded items, as well as those associated with sport clubs, societies or even friendship groups. These items tend to be personalised, often with a nickname or an event, subsuming the wearer's personality to that of the specific group. At first I was puzzled by their popularity, until it was explained as a uniform that excuses the wearer from 'constantly having to look good'. Despite this, many students dislike it, believing that, as one student commented, those who wear it 'are all wankers'. This student refused to wear legible clothing on the same grounds that others did: it negated their self-concept in favour of 'being a typical student'. Simply put, many students did not want to negate the investment they had made in the cultural objectifications of youth culture.

Like legible sports wear, fancy dress simplifies the complex significations of dress and appearance from which people deduce not only social status, but also personality traits and habits (Barnard, 2002). In doing this however, fancy dress goes further than sports wear, taking over the skin and hair of its wearer. By not wearing 'going out' clothes and dressing up as 'something other' a student implicitly disavows cultural identification via personal image cues. Music-scene affiliation, that yardstick of youth culture, is banished. Fancy dress takes over the body, sometimes emphasising and sexualising it but always dominating and often negating other indicators of personal style and image. It destroys the cool pose and makes jokers and players of everyone. This explains, to some extent, the variety of groups that have adopted it as a method of accelerating the journey from objectification to liquidity. Fancy dress is a performance enhancer that does away with stratifying, stylised going out clothes, replacing them with an ensemble more suited to enacting the group identity of liquidity. It liberates the self from accumulations of cultural capital and simultaneously provides a justification for a diverse group of people with differing cultural capital to perform a shared identity. As discussed in 7.1.3, fancy dress is often sexualised, although it does not have to be. It can both enhance, disguise and transform bodily capital.[2]

To the uninitiated, the Facebook statement *'Lionel is a nerd'* may mean that Lionel is working hard at the moment or that Lionel is into computers and technology. Anyone with a familiarity with student culture would understand that such an announcement would likely mean that Lionel got drunk last night in a number of

[2] Indeed one of the most popular costumes in 2007/2008 was an all over superhero body-suit that made the costumer appear as if they had a perfect musculature.

pubs and probably a nightclub, dressed in shirt, tie, thick glasses, perhaps a cardigan, wearing spotty make-up and having brushed his hair. To confirm one could glance at Lionel's Facebook profile or photographs, which would likely be displaying Lionel in the act of 'being a nerd'. This is a representation of fancy dress, which I define as costumed group play structured by the performance arc of going out. It is the classic negotiation of objectivity by students and as such is a normal part of student life in Sheffield: on certain nights of the week, it is not unusual to see characters from *Baywatch*, *Top Gun* or *The Smurfs* in student areas. Pop culture steps off the screen and goes out drinking, striking poses in pubs and shouting slogans in the street, before dancing in clubs, and then stumbling home. On any Wednesday night at 2am the takeaways in Broomhill are busy with cows, monks, fairies and cabaret dancers.

Conducting interviews on the subject of fancy dress was never straightforward, partly because the practice was so widespread. Many students had never been reflexive about it, and resisted or found it hard to be reflexive once I encouraged them to be: 'I don't know... it's just... like... dressing up is fun?'. In interview, many active fancy-dressers could not or were unwilling to elaborate on this. There is a sense that its ubiquity makes it unremarkable, a day-to-day feature of student life, something fun, and nothing to comment on. I can sympathise with this: my earliest field notes from Sorby fail to mention it for months. When I look back on photographs from this time however, it is everywhere, part of the scenery, 'disguised' as it were. As a group, students exhibited extremely high levels of regular participation in fancy dress throughout my fieldwork,[3] and held student festivals committed to it (such as the Medics' Bar Crawl). All of the students I interviewed, aside from 'invisible' international students, had gone out in fancy dress in Sheffield, even non-traditional students (even if it was 'only school uniform'). Because of its ubiquity, fancy dress could be said to differentiate the act of 'going out' as a student from 'going out' as a young person.[4] Time and again, in interview and especially in participant observation, fancy dress was likened to being a proper or typical student, 'standard behaviour', especially for first year students yet to unlearn the rules of university.

The motivation for such participation is often mistaken by both students and other commentators. Owners of costume shops have contrasted students who wear fancy dress 'as a matter of course' to non-students who do so only to 'celebrate special events' such as a stag/hen night or a birthday. The contrast is, in fact, mistaken as both students and those on stag/hen parties wear fancy dress for reasons of group

[3] Out of a total of 656 self-reporting undergraduates, traditional and non-traditional, 76.8% (504) were active costumers with the average student doing so once a month in term time. When considering only traditional, mobile, non-mature, non-international students this rose to 79.8% (439 of 550).
[4] Of 504 self-reporting students who actively went out wearing fancy dress, 94.4% (476) did so primarily in Sheffield, 25.8% (130) had never done so before university, and 48.8% (246) had rarely done so.

integration.[5] Costume shops trade in more than feathers and eye patches, they sell scripts for socialisation, and their proliferation in student areas[6] is a recognition that, as a group, students desire, demand and support their products and services. Of course these shops have grown up with the expansion of HE, capitalising on the strong traditional link between students and fancy dress. This connection can be seen in the University Archives as far back as 1919, when students applied to have a 'Fancy Dress Carnival' on Shrove Tuesday.[7] Of course fancy dress was a defining element of the Rag[8] and Pyjama Jump, as well as *de rigueur* at Halloween parties from the early 1980s.[9] By the homogenous third phase of student culture fancy dress had long been incorporated by the night-time economy into the performance of going out, as the following quotation from the student press illustrates:

> Smurfs, pirates, fairies, babies, bath time, Barbie's, wigs and undies, golfers, firemen, police and even chavs. Part of university life is the nights out, drinking, socialising and clubbing are at least a once weekly ritual, if not more, normally two or three times weekly. Cheap drinks, late nights and dancing entail a big messy night. These nights are often themes, whether chosen by the nightclubs or by the individuals they tend to be big events. I've always found that fancy dress ensures a great night. Maybe its because your playing at being someone else for the night so inhibitions are lost and your enjoyment is heightened, the clothes you wear can change the way you feel.
>
> (Shafique, 2008, p. 50)

This wide scale engagement provided, in Honko's (2000) terms, a huge amount of organic variation from a variety of performances. As a consequence there was also a variety of readings and interpretations, many of them student-generated, and many contradictory, all making the relationship between fancy dress and the 'student body' ambiguous. As one student commented, a wealth of costumes carry their own significations and meanings: 'There's a massive difference between the fairy and that [student dressed as a] cassette tape, of course'. Rather than detail these and the ways by which fancy dress interacts with the performance arc of 'going out' (which could and should merit a dedicated thesis), I have interpreted the practice in relation to objectivity and liquidity, beginning by considering the role fancy dress plays in destroying objectivity and integrating student groups. In 7.1.2 I consider its performative aspects, especially in their relation to liquidity before, in 7.1.3

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[5] I suggest that the popularity (one is tempted to say ubiquity) of fancy dress on stag/hen parties is more to do with its integrative function of binding disparate friendship and family groups than its role in 'supporting liminality' or 'licensing misrule'.

[6] Memorably described by an undergraduate writer as 'cynical, colourful, fancy dress shops (that multiply like bacteria populations throughout student areas)' (Hobbs, 2009).

[7] The University agreed to this on the proviso that it was called a 'Fancy Dress Dance' and not a 'Fancy Dress Carnival' (US/SUN/3/72 (25/01/1919)). The association of fancy dress with a carnival at this time of year is particularly European and deserves further investigation.

[8] With specific 'Costume Dances' often held, for example in 1930 (US/SUN/3/72).

[9] See, for example, *Darts* No. 478, 15/10/1981 No. 478 (Advertisement: 'Sat. 31st Oct. Halloween Disco at The Maze Nightclub – 60p – Fancy Dress Preferred').

discussing the relationship of fancy dress to the body, and commenting on how this relationship is exploited by sporty students who 'reobjectify' fancy dress.

7.1.1 Nerds

Fancy dress should be first understood as a levelling force within student culture, socially integrative and identity equalising, which explains its ubiquity in Freshers' Week, fraught with the tension between mass friendliness and inevitable stratification. The utopian, carnivalesque edge is also evident at weekly events such as Corporation's 'Skool Disco', which grants free entry to those students who dress up to its name. In 'Corp' students drink the cheapest alcohol in Sheffield (as discussed in 4.3.1), which sticks to the floor as bodies crush against each other in a series of hot, dark rooms. Nowhere is Bakhtin's laughter more apparent: quad-vods encourage sing-a-longs on the dance-floor and sexualised banter off it. Everyone, it seems, knows each other, and everyone is on the way towards the messy dissolutions of liquidity. It is here, in *Skool Disco*, that I watched two students engage in a drunken sex act, as a circle gathered around them in bemusement and horror until someone threw their vodka over the oblivious pair. No one knew who they were, everyone was drunk, and as they disappeared into the crowd of white shirts, they could have been anyone.

This is, in a way, the point: fancy dress can project an 'everyman', an imagined student, a blank canvas that firmly occupies the central territory of going out. For the present discussion, it is noted that on a meta-level, the wearing of fancy dress (of simply being in costume) projects a group identity: one that signifies that the wearer is fun, enjoys bodily pleasures and is part of a friendship group that actively performs going out in the night-time economy. Not only is the wearer an 'adult who plays' but the wearer is an 'adult in the act of playing'. In other words fancy dress maps the disposition of what it means to be a 'typical student' on to the student body. If there is a student costume that symbolises the relationship of the individual to the group as per Yoder (1972) and Brunvand (1998), fancy dress is it. Students arrive for Freshers' Week with outfits in the suitcases, and even those students who purposefully decide not to engage in fancy dress, as they don't want to be typical students, eventually 'succumb' (as one interviewee put it).

This student in fancy dress may be stereotypical and clichéd as per the discussion in 4.1, but fancy dress is also a metaphor for the personal transformation that mobility brings. This is one of the reasons it is so popular with first year students, especially during the early part of the year; the symbol of a student in fancy dress stands for the empowerment of leaving home and 'being who you want to be'. The mass adoption and ubiquity of costumes make it clear that going out, and in that the potential of shared identity, of solidarity, is accessible and can be achieved. The

costume becomes a mask hiding all the pressures of 'fitting in', 'being cool', getting along with everyone in a group, all the objectifying terrors of definition that student mobility hoists on many that are unequipped and out of their depth. A student who does not feel adept at performing 'going out' need only dress up as an alligator once, and then he is an alligator for as long as he wants to be as the image can represent him online for months. The practice of *imaging* fancy dress is thus integral to the practice of *imagining* it. Accordingly, digital cameras, mobile phones and the internet are all immensely influential on both its proliferation and practice.

As a part of the performance of going out, fancy dress is closely timed to rhythms of the work and play clocks. It does not occur during Work Festivals, is *de rigueur* in Freshers' Week, at Halloween, on the Medics' Bar Crawl (a Thursday in late October/early November), and Christmas. Outside of these special times fancy dress is worn according to the weekly play cycle. In reference to 4.2.3, it is considered inappropriate to wear in theatres that emphasise cultural objectivity. I have only recorded it once at The Tuesday Club, the night of cultural taste *par excellence* (and its wearers were aware of their transgression) and have seen it rarely at the Thursday 'indie' night, in contrast to its ubiquity on Monday and Wednesday. A similar pattern was discernable in the city centre: if the night was advertised on the premise of cultural taste, then those in fancy dress were not welcome. Some establishments, such as Bungalows & Bears had a blanket ban as they believed it contravened their image and market. In contrast fancy dress was always welcome (and often suggested) at nights that emphasised liquidity.[10]

It was unusual for a group of students to dress up in fancy dress and not visit a nightclub: 'The point is to go out get seen by others. It's not just your friends... it's a mass activity'.[11] Indeed, fancy dress can be interpreted as the business clothes that facilitate trading on the black market of studentland. This is down to its ability to both disguise the objectifying cultural and bodily capital of its wearers and thus facilitate their engagement in the cultural capital of liquidity, even to the extent of providing that wearer with a means of doing so in the form of a performance script encoded into the costume. Unlike some varieties of mumming,[12] students do not use costumes to disguise their identity,[13] even though the script, 'Who are you?' is precisely the same as that found, for example, in Newfoundland (Roper, 2008).[14]
In contrast to mumming, fancy dress is a reaction to post-traditional modernity (and its ultimate symbol) as it disguises the way in which 'lifestyle concerns the very core of self-identity, its making and remaking' (Giddens, 1991, p. 81).
Fancy dress has thus become the definitive way for any feasible grouping of students *outside of the established family* to engage in the performance arc of going

[10] Mondays at Embrace, Tuesdays at Billionaire, Wednesdays for Skool Disco and Thursday at Jump Around!
[11] Accepting the exception of Halloween, which situates fancy dress in the student house.
[12] A 'dramatic, seasonal, visiting custom' (Hayward, 1992, p. 2).
[13] Over the thousands of different costumes I saw during my fieldwork, only one hid their identity, a gypsy fortune teller who read my palm at Halloween.
[14] I have also recorded students house-visiting friends in order to display their costumes before moving on to other houses to do the same. This has always been in the context of preparing to go out

out. I have performed fieldwork where the size of the group was above 200 and defined by being a member of a hall, to small birthday performances whose attendees were all guests that knew each other to varying and lesser degrees. Members of and once-members of societies, subject or module colleagues, residents or once-residents of flats, houses, streets, accommodation blocks or corridors, individuals who will be sharing an experience in the future, or have experienced an event in the past or even disparate friends of one individual, or any combination of the above, will go out wearing fancy dress together. It is thus an easy way of thinking about Noyes' formulation of the group in student life as it brings together unusual social networks in performance.

For example, Neighbours, that mainstay of youth television, has its own society at the University, which for its 'first social of the year' ran 'a neighbours themed bar crawl to get to know everyone'. This coincided with the appearance of the actor Ryan Moloney (who plays Jarrod Vincenzo 'Toadfish' Rebecchi) at the Union.[15] Of course dressing up as characters from Neighbours is all about cultural taste, but in terms of stratification it is a low standard, especially contextualised within the student habitus (and not, for example, at a Neighbours convention).[16] Indeed, the themes and stations of the crawl were designed to facilitate the performance of 'going out' and integrate the group on the journey towards liquidity:

> Please come along wearing something Australian or summery - after all the sun always shines in Oz! ...or if you're really inventive, come as your favourite Neighbours character! Remember we do have cheap £2.50 Population tickets to sell you, so make sure you get down nice and early to get them of us, as we will be selling them on a first come first serve basis.
>
> 8pm - Meeting in the SOUTH SEAS aka the General Store to get ourselves sorted with tickets and the like...
> 8.30pm - We'll be heading to the FOX & DUCK to pay a visit to Elle & Paul at No. 22, and having a Cocktail with them.
> 9pm - We head to THE YORK to drown Carmella's sorrows at No.24 with a shot of your choice.
> 9.30pm - Time to pay a visit to the Parkers at No.26 at the BROOMHILL TAVERN, with an alcopop.
> 10pm - We go see the Kennedy-Kinski household (No.28) at THE PLACE where we calm Susan's nerves with some wine.
> 10.30pm - Now we head to the original House of Trouser (No.30) to see Toadie, Callum, and Dan at the NOTTINGHAM HOUSE where we have a manly pint of anything.

