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From Servants to Staff: The Making of a Modern Estate

Chatsworth 1908-1950

By:

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Abstract

Taking as its subject the estate of Chatsworth, in rural Derbyshire, this thesis addresses the question of how the history of the country estate can be understood, not from the perspective of a single social group, but in relation to the whole community who lived, worked and interacted within its boundaries.

Structurally, the thesis is comprised of four thematically organised chapters. Each focuses upon a different subset of the estate community and draws upon different kinds of archival material. Each chapter also adopts a distinct methodological approach in response to the source material under scrutiny. In particular, the thesis pays attention to analytical tools developed within the field of historical pragmatics. I argue that this innovative, multi-methodological approach enables a holistic understanding of archival sources to emerge.

The thesis finds that, while demographic mapping provides one level of insight, the information contained within letters and memoirs can be crucial for understanding the social norms and interpersonal relationships which made up the framework underpinning the estate community. In particular, it draws upon a variety of documents from the records of Chatsworth's senior employees, who occupied an important mediatory role within the estate hierarchy. The records of these servants provide a unique insight into how estates such as Chatsworth functioned as social organisms. They offer access to the experiences of the lower-ranking individuals inhabiting the estate, which are unlikely to have been recorded elsewhere, whilst also providing a new vantage point from which to observe the social and professional obligations placed upon the estate's upper-class landowners.

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1.1 Introduction to the Thesis

I naturally have the feeling, which I hope you will sympathise, that Chatsworth is worth preserving as the visible framework and background of a phase of social life which has counted for much in the past and has been of marked service to the nation – I am not now of course thinking of Chatsworth alone but of all the great houses of England.¹

Chatsworth, in rural Derbyshire, is the historic seat of the Cavendish family. The above extract comes from a letter written by Edward Cavendish, 10th Duke of Devonshire, in December 1945. In this letter, which was addressed to the vice chancellors of the Universities of Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and Nottingham, Cavendish suggested some potential uses for Chatsworth in the aftermath of the Second World War. He explained that his chief desire was for the universities to use Chatsworth as a centre for learning, with his family's chief living quarters in the older part of the house to be maintained as 'an exhibition in itself, furnished exactly as they had been in the past.'² As the above quote shows, the 10th Duke believed such preservation was important because Chatsworth, and other country houses like it, were visible reminders of a certain kind of social life. Yet, although he advocated the conservation of quarters traditionally inhabited by his family, Edward Cavendish made no reference of preserving the household's service wing, or the workshops, farms and tenant housing situated on the wider Chatsworth estate.

Like Edward Cavendish, this thesis argues that country estates such as Chatsworth provide evidence of earlier phases of British social history. However, whilst the 10th Duke considered

¹ The Devonshire Collection Archives [Hereafter DC], CH12/4/4, Letter discussing the potential uses for Chatsworth After WW2, written by 10th Duke of Devonshire, 17.12.1945.

² Ibid.

the social history of Chatsworth solely in relation to the Cavendish family's traditional role as landowners, this thesis wants to expand beyond such a narrow, 'top down' outlook.

Historiographical debates between scholars including David Cannadine, Miles Fairburn, and Samuel Raphael, have shown that social history is an umbrella term which can be used in conjunction with a variety of approaches.³ Most simply, however, social history can be defined as a perspective on the past which foregrounds the lived experience of people. Although the exhibition proposed by the 10th Duke would have conformed to this outlook, this thesis argues that, by ignoring the service wing, the workshops, the farms and the estate villages, it would only have captured half of the details which made Chatsworth worth studying from a social history standpoint. As such, instead of adopting the elitist stance advocated by the 10th Duke, this thesis responds to it by considering as its key research question: how we can best understand the history of the country estate, not from the perspective of a single social group, but in relation to the whole community who lived, worked and interacted within its boundaries? Ultimately, this thesis argues that it is impossible to understand the Chatsworth estate without adopting an approach which foregrounds the interpersonal relations which connected the different members of the community to one another.

In order to answer its key research question, this thesis investigates how the Chatsworth estate functioned as a social organism between 1908 and 1950, during the tenures of both the 9th Duke of Devonshire (who inherited both the estate and his title in 1908 and held them until his death in 1938) and that of his son and heir, the 10th Duke (who inherited these assets upon the death of his father in 1938 and held them until his own death in 1950). My thesis considers some of

³ David Cannadine (Ed.), *What is History Now?* (London, 2002); Miles Fairburn, *Social History: Problems, Strategies and Methods* (London, 1999); Raphael Samuel, Keith Hopkins, John Breuilly, Joyce Youngs, David Cannadine, Royden Harrison, J. Clark, 'What is Social History', *History Today*, Vol.35(3) (Mar 1, 1985) pp.34-44.

the events characterising this period, and it measures the impact these developments had upon the wider community at Chatsworth. Traditionally, the first half of the twentieth century, and in particular, the inter-war period, has been regarded by historians as a period of turmoil and transition. For instance, Peter Clarke's comprehensive study, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-2000*, presented the early decades of the twentieth century as an 'era of unexampled change'.⁴ Similarly, as the title suggests, the first edition of *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, focused principally upon the theme of transformation.⁵ However, as trends and enthusiasms in historical scholarship have evolved, academics have begun to draw attention to threads of continuity during the twentieth century, as well as those of change. The revised second edition of *Twentieth Century Britain*, published thirteen years after the first in 2007, is one example of a more recent study reflecting upon some of the consistencies which can be identified throughout this period.⁶ The subsequent section of this introduction will consider, in more detail, intellectual debates relating to continuity and change in the first half of twentieth century. It will focus on the ways in which scholars have responded to the seismic social, political and economic developments which occurred during this era. This will provide an understanding of some the historical events discussed and referenced later in this thesis, as well as placing the study in conversation with this particular avenue of research. Following on from this, the study will turn its attention more specifically to the themes of power, class, and social hierarchy, and track how these notions have been understood. Taking into account the impact of the 'challenges of modernity' associated with the first half of the twentieth century, this section will consider how the key research question outlined above relates to both enduring and shifting experiences of power, class mobility and social aspiration.

⁴ Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-2000, second edition* (London, 2004), p.5.

⁵ Paul Johnson (Ed.), *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Social, and Cultural Change* (London, 1994).

⁶ Francesca Carnevali & Julie-Marie Strange (Eds), *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Social, and Cultural Change* (London, 2007).

1.2 The Economic, Social, and Politic Context for the Thesis:

Assessing Debates on Change and Continuity

In 'Class, Experience and Britain's Twentieth Century' (2014), Selina Todd examined evidence of social behaviour, political structures, and economic developments, in order to identify the successive social frameworks which underpinned British society over the course of the twentieth century.⁷ Based upon her findings, Todd argued that, from the dawn of the century until the outbreak of the Second World War, it was: 'the division between those who served, and those who were served, [which] framed political and social life.'⁸ She concluded that the period was absolutely defined by this specific appreciation of service.⁹ Turning her attention towards the era between the Second World War and the late 1960s, Todd reached a very different verdict. Whilst Todd considered that British society had previously revolved around the notion of a hierarchy where those who served were situated at the very bottom of the scale, she believed that the dominant social framework between 1939 and 1969 inverted this system. She claimed that the middle decades of the twentieth century constituted a period in which 'ordinariness mattered, culturally as well as politically.' By choosing to celebrate the 'ordinary' worker, the traditional pyramid of service was turned on its head.

In relation to her findings, Todd considered evidence of both continuity and change throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The evolution of a society focused around concepts of service, to one which celebrated the 'ordinary' worker was, undoubtedly, a significant change. Todd observed the fact that this new framework had not simply materialised at the outset of the Second World War. Rather, she argued that it had come into existence as a result of

⁷ Selina Todd, 'Class, Experience and Britain's Twentieth Century', *Social History*, Vol. 39. No. 4. (2014).

⁸ Ibid, p.502.

⁹ Ibid.

successive social, political and economic developments which had challenged the previously established *status quo*.¹⁰

Many other scholars researching the first half of the twentieth century have drawn attention to the industrial unrest and political movements which emerged at this time, arguing that they led to the profound transformation of British society. For example, in his 2005 study on 'Elitism and the Revolt of the Masses', Tom Villis described how the strike action taking place between the years 1910 and 1914 ensured that the period immediately preceding the outbreak of the First World War was one of great upheaval for Britain.¹¹ Laura Schwarz built upon Villis' research in her 2014 study of the Domestic Workers Union of Great Britain and Ireland by focusing, in particular, on the role women played in the civic unrest of the early twentieth century. She concluded that 'between 1888 and 1918, trade unions grew at a faster rate than any other time in their history' and pointed out that women were heavily involved in labour movements during these years, '[by] going on strike and joining trade unions in greater numbers than ever before.'¹² They also were 'inspired by the suffrage movement...use[ing] new tactics of propaganda and demonstration, to raise greater public awareness of their grievances.'¹³

Jon Lawrence is another scholar who has focused on social unrest. He argued that the political dissatisfaction which characterised the early years of the twentieth century was exasperated as

¹⁰ Todd, 'Class, Experience, and Britain's Twentieth Century', pp.501-502.

¹¹ Tom Villis, 'Elitism and the revolt of the masses: Reactions to the 'great labour unrest' in the New Age and New Witness circles', *History of European Ideas*, 31. (2005), p.88.

¹² Laura Schwartz, 'What we think is needed is a union of domestics such as the miners have': The Domestic Workers' Union of Great Britain and Ireland 1908-14', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2014), p.178.

¹³ *Ibid.*

a result of both world wars. In 'Class, 'Affluence' and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, c. 1930-1964' (2013), he claimed that the two conflicts resulted in:

The politicization of everyday life within the context of material scarcity and mortal danger threatened to unleash a Hobbesian war of all against all. Evacuation, rationing and conscription provoked social tensions which often found expression through vernacular languages of class.¹⁴

He pointed to the national coal disputes of 1920 and 1921 as one example of this.¹⁵ Agreeing with Lawrence, Pierre Purseigle noted in 'The Transformation of the State', that during the First World War, 'the unequal distribution of food, coal, petrol and other vital goods – often compounded by forced or planned internal migrations – put national solidarity to the test'.¹⁶

In addition to examples of industrial action and political movements, many historians, including Todd herself, have shown how the particular economic challenges and struggles of the twentieth century led to societal change. In 'Young Women, Work and Family', which was published in 2004, Todd noted that, during the mid 1930s, a socio-economic divide opened up between 'prospering urban centres and large pockets of rural poverty'.¹⁷ This can be explained by the fact that, whilst there was an sustained period of industrial growth in the 1930s, rural areas were suffering from the effects of a prolonged agricultural depression.¹⁸ Todd observed that, while it was difficult for young women to find steady employment in the countryside, especially in the midlands and the south-eastern counties, there was especial demand for

¹⁴ Jon Lawrence, 'Class, 'Affluence' and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, c. 1930-64', *Cultural and Social History*, 10:2 (2013), p.278.