[15] Toadie was touring the circuit of clubs and students' unions across the country, acting as a draw (a stage presence and 'DJ') for night-time business.
[16] 'The organisers had made it clear that beach wear, a very common fancy dress theme, would also be acceptable. This was the theme suggested by the Union for its 'Toadfish' event that night.

> 11pm - Last but not least we pay a visit to Steph and Libby (No.32) for a girly spirit and mixer at THE WEST END
> 11.30pm - We stop off in *BAR ONE* or Charlie's for a quick drink or two, before heading up to Population to see TOADIE!!

In fact, this binge drinking bar crawl is a variant of 'pub golf', a performance of going out in which a route is planned in advance and a 'course' of drinks decided on.[17] Typically players wear golf clothes and hats (and occasionally carry golf clubs), and often perform the persona of a 'genteel sports player'.[18] It is a performance often undertaken by sports teams and societies, males and females, although the majority of my participants had played it at least once, typically in the first year. On asking students for the rules I got a varied response:

> Going from pub to pub and having a drink in each place.

> Each bar is a 'hole'. It has a par and a suggested drink. The par indicates how many 'gulps' you can take to finish the drink. There are bunker holes which mean you have to do a shot as well as the drink and there are water 'holes' where you can go to the bathroom. I have never been to a pub golf where these rules were enforced strictly

> bar crawl where you have to consume a set selection of drinks at every 'hole', normally with a buddy and you score each other, the number of 'goes it takes to consume a pint adds to the score, extra shots are a -1, vomiting increases your score based upon peer consnsus of how 'bad' it is. winnner is the player with the lowest score. in the event of à draw, the competing players strawpedo a bottle of wine, and the last one to be sick or kicked out of the club wins.

I have read this last comment as a performance in itself, with the student attempting to shock the researcher, although it certainly captures the spirit of some enactments of pub golf. Such a quotation is interesting, for it represents, essentially, a reobjectification of liquidity, which as discussed in 7.2, often results in violence and punishment. Before this, the next section considers the way in which fancy dress contributes to the performance of going out.

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[17] The practice may be a reification of USA college slang for pub crawling, Eble (1996, p. 16) has 'bar golf' as a 1930s/1940s term for 'going from bar (watering hole) to bar drinking'.
[18] Alternatively I have recorded 'Army gear, for pub "gulf"', cricket whites and 'pub snooker, so a shirt and waistcoat'.

7.1.2 Following the script

The mere act of wearing fancy dress, in Ramsey Street or anywhere in the student habitus typically results in two performative (and thus experiential) outcomes. Firstly, it diminishes reflexivity and heightens the *general* performance of going out in that it feels heteroglossic and fluid to its wearers, whilst they remain in the formulaic temporal and spatial arc of pub, club and home.[19] This loss of general reflexivity can diminish personal responsibility, as the chanting super heroes in 6.2 demonstrated. Secondly, fancy dress provides specific performance scripts suggested by the encoded references of the costume ensembles. These two outcomes are clearly differentiated in the following example.

Gregory and his friends dressed up as the 101 Dalmatians for a Disney themed night. They wore white jump suits and face paint: a simple costume that had the merit of being easy to produce and replicate, yet visually arresting so the whole group felt both uniform and transformed. There was 'no way on any other night I'd be running down West Street at 100 miles an hour going out of control. If I wasn't dressed like that I just wouldn't think of doing it.' He felt as if the costume had allowed him to lose his self in performance, and in so doing licensed the mild disorderly behaviour that characterises the journey from objectivity to liquidity. In contrast, Gregory only followed the performance scripts suggested by his costume when someone requested a photograph, upon which various members of the group, or sometimes Gregory alone, would assemble, paws out and tongue lolling, for the photo. This pose was as close to performance as many of the Dalmatians got, but it was repeated with many humorous permutations and variations over the course of the evening.

Students were not always aware of these performance scripts, indeed, the majority of my participants did not associate any actions, poses or verbal routines with their costumes, despite my observations to the contrary. Few realised they were performing, working less like actors and more like close-up magicians, engaged in tricks that were subtle, quick and often amusing. These were often unconscious and only followed in certain situations:

- ⇒ When two or more people met for the first time and exchanged greetings on the lines of 'who are you' or 'so you're a...'
- ⇒ When someone was referred to as a third party, in introduction or conversation
- ⇒ When someone attempted to flirt with someone else
- ⇒ When a photograph was requested, staged or simply taken.

Anyone within the group of students going out could request and receive a performance. Anyone outside the group could also request one, although this

[19] Indeed, fancy dress can be interpreted as a way of ensuring the tick of the play clock does not sound repetitive.

depended on a number of other factors: whether the person requesting the performance was in costume themselves, their appearance, the amount of alcohol consumed and the group's position on the arc of the night. Because performances were generally introductory, they did not tend to be given at the end of any stage of the arc.[20] Like photographs, they were not enacted at the highpoints of the night, when the self is lost to intoxication, movement and the moment, but at the beginning of the stations: at home, in a pub on the way to the Union, in Bar One, leaving Bar One, at the Club, before the performance dissipates into messiness.

Since fancy dress performances were rarely offered and often requested, I have categorised fancy dress as a 'suggestive performance' in that it is both prompted and prompting, with costumes supplying a script that waits to be activated by another party, typically via a camera. Yet fancy dress was 'suggestive' in another way, as there was often a flirtatious subtext provoking either display or even physical touching. Of course this corresponds to the general, sexualised dress code for clothes worn for interacting with the night-time economy. On display and the focus of attention, the fancy dress clad body can be discussed, even stroked, just as it can also be disguised and hidden. While fancy dress possesses a high-level of potential variability (*i.e.* there is much one can encode into a costume), the scripts are always suggestive and thus predictable. Students follow Eco's (1992) *Intentio operis:*[21] a fairy is likely to grant a wish, whilst a cowboy will draw their gun to blow someone away. This ensures there are very few failed performances in student fancy dress ('Who are you?', 'The Escalator Engineer!', *'Who?'*). Costumes tend to follow standard routines that rarely mimic but often metaphorically or metonymically reference shared youth (or even University)[22] culture. For some this will involve critique, a polysemic perversity (Falzone, 2005) that reimagines pop culture (for example, as 'Disney Fucked Up'), but for most homage and imitation suffice ('Disney').

This perfectly demonstrates Barthes' (Barthes and Stafford, 2006) definition of fashion: a tension between creativity and tradition, in which tradition is the driving force. Even in fancy dress this has the effect of encoding cultural homogeneity into clothes. The performance script is an exercise in familiarity: it objectifies itself and then reincorporates itself back into reality via performance. This visual process is reified into language by the standard 'What are you?', which fixes meaning to non-verbal signs, transforms 'an object into language' (Barthes and Stafford, 2006, p. 99). Students ask, 'so who are you?' even when the character is obvious. They are following the script, which implicitly resolves the tensions of objectification by naming and explaining it. By wearing fancy dress students are warming cool objectifications through performance, naming, shaming and laughing at uncertainty and thus moving the night towards the dissolutions of liquidity.

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[20] The sexualised nature of the script complicated interactions: I have been accused of being a predatory homosexual and a hetrosexual rapist by male sporty students, just from asking students 'what they were', yet I was not myself in costume, and was not part of the sporty scene (where such comments pass as humour).
[21] This supposes that readers do not interpret texts randomly or perversely.
[22] I recorded, for example, a student dressed as a Ucard.

While the script is, as discussed, typically short and, when in front of a camera, flat, some students are consistent performers and able improvisers. This is easier to achieve with the help of others, for example, two students dressed up as 'God' and 'Jesus'[23] managed to maintain their characters for much of the night. In general however, costumes encode elements of individual and group interactivity depending on their ensembles and themes. Whole groups, for example, enact group performances emanating from their costume scripts. Some also lend themselves well to narrative, which sees students modify the performance arc of going out to the theme, Top Gun for example, necessitating recreations of pool and karaoke. In general group scripts are typically more diffuse:

> For cowboy we tried speaking in southern American accents n kept playing duels, for mexican we tried speaking in a Mexican accent and drinking tequila all night, for the mime I tried to do the little miming things, for James Bond I did the gun thing from the beginning of the films all the time n drank martinis...

Sometimes members of the public became involved, whether they wanted to or not, as performers forced scripts on others. In a malleable world (5.6) anything is fair game and in part because of this, studentland and the night-time economy is structured to minimise contact between those not performing going out. Different groups of students would, however, meet with each other according to these geographic scripts (Chatterton and Hollands, 2003):

> we went out as cavegirls and met at the south seas. a group of cavemen we didn't know saw us when we were walking down to the union. they chased us and it was hilarrrrrrious

Not only does fancy dress increase the interactivity of groups in performance, it also initiates contact between those who don't know each other at all. By doing so it actuates one of the key marketing ploys of the night-time economy: the claim to initiate social connections between people (Winlow and Hall, 2006). This is at the heart of fancy dress' appeal to students: a means of broadening the audience of going out. As discussed in 6.1.3, this has, in the homogenous third phase of student culture, shrunk to the level of the individual subsumed in the family. Fancy dress, via its performance scripts, reaches out and implicates others in the audience. Unlike the hard, sexualised shell of going out clothes which both protects against and attempts to hold the objective gaze of the eye, fancy dress provokes the mouth, the smile and the question. It legitimises the stranger taking photos.

A student commented to me, with typical irony, that 'fancy dress is just a way of making your Facebook photos look interesting'. Part of the statement's humour lies

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[23] For a joint American Football/Cheerleaders social themed on 'fictional characters'.

in its disavowal of the wondrous, the fantastic and the incredible, terms that many of my participants appealed to when asked to describe fancy dress, despite their routine engagement with it. It is thus a weekly, everyman performance that is characterised by the subjunctive. This sees a communal willing or wishing for something else: a coherent identity filtered through the dreams of the night-time economy that has not succumbed to the monotony of repetition. Through fancy dress the subsumption of individual to family, so powerfully experienced by the first year student, is visually and virtually extended to the whole student body.

This desire for this vision diminishes as a student passes through the three year undergraduate cycle, gradually objectifying their identity from its subsumed state in a family shaped by university housing and the night-time economy (see Chapter Five and 6.2). As discussed, studentland privileges the cultural capital of liquidity (see 4.3.1 and 5.4) and fancy dress is one of the ways that both students and the theatres of the night-time economy manifest this, as fancy dress is, above all else, a disguise for the stratifying objectifications of going out. Since unlearning to be a student is also a process of exercising *objectifying* distinction and taste in the night-time economy (see 5.7 and Winlow and Hall, 2006), one would expect a decline in fancy dress as a student passes through the three-year undergraduate cycle, which is exactly what happens. Students need it less and less, although older students do, on occasion, engage in its performance.

No matter what stage the student may be at in the undergraduate cycle some costumes have become so routine they no longer prompt performances. As one student wrote to me: '[there are] other ones we don't really bother *e.g.* Skool Disco or army there are no special moves'. Indeed, school uniform has become so normalised in its long history at Sheffield (see 6.1) that is has no scripts attached to it, aside from perhaps the Lolita-esque licking of lollies, although again such a performance is also part of 'club culture' (Hooper, 2007). Certainly, if a student dresses to the theme suggested by the club (see 4.3.1 and 5.3), then the level of performance is typically lower than it would be for a student-designed event, although both remain suggested, and typically prompted by photography.

In contrast extraordinary or unique costumes become stopping stations as students repetitively request performances by taking pictures. These photographs sharpen and define the stage of going out. In reference to Gunnell's (2006) spatiality of performance this follows players as they perform the arc of the night, with cameras acting like footlights, picking out and prompting performances. Characters strike poses, often accompanying them with their scripted routines, centre of attention for the moment of the flash, with the audience as the future, watching in front of the computer screen. Of course, these flashlights tease Bakhtin's (1968) definition of carnival which famously 'knows no footlights'. Indeed, it is through the blinding definition of the flash, and the proliferation of images that follow it, that the integrative functions of fancy dress fold into competition and stratification. This

introduces the paradox of fancy dress, for at the same time as costumes level identity, they enhance it, emphasising and often sexualising the body, layering it in a wealth of signs and symbols that the eye disrobes, a language game played out by the Apollonian gaze (Paglia, 1991). The 'Skool Disco' may destroy the cultural capital of the image, but it also privileges bodily capital which naturally varies according to a number of metrics: skin, hair, symmetry and size (for a good summary see Griffiths, 2009). While clothes can be used to disguise, they are also used to enhance and display (Entwistle, 2000).

Fancy dress is thus deceptive, having the ability to differentiate between students even if they are wearing the same costume. For while it destroys the objectifications of youth culture it is open to domination via performance scripts and from those with high bodily capital. For example, a group wearing cavemen outfits bought from a costume shop present a fixed ensemble of plastic clubs, fake beards and tunics, where practicality is secondary and self-image appears subordinated to an idealised caveman troupe. However, the script of 'performing a caveman' that the costume provides is open to individual emphasis, despite the actual costumes being similar, or, as is often the case with those from fancy dress shops, identical. Furthermore, because the caveman costume displays the body, and arguably because the performance script is more suited to a certain body type, the costume is therefore liable to being better performed by those whose bodily capital correspond to it.

One reaction to this is, of course: so what? Does it matter whether some students are better at pretending to be cavemen then others? On one level, no, of course not. But on another this example provides a means of examining the stratification of the black market and thus student life. That this should be identifiable in fancy dress, which pretends to avoid such stratification is particularly interesting. For the carnival disguises competition in its heteroglossic static, hidden between Bakhtin's gay laughter and the cut and thrust of the marketplace. The night-time economy presents itself as both utopian dream-space and sexual amphitheatre, full of titillation, intoxication and potential. The willing collusion of its consumers is exemplified by fancy dress: a mass of ideas, costumes and humour suggests a grand act of sympathetic magic (Frazer, 1890): by dressing as something remarkable, we are something remarkable. While this magical act undoubtedly aids the loss of self in reflexivity, it also increases the chances of losing out: someone else gets the girl, someone else looks better than you.

How many quod-vods can you neck? Gangs of drunken boys in mock-school uniform, shirt sleeves rolled up to expose their biceps, chant and point at pouting pig-tailed girls in mini-skirts and tied up shirts, breasts and mid-riffs on display. This sense of competition is further intensified on nights that encourage a creative engagement with the art of costuming, where the physical stakes are obvious and extreme: body-paint is everywhere, with some men and women covering only their

genitals, their blue[24] or green[25] bodies totally exposed. To ignore these strange, sexualised figures would be to ignore both the creativity and the desperate stratification of the black market. Their bodies will our objectifying gaze.