¹⁵ Jon Lawrence, 'Labour and the politics of class, 1900-1940' in David Feldman & Jon Lawrence (Eds) *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History* (Cambridge, 2011), p.238.

¹⁶ Pierre Purseigle, 'The First World War and the Transformations of the State', *International Affairs*, Vol.90(2) (2014), p.257.

¹⁷ Selina Todd, 'Young Women, Work and Family in Inter-War Rural England', *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 52, (1) (2004), p.89.

¹⁸ Nicola Verdon, 'The Modern Countrywoman': Farm Women, Domesticity and Social Change in Interwar Britain', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol.70 (1) (2010), pp.91-92.

workers for the retail, tertiary and industrial sectors in urban areas.¹⁹ This encouraged an increasing number of young women from rural settlements to migrate to towns and cities, rather than searching for work as domestic or farm servants.²⁰ She concluded that:

Employment and migration patterns meant that these young women were at the forefront of social and economic changes in the countryside... [they] were instrumental in rural depopulation, as employment opportunities expanded for them in urban areas, and their own socio-economic aspirations rose...²¹

As a result, Todd noted that this period witnessed the development of a distinct social and economic group made up of young, single women, who were set apart from older women in both their employment attitudes and their aspirations.²² Jon Lawrence has built upon this research by drawing attention to the fact that, in the 1930s, there was a growth in 'discretionary consumption' by the young, especially on leisure activities such as dancing and the cinema.²³ Based upon their findings, historians such as Todd and Lawrence, now agree with the arguments put forward in the 1970s by feminist historian Leonore Davidoff: that the opportunity to indulge in leisure-time activities, and the increasing ease of travel via train, omnibus and bicycle, led to a growth in young women's expectations in the inter-war period regarding independent adult life.²⁴ This contrasted with the restraints traditionally associated with domestic employment, and thus, the period witnessed a decline in the popularity of residential service as a career. As a consequence of this renewed focus on leisure and discretionary consumption, Todd and Lawrence's research has shown how the falling numbers of young women working in the domestic service sector, over the course of the 1930s, was not

¹⁹ Selina Todd, 'Young Women, Work and Family in Inter-War Rural England', *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol. 52, (1) (2004), p.89.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.85.

²¹ *Ibid*.

²² *Ibid*.

²³ Lawrence, 'Class, 'Affluence' and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, c.1930-1964', p.276.

²⁴ Leonore Davidoff, 'Mastered for Life: Servant and Wife in Victorian and Edwardian England', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Summer, 1974), p.417.

only fuelled by industrial expansion, but that, in turn, it helped to shape it and drive it forwards.²⁵

Yet, although Todd and other historians have identified the early years of the twentieth century as a period of great social metamorphosis, Todd has identified a common thread across the era: the enduring importance of class, power-dynamics, and social hierarchy. This theme, she noted, was the most significant continuity in twentieth-century British history.²⁶ As a consequence, Todd argued that the period should not purely be viewed as one of turmoil and transition for British society. Rather, she suggested that there were also some significant consistencies. In making this claim, Todd aligned herself with a new direction in historiography.

Lucy Delap's work is also part of this trend. Recently, she has drawn attention to some of the continuities which can be observed during the first half of the twentieth century. In *Knowing Their Place: Domestic Service in Twentieth-Century Britain* (2014), she pointed out that, in spite of the general decline in recruitment figures, 'domestic service remained the most common of all entry-level jobs available to young women until the Second World War.'²⁷ Delap drew attention to the fact that not everyone was able to find work in the industrial or retail sectors.²⁸ She found that, due to the economic downturn and the 'coercive nature of the unemployment benefits system', many women from 'distressed regions' were still drawn to domestic service.²⁹ Yet, Delap also stressed that, although many women during this time period felt compelled to find employment as domestic servants, some continued to choose domestic work over other profession. She argued: 'the sense of career progress, of 'bettering oneself',

²⁵ Todd, 'Young Women, Work and Family in Inter-War Rural England', p.85.

²⁶ Todd, 'Class, Experience and Britain's Twentieth Century', p.507.

²⁷ Lucy Delap, *Knowing Their Place: Domestic Service in twentieth century Britain* (Oxford, 2014), p.14.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p.13.

²⁹ *Ibid*.

continued to be important to some servants, whose aspirations were not simply thwarted by becoming servants.³⁰ She pointed to the fact that domestic employees increasingly ‘treated service as integrated with the rest of the labour market, or as a building block to a number of other occupations.’³¹

Ultimately, Delap concluded that, in spite of the many changes which affected this avenue of employment in the years following the First World War, ‘the continuities in domestic service are worth dwelling on.’³² This, she found, was especially true in relation to the way in which domestic work was carried out, opining that even beyond the Second World War, ‘the actual tasks undertaken in homes changed little.’³³ In spite of the seismic social and economic changes to Britain in the post-war period, Delap also identified consistencies in what she termed ‘the cultural realm of what was funny’.³⁴ Although milder than the humour focused on servants in the pre-war period, she found that there was still laughter directed at cleaners and chars. Delap linked this kind of comedy to the need to establish social boundaries.³⁵ Therefore, like Todd, Delap also determined that class, power-dynamics, and hierarchy continued to occupy an extremely important role throughout the twentieth century.

In conclusion, this section of my thesis has considered the conflicting themes of continuity and change in relation to twentieth-century British society. It has drawn upon the research of scholars such as Selina Todd, Jon Lawrence, and Lucy Delap in order to illustrate how a social framework revolving around notions of service evolved into one which celebrated the

³⁰ Delap, *Knowing Their Place: Domestic Service in twentieth century Britain*, p.240.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Lucy Delap, ‘Kitchen-Sink Laughter: Domestic Service Humour in Twentieth-Century Britain’, *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol.49(3) (2010), p.642.

³⁵ Ibid.

‘ordinary’ members of society. However, this study has also identified the fact that both frameworks revolved around a notion of hierarchy. Despite shifting perceptions, class remained an important distinction throughout the period. Going forwards, this assessment enables me to situate social experiences at Chatsworth within a specific temporal context, and it also offers the opportunity to demonstrate how a study of Chatsworth can be of interest to historians like Delap, Lawrence and Todd. As a business which boasted a labour force of several hundred individuals, presided over by Ducal employers who also happened to be their landlords, Chatsworth in the early years of the twentieth century represented an extreme example of a social system defined by traditional notions of service. Yet, because of this, records relating to life and work on the estate allow scholars the opportunity to examine, in the most conventional of settings, which social, political, and economic ideals associated with service were contested and/or reassessed in the face of the challenges of modernity. Additionally, it affords the opportunity to highlight which customs relating to hierarchy, class and power-dynamics managed to persevere throughout this period of seismic change. As a result, this thesis and, it is thus hoped, its findings will be of general interest to academics investigating the history of British society during this period.

Given the continued importance placed upon the issues of power, class, and social hierarchies throughout the first half of the twentieth century, as well as their relevance to the thesis as a whole, the following section will consider these themes in greater detail.

1.3 Making Sense of the Country Estate Community: Understandings of Class, Power, and Social Status

As has already been stated, the key aim of this thesis is to understand the Chatsworth estate, not from the perspective of a single social group, but in relation to the whole community who lived, worked and interacted within its boundaries. Ultimately, I argue that it is impossible to reach this understanding without adopting an approach which foregrounds the interpersonal relations which connected different members of the estate community to one another. In order to provide the context for this approach, this section sets out the working definition of the term ‘community’ utilised by the thesis. Building upon this understanding, the study then reflects on the ways in which relationships within this community were guided by the themes of class, power dynamics, and social status over the course of the first half of the twentieth century.

The earliest investigations which focused upon historical notions of ‘community’ were conducted by social anthropologists rather than historians. In his 2012 study, ‘1956: The End of Community: The Quest for the English Middletown’, Mike Savage reflected upon this early scholarship, drawing attention to the fact that many of the anthropological investigations carried in the 1950s and 1960s promoted communities as excellent case studies for examining social change.³⁶ Savage drew especial attention to *Coal is Our Life: An Analysis of a Yorkshire Mining Community*, (1956), as the ‘first anthropological monograph of a ‘working-class’ community.’³⁷ He concluded that the outlook adopted within this book:

³⁶ Mike Savage, ‘1956: The End of Community: The Quest for the English Middletown’ in *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940: The Politics of Method* (Oxford, 2012), pp.23-24.

³⁷ Ibid, p.21.; see also Norman Dennis & Fernando Henriques, *Coal is Our Life: An Analysis of a Yorkshire Mining Community*, (London, 1956).

Evoked a deep sense of the isolation of this [particular] town. The miners were in, but not 'of' British society. They had their own values which were only explicable in terms of the nature of their work and community relations, and which did not conform to any...norm.³⁸

The above quote demonstrates that, in these early years, academic understandings of 'community' centred around notions of belonging, inclusivity and individual rules of behaviour. Yet, despite providing this assessment, Savage could not determine a comprehensive working definition of the term 'community'. This was due to the fact that the anthropologists working in this area found themselves unable to agree on this matter. Indeed, towards the end of the 1960s, social anthropologists began to redirect their focus away from this area of research, as they increasingly considered the concept of community as too 'vague, confused and flawed' for scientific study.³⁹

It was during the 1970s that historians first began to focus their attention towards the thorny issue of community. This development was led by Alan Macfarlane, who positioned himself as an interdisciplinary scholar drawing upon, and contributing to, both anthropological and historical research.⁴⁰ Yet, historians like Macfarlane, and subsequently, C. J. Calhoun and Lyndal Roper, also found it difficult to identify a universal understanding of the concept.⁴¹ Rather, in 'History, Anthropology and the Study of Communities', Macfarlane wrote that the main difficulty facing 'community' research in any field lay in providing a comprehensive definition.⁴² In order to emphasise this point, he quoted the conclusion reached within Colin

³⁸ Savage, '1956: The End of Community', p.21.

³⁹ Savage, '1956: The End of Community', p.28.

⁴⁰ Alan Macfarlane, 'History, anthropology and the study of communities', *Social History*, Vol.2 (5) (1977), pp.631-652. See also Alexandra Shepard & Phil Withington (Eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place and Rhetoric* (Manchester, 2000), p.3.