7.1.3 Pressing flesh

The essential division in fancy dress, and thus in student culture, was between two groups: those who regularly attended Wednesday events, dressing up every week, and those students who dressed up less frequently, but did so in order to heighten or ease the performance of going out for a specific group and/or for a special occasion. In terms of volume this second group of students constituted the majority of fancy dress participants: as the student network is large, outside of Work Festivals there were always groups seeking to engage in the black market together, and, as discussed in 7.1.1, fancy dress provided a means of escaping its objectifications. Despite this, many older students, especially third years, spoke of fancy dress as 'papering over the cracks' in student groups. In some part this was because fancy dress became less use to older students whose groups required less 'identity work' as their social relations became fewer and more secure, requiring less effort to maintain.[26] In another it was a result of unlearning the rules of university,[27] and a judgemental, disdainful comment on the emphasis the Wednesday group of students placed on fancy dress.

For while the majority of older students had begun to objectify their involvement in the night-time economy through a process of distinction, unlearning the rules, disassociating themselves from the mainstream identity of 'student', the Wednesday group intensified their trading in the mainstream market of liquidity. These students were clearly identified by their involvement in the sports scene at Sheffield, typically via membership of a sports club or society, for which socialising on a Wednesday[28] in Bar One (the Union bar) and attending the Union's Juice/ROAR night (for which sports societies receive discounted tickets) in themed fancy dress was expected. The common ground between fancy dress and sports is the body, for both valorise it in opposition to the objectifications of youth culture which are denigrated. Dedicated sporty students were *always* dedicated fancy dressers, and often excessive consumers of alcohol (again a bodily pursuit), as observed at other HEIs (Sparkes *et al.*, 2007).

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[24] Smurfs.
[25] Hulks.
[26] Despite these statements older students would occasionally wear fancy dress to integrate with a group.
[27] Again, I recorded many students who proclaimed they had 'outgrown' fancy dress, to later witness them dressed as a superhero whenever a specific and particular group demanded it or for a 'special occasion' (usually, but not always, a reunion of a group that was particularly active in the first year, but also festivals such as Halloween).
[28] UK university sport societies go out on Wednesday because BUCS (British University & College Sport) matches are traditionally held in the afternoon, upon which no lectures are scheduled, a practice initiated by the University of Aberdeen in 1920 to encourage student health (Vernon, 2008).

Although non-sporty students attended Juice/ROAR in fancy dress, the presence of sports teams was obvious on the night, each dressed according to a theme (occasionally matched with a 'gender appropriate' opposite (for example, Netball/Rugby or Cheerleaders/American Footballers). Teams did not tend to follow the themes suggested by the nightclub, often preferring to organise their own. As a result there was both an integrative aspect to the costuming (within teams) and a competitive one (between teams). Befitting this, once the students entered Bar One, and especially the nightclub itself, the event was territorial, with each team having a known and named area (*e.g.* 'Netball Corner'), used by members as a place to dance together or return to ('handy if you're really drunk as you always know where to find people').

Some of these sporty students had families outside their teams, but many in their second or third years had chosen to form 'sporty' residential families. Others had two, their friends from first year accommodation, and their sports family with whom they socialised on Wednesdays. Initiation ceremonies,[29] hierarchical hazing, ritualised 'team' names, slang and personalised, legible sportswear were all cultural mainstays of the sporty idiocultures. These served to subsume identity to the team, which functioned like hierarchical families, with significant levels of social capital 'in the bank' which provoked aggressive trading on the liquidity markets.

Following Sparkes *et al.* (2007) sporty students imparted a lot of time and energy in building and maintaining physical capital; fancy dress heightened this conversion into cultural capital in a habitus already dominated by liquidity and banter. Thus, although they professed allegiance to the sporty scene, these students claimed to be 'mainstream'. Indeed, they were the only students that routinely described themselves *as* the norm in contrast to non-sporty students who defined themselves in how they *differed* from the norm. Since 'going out' was the ritual means by which all students performed their identity, regularly going out in fancy dress negated any identification via cultural taste. By choosing not to construct a personal image from areas of youth culture, sporty students implicitly allied themselves with the central culture and positioned themselves in opposition to students who constructed a personal image from the objectifications of cultural taste. In opposition to this sporty students assumed a mainstream student identity, attempting to dominate the central territory by claiming an elite status via an everyman route. Many believed they were 'the best at being a normal student' and 'winning at life', by which, of course, they meant trading on the black market. This is why second and third year non-sports students began to rhetorically distance themselves from fancy dress: they were attempting to 'unlearn the rules' whilst sporty students were intensifying this process.

[29] 'The rugby men have to get smashed, swim across the Ponderosa Lake and then naked to Juice.'

It was no accident that Skool Disco fell on a Wednesday, and thus attracted those students who did not fit in with the intense costuming of Juice/ROAR. Sporty fancy-dressers complained about conservatism in fancy dress and were more comfortable wearing unusual costumes that required more scripting, in which inexperienced fancy dressers would not be confident. In so doing, sporty students spent hours preparing their costumes; the machismo that passed as currency within the group (both amongst males and females) never contradicting this effort. As one might expect, aggressive, 'banterous' (to use the student adjective) speculation in liquidity was often displayed in these costumes. This was well demonstrated one Wednesday when the Football Club all dressed in black-face to Juice. This caused controversy and complaints, which resulted in the students' removal from the club. Before this happened I questioned one of the members who explained the club were all dressed as the Everton footballer Joseph Yobo, as a tribute. Indeed, he could not understand why anyone was upset: 'no harm's intended', he pointed out, commenting 'there's a black person on the social, he didn't have to bother putting any make-up on'.

It was obvious however that members were aware that there was something risky about the costume: although that was the whole point; it was intended to be an aggressive speculation in liquidity. The students were performing banter, flirting with aggression, attempting to prick and not wound. In this they were testing 'reality', not to make any racial comment, but rather in an attempt to rip the malleable, liquid nature of the black market where only the raw can touch the real (see 7.2).While this transgressive edge may have heightened the performance of going out (thus increasing its integrative power amongst the team) it was designed to establish the reputation of the club as 'legendary' in the eyes of others. The performance was thus tailored towards Juice, and targeted at the heart of student culture. It could not have taken place in another nightclub, or indeed on West Street, where the students would have certainly risked bruising to their already blackened bodies.[30]

What is not obvious to casual observers, is that the sports clubs were typically dominated by privately educated students. What little Rah 'scene' there was in Sheffield could be located in the long investment these students had made in their bodily capital. One student maintaining that 'posh girls are massive' and commenting that 'you can see the appeal of getting involved in the whole rugby thing. It's all big 21st birthday parties, you know, with marquees on the lawn...'. There was a clear contrast with those students from poorer backgrounds, who, even if they had corresponding physical capital could not compete with the sporty students. William, for example, had invested a lot of time body-building. He was one of the few students to attend university from his school, and the only one from his housing estate aside from his brother. He could not, however play any contact sports, and lacked the cultural capital to get along with the students on sports

[30] Indeed, it is testament to the non-violence of the habitus that the team were safe walking from their pre-drinking to the Union, and testament to the esteem the football team are held there that they were let in.

team. Although he excelled at the everyman male behaviours expected of the bodily mainstream, William felt his background barred himself from participation in sports, and by extension the social opportunities that brought. On Wednesdays he dressed up in school uniform and avoided the aggressive costuming of the Union. Similarly, Gregory, although not from an explicitly poor background felt the weekly cost of buying fancy dress was prohibitive to anyone who wasn't wealthy: 'It's just so expensive having to get or hire a costume every week. And if you don't you just get shouted down and then made to down loads of drinks next time you go on a social.'

Interpreting the Wednesday fancy dress scene as one which serves to propagate accumulated wealth amongst the student body would be simplistic. What is interesting is the way that elite students, in the absence of a 'Rah' scene, have absorbed the bodily and cultural constructions of the laddish mainstream (traditionally identifiable with working class masculinities (Kehily and Nayak, 1997)). This can be clearly heard in the accents of privately educated students at Sheffield which tend to gravitate towards a generalised south-eastern accent for students from the south and a generalised regional 'northern' accent for those from elsewhere. Standard English or Received Pronunciation is rarely heard on the sports field, or in Juice/ROAR. Perhaps this is the ultimate legacy of the dominance of the Union within the black market: due to the absence of elite student venues within the night-time economy of Sheffield (as seen in, for example, Newcastle (Hatersley, 2010)), stratification is subsumed within the temporal and spatial provision of the Union. Many students do not even notice it, although all will have seen evidence of its existence, if not at Juice/ROAR itself, then in representations of it, as discussed in the next section.

7.2 Pranking the corpse

The presence of the digital camera, the disposability of the image and the structuring powers of Facebook have all played a huge role in the intensification of the black market in the homogenous third phase of student culture. Like the mobile phone and other personal technologies, their ubiquitous proliferation make it hard to conceptualise a world without their existence. Certainly, if 'capitalist societies are built upon accumulation and investment' (Fiske, 1992, p. 45) then the constant representation of going out can be taken both as measurement of and engagement in the black market. Nathan's (2005, p. 144) statement, that the 'actual experience of individual students is much richer than the normative expressions of student culture' was made before the full force of social networking and digital life had broken on youth culture, and now reads as simplistic. The line between experience and expression has disappeared: it is impossible to comprehend the full extent of cultural (re)production on Facebook, let alone online.

The prevalence of images adds a half-life to Noyes' social imaginary: she discusses the event preparation which bonds social networks and the performances that create the imaginary, but not representations of performances. With going out, and especially fancy dress, a whole raft of re-imaginings occur when the images are sorted, displayed and consumed online. Students see these images as being part of the performance of 'going out', a teleprescient (Virilio, 2006) manipulation of time that casts the present into the future, and the future into the past. The internet allows students to reobjectify the journey to liquidity after the fact, brand managers in the commodification of their own experience, the identity factory, that is Facebook: me, me, choose me, I am fun, choose me.

The parade of 'I's and eyes leaves behind questions of 'reality' in the countless, interconnected young people, endlessly representing, criss-crossing between bedrooms, bars, home and university, future and past, smiling, pouting or grimacing from behind pints, cocktails and shot glasses. Indeed, Facebook ably illustrates the reductions of the popular imagination by demonstrating that student life is both wonderful, at once full of thousands of experiences, and at the same time populated by piles of drunken bodies repeating themselves in endless permutations. Crucially, due to the networked ties of youth, these images are accessible to many students before they go to university. They perpetuate the hold of the black market, representing and thus informing its extent and messy potential.

According to Poster (2002) such technologies constitute 'a mediation in the construction of cultural reality' and 'reconfigure the basic constituents of culture—the relation of the body to mind, human to non-human, space and time, subject and object.' Poster suggests that the internet makes the construction of identity both explicit and fragmented, fearing that 'something monstrous' is being born. Eight years on, the moment for concern has evaporated, for these students have grown up in a parade of manipulated images. Many are, in fact adept at existing in video games which fuse the 'loop of subject-object', between the 'meat world of fingers' and the virtual world on, and indeed off, the screen (De Zengotita, 2005, p. 198). Similarly, just as the photo suggests the performance, the performance is also suggested by the camera: this conflation of subject and object results in the student's finger blurring on the camera button. *Click, click, click!*

Looking at a set of photos documenting a night out is like reading a series of visual tableaus set in the physical stations of the performance arc. Some are touristic in intent, claiming physical place by a representation of identity, while some represent the potential of experience, performing what might have happened if the viewer had been there. They set up multiple taleworlds of suggested reality and fantasy (Young, 1987): one can hear the roars and smell the tang of alcohol, of explorers on a familiar trajectory, the parabola into liquidity. Students are experts at contributing a vast amount of visual information by encoding as full as possible a performance into posed photographs. As such, they mix the depthless surface of Fredric

Jameson's postmodern aesthetics (Roberts, 2000) with the direct intention of pornography, a genre which aims to hide nothing (Žižek, 1999). They are tourists, of their youthful, primal experience *as it happens*, taking photos because they don't want to miss a thing.

As the tableau is performed, liquidity is reobjectified and the moment is thrown into the future, to imaginary friends or themselves reacting with delight, the camera lens becoming the screen of the computer monitor. Indeed, for some groups the act of taking photos dominates the night, one participant even substituting the phrase 'taking photos' for 'going out' (as in 'are we taking photos tonight?'). Many students commented on the stylised poses that were struck for the camera, which obviously owe a great deal to fashion photography and celebrity culture, and were indeed, subject to their own trends.[31] Both male and female performances were replete with a variety of suggestive pouts and alluring gazes, ranging from the overt performances of fancy dress (see 7.1.1.), to the cool, controlled pose of looking good. Such poses are difficult to pull off in the journey towards liquidity, and both men and women practice them at home, in front of their own cameras. Many have been practicing for most of their teenage years.

This is the high art of objectification at play, the tease of indifferent control in the face of the nightly bacchanal, lips slightly parted, muscles tense, in control, ready for *action*, ready to *fuck*. These images work the ideal stalker: you can't have me, you can only want me, I own this photo, I own you, I own this time, all *mine*. Such an attitude is another example of the fusion of subject and object, a loop born in the third homogenous period of student culture (6.1.3). Pose is the person is the photograph is the moment forever: control over not only the body (as per Goffman) but of the future itself. It assumes Avery Gordon's (1997) hypervisible culture which sees everything as accessible, viewable, understandable and consumable and reduces 'human possibility to the immediate confines of the body' (Chapman, 2008, p. 158). This deepens the discussion of student costume in 7.1.1, rephrasing the attractions of both fancy dress and legible sports wear as a time out from image-making. Indeed, fancy dress can be read as distillation, satire and celebration of the mediated articulation of the self demanded by the black market. A night off via an exaggeration of the performative dictates, a temporary act of intense self-definition in the face of endless options: *Tonight Matthew, I'm going to be Elvis Presley*. A night off posing and preening and 'looking fit' by puncturing the endless, parade of pop by surrendering the body to enacting a fragment of the whole. Effectively, fancy dress says *I* am ready for my close up. In their regular, weekly intensification of this, sporty students wear their costumes like tattoos, their body and costume as one, like the 'legendary' football team black-up. Sporty students thus return the

[31] When I began my fieldwork female students often posed with fingers raised to pouting mouths while eyebrows arched to suggest surprise: 'Who me? I would never consider such a thing...'. This flirtatious performance became ubiquitous and then a cliché to be avoided, a student rule to be unlearnt.

performance of fancy dress to the boundary between subject and object which, for many students, it is an escape from.