⁴¹ Macfarlane, 'History, anthropology and the study of communities', pp.631-652; C. J. Calhoun, 'Community: toward a variable conceptualization for comparative research', *Social History*, Vol.5 (1) (1980), pp.105-129; Lyndal Roper, "'The common man", "the common good", "common women": Gender and Meaning in the German Reformation Commune', *Social History*, Vol.12 (1987), pp.1-21.

⁴² Macfarlane, 'History, anthropology and the study of communities', p.633.

Bell and Harold Newby's anthropological study *Community Studies: An Introduction to the Sociology of the Local Community*, (1971): 'the concept of community has been the concern of sociologists for more than two hundred years, yet a satisfactory definition of it...appears as remote as ever.'⁴³

More recently, in *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place and Rhetoric* (2000), Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington noted, that over the course of the last fifty years, 'the diffuseness of the term [community] has allowed it to be applied to a variety of diverse historical studies and to support a variety of historical interpretations.'⁴⁴ Nevertheless, in their evaluation of this historiography Shepard and Withington were able to recognise some commonalities amongst the research, which suggested that 'community': 'Was something done as an expression of collective identity by groups of people. It occurred over periods of time, with shifting emphases and boundaries – both for the community and for the person.'⁴⁵ They also argued that:

The power of the concept [of community] is in the attention it draws to the overlap in representations, practices and identities. As a process, therefore, community may be approached as a combination of six constituent parts. First, the institutional arrangements, practices and roles that structured it. Second, the people who did it, did not do it, did not want to do it, were excluded from doing it. Third, the acts and artefacts – whether communicative or material – which defined and constituted it. Fourth, the geographical places in which it was located. Fifth, the time in which it was done and perpetuated. And, sixth, the rhetoric by which it was legitimated, represented, discussed, used and turned into ideology.⁴⁶

⁴³ Colin Bell & Harold Newby, *Community Studies: An Introduction to the Sociology of the Local Community* (London, 1971), quoted in Macfarlane, 'History, anthropology and the study of communities', p.633.

⁴⁴ Shepard & Withington (Eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place and Rhetoric*, p.3, quoted in Nigel Andrew Cavanaugh, 'Industrialising Communities: A Case Study of Elsecar Circa 1750-1870', Thesis for the degree of PhD in History, University of Sheffield, (2017), pp.23-24.

⁴⁵ Shepard & Withington (Eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place and Rhetoric*, p.12.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

It is this understanding of ‘community’ which I adopt within my thesis. In particular, I examine evidence directly pertaining to the fourth, fifth, and sixth ‘constituent parts’ of the Chatsworth estate community. This is because documents produced by and exchanged between those living and working within the estate’s boundaries in the years 1908 – 1950, are the aspects of communal life which remain the most visible. Yet, by drawing upon the rhetorical accounts through which this specific community was legitimated, represented, and discussed by its members in the first half of the twentieth century, and through which its specific ideology was established, this study also seeks to make sense of the other three facets identified by Shepard and Withington. In order to answer the key research question of the thesis and understand the variety of ways in which this community was experienced, I am especially concerned with using the rhetorical evidence available to shed light on the ‘second constituent part’ of communal life. Consequently, a key focus is directed towards ascertaining which individuals were the principal members of the estate community, which individuals were excluded from it or occupied positions of impotence, and which individuals considered themselves to be reluctant participants. In order to provide a nuanced understanding of the social relations which connected those occupying different roles upon the estate, this study shall now turn its attention towards the themes of class, power and social hierarchy.

Shepard and Withington have argued that issues such as class conflict and consciousness, ‘were aspects of, rather than antithetical to, community and communal relations.’⁴⁷ Based upon her discovery that class relations were consistently important throughout twentieth-century British history, Todd has also argued that class provides an important lens through which to observe how social relations were experienced, concluding that class was ‘a means of understanding

⁴⁷ Shepard & Withington (Eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place and Rhetoric*, p.7.

the unequal distribution power, but also a means by which people understood their daily lives and their place within society.’⁴⁸ By directing our attention towards class theory, it is possible to understand how it could entirely define an individual’s experiences of communal life.

Drawing upon concepts of class struggle first put forward by Engels and Marx, in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *Das Kapital* (1868), E. P. Thompson set out the following definition of class in his seminal study, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963):

Class happens when some men as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs.⁴⁹

Thompson, therefore, considered class to be intrinsically linked to social relations. According to Emma Griffin, *The Making of the English Working Class*, was ‘arguably the most significant contribution’ to class-based historical research.⁵⁰ This hypothesis is supported by the fact that many historians investigating class have subsequently built upon the foundations laid out by Thompson in his 1963 study. For example, in ‘Fear, Hatred and the Hidden Injuries of Class in Early Modern England’, (2006), Andy Wood acknowledged the advantage of considering social relations through the prism of class-struggles.⁵¹ Yet, he qualified this theory by suggesting that no form of power relationship could ever be static. Rather, dynamics of power existed in a state of perpetual flux due to the fact that individuals were constantly attempting to gain advantage over each other.⁵² In light of this, Wood argued for ‘a less rigid, more flexible

⁴⁸ Todd, ‘Class, Experience and Britain’s Twentieth Century’, p.493.

⁴⁹ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1980), pp.8-9.

⁵⁰ Emma Griffin, ‘Signposts: Working Class Histories’, *History Today*, Vol.65 (2.) (2015), p.57.

⁵¹ Andy Wood, ‘Fear, Hatred and the Hidden Injuries of Class in Early Modern England’, *Journal of Social History*, Vol.39, No. 3 (Spring, 2006), pp.803-826.

⁵² *Ibid*, pp.815-820.

history of class identities and social conflicts...one that frees us to recognise class as...fluid, ever-changing, emotive.’⁵³ In ‘Class Sentiments: Putting the Emotion back into Labour History’, (2014), Thomas C. Buchanan also maintained that emotions were an important part of class-based social relations, and he expanded upon Thompson’s original definition in order to reflect this. ‘Emotions worked in just the way Thompson’s model would suggest...helping to determine in lived experience which people were part of the community, and whom was to be reviled and hated.’⁵⁴

Most recently, in *Me, Me, Me: The Search for Community in Post War England*, (2019), Lawrence has argued that the emotional response to class was a peculiarly English phenomenon. He provided the following assessment:

I don’t want to suggest that class lacked a psychological dimension for anyone but the English...but I would argue that ingrained hierarchical and status-based models of social difference played an especially heavy burden on cross-class social encounters conducted in England.⁵⁵

Whilst class, hierarchy, and status-based models of social difference, played a significant role in the ways in which communal relations were experienced across England, it has been recognized that these elements were especially important for interactions between masters and their servants. Such relationships were, at their very core, asymmetrical, and they reflected fundamental differences in the cultural, financial and social capital of individuals operating at opposite ends of the established hierarchy. Consequently, the power-dynamics inherent in master/servant relations have been examined within a number of studies, including the

⁵³ Wood, ‘Fear, Hatred and the Hidden Injuries of Class in Early Modern England’, p.819.

⁵⁴ Thomas C. Buchanan, ‘Class Sentiments: Putting the Emotion back into Labour History’, *The Journal of Social History*, Vol. 48 No.1 (2014), p.73.

⁵⁵ Jon Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me: The Search for Community in Post War England* (Oxford, 2019).

aforementioned research conducted by Delap in relation to the centrality of humour ‘in establishing, maintaining, and subverting social boundaries’ in the home.⁵⁶ Other scholars who have considered the importance of class distinctions and power dynamics in interactions between masters and servants include Todd, as well as Carolyn Steedman, Alison Light, and Judy Giles.⁵⁷ In this thesis I build upon this existing work, and expand upon it, by arguing that relationships were even more profoundly affected by the themes of class, power, and social status upon estates like Chatsworth. These sites were unique because, whilst in smaller establishments, there was a clear-cut hierarchal division between those who were served, and those who served, country estates operated as environments in which the full social spectrum was represented. Individuals from the pinnacle of Britain’s social hierarchy, those from the very bottom, and those operating at all manner of stations in-between, were all obliged to live and work alongside each other in exceptionally close proximity, creating a ‘landscape’ of asymmetrical relationships.⁵⁸

According to Sennett and Cobb, ‘class is a system for limiting freedom: it limits the freedom of the powerful in dealing with other people, because they are constricted within the circle of action that maintains their power; class constricts the weak more obviously in that they must obey commands.’⁵⁹ By considering notions of class in relation to the Chatsworth estate community, it is possible to observe how historical actors from across the board were both

⁵⁶ Selina Todd, ‘Domestic Service and Class Relations in Britain, 1900-1950’, *Past and Present*, 203 (2009), pp.181-204; Delap, ‘Kitchen-Sink Laughter: Domestic Service Humour in Twentieth-Century Britain’, p.642.

⁵⁷ Carolyn Steedman, *Master and Servant: Love and Labour in the English Industrial Age* (Cambridge, 2007); Alison Light, *Mrs Woolf and the Servants: The Hidden Heart of Domestic Service* (London, 2007) & Judy Giles, ‘Authority, Dependence and Power in Accounts of Twentieth-Century Domestic Service’, in Lucy Delap, Ben Griffin and Abigail Wills (Eds), *The Politics of Domestic Authority in Britain since 1800* (Hampshire, 2009).

⁵⁸ Judy Giles, *Women, Identity and Private Life in Britain* (London, 1995), p.157.

⁵⁹ Richard Sennett & Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (London, 1993), p.28.

pigeonholed and constrained. For instance, in the early years of the twentieth century, those born into positions of power who then went on to occupy principal positions within the estate's social order, such as the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, were bound by notions of paternalism. This forced a duty of care upon them. This obligation was also compounded by the fact that, as pre-eminent aristocratic landowners, the Duke and Duchess carried out their role on the public stage. Thus, their behaviour and, moreover, that of their employees, was open to scrutiny. Any transgressions on the part of their servants would have been ascribed to them. At the other end of the spectrum, low-ranking employees working as servants were constricted by conventions of deference, which forced them to adopt submissive models of behaviour, regardless of their true feelings. Those who occupied positions somewhere in the middle of the hierarchy found themselves navigating between these two restrictions. They were required to act reverentially towards their superiors, oversee the care and wellbeing of their subordinates, and were ultimately held responsible for any misdemeanours or infractions carried out by those they were overseeing. Thus, the broad social landscape English country estate offers scholars interested in class-based interactions the opportunity to investigate relationships 'through, across, and between social strata' and enables them to comprehend how these interactions fed into and drew upon ideas surrounding identity and role.⁶⁰ An appreciation of this can ultimately allow greater insight into the themes of continuity and change discussed in the preceding section of the thesis, by illustrating how understandings and experiences of Britain's social hierarchy were affected by the key social developments of the first half of the twentieth century: namely, the move from a society which revered those who were served, to one which celebrated those who did the serving.