Fancy dress also acts as a shield against liquidity, pre-empting the inevitable fall from shame into messy binge drinking. It thus both encourages and justifies a night that ends in liquidity: it doesn't matter how far you fall when dressed as Dorothy or the Cowardly Lion. Just as make-up, hair gel and 'going out clothes' sexualise the body to both invite and *defend against* the objective gaze of the night-time economy, fancy dress both invites messy binge drinking and *protects against* its consequences because it has already destroyed the shell which messy liquidity will dissolve. For should a photo or video be taken that exposes the subject in some unflattering way, showing them to be ugly, 'over-performed',[32] heavily intoxicated or out of control, then these images are quickly circulated, failed performances liberated from the subject-object loop and offered to the 'banterous masses'.[33]

While they may not want such images and videos attached to their Facebook profiles, students are essentially ambivalent about their existence. The active construction and dissemination of images documenting disorder and risky behaviour, is a pursuit much commented on in the literature (Griffin *et al.*, 2009; Peluchette and Karl, 2010). Most interesting, in terms of student culture, is the element of punishment obviously seen in overt 'prank photos'. These are taken when a student becomes so intoxicated that they fall unconscious, thus providing other students the opportunity to abuse their bodies whilst taking images and videos. While there are traditions of 'pranking the corpse' (Harlow, 1997) and evidence of nineteenth century drunken face 'blackening' (Bater, forthcoming) student abuse should be contextualised within intense mediated representation on the one hand and the post-industrial alcohol order on the other. These contemporary attacks can be divided into two categories. The first, far more common, is when the victim is known and the attack perpetrated by their family and thus contextualised in going out, and the liquidity and banter that brings:

> The videos feature myself, Spot-the fish and Whore Pipe plotting a terrorisation operation against 'our leader', Monkey. This occurred last year and involved a plot to remove both of his eyebrows while he was comtosed in his bed...mint. What I found funny about them more than anything was how serious all three of us were taking the operation. At one point we even argue over who should have the privilege of removing the great man's brows. Due to all of us being runied (FELLA), the video footage is poor at best.[34]

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[32] Images that reveal the constructed nature of identity by displaying obviously forced poses.
[33] 'He maybe needs to think twice next time about performing like a circus monkey for people's video phones, otherwise the footage could end up in the wrong hands.'
[34] This student's writing style is pregnant with textualisations of oral forms from the idiocultures he describes. 'FELLA' refers to a spoken interjection that intensifies awareness of and implicitly celebrates masculine liquidity.

While families were likely to temper the butchering of their own, they showed no such mercy against those they did not know. Once, in Tapton, the Halifax rugby team spent the day drinking in Tapton Bar. When they finally departed, at some point past midnight, a member was left unconscious in the Reception area. Four Tapton students, two male and two female quickly galvanised themselves, collecting razors, shaving foam, permanent markers and scissors. I arrived to witness his left eyebrow being shaved off, and a crude cock being drawn on the side of his face. One of the female students calmly explained to me that the student 'deserves this', because 'he shouldn't have let himself get in that state'. 'He'll expect this,' she kept repeating. The student's hair was already snipped and 'restyled', he was undressed, his trousers taken off and his underpants snipped at the waist. Being an older employee of the University I could and should have stopped this attack. Although I moderated and eventually ended it, I did so slowly, not for the purposes of my research, but because I fell into the vertigo of 'group polarisation' (Abrams *et al.*, 1990), fighting a strange sense of excitement and 'team spirit'.

The next day the student woke up at approximately 6am, put his clothes on and returned home. There was no come back, no recrimination, no anger. Indeed, in five years working for the University I have never heard a complaint over these attacks, which are normalised as just punishment, part and parcel of extreme drinking; not a badge or trophy, and not even a wound, more like a limp, the result of a fall. These punishments are thus accepted in the habitus, engaged in by both men and women, just as they seem to be accepted in the national media (Moran, 2010). This is 'standard behaviour', just having a laugh: *to be fair I'd do the same.* As performances of liquidity they should be contrasted with the objectification of the body. Fat people rarely, if ever, receive such abuse. These punishments are for fit, disciplined bodies that have developed a shell hard enough to crack, bodies that invite such punishment, accept it as a consequence of investing in their capital. They should not be mistaken as Bakhtinian, carnivalesque reversals of hierarchy. From the student's point of view these attacks are morally counter-balanced by the victims' engagement in the rules of the black market. It is banter, market forces at play, fair game: a horizontal swap. Indeed, there are no hierarchical reversals in going out (as there were in the costumes of the Rag) because there is no hierarchy in the homogenous third phase of student culture. Responsibility for the self is atomised onto the individual, whose skin has hardened to meet the challenge. These punishments are the dark consequence of ceding some of this self to the family which purport to reveal the shell for what it hides: a squirm of phalluses. As such they are also acts of supreme definition in themselves, a degradation defined in the flash of the camera, a Ballardian pornography of violence.

Interpreting these punishments as manifestations of the grotesque so beloved by academics (Abrahams and Bauman, 1978; Malbert, 2000; Ware, 2001) would be a distortion. Bakhtin's (1968, p. 19) anal fixations result in 'fertility, growth, and a brimming-over abundance' and have 'a cosmic... all-people's character'. Students do

not possess an open-ended, limitless concept of the body. As suggested in Chapter Six, the axis of participation in society has fallen from the vertical and hierarchical to the horizontal and personal. To weave an argument out of the thread of the 'deeply positive character' of Bakhtin's (1968, p. 62) material bodily principle would ignore the intensifications of neoliberalism, which has turned the gay, ambivalent laughter of the marketplace into a sneering, derisive howl. Discipline and hedonism go hand in hand in the contemporary market square (Featherstone, 1991; Szmigin *et al.*, 2008), especially in the post-industrial alcohol order, 'a landscape that encourages consumption but a moral climate that urges restraint' (Measham and Brain, 2005, p. 278).

If, as Winlow and Hall (2006) suggest, violence has become normalised in the night-time economy, then the student habitus, long celebrated for its anti-violence (Chatterton, 1999), is, in fact, home to punishment and abuse. Indeed, these intoxicated punishments follow the same logic as 'Facebook rape' or 'frape':[35] they left their computer open, guv'nor, so they deserved it. This suggests that degradation, abuse and violence, symbolic or otherwise is the natural consequence of letting your guard down. Again, there may be a traditional element to this, inherited from the ambivalent destruction and creativity of the Rag, but this is an element that is no longer sanctioned by ritual, temporality or license: thanks to the subsumption of social relations to the marketplace, savagery has become normative reality. Under the tyranny of the play clock and its dictates to 'have a good time all the time' the carnival has folded in on itself and is no longer a means of freeing the territory, of ushering new ideas into society. As a consequence there is no temporal liberation that releases participants 'from control by the social system' (Belk, 1994, p. 109). Extraordinary events such as Intro Week, Christmas Day at the Union or Graduation are simply intensified versions of the weekly calendar.

The punishments of the black market are both a consequence of its daily objectifications and a solution to their pressures, a release of social tension that ultimately enforces the status quo and the existing power structure. Such is the hegemonic incorporation of pleasure. While these punishments also occur amongst contemporary non-student youth (Griffin *et al.*, 2009), the evolution of working-class alcohol cultures have been more marked by change than their HE counterparts, embedded as they were in the social structures imposed by industrial labour. As a consequence violence in the contemporary working-class night-time economy is public and directed against *conscious* individuals (Winlow and Hall, 2006). In contrast, the longstanding carnivalesque legacy of student mobility alongside its middle class gentilities has contributed to the privatisation and internalisation of violence. Once the target of 'student-bashing' for being at the vanguard of youth pleasure, students can now be relied on to punish themselves.

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[35] The common act of gaining access to a user's Facebook page (usually because they left themselves signed in) and littering it with profanities and slurs.

The high volume of single session alcohol consumption can also be interpreted as a form of punishment, both against others and the self. For many students this is both economic rationing ('what's the point in drinking if you don't get drunk?) and psychoactive trial:

> After eventually arriving at Panda's house (which was fucking catt mind) we quickly got changed, sunk the remaining cans (FELLA) and 'teared to see the boys' at Font bar. Sipping on Mai Tai and sexy bitch cocktails was mint, but then Vodka Revs was even minter. The only gliche was that I was the only one to get Id'd, but the doubles in there were absolutely lethal. Fly was given one of the most expensive dirty pints I've ever bought; £23. He impressively finished it off in one...pretty mint. Then we moved onto The Ritz and this is where the memory of the night effectively ended. It was mint though and I successfully managed to stay well within my £50 budget.

What you pay for is what you get: this memory loss is ruthlessly 'calculated'. Students speak of 'fragmentary experience' with limited recall of events or circumstances ('I will definitely be there, I might even attempt to remember this social...'). The pursuit (and infliction) of liquidity dissolves mind and body, with its after effects, its 'mess' (or as one student explained 'vomit, piss and shit') not fully experienced or remembered. Others recount these grim consequences with a war reporter's suppressed excitement: 'He told me afterwards that he had thrown up blood... This is probably a sign that he should cut back on his alcohol intake, but he won't'. Another described his hangover in terms of 'rotting away in your own filth'. These punishments are peak experiences of the mainstream, the heights of the central territory and valued accordingly. As highlands they are always occupied by sporty students (who win at life), but most non-sporty students will also journey up here and those who don't are always aware of their occupants looking down. From these vantage points the body is dissolved in tribal, punishing bingeing: obliterated, slaughtered, mashed up and brained. Usually the night-time economy safely contains such violence within its scripted areas, but when it happens *en masse*, the descending swathe of bodies and alcohol is literally known as 'Carnage'.

The business plan behind Carnage UK is simple: organise mass student bar crawls in 46 university towns every Sunday by printing t-shirts which act as tickets. Bars, pubs and nightclubs pay the company to be included on these shirts which are bought for £10 each by a total of c.350,000 students a year (Robinson, 2009a). These costumes act as identity symbols for their wearers who are encouraged to both 'customise' them according to set themes and to write on them and each other as the night progresses.[36] In so doing the organisers cleverly combine the dress codes of 'legible sports wear' and 'fancy dress'. Events are promoted by students who

[36] Standard fancy dress themes are chosen; for example, Dirty Doctors & Nympho Nurses (24/10/2006), Pimps & Tarts (13/04/08) and Baywatch Beach Party (27/04/08). It is fashionable amongst men and women to rip these t-shirts to reveal the chest and breasts.

receive a cut of ticket sales, and marshalled by student 'volunteers' who receive free entry and five free drinks at the destination nightclub, not to mention the prestige of being associated with the event. Heavily advertised, especially on Facebook, campaigns are always based on the premise of missing out on an incredible, important experience:

> Warning please be aware Carnage is extremely popular. Get Your Carnage Bar Crawl T-Shirt Now!...This Event will Sell out Miss This – You Will Miss Out! It's Gonna Get Messy Don't Forget Your Marker Pens![37]

The company is, essentially, a floating, disembodied brand that passes from university town to university town, Sunday to Sunday, printing t-shirts and organising student engagement in the night-time economy on the only day not colonised by the weekly ticking of the play clock.[38] The bars, of course, are happy to be involved, despite the controversy that has surrounded the event following a Hallam student urinating on a war memorial on Sunday October 10th 2009, an event at which five students were arrested (Taylor, 2009). Long before this the Union and the student press had criticised Carnage UK for promoting sexualised binge drinking. The company have denied promoting 'irresponsible drinking':

> Our events are heavily focussed on group identity, social & ethnic cohesion and fancy dress themes. The only criticism we are aware of, are those created by our competitors, the student unions across England. These are the very same student unions who themselves are operating dangerous and irresponsible drinks promotions. Our marketing material always carry the 'Drink Responsibly' message and the Challenge 21 policy which we strictly enforce.
>
> (Taylor, 2009)

As ridiculous as this may sound to anyone who has attended a Carnage event, there is a grain of truth in it. Carnage is one of the few events that both University and Hallam students attend as equals, their black markets united for Sunday trading in open territory. It is reminiscent, in a way, of the Pyjama Jump, or what it may have evolved into. Indeed, a photo of one of the last Jumps even depicted a group of students wearing a specially printed t-shirt with 'sign here when you've scored' (Mathers, 2007, p. 117). This makes the connection between the events explicit, and casts Carnage as a fully commodified Pyjama Jump, with the act of writing on a t-shirt its 'unique selling point'. Wearing a Carnage shirt is, of course, an example of a 'suggestive performance', one that invites bodily graffiti from the marker pens students take with them. Since everyone is participating in the same suggestive performance, the sense of audience is much wider than is typical when going out.

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[37] Taken from flyer for Carnage event on 27/10/08. It is possible that Carnage popularised the slang use of 'messy' as it features on flyers in my possession dating back to 2006.

[38] Indeed it is an eerie experience finding a flyer for a Carnage event set in another town as all details are the same save for the names of the bars and clubs.

This is one of the reason's students enjoy the event: it captures some of the totality of Pyjama Jump. The process of writing on bodies invites mutual touching and flirting, as well the production of many sexualised identity statements. Of course, the t-shirt has long been a 'contested site for the interplay of the social semiotic forces of solidarity and power' (Horton and Jordan-Smith, 2004, p. 428) and nowhere is this more apparent then on the streets of a Carnage Sunday, where disciplined bodies are punished for their involvement in the objectifications of sexuality. Written on the Carnage t-shirt I found in the gutter was:

> I heart VIRGIN GIRLS
> I DROPPED THE SOAP... COME GET ME BOYS!!
> If its not alcohol it won't get stolen...yet.
> I heart SEXY POLICE OFFICERS (FEMALE ONLY)
> STRIP SEARCH
> I'll be your bad boy. PUNISH ME!!

These comments are, in fact, tame, although the last is apt. Carnage resembles a gang 'frape' staged for a pornographer: identities willingly sullied, branded and shamed. The spurting cock is its triumphant symbol, scrawled on girl's cheeks and breasts, on men's backs and mouths. This is the liberalisation of licensing laws taken to a vicarious, free extreme, traditional male pleasures engaged in by both sexes, bottles torpedoing down throats as cash tills sing and phalluses splutter globs of permanent marker. Women's foreheads read 'sluts' and 'bitches', whilst men are 'gay', 'rapists' or just plain 'cunts'. As in tattoos, which see the 'conflict between the individual and the social... engraved into the skin' (Oksanen and Turtiainen, 2005, p. 128), these marks represent the woeful state of contemporary feminism writ large. The experience is hard to describe, immensely strange, especially if you are not drunk. As one student commented: 'Carnage literally is "CARNAGE". Loads of bars, loads of booze, with endless amounts of tidy gash crawling everywhere'. Shirts get ripped and torn as liquidity proceeds, and the 'tidy gash' begins crawling over each other, for it is *de rigueur* for girls to perform Sapphic kisses for male attention. As the mass performance dissolves into 'piss, shit and vomit', the inevitable arrests occur before the Council's 5am road-sweepers begin to get the city ready for its Monday morning start. Of course, from the point of view of the night-time economy Carnage is a simply a remarkably efficient and profitable use of space and time; if only students didn't piss on war heroes or hit policemen, there wouldn't be a problem. As Paul Scriven, the leader of Sheffield City Council, commented:

> Regardless of the moral arguments, if these events leave a trail of destruction behind them then it's clear to me that Carnage UK should be paying for the resulting costs...
>
> (Robinson, 2009a)

This frames the central issue as a 'clearing up problem'. In other words it follows the same rationale as the young people in Griffin *et al.*'s (2009) study: that extreme drinking and disorder, even to the brink of unconsciousness, is a logical, even inevitable leisure option for youth. I have attempted to demonstrate over the course of this thesis, that this effective determinism is a result of neither biology nor status (being a student), but of the violence of a totalising, unregulated and manipulative market. In contrast to the working class night-time economy, students are largely committing violence on the self, or their unconscious friends, disguising it in the performance of liquidity. Thus, it is only the echoes of this violence that cause public concern, either in the new geographies of studentification, or the pissy splatter of Carnage. This 'clearing up problem' avoids the central issue: why do students desire, in the words of an ex-JCR president of Tapton, 'all the hostility and the rowdiness'? How does the market, to use its own language, incentify this?