⁶⁰ Cavanaugh, 'Industrialising Communities', p.34.

Whilst this thesis builds upon and contributes to scholarship on class, power dynamics and social hierarchy, as well as that focusing upon the themes of continuity and change more generally, the study primarily speaks to, and engages with, two specific strands of historiography. These strands are, on the one hand, scholarship relating to the English country house, and on the other, scholarship focusing on the practice of domestic service. Heretofore, there has been a perceptible divide between these two avenues of research. Works associated with the former have traditionally adopted a ‘top-down’ approach to the study of the country house, focusing, like the 10th Duke of Devonshire, on the social history of the country house from the perspective of the landowning elite who called such properties home. Conversely, research associated with the latter has generally assumed an outlook consistent with ‘history from below’, a method based upon the work of E.P. Thompson and other pioneering social history scholars.⁶¹ It concerns itself with the experiences of ‘ordinary people’, rather than those of the ‘privileged elite’ like the Cavendish family. The next section examines these two separate strands of scholarship in order to investigate how and why a gap has emerged within the literature, and to identify the key texts which this thesis will draw upon and speak to. It positions the thesis as a bridge which connects the two areas of scholarship, and it demonstrates how, by considering Chatsworth’s social history from the perspective of its entire community, rather than that of one particular group or another, our understanding of the English country estate will be transformed.

⁶¹ Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*; Raphael Samuel, Keith Hopkins, John Breuilly, Joyce Youings, David Cannadine, Royden Harrison, J. Clark, ‘What is Social History’, *History Today*, Vol. 35(3), (1985) p.34.

1.4 Literature Review: The History of Country Houses and their Estates

Literature on the subject of English country houses and their associated estates has traditionally been written from a ‘top-down’ perspective. This is unsurprising given the historic social, economic, and political prominence of country landowners.

Noticeable interest in the histories and traditions of the English country house first developed in the later years of the Victorian period, long before the development of new social history. The movement emerged just as the country landowner lifestyle was becoming accessible to wealthy businessmen who longed to assume the traditions of the aristocracy and the gentry. Features on country houses began to appear in popular literature targeted at the aspiring middle classes. The most conspicuous of all these publications was *Country Life* magazine, which was first published in 1897.⁶² The magazine was created by Edward Hudson, who was head of a successful family printing business. Mark Girouard, writing on the subject in 1980, labelled him a ‘romantic and country loving businessman’ and described how early copies of the magazine were:

Extensively bought by equally romantic businessmen in Britain, America and the dominions. They read it with yearning and resolved that when they had made their pile they, too, would acquire a country house. Many of them did make their pile, and built or restored country houses on the strength of it - and the results were duly recorded in *Country Life*.⁶³

As *Country Life* grew in popularity during the early years of the twentieth century, its readership began to include the landowning classes who had been vaunted within its pages.

⁶² Michael Hall, ‘How Country Life’s 120 Year Journey Began thanks to a Visionary Founder’, *Country Life*, (06.01.2017) <https://www.countrylife.co.uk/country-life/country-lifes-120-year-journey-began-thanks-visionary-founder-146435> [accessed on 01.08.2018].

⁶³ Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (London, 1980), p.303.

However, whilst early literary interest in country houses was marked by romanticism and nostalgia, it is possible to detect a shift in the second decade of the twentieth century.⁶⁴ This was an era of intense change for the country estate. Political attitudes towards the landowning classes altered over the course of the First World War. This factor, combined with the economic challenges faced by the government, led to a significant increase in the financial duties levied on landowners. In his 1982 book *The Last Country Houses*, Clive Aslet, reflected on these developments and described an ‘avalanche’ of land sales after the end of the First World War in reaction to the threat of taxation.⁶⁵ In relation to these sales, Aslet defined a ‘new breed’ of country estate landowner in the interwar period: the American millionaires, who bought up much of the land which had become available.⁶⁶ Whilst ownership of some historic country estates transferred from the more traditional bastions of power to the nouveau riches, building work on new country houses ground to a halt. Aslet noted that it was in the post-1918 period that the country house building world collapsed.⁶⁷ Anxieties relating to these changes began to appear within popular literature. Perhaps most markedly, these concerns were the subject of an article written by the 9th Earl of Denbigh for the popular American magazine, *North American Review*, in 1927. The article was entitled ‘The Passing of the Great English Country Houses’, and in it, Denbigh spoke from the perspective of an English landowner, lamenting recent events and called for a greater awareness of the cultural importance of the country house:

I wonder whether American visitors appreciate the changes also proceeding in English country life, and the extent to which the old landowning families, from the small country squire to the professor of great estates, were formerly all bound up in the life of the country?⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Clive Aslet, *The Last Country Houses* (London, 1982), pp.57-8.

⁶⁶ Ibid; see also F.M.L. Thompson, who wrote on the matter even earlier in the 1960s, F.M.L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London. 2013), pp.332-3.

⁶⁷ Aslet, *The Last Country Houses*, p.76.

⁶⁸ Rudolph Fielding 9th Earl of Denbigh, ‘The Passing of the Great English Country Houses’, *North American Review*, vol. 224 (834) (March-May 1927), pp.93-94.