7.2.1 酒後吐真言[39]

The violence of extreme alcohol consumption, whether to the self or as a punishment to others, is always a reobjectification of liquidity. And yet this reobjectification is not simply a return to the cultural pressure of youth culture: it is a reobjectification of something beyond the simulacra of theatreland. It is the subject-object loop tearing itself through the veil of constant performance. This is because the black market sees objectified cultural capital invested in a performance that dissolves that very objectification. This occurs in a familiar, hyper-controlled theatreland which, from its provision of stages to the actor's own costumes, is designed to lose the self in a performance that evokes freedom, carnival, transgression and the release of inhibition. Alcohol is both commodity and performance-enhancing drug, but too much and the actors slip and crack their head on the boards of the stage. This is the body retching vomit or being struck by a fist. Instead of recovering objectification the next day, via the shame and consensus building exercises of Facebook, it occurs in the midst of performance: a sobering reverse of the intoxication process that is always real and immediate.

In the case of physical, bodily violence this is thrilling to watch: 'simply a natural attraction, like the brief appearance of a real tiger on a simulated safari trip' (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 190). In 7.2 I suggested that punishment was an analogue for the market, the vicarious violence of neoliberalism manifesting itself on the body. Such an interpretation follows the logic of Bryan Turner's (1996) somatic society, which suggests that society, and social problems are expressed through the body. On a mass, determined scale this carries an experiential desire, an invocation,

[39] After wine blurts tasteful speech (*in vino veritas*).

willing disruption and dissolution as the student battle cry of 'it's going to get messy!' objectifies liquidity itself, willing the malleable world on the hard shell of youth. Many of my interviews suggest that this search for extreme liquidity and its inevitable reobjectifications of violence were quests for 'reality'. Authenticity is the ultimate reward of the black market, conferred from the springs of reality trickling from the highest peaks of the central territory, the reason students perform the journey from objectivity to liquidity. Indeed, it is the experiential 'sense of authenticity' consumption delivers *in spite of continued representations to the contrary* that students extol when they discuss alcohol and student life.

Despite countless mediated images of 'pissed-up "ironic" students', not to mention health warnings, and personal resolutions to spend time 'more constructively', the punishing ASCs provided by binge drinking, accompanied, as Noyes would say, by the 'consensus' derived from the performance of going out, confer a sense of authenticity, of 'reality', to the student experience, which, as discussed in 4.1, doesn't feel 'real'. When the media criticises student life as 'a monoculture, one fuelled by booze and an obsession with being ironic' (Sanghera, 2008), they attribute causality to youthful inexperience, a biologism that ignores the media's complicity in the marketisation of HE over the last thirty years, a process that has served to reify student culture into a commodified experience.

For the night-time economy ritualises a product that has tangible effects on the human body, far more immediate than any other aspect of HE, including learning. To students, the perception altering effects of alcohol combined with the punishments of bingeing, deliver an experiential sense of what many describe as 'authentic existence'. This shock of 'sheer reality' is amplified by its expected nature: for is this not what the commodified student experience promised? Finding the mediated myths, images and representations of 'being a student' confirmed by the experiential pleasures of studentland is exhilarating and liberating, and one of the defining, self-validating thrills of going to university. Discovering that the shimmering mirage of 'student life' can be made real by supping at the very oasis that you had feared was all part of the illusion suddenly transforms the sand into paradise. And thus the simulacra replicates itself, not in the frozen soulless frames that one associates with image, reality, image, but in joyous, surging, drunken chants of affirmation: *we're here, we're stuuuuudents, and it's as good as they are pretending it's not!* The sensibility of loss, discussed in 4.1 is in direct proportion to the sense of authenticity conferred by the punishments of the black market. This is the story students repetitively tell when summing themselves up:

> I unfortunately study History, am a massive fan of the mighty Bladesmen, love playing guitar and seem to spend most of my time at uni on a one-stop train to lashville[40] (which is what it's all about really!).

[40] Where one is punishingly drunk.

Not study, nor sport nor music, but the process of getting obliterated, which he 'seem[s] to spend most of [his] time' doing. The criticism of this 'one-stop train' is not the search for 'what it's all about', for this is a condition of modernity ('The moral thread of self-actualisation is one of authenticity' (Giddens, 1991, p. 78)). No, the problem is the solution: a daily, regular service to 'lashville' run by the Union and the night-time economy. The track is so expertly oiled, so slick, that it takes many students two years to begin to reflexively look out the window and see anything beyond the performance arc of predrink–nightclub–home. Indeed the rails of the track are so tightly riveted to the mobile student experience that many mistake the performance of going out for reality itself. This was the problem I encountered with many of my interviewees who considered fancy dress to be 'nothing remarkable' not to mention those who thought shaving eyebrows and writing 'cunt' on foreheads was 'standard behaviour', 'to be expected'.

Many found it inconceivable to view 'going out' as a performance, despite regular comments concerning 'putting on a good show'. In terms of their university experience it was considered as 'the real point of university', many repeating the phrase 'what it's all about' like a willing incantation. Of course, in doing so they were simply describing what going out felt like: conflating both the loss of reflexivity in performance and the savage, authentic shock of intoxication as 'reality'. By locating reality in liquidity and violence they were, of course denying reality's place in daily life, amidst the objectifications and representations of youth culture and HE. This confirms the suggestions of many media theorists, who view such objectifications and representations as, essentially, alienating (Poster, 2002; De Zengotita, 2005; Baudrillard, 2007; Berardi, 2009a).

Banter, the language of liquidity, pretends to represent this sense of 'raw reality'. It is comparable to the American 'undergraduate cynical' code of discourse in which everyone is levelled by 'joke-and-insult' discourse (Moffatt, 1989; Nathan, 2005). Moffatt, however, saw a distinction between the 'real selves' that students showed to their 'real friends' and the 'undergraduate cynical' displayed to everyone else. This was not so in my families, who used banter as a means of taunting what was supposed to be the 'real self'. Banter touches the raw, teases and provokes a feeling, a response to which there is only one correct reply: escalation. In some ways it used humour as a strategy of inclusion, a 'tiny conspiracy' amongst friends (Kuipers, 2006, p. 248). This get-out-clause flirts with violence, allowing banter to fall back on 'no offence should be taken as there is no malicious intent' (Luhrs, 2007, p. 203). By doing so it aims to puncture, to finger the shell. As a language it is thus implicated in 'the search for reality', which sees the pursuit of liquidity as a relentless attempt to break through not just pretension, but representation itself. This is the purpose of all the cheeky pricking, punching, and taunting: forcing a reaction, generating *a response* unmediated by ideas, feelings or principles, unscripted by constant representation: life unperformed.

Because the only sense of reality is received from the punishing raw, banter is a savage means to an authentic end. Ultimately it is a strategy of revelation. In 2006, during the final months of Sorby, all the students knew it was slated for destruction, and one family, in fact one of the groups involved in my ethnography, vandalised the walls, drawing all over them in maker pen, smashed the entire corridor's ceiling, including the fire detection equipment and broke windows, in an episode of destruction that lasted well over a day. When eventually caught they claimed that 'it didn't matter' as the 'building was going to be knocked down anyway'. In their eyes, the building was worthless, an environment without purpose, to be inevitably consumed in the values of liquidity. This act, which was characterised by the University as a 'rampage' was seen by the students as a raw honesty, a perceived authenticity and comment on the doomed shithole that was Sorby: revealing what was behind the calico wall. This is the violence of the third, homogenous phase of student culture, a new violence of revelation that the porters and Security guards did not understand:

> I am not open to intimidation. I used to walk the corridors. I don't now. [Why's that?] You've got doormen on pubs now and I can't make sense of it. I was told when I joined the army, 'They don't brew fighting beer,' and I still believe it. You start tarring students with the same brush, £20,000 of damage and they're still at university. We've felt let down time and time. I mean, why should I bother? Why should I walk the corridors?
>
> It's always to do with alcohol the vandalism side of it. Last week one smashed the toilet, it needed two tradesmen, a plumber and an electrician. Total vandalism. I think they stand there and think, what can I do in this room? They're planning to do things in the room. It doesn't just happen.

Of course, it *does* just happen when the self is lost to the performance of liquidity, punished by alcohol consumption, totally subsumed and searching for 'the raw' in a self-serving performance, where the audience has shrunk to the family. It happens in the same way the punishments and violence against the self and others occurs: alcohol-fuelled performances of liquidity reobjectifying themselves in order to touch raw, authentic reality. Smash it up!

That alcohol should be the psychoactive of choice, and not, for example, the marijuana, amphetamine or ecstasy of the second phase of student culture, is a consequence of both the neoliberal post-industrial alcohol order and a perverse sense of wariness. Many of the students I spoke to were, in fact, very critical of illegal drugs, despite their repeated use of alcohol to achieve an ASC. This is reminiscent of both Žižek's (2008) depiction of consumerism eliciting desires without risking normative transgressions and De Zengotita's (2005, p. 69) commentary on society searching for 'power without the terror', of setting up 'endlessly varied, but controlled, encounters with the primal, the apocalyptic, the

ecstatic, the Dionysian'. De Zengotita argues that this turn to sensation is a direct result of pervasive, global mediation, which, has long contained nature and forever advances its representations of human experience, thus dulling its edge. This suggests that the boundaries of the abject 'of being opposed to the *I*' (Kristeva and Roudiez, 1982, p. 2) are forever being pushed back. As an example of this forever encroaching representation, this sense of 'rawness' in student life, so apparent from my fieldwork, is beginning to be represented in the media. The following excerpt, for example, was taken from the women's weekly magazine *More* under the title of 'Diary of a Male Fresher'. It was accompanied by a spread of sexualised photos:

> I'm woken by Dan and Kieran chucking a bucket of water over me and by 10am we're hammered on vodka and beer funnels.
>
> We start downing ketchup, vinegar, a rotten egg and, when we get really drunk, our own piss along with the booze.
>
> We try to wake him, but the most we get is the occasional slurred 'hello', and regular chunders – in his sleep. When he starts foaming at the mouth we call an ambulance. Then Sara spays a fire extinguisher everywhere. It covers the corridor, kitchen, food – everything – in white powder. I can't deal with the medics and the fact my flat looks like the North Pole, and go to bed.'
>
> (Robinson, 2009c)

Of course students sense this mediated facade, but this results in intensification not rejection, forever pushing further, just as, in fact, the advertisements and events of the night-time economy implore them to:

> It's time to dig out the face paint, apply the whiskers, cover yourself in stripes for Sheffield's biggest student night ROAR! Every Wednesday in Foundry & Fusion is the WILDEST & BEST student night ever! Go crazy for the best in current pop, dance and... well everything really to get your feet a'moving! Roar until you can't Roar no more, every Wednesday night! Whoop!

This telepresence of style, from objectification to liquidity, sexualisation to debasement, manifested in constant exhortations to perform is relentless. The play clock ticks on, leaving no time or space for reflection, day after day, week after week, calling out its families into constant exploration of the raw and the wild. This, of course, is the represented level of participation, yet, in a culture based on performance, where the theatres and stages are geographically indistinct to those of the white world of daytime education, the gap between representation and reality is thin indeed, and some would say, given the penetration of the media, meaningless (De Zengotita, 2005; Baudrillard, 2007). One reaction to this physical and representational intensity is exhaustion. Indeed, Berardi (2007, 2009a, 2009b)

suggests that the pressures of the infosphere are tangible: 'The subsumption of the mind under the process of capitalist valorisation leads to a genuine mutation,' (2007, p. 76), 'a psychopathic mutation of social relations.' (2007, p. 81).

Certainly, considering the carnivalesque, it would be inconceivable for students to binge on food as they do an alcohol. Repetitively eating to excess, the body transgressing 'its own limits', would permanently destroy the contours of the shell. The act of eating is certainly not 'joyous, triumphant' just as work no longer 'triumph[s] in food' (Bakhtin, 1968, p. 281). Many students instead undergo enforced starvation and gym routines measured out in internalised algorithms of exercise, rationed pleasure, guilt and shame. Somehow this seems appropriate and apposite in the context of a society in which celebrities seem to bear the weight of mediated attention, in images that are both positive and negative. Indeed the student press has adopted montages of the sort used in gossip magazines to illustrate the happenings of the night-time economy ('*s.c.e.n.e.* Funniest photo of the month wins a bottle of champagne!!!' (Shafique, 2008, p. 30)), and popular night-time economy websites such as www.dontstayin.co.uk revolve around images of nights out, parties and fun. The Union echoed these for its Monday night bar event The Big One, using a design layout that mimicked *Hello!* and *OK!*.

Some males within my participation group maintained a muscular physique through steroids, one female resorted to plastic surgery whilst a great many succumbed to eating disorders: fancy dress of another order. If these bodily corrections can be read as a reactions to the pressures of objectivity, the nightly sorties into liquidity can be understood as coping mechanisms, a means of dealing with the enormous strain that constant representation and objectification has placed on the body by turning its surface into a shell. Of course, this reads alcohol as medicine, and its ritualised consumption as treatment.

7.3 Help me scrape the mucus off my brain

> It is not so much that the self becomes a new self; in a sense – at least, this is the claim and the promise of a higher education – the self finds itself truly for the first time. This is so through the moment of authenticity that the student reaches, and that is so, in turn, because the student now has reached a position of being able to form understandings of the world and with (more or less) sound warrant. That, to repeat, is particular to higher education, insofar as it is rooted in research and scholarship. In such an environment, the student moves epistemologically onto firmer ground, in that she has grounds for her understandings and claims.
>
> (Barnett, 2007, p. 69)

If education is about ontology, about becoming, then this presupposes an evolutionary narrative of, as Barnett says, 'finding' the authentic self. As discussed in 6.1 and 7.2, in their lives away from education students are similarly concerned with experience, authenticity and the self, although their narrative is neither evolutionary nor one of becoming. As befits the third horizontal, homogenous stage of student culture, it is one of revelation, of stripping away the surface and revealing the essence of the interior. Gourlay (2009) suggests that the process of writing ontologically forms a student identity. Outside of the white world, I suggest that the process of drinking has a similar action. While both encourage reflexivity and build confidence, drinking works in the opposite way to writing: it dissolves and does not objectify. As discussed in 7.2.1, intoxication feels more real and immediate than education, especially when contextualised in the identity-making performances of going out.

For students the most important distinction between the two is choice. This is the motivation for participation which, as discussed in 4.2, casts education as obligatory (Trow, 2005), and going out as a 'free' choice. In interview students underline the disposition of the habitus: 'it is my choice to do what I want to do to my body'. During my fieldwork I was often given examples by my participants of when they refused to go out or refused to consume ugly and tasteless cocktails designed to intoxicate: 'it's all about choice, mate no one's making you do anything'. There is certainly no consciousness of any coercion beyond the group; students see themselves as adults with a right to play without censure. Autonomous, free thinking individuals, none of my participants, however, had the conceptual tools to criticise or question the market on which this 'free choice' was made, even those students who had decided not to make it.[41] Aside from invisible, bewildered international students, most of this latter group were either religious or left wing. In other words they were engaged with their own journeys of revelation and objectification.

However, when considering the development of the self, one must consider the social context of the activity. As discussed in 4.2 the play clock speaks to groups and the work clock to individuals. The irony of the 'free choice' to play without censure is that going out cannot be engaged in alone. Drinking, for my participants, was a social activity that, via the process of making friends and making places subsumed, to some extent, the identity of the individual to the group. As discussed in 5.2, the individual student does not chose to go out, the group does. So, while the journey from objectivity to liquidity implied a personal revelation of authenticity, this was always supported, delivered and cushioned by the group engaging with the night-time economy. Even the language these revelations were couched in, banter, was the language of the small group, in that it required a particpatory audience.

[41] Indeed, when I started this Ph.D. I had little conception of these issues either.

This explains why young people on the journey to liquidity 'trouble the neoliberal project' in refusing to 'inhabit the position of responsible, moderate and rational subjectivity' (Griffin *et al.*, 2009, p. 471). When students used the justifications of neoliberalism to discuss their leisure 'choices', they were not engaging with the black market in a wholly reflexive manner. The revelations of authenticity and reality obtained by touching the raw are group experiences, however personal they feel. This explains the lack of shame in student life, and the recurrence of the adjective 'shameless' to describe the banter of going out. Any shame resulting from the liquid mediations on Facebook was borne by the group, as were the collective punishments of, say, Carnage. While this may be so for other young people, student mobility intensified this process, swapping blood for friendship, heightening the subsumption of the individual to the group, indeed locating the enactment of group identity in the night-time economy.[42]

The student night-time economy is thus of a profoundly different character to the contemporary self-building ontologies of education. Becoming a student in the white world is a choice individuals must make in deciding to do the work. Being a student in the black market is bound by group decision making processes. It does not follow, however, that unlearning the rules of the black market is necessarily connected to a corresponding 'learning' of education. Since the former is a process of distinction in regards to the night-time economy it necessarily entails engaging in the cultural capital of objectification (as discussed in 5.5). These individuations of cool do not necessarily welcome the self-building exercises and insights of education, indeed they may imply a greater connoisseurship in pleasure (Winlow and Hall, 2006). Nor indeed should we expect there to be a direct, proportional between the two. Academics, HEIs and students bid their separate ways long ago in the second, heterogeneous period of student culture. As a consequence the night-time economy has been developing for longer than the student accommodation market and much longer than the deregulated degree market. The subsumption of the individual to the group is one of the black market's strongest products and one of, if not the, defining experience of the UK mobile student experience. As discussed in Chapter Six the Village has certainly modified, and will continue to modify this product, as will the lifting of the cap on tuition fees itself.

The key point, however, is that HEIs, Sheffield being no exception, have long accepted the presence of youth culture and the night-time economy and have benefitted from the developing attractions of the black market. The path of least resistance through the heterogeneous 60s and 70s for both students and their HEIs was one which kept the white world of education separate from the black market of pleasure. In the context of the university as a whole there is, to paraphrase Le Breton (2004, p. 1) on adolescents, 'a lack of guidance in life and a feeling that

[42] Mobility infamously influences group behaviours, especially when they relate to sexuality and intoxication. The Tailhook report (Office of the Inspector General, 1993) is infamously concerned with this, as is the literature on away fans and the carnivalesque (Giulianotti, 1995), not to mention the holiday industry.

behavioural limits are absent' which results in an attempt 'to conquer the right to exist' (p. 11). Le Breton would hold this ritualised pursuit of liquidity was a rite of passage for its widespread, 'sociological eminence' and 'the anthropological structure it contains: 'the revelation of identity and the ontological change pursued with a greater or lesser degree of lucidity' (p. 13).

I would argue that a status change does in fact occur in the raw liquidities of going out, which, for all their joys of group subsumption also affront a sense of self. My older participants spoke of 'having gone through all that' and 'having done that' as if they had won their identities back from the brink. In unlearning to be a student, however, they had learnt to be more sophisticated consumers of the night-time economy. To many this felt like growing up, of knowing 'who I am now' in terms of what 'they liked'. As consumers students become indebted to the night-time economy in how they, as individuals, defined pleasure. As sophisticated emergent adults the reflexive project of the self was reobjectified in the memories of liquidity. To an ex-student the mere question, 'What did you get up to in your student days?' will typically elicit a personal experience narrative based on alcohol. While these stories are primarily articulations of an individual's identity through their exploits, they are also references to the sublimation of that very identity in the muck of punishment. The lessons of the black market are also its scars.

These stories are only one example of the way liquidity is not only reobjectified but actively mythologized. This process is not something that only happens when a student leaves or unlearns the rules of university. It is the typical oral reobjectification of going out in the black market, the equivalent of posting photographs to Facebook. Only in these stories' willing attempts to transcend through '[e]xaggeration, hyperbolism, excessiveness' (Bakhtin, 1968, p. 303) do students approach the cosmic ambitions of the carnivalesque. This is partly because the verbal arts are more ephemeral and thus less subject to mediation than the appearance of the body, and partly because they are adept at creating multiple 'taleworlds' where the 'ordinary' can interact with the extraordinary (Young, 1987). Some of these stories are told 'the next day' while others become personal experience narratives (Dorson, 1960) often contextualised within the group, in performance situations that themselves feature alcohol (Bauman, 1972b). These certainly change as they undergo performances (Bauman, 1986) and have been documented and analysed by many researchers (Winlow and Hall, 2006; Guise and Gill, 2007; Szmigin *et al.*, 2008; Griffin *et al.*, 2009).

When talking about alcohol my participants typically preferred the plural to the singular, as noticed by Guise and Gill (2007), except when they were extolling the exploits and virtues of another individual, in which case that person was always defined as a 'legend'. As discussed in 5.1, legends are those individuals who have consistently proven their commitment to the values of student culture. They are thus a way of avoiding what Bauman (2001) calls ambivalence in that they manage

to define individuals in liquidity, and thus define individuals even in the context of the subsumption of the individual to the group. It is through this process of 'legendeering' that the shell-rupturing attacks of punishment are celebrated by others, for a legend knows no shame. In some ways this is an example of the masculinity of the habitus, of its valorisation of fortitude. On another, however, it is an act of sympathy, a recognition of the hardships of trading in the slosh of liquidity. The majority of my participants were called a legend by a member of their family at some point in their university careers. All had their own stories, and all were celebrated. Everyone, as Bauman (2001) says, was famous. It is through these positive reinforcements that families supported each other, with the suggestion that they were all somebody remarkable, survivors of pain capable, of surviving more. They were authentic legends, beyond temporal depth, beyond representation, beyond objectification: members of the real, true tribe of liquidity.

8 From tower to cave

In 1847 Henry Clifton Sorby sheltered in a quarry whilst taking a walk in the Peaks. As the rain fell,

> he recognized the association between the current structures in the quarry face, the movement of the sand grains in the rainwash, and the deposition of the alluvium in rivers. In one afternoon, at the age of twenty-one, he had laid the foundations of modern sedimentology...
>
> (Humphries, 2004b)

Many of the students from my participation groups never visited the Peaks during their three years at University, more still did not know who Sorby was. Yet all were concerned with walking his route, into nature, searching for secrets in caves. Not every twenty-one year old can lay the foundations for modern sedimentology, but all have their own discoveries and revelations. That their journey should be scripted and enacted by the black market is a consequence of youth culture, its falling hierarchies and inner vistas, which unfolded, in the second half of the twentieth century, to the expansion of HE. The hall of residence named after Sorby was a casualty of this latter expansion, and its demolition and replacement by the Village an architectural symbol of a wider individuation, mental and social.

8.1 Peter spitting wine

This thesis aimed to investigate the distinctive means by which students identified as a group outside of the official university agenda of learning and teaching. The literature suggested that the locus of student identity would be found in the rituals of the night-time economy. My fieldwork confirmed and demonstrated the temporal and spatial transformations these rituals had wrought on student life, the University and the city of Sheffield. In doing so I framed going out as performance and social process, one acting on and enacted by 'the family' and its relationship to student accommodation. Through this dual articulation I demonstrated how going out propagated and was propagated by the pressures of mediated representation. In this I have relied on Paglia (1991), connecting her dichotomy of objectification and liquidity to Bourdieu (1984; 1990) in general, Measham and Brain (2005) and Winlow and Hall (2006) on the night-time economy and Allen and Ainley on HE (2010). Ultimately this thesis suggests that the latter's prediction of disillusionment in HE will be tempered, in the case of mobile students, by their immersion in not only the 'consumer economy's seductive semiological life' (Winlow and Hall, 2006, p. 3) but

also the capital gains to be made in the black market, where going out is both psychic medicine (Berardi, 2009a) and social activity.

In terms of HE, this research was not, of course, generalised; all the fieldwork was undertaken in Sheffield, an elite university. During that time I met many students visiting from other HEIs, and visited many myself, especially the University of Gloucestershire. I have no doubt that the general student culture described here would be recognised by young, mobile students from all over the UK, as indeed this culture is celebrated and shared on Facebook. In many ways this thesis was an investigation into the culture of mobility, however it must be emphasised that firstly the mobile culture dominates national representations of what it is to be a student (Holdsworth, 2009) and secondly that non-mobile students also 'deal on the black market', whether at Sheffield, Hallam or elsewhere. I follow Nathan (2005), in arguing that as culture is widely learnt, shared and contested, the study of one university has a wider application to others.

In the five years this thesis has taken to produce many of my participants have long since graduated and left Sheffield. At one of their Degree Congregations the programme stated:

> You are now one of the University's alumni, and you have a continuing and important role to play. There is no membership fee and no need to register – you join The University of Sheffield alumni (former students) automatically because of your new status as a graduate.[1]

The future rolls on. At the time of writing the dates of semesters on the University website are given up to 2015–2016, over a decade since I began this study, which was originally concerned with the spiritual properties of crystals.[2] This seems like another world, but I have lived in Sheffield for all of it, unlike many of the students I have studied. Indeed, the temporality of student time and the relation of the work and play clocks to student culture have been a major finding of this study. It is worth bearing in mind that undergraduate term time amounts to only 24 weeks a year, 82 weeks in total over a three year course. In the wake of the Browne Review these 82 weeks will be transformed over the coming years. This emphasises the historical and documentary aspects of this thesis, which may be seen to chronicle the last years of the third phase of student culture.

I have purposely maintained a critical approach and tone throughout the text, which has entailed silencing voices and opinions, a necessity in the process of producing a research text (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004). Much of my criticism has been targeted at capitalism, specifically at its wide incorporation of pleasure in the

[1] From a ceremony held on 18/01/08. The concept and 'responsibilities' of alumni to the institution were emphasised at the ceremony, as befitting a University actively attempting to tap into 'the alumni revenue stream'.
[2] I still have one from that time, a shard of ametrine, which, according to the slip of paper it was sold with, is 'A combination of amethyst and citrine found in Bolivia. It is said to help keep one composed under pressure.'

business of consumerism. Because of this stance I have not, when describing students, highlighted manifestations of what Klaus-Peter Koepping (1985, p. 195) calls the 'inexhaustible optimism and assertion of the joy of life (positivity against the negativity of "Thou shall not")'. This life-affirming joy was, in fact, everywhere, although I made the decision not to valorise it, for doing so would amount to supporting the very mechanism of hegemonic incorporation. Although it pretended to be, banter was not 'marked by exceptional radicalism, freedom, and ruthlessness' (Bakhtin, 1968, p. 72). It was marked by repressive and repetitive behaviour that never managed to transcend itself. That did not prevent it from being funny and, at times, charming. I did not, however, write this thesis as 'an entertainment'.

Challenging student life was not a simple matter of isolating a culture; it was the task of criticising the larger culture, which has been shaped, in itself, by the very same incorporation of youth pleasure. Bakhtin's rejection of 'the positive evaluation attached to the progress of rationality and enlightenment' (Dentith, 1995, p. 74) has gone pop and as a consequence we are all residents of the pleasure cave, an internalised, hypermediated Cockaigne of juicy carrots and big cocks buffeted by the supercomplex rhythms of 'the free winds blowing from the marketplace' (Bakhtin, 1968, p. 275). The separation of student life into what I have termed the black market and the white world of education is a way of illustrating the complexities of the cave system, and the incorporation of pleasure which it masks.

The student protests over the right to pleasure, self-governance and self-expression fought in the 1960s and 1970s have all contributed to a fear of embodying and understanding the student experience, of seeing the cave as one. Barnett calls this a bargain, between students who, as adults, grant an authority to the lecturer, 'provided they are given space to develop their own selves' (Barnett, 1999, p. 161). Note how this leaves half the bargain undefined and unobjectified. This has led to the night-time economy, as well as HEIs, responding to the challenges of not 'knowing but of *being*' (Barnett, 1999, p. 157). The 'corporate life' of the first stage of student culture, challenged in the heterogeneous second, has thus led to the term taking on a different shade of McMeaning in the third.

The black market thrives in the tension between decisive ontology and raw revelation, objectification and dissolution. It is a testimony to the efficacy of its medicine that students themselves, let alone academics do not possess the language needed to effectively question it. One has to return to its birthing to find prescient and forthright criticism from students. In 1962, at the beginning of my second stage it was characterised as masculine, expensive, time-consuming and bawdy:

> Where, one wonders, do they find the cash? At 1/6d. a pint it must take 15/– to get at all high – and this without standing the odd round, bringing it up to 25/–. Many have to live on £2–£3 per week spending money, though some

> rustle up £4 or £5. Don't they ever buy books or clothes, take the girl out or eat in the Rickshaw? They must but someone might enlighten us.
> And what about the time? Who on earth objects to a drink or two after or before a meal or a meeting: but how can you possibly pour whole evenings down the hatch? I understand the consumption of beer has gone up by something like seven or eight times in the new Bar – some increase might be expected in the lush premises of our chromium cricket pitch (surely the longest bar in Christendom?). But at a time when your future is being shaped, when queues of 3rd year sixth-formers are hammering on the gates for non-existent places, is this anyone's idea of University life, let alone education?
>
> The trouble is that anyone who queries the present situation is shouted out as a 'Puritan.' That's nonsense: I for one want to see as much people giving as much to, and getting as much out of University as possible. And apart from adding to the fairly respectable repertoire of bawdy (sorry – 'folk') ballads already current, I can't see much in the Bar that the Locarno or the Lousy Lou couldn't provide equally well, and with more punch-ups and panache.[3]

Aside from the elitism in its last point, such criticism has rarely been as full or eloquent, but yet it fails to spot the future in its own appeal: 'I for one want to see as much people giving as much to, and getting as much out of University as possible'. In the smash of intoxication the black market delivers on its promises, and it would expand throughout the second stage of student culture, until it spread to its current extent and reach: masculinised, cheap, time-consuming and banterous.

Student criticism of this expansion may have, in Sheffield, been muted because student politics was and is funded by Union profiteering, yet such an interpretation reeks a little of conspiracy. The caverns of studentland may be swamped, yet the liquid emanates from beyond the reaches of the Union. The dissolution of objectification can be read as a performance that mirrors the 'social liquidity' of contemporary society (Bauman, 2000). Yet this does not, however, excuse the Union's willing complicity in feeding the flow. From the early 1990s it has led the way in developing the student night-time economy of Sheffield. This was not, as they claim, inevitable (Mathers, 2007); the Union could have chosen another way.

Facebook, more than any other representational media, increases student debt to consumerism. The message is simple and fun and yet the medium is pervasive and seductive. It is a pedagogical structure, like the legends discussed in 7.3, a seminar group that embeds 'represented lifestyle' in daily life. Facebook trains young adults for the future, it is the bubble that never bursts, the veil that never falls. Indeed, one of the black market's most persuasive seductions, a legacy of the traditional,

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[3] Comment by Inquisitor, *Darts*, No. 215, 15/11/62, p. 2.

temporal student carnivalesque, is that the future does not exist in the present and that student days are 'out of time':

> After graduating we'll be seeking jobs, settling down, straightening up and flying right. Our student excesses will be things of the past, and we'll move on and enter society as decent normal citizens, with only the spectres of Facebook photos to remind us of our student nights out...
>
> (Garbett, 2008)

This attitude, which recurred throughout my fieldwork, fetishises the central territory of being a student into a holy land, a sacrosanct territory, that only the young and mobile have access to. This sense is quickly intensified into the overbearing and fearful warning of Carnage: 'You will miss out'. Instead of questioning the black market's demands, students acquiesce to its imperatives, justifying their involvement on the grounds of temporal tourism, an ever-shrinking window of 'last chance to be'. There is a sense of reciprocity about this process that feeds homogeneity: if going out is all that can be agreed on then the consensus derived from this performance will feed back into a coherent identity (as per Noyes (1995)). In a group that has undergone dramatic and rapid expansion this effectively means less agreement on areas of common identity.

If, as Hafstein (2007, p. 94) claims, 'intangible heritage objectifies the practices and expressions of human communities' then the black market presents itself as being part of the intangible heritage of the lifecourse. The question of access to this territory is thus the question of who owns youth, and thus the future. For not only are the turnstiles to these wildlands run by corporate barkeeps in stovepipe hats, the exits to 'adulthood' are not as well staffed as students are led to believe. In fact, there are no gates, just a piece of paper reminding graduates that 'There is no membership fee and no need to register'. Walking on, the highland trail may pass through endless personal statements, employment and loan repayments, but it will inevitably revisit revelatory punishment in the night-time economy. These revelations are, at their core, a re-enactment and reification of pleasures and behaviours learnt at university. The fleeting sensibility of loss over the subjunctive potential of education was not only regret for time spent on the black market, it was also a lament for an education that was not obligatory, that was willingly chosen. Whenever this sensibility surfaced in my fieldwork it made the willing embrace of raw punishment all the more disempowered and sadomasochistic. Medicine has never tasted so bitter.

The role of student accommodation in forming the group that engages in such pleasures cannot be stressed enough. As discussed in 6.2 the destruction of the halls and the development of the Village was intended, in part, as a means of controlling its student population, especially in relation to the black market, in which the halls were embedded. The Village thus represents an objectification of the HEI beyond

Barnett's 'bargain' between lecturers on one side and students 'developing their own selves' (Barnett, 1999, p. 161) on the other. It is a reanimation of the corpse of 'corporate life' without the 'hassle' of education and as such demands careful consideration in this conclusion, for its objectification of market values indicates the future for HE in Sheffield.

8.2 Our shared visions

In 2009 the University asked students to 'Make a video of how your experiences of our university have shaped you and how they've helped you to Discover and Understand'. For a long time the only video posted to the competition's YouTube channel was 'Z1 Enjoy Sheffield', a video, set to a rock song, of a flat in the Village playing physical pranks on each other. This was reminiscent of the old corridor cultures, and a good insight into what goes on in some of the apartments. In terms of families, the Village can be visualised as a many-chambered, non-porous structure, with each apartment supporting the making friends making places process of going out in the night-time economy. As discussed in 6.2 its architecture discourages assembly and free movement, and speaks instead to comfort and security. As I have argued this leaves those that do not 'join in' isolated in their bedrooms. Who knows whether Z1 contains an international student who does not understand, is not willing, or has not been invited into the family that has evidently formed there. This is, of course, the challenge facing the 'optional' community of the CDCs: how to persuade atomised students in isolated cells to 'buy-in' (sometimes literally) to the community of choice they have built. The internet has never looked so tempting.

This necessarily impacts on what Sheffield means to student culture, which is becoming evermore secluded and segregated in a concatenation of cluster flats, lecture halls and night clubs. While many students profess to 'loving' Sheffield, and the Union does a good trade in 'I ♥ Sheffield' merchandise, it is difficult to equate this with Kingsbury's (1974, p. 24–25) comment that:

> Someone starting university in, say, Sheffield is also inevitably committed to life in the city of Sheffield. If he occupies himself exclusively in the university precincts, both he and the people of Sheffield will be the poorer.

It would, however, be unfair to compare the values of one education system with another, especially when the Village is forward-looking, an *anticipation* of the future, a projection of all that a university residence might need to be in order to compete in an uncapped, aggressive HEI-market. As such, the Village should be interpreted as both an exercise in controlling a studentified population and also a means of attracting and growing that very same population. It photographs well,

like the IC, like the Union, like the new University buildings that are outshining the functional, modest modernism of the 1960s. They should all be understood alongside the proclamations and visions that have emanated from the highest levels of the administration since the beginning of this research:

> Our Shared Vision provides the foundation for the University to advance to even greater heights. It defines our aspirations, defined not by me, not by SMG, but by us as a community. Now every one of us has a role to play and now is the time to understand what needs to be done so that we will achieve our shared vision.
>
> (VC Bob Boucher quoted in *Overview*, 2006, p. 6)

One need only substitute the word 'nation' for 'University' to appreciate the level of rhetoric this emanates from.[4] Such visional pronouncements are exercises in branding that seek to unify, market and attract. World-building, they attempt to objectify the free market and toughen up the Universities' shell. The very typeface this thesis is presented in is a product of this toughening. It is called 'Stephenson' and is a modified version of a design by a company once co-owned by Sir Henry Stephenson, a founder of the University and begetter of Stephenson Hall. Its use in University communications is mandatory.[5]

Competition in the housing market is tough. A brief glance through the student press reveals adverts from private providers proclaiming 'Student living in Sheffield is changing' before offering the familiar seductions of emergent adulthood: oversized beds, *en suite* showers and toilets, LCD flatscreens, internet, Sky free view and leather sofas (Shafique, 2007). The Village is the University's reply, part of a larger Strategic Plan, focused on growing student numbers, uncapped top-up fees and 'raising the profile of the institution'. As discussed in 6.2, there has been significant debate on whether students should have been made to pay for this via increased rents. In a monetised HE system concern over the extent of student loans is, implicitly, something for the student to worry about, not the university, which only worries about satisfying student desires. In the wake of the Browne Review this debt culture will only be intensified in the white world of education, which will be riven with market forces; not only between HEIs, but within them.

The following are quotations taken from ACS managers at a staff conference, an event which is part social gathering and part mission statement (indeed, on this occasion a specific ACS 'vision' was revealed, 'To be recognised and chosen for delivering quality'):

> Our customer needs are changing on a daily basis
> Our customers have ultimate choice

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[4] Even the name of the publication, *Overview*, is delightfully Orwellian.
[5] Although my adoption of it for this thesis was, of course, 'by choice'.

We want to be the provider of choice
We want that money
Because their needs are changing we need to find out what they want
Be business focussed and financially astute
Making the difference with customers
Going green is an issue for our residences – they've told us that in feedback
If we keep students on site we can take their money

The inclusions of such sentiments is not intended as specific criticism of the department (which is a product of its environment), but rather as a demonstration of the way in which the neoliberal agenda is being 'taught' to employees. ACS is the largest department in the University, employing over 850 members of staff. The majority of those present at the conference were porters, cleaners, caterers and service staff: those who have, despite the changes the residences have seen, the most significant contact with students. In other words, this is further evidence of the subsumption of social relations to free-market capitalism, for what, essentially, was being discussed, was the central role of capitalism in the maintenance of social relations with customers. As in the hard architecture of the Village, so in the soft structure of the staff.

I have interviewed several students from Sorby who have expressed their horror at the Village, telling me that they believe it a travesty and a betrayal of students on behalf of the university. To which I asked, were you happy when you were allocated to Sorby and saw the photos? If you had been given the choice would you have preferred an *en suite* in a pleasant looking flat in buildings divided by woodchip walkways? All of them answered the latter. Therefore, the only thing that ACS, the University, and, indeed HE is guilty of is assuming that the customer knows what they want. Students asked for *en-suite* bathrooms and plasma screens and self catering, and they received them. In a feedback culture desires lead to the objectification of desires in a provision of choice, as modulated by the 'business need'. And once the choice is made and the happy moment has passed, boxes have been ticked on the online Application for Accommodation, and the computer has allocated its customers to their cluster flats where they sit in front of their widescreen TVs counting what remains of their loans, we should not be surprised that they spend this cash in the raw intensity of the black market.

The problem with framing students as customers is the assumption that students understand and know what they want. This is the fallacy of neoliberalism, which insists the outcome is always right, because the customer had the choice, indeed the customer was *consulted* every step of the way. The 'feedback, improve and channel it back' ethos, and the variety of surveys and 'research' that it relies on is integral to its ideology. Yet there is no such thing as a free, informed choice, not in a hyper-mediated environment. The black market recognises this and forces an all or nothing engagement. The Fairy Godmother does not treat students as rational

'customers' who know what they want, the Fairy Godmother commands and instructs: I want to see you in the bar every Monday, bitch.

This is what education needs to do if it intends to be an exercise in ontology and thus challenge the immediacy of the quick revelatory fix of liquidity. For if students are assumed to be students and not customers, then suddenly they don't know what they want and need to be taught. Of course, this position relies on the minority to decide the fate of the majority, which is precarious in its flirtation with authority, however moderated by knowledge and experience. Perhaps we should consider the Browne Review an indication that the modernist project has successfully dismantled the authority of age, experience and knowledge over youth and desire. Of course, this process has been going on for some time, indeed, since the beginning of the second stage of student culture students in Sheffield have been telling the University that actually, outside the classroom they know what they want. This will increasingly be seen in the classroom.

Despite this, the University believed they could both give students what they want in terms of accommodation, and also objectify their culture and community within it. The marketing material for the new Village proclaimed, in the Stephenson typeface, that 'The community spirit is thriving' (ACS, 2007). This amounted to a remarkable reimagining of what constituted student community, beset, only by one problem: it did not recognise itself as a vision, as a product of branding and marketing, that was, essentially untethered to the physical structure of the cluster flats. This is both the danger and beauty of visions: they transform expectations without necessarily changing anything else. None of the student culture thrived in the way in which it had been planned, yet the next brochure advertising the Residences proclaimed in 2009, 'you're automatically part of a vibrant community', and while this remains so, its 'vibrancy', in terms of student culture at least, has been pushed to the margins, and exists in the black market of the night.

The third, homogenous period of student culture has been subject to the story of two interrelated wings of advanced capitalism, both narratives of subsumption that, in their pursuit of capital, have served to pull the adult who plays in opposing directions. The development of the Village has atomised student community and heightened security provisions. It has emphasised choice, security and comfort. The second, the intensification of the night-time economy has subsumed the processes of friendship, the exchange of social capital and identity formation into the performance of going out. Both of these subsumptions appeal to the disposition of the adult who plays; the first to the adult, the second to the player. Both look fantastic in brochures, the wood and stone apartments of the Village, their windows reflecting big skies, contrasted with the smoky blue of the nightclub, pretty girls spinning discs in a dazzle of laser beams. This is the 'vibrant community' of the ACS brochure compared to 'Our Visitors' Guide', which assuredly proclaims that 'Sheffield is at the forefront of developments in the field of clubbing'. The reality is

best seen in the Village apartments, whose walls are plastered by club flyers and photographs of people using the night-time economy, as the behaviour of their residents is constantly policed and checked by 'Security' and 'Mentors'.

As I write in November 2010, the VC has called for a 'University response' to the Browne Review: 'Project 2012'. It is clear that the white world of education is shaping up for a *sturm und drang* of visional proclamations in advance of its debut on an unregulated market:

> We will articulate a set of propositions (in the form of written statements that clearly describe what we offer and how this benefits our students) for our undergraduate degrees...

These pedagogical objectifications will enter a crowded market, competing with at least three other 'visional models'. First, the 'well-policed' Village, with its atomised cluster flats and its mantra of fair service and 'equality of product'. Secondly, the Union, a market leader in an increasingly unregulated night-time economy that pushes obligatory participation in its totalising provision of six club nights a week. Finally, the IC, a building as porous as it is beautiful, totally open to the free market whims of student life. Notions of a wider, integrated, holistic society, where Village, Union and University integrate and balance do not and will not exist, simply because all of these aspects have developed, or intensified around capturing the element of student desire to which their 'business need' responds to. All are covertly manipulative which is exactly what the future will bring: intense competition that pretends to offer choice. This many-headed hydra has no notion of sacrifice or compromise in its constant appeals to customers, and may, in its psychotic obsession with feedback, end up consuming itself.

From the many viral videos produced by the University and distributed online, it is the Union's that stand out. They have, after all, had time to shape up, having faced the rigours of competition since the early 1990s, long before any other part of the University. At time of writing in 2010, their last YouTube video was designed to promote Union nightclubs to prospective students. To the sound of Tinie Tempah's *Pass Out* and shots of students dancing, cheering, waving their hands and drinking, Peter Dickson, the announcer for E4, Channel Four's digital 'teen' orientated television channel intones:

> Welcome to Sheffield Students' Union. The best students' union in the whole ruddy country. Freshers of Sheffield! Stop what you're doing and listen to me. Look at all these people having the time of their lives. This will be you in a few short weeks. I bet you're so excited you've wet yourself. I know I have!

The music then dominates the audio as Tinie Tempah raps:

> Yeah yeah we bring the stars out
> We bring the women and the cars and the cards out
> Let's have a toast a celebration, get a glass out
> And we can do this until we pass out

Students, obviously drunk and having fun are then interviewed in front of a backdrop of club night logos offered by the Union, and asked what their favourite night is. Different families point at the different brands on the backing board, and then the plummy voiceover names them as the brand logos flash up on screen.

> Population, The Tuesday Club, ROAR, Live Wire, Pop Tarts, Last Laugh, Climax. Everything you could ruddy well wish for. Nice! Sheffield Uni – go there and be awesome!

The change in mediated representation of Sheffield student life over the postwar period is dizzying; from poorly printed postwar newspapers through Rag 45s, a Channel Four documentary, to photo walls, Facebook and finally this Union-produced viral video that attempts to embed branded nightclub products in the experience of its upcoming customers. A hyperspeed metaphor for the gradual consolidation of student culture into going out. Consumerism thrives in these open circuits of representation and its acceleration is a challenge to educators, who will be tasked with delivering not only market visions but also embedding mediated advertisements into learning. If they don't, like the Union in the early 1990s, or ACS in the mid 2000s, they will be told that 'someone else will'. As a vision of the future the Union's video nasties are more powerful and prescient than pronouncements from the VC. Awesome!

8.3 Do something

As HEIs further monetise their provision they attempt to move as far away as possible from the situation Whisnant described in 1971 when students rejected university 'as the most critical interval in a lifelong race for the shoddy rewards of society' (p. 95). Thanks, in part, to subsequent incorporations of pleasure my participants no longer believed that the rewards of society were 'shoddy'. Most were, indeed, 'delighted' by its potential and prepared for the challenge, seeing themselves as they often proclaimed on Facebook, as 'in it to win it'. In the coming stratifications of the open market Sheffield needs to convince its potential students that as an institution it will deliver these rewards. As Allen and Ainley (2010) predict these demands will further stratify HE in respect to wealth and social class. If the economic crisis deepens and employment falls would this however stop

people going to university? As they suggest, in terms of elite, mobile students most likely not: there will always, of course, be jobs for elite, mobile students. If there is one thing that elites are good at, it is propagating more elites.

However, as this thesis has demonstrated mobile HEIs offer students more than the possibility of future employment. Of the three 'providers' I have discussed in this conclusion, the shared territory of all of them, University, Union and ACS, is community. The Union and ACS share the social group of the 'family', while the University supplies a vague 'community of scholars', or as students term them 'subject friends'. Of these the family is the product that students will continue to pay for. Its subsumption of individuality in the social banking of living and playing together is, for many, the defining experience of mobility. The elite will not want their children to 'miss out' on what amounts to both an extension of social networks and a testing of the adult shell in a punishment that amounts to a toughening. The pressures of representation will not diminish in the coming years and the mobile student experience will continue to be feted by the media as both 'training' for adult life, whilst functioning, in its revelatory punishments, as a means of dealing with it. An unregulated HE market will not spell the end of the black market, it may even, in its increased emphasis on competition, intensify aspects of it, as students demand more potent medicine for the coming objectifications of Project 2012.

Of course, it is only a matter of time before these punishments claim a life in Sheffield, as they have at other HEIs (BBC News, 2004; The Bath Chronicle, 2008). As an anticipation of this, the University urgently needs to join the campaign for a minimum price per unit, especially in unlicensed premises such as supermarkets, in order to limit the depth of pre-drinking. This has to be accompanied by 'Social Responsibility Standards' in the licensed trade that are not, as they currently are, voluntary (KPMG, 2008). In terms of the University as a community, especially one responding to uncapped fees, the challenge presented by the black market is not, however, one of regulation. Socially, the Union's dominance in the night-time economy disguises division, which is more temporally and spatially distinct at other HEIs, where the gulf between mobile, non-mobile and minority students is obvious (Cheeseman, 2010). While this has prevented an overt 'Rah' scene developing at Sheffield, it has hidden stratification and competition, and has completely alienated 'invisible' international students. This is a national problem, but that does not preclude a local solution. Indeed, the first HEI to successfully and meaningfully facilitate international student integration will reap significant financial rewards, as well as, of course, making life better for its students.[6]

Any challenge to the black market must challenge the revelatory power of its products: the communal dissolution of objectivity. Although I suggest that the

[6] Forgetting this last point in relation to the former is the danger of monetising the system: the social responsibility of the institution is subsumed to the movement of capital.

pursuit of liquidity is a condition of life (especially, as I have proposed, in a world where mediation is pervasive, constant and unavoidable), the performances supported by the theatres of the night-time economy are abusive and self-defeating. This thesis is not the place to propose alternative rituals of communal release and transcendence,[7] and so the remainder of this conclusion will focus on how HEIs, specifically Sheffield, can compete with the revelations of liquidity by enhancing their ontological provision. I suggest there are three general areas in which this can be achieved. Firstly, and simply, the process of degree classification should be changed to accommodate the first year and thus end the culture of 'Fuck it, 40%'. Although it can be argued that students need time to develop, the unregulated black market has and will continue to swamp this time in the revelations of pleasure. It is misguided to assume that removing the cap on fees will incentify the knowledge process beyond this, indeed it is far more likely that the night-time economy will market itself as the just rewards of mobility. As the VC commented when I raised this very issue with him:

> [S]tudents need to be educated about academic life... they (and staff) should see their academic performance and their behaviour as a total package... [A] drinking culture is dangerous in terms of establishing lifestyle patterns and... impact[s] on student performance and long-term health.
>
> (Vice-Chancellor's Office, 2009, p. 2)

Secondly, a different sort of corporate life needs to be emphasised at the University, and thirdly its students need to be equipped with the intellectual tools to interrogate youth culture, pleasure and the night-time economy. These last two solutions both seek to embody the educational project outside of the formal institution, and as such require detailed enunciation. Firstly, Corporate Life must be addressed in a purposeful manner, and not, as discussed, through the application of 'free-market visions', branding and advertising. Horizontal connections need to be established between students in separate academic departments. Such a conclusion was a suggestion of the report into student community (Finlay and Jenkins, 2008) and could be manifested in compulsory, cross-discipline 'orientation' modules, introductions to both HE and the history and culture of the University and the city of Sheffield. This could explicitly target the role of international students, and could be undertaken in conjunction with Hallam, relying on the stated aim of both HEIs to work together as closely as possible. Students also need both the time and space to develop and maintain social connections within their own academic departments. The vertical axis is more apparent in this context, especially between undergraduates and postgraduates. Staff must also be impelled to seek connections, both horizontally and vertically. If this time needs to be officially accredited and paid for, then it can be justified via the logic that doing so would be a means of increasing the ontological efficacy of the institution.

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[7] Although I accept this as an area for further research.

In terms of corporate life, the residences, and specifically the Village are in desperate need of being embodied into the discourse of what the University is. Since 75% of its students are or have been accommodated in them then staff should all be aware of both the concept of residence and its manifestations in Sheffield. This necessitates academics visiting and knowing where its residences are. Secondly, an academic post with the responsibility of fostering learning and teaching in the residences, both University owned and private, should be created in order to bridge the cultures. Thirdly, there needs to be a system that introduces students in the same academic department to each other in the residences.

In reference to the Village itself, it can be (and has been) argued that it has simply not had enough time to develop a coherent internal culture beyond the making friends making places mechanism of the black market. While there is an element of truth to this, it needs further attention. As I have demonstrated the interplay between architecture and the social processes of friendship is real and could, if desired, be empirically assessed in a study of social networks. The establishment of these social networks used to be managed in the larger hall environment via the process of allocation. In the heterogeneous second period of student culture, with the dominance of youth culture, the development of the night-time economy and the consolidation of student performance into going out, allocation became unnecessary, not to mention impractical considering the pressure on bed numbers. However, with the atomising restriction that 'apartment-style living' has brought, with its emphasis on the central territory at the expense of all else, students are once again in need of the potential structure provided by increased attention on deciding 'who lives with who'.

Accommodation blocks could, for example be loosely structured according to language-use, interest in drama, or music, which may encourage community development beyond the flat (and beyond the night-time economy). Above all, greater attention should be spent on family formation, with prospective students entering into the process. Indeed, pre-arrival is the time to appeal to students' subjunctive desire to engage in the potential of education. As argued in Chapter Four, it is this desire that is 'washed in waves of gradual ridicule and receding promise' by the tides of the night-time economy. Such a project would take investment from the University, but would arguably pay dividends, especially if it encouraged second and third year students to remain in University accommodation, a key factor in increasing community, as recognised by Warden's Reports going back to the 1940s. Since the Village is a containment of studentification, there is no reason, if young adults continue to follow long established patterns of mobility (which as I have argued the middle class will),[8] why the desire for education should not be married to the practicalities of social

[8] Given the meagre relation of degree course to employment, I personally think HE is a reflexive commitment better undertaken later in life. Considering, however, the lack of employment for youth, and their consequent 'warehousing' in HEIs (Allen and Ainley, 2010) this may not, without significant economic reform, be possible.

network formation. Indeed without the 'backing of a great city like London or Edinburgh'[9] to distinguish it, the University may have to do just that.

The third means by which HEIs (and Sheffield in particular) need to confront the revelatory efficacy of the black market is by simply addressing it within their educational remit. Thanks to the incorporation of pleasure that has led to the homogenous third phase of student culture, students have been effectively deprived of the conceptual tools they need to criticise their own position in relation to consumerism and the night-time economy. The IC, with its opening hours and flexible remit is an example of how the concept of the University has not questioned this but accommodated it. Just as I have suggested compulsory, cross-disciplinary 'orientation' modules to embody corporate life within the university, I similarly suggest students be given the option to engage with the ideas and discourses that allow them to conceptualise student culture and their position within it. Such a module would not follow social norms methodologies as recently explored at the University of Leeds in relation to alcohol consumption (Bewick *et al.*, 2008b)[10] and would instead, follow an alternative mechanism of critically engaging students in the ideologies that bind them. This can be located in the work of Angela Brew (2006, 2007) and Phil Levy (2009) who both underline the importance of involving undergraduates in the research process:

> Several of these students described how they had come to university with a strong desire to engage in an intense learning experience in close contact with peers and tutors. Alongside many positive experiences, they articulated some disappointment with a perceived lack of intensity in the first year, and with less contact with the teaching staff than they desired.
>
> (Levy and Petrulis, 2007)

Asking students to research their own culture follows the logic that no one understands the rules of university better than students themselves. Via the research process the University would effectively be providing the framework to conceptualise these rules with the aim of encouraging reflexivity within them. This would give students the opportunity to question their trust and respect in the black market, threatening the internally persuasive elements of its authoritative dialogical discourse (Morson, 2004). The chief benefit for the student, as well as the University, would be located in the student's reflexive engagement in the potential of HE. This would focus student engagement in ontological becoming by asking them to understand ontological revelation, embodying the subjunctive desire for education over the sticky, trickster turns of liquidity.

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[9] Quotation taken from an interview with a manager at ACS.

[10] These are culturally inappropriate and belong where they were developed, in the USA, where the minimum purchase age is 21.

To sum up, my recommendations are as follows: firstly a minimum price per unit accompanied by enforced social responsibility standards in the night-time economy, secondly an end to the 'Fuck it, 40%' culture, thirdly a practical emphasis on community and corporate life in academic departments and the residences beyond visional pronouncements and fourthly the involvement of students in the process of research, specifically in relation to their own culture, in order that they may better understand and challenge the ideas and values that influence it.

8.4 Vessels

In late 2005, as part of the research training for my PhD on the spiritual properties of minerals I decided to investigate a phenomena that had intrigued me in Sorby: why students collected and displayed 'empties', the bottles and cans that once contained the alcohol they had drunk. I set about interviewing, taking photographs and administering surveys. Of the 60 students I spoke to, 88% were aware of the practice and just over a third engaged in such behaviour themselves. Bottles and cans were stacked in halls, on windowsills, and on shelves, sometimes in ordered displays that satisfied a certain aesthetic but more often than not in random rows and precarious towers. This was, I discovered, classic folklore, material behaviour with a 'social dimension surround[ing its] construction, display and use' (Jones, 1997, p. 205). Students often had games or rituals surrounding their collections whilst others displayed 'special bottles' from 18th or 21st birthdays. Some would use bottles in pranks, stacking up cans of Red Stripe over doors and windowsills, taking photos as souvenirs.

I suppose, in over five years of work, I have never stopped writing this essay. Coming to the end of it now I have begun to teach Erasmus students about 'British Language, Culture & Identity'. In seminars some of them have asked me, 'Why do students stack cans in their windows' and I have found it hard to articulate the many answers I have found to this question. In a way those stacks of cans are an embodiment of everything I've thought of in the past five years. They come and go, ephemeral and disposable as their owners throw them out when they've had enough. Sometimes they begin to block out the light, sometimes they start to smell, or as increasingly happens, a member of staff requests their removal. Writing this thesis has taken such a long time because I've found it very hard to throw anything out. Eventually I realised the truth in Malcolm Jones' (2002) observation, that material culture does not have to exist in order for it to be studied.

Repetition is a way of being 'sent', a loss of subject (Middleton, 1983, p. 261), that was to Adorno, psychotic and infantile. These displays of empties carry the strange poetry of repetition. They can represent many things: the willing loss of self in the

predrinking arc of the night, the psychotic flame of performance, the infantile rites of the family at play. Bottle after bottle after bottle. I've often had to fight my anger and indignation at the extent of accumulation and investment in the rites of the night-time economy. Thinking about the pleasant rhythm and weave of these cans somehow calms me down. They are just patterns. There is something in their determined pursuit and display that relaxes me.

One student in Tapton had even collected most of the bottles and cans he and his friends had drunk since the second week of the first term. The collection was so large he kept it in a locked storage room. In the final term of the academic year he wanted to create a large picture out on the grass, that would, when viewed from above, look like a beach. He had it all planned: brown glass bottles for the trunk, green glass for the leaves, *Fosters* for the sky, *Carling* for the cloud and *XXXX* for the sand. If ever there was a Fiskean metaphor for the constituent power of the audience, this is it. Somewhere, under all the alcohol brands, peeling labels and sticky memories, somewhere in these sugary permutations there is a suggestion of paradise, and with it, a ripple in the trash.

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