As this quote makes clear, Denbigh did not reflect on the impact of these changes upon the servants, estate workers and tenants who were also 'bound up' in this traditional way of life.

Denbigh concluded his article pessimistically, reflecting on the land which had been sold in the years following the First World War. He surmised that:

It is difficult to say how much land has been sold of recent years, as there is no official record. One of the largest firms of real estate agents informs me that they have sold well over 1,000,000 acres of agricultural land since 1919. They are only one of many.⁶⁹

Whilst this figure seems implausibly high, Clive Aslet concluded in *The Last Country Houses*, that half a million acres of estate land 'were rushed onto the market in 1918', so perhaps the number given by Denbigh is not as unlikely as it first appears.⁷⁰ Yet, despite the challenges posed by the First World War, some country estates remained relatively unaffected by change in the interwar period. As this thesis will show, Chatsworth offers a good example of stability and vitality at this time.

The Second World War had an even greater impact on the English country house, however, and this directed interest in its traditions and histories away from the periphery and into mainstream popular literature. During the conflict, the majority of these buildings were repurposed in order to contribute to the war effort in one way or another.⁷¹ As the conflict dragged on, economic strain took its toll on landowners, whilst the houses themselves were deprived of a great number of their workforce. It was the perceived plight of the English

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.100.

⁷⁰ Aslet, *The Last Country Houses*, pp.57-8.

⁷¹ David Littlejohn, *The Fate of the English Country House* (Oxford, 1997), pp.49-53.

country house at this time, which led Evelyn Waugh to write *Brideshead Revisited*, first published in 1945. According to Waugh's preface to the second edition of *Brideshead*, published in 1959, when he began penning his novel in the later years of the Second World War 'it [had] seemed...that the ancestral seats which were our chief national artistic monument were doomed to decay and spoliation like the monasteries in the sixteenth century.'⁷²

The difficulties faced by English country estates compounded in the post-war period. Many landowners found it impossible to meet the costs required either to restore their buildings to their pre-war glory, or simply to maintain them.⁷³ Moreover, the high rates of death duties charged upon the inheritance of a country house and its estate and collections priced many heirs out of ownership. Consequently, from the end of the war until well into the 1960s, not only were parcels of estate land sold off, but many hundreds of country houses were destroyed by their owners.⁷⁴ In writing to the Vice Chancellors of a select group of 'northern universities' in the 1945 letter quoted at the beginning of this introduction, the 10th Duke of Devonshire was attempting to avoid that fate for Chatsworth.

This situation also brought the country house to the attention of academics for the first time. F.M.L. Thompson was one of the first historians to focus on the subject. He published *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* in 1963. As the title suggests, this book assessed the history of the country house through a 'top-down' perspective. Whilst focus was predominantly given to landed elites who lived during the Victorian period, Thompson did reference the events of the twentieth century which had influenced his research. Poignantly, he labeled the period

⁷² Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited* (London, 1959), quoted in *ibid*, pp.49-50.

⁷³ Littlejohn, *The Fate of the English Country House*, p.53.

⁷⁴ Giles Worsley, 'Beyond the Powerhouse: Understanding the Country House in the Twenty-First Century', *Historical Research*, vol.78 (201) (2005), p.423.

from 1880 up to the outbreak of the First World War as the ‘Indian Summer’ for English landed society.⁷⁵ In relation to the interwar period of 1914-1939, Thompson went even further and described how a ‘startling social revolution’ had taken place during these years which was ‘nothing less than the dissolution of a large part of the great estate system and the formation of a new race of yeomen.’⁷⁶

As country house historian, Giles Worsley, has noted, it was ‘The destruction of the country house’ exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1974, with its hall of the fallen houses, [which] defined the viewpoint of a generation.’⁷⁷ Following this exhibition, both popular and academic interest in the traditions of landed society quickened. In particular attention was given to the cause and rate of the deterioration of country house life. Scholars Mark Girouard and Clive Aslet published their studies on the English country house in 1980 and 1982 respectively. Girouard undertook a broad social-architectural history of the country house.⁷⁸ Aslet took a similar approach to focus specifically on the challenges faced by country house landowners over the course of the twentieth century.⁷⁹ David Littlejohn and Peter Mandler built upon this research, and both published their studies of the country house in 1997. In the evocatively named, *The Fate of the English Country House*, Littlejohn explored the difficulties faced by English landowners, and considered how they were compounded in the post-war period.⁸⁰ Peter Mandler, on the other hand, took inspiration from the architectural outlook of Girouard’s work in *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home*.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Thompson, *English Landed Society*, pp. 292-326.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 327-345.

⁷⁷ Worsley, ‘Beyond the Powerhouse’, p.423.

⁷⁸ Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*.

⁷⁹ Aslet, *The Last Country Houses*.

⁸⁰ Littlejohn, *The Fate of the English Country House*.

⁸¹ Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (London, 1997).

All of the pre-existing studies of country houses mentioned within this literature review have considered these rural settings from an elite perspective. For example, although Clive Aslet, Mark Girourd, and Peter Mandler, investigated the impact of twentieth century developments upon country houses, their research predominantly focused on the ebbing social and political power of the landed elites, and the ways in which the architectural design of big houses changed as a result of these power shifts.⁸² Meanwhile, there has been no exploration of the impact of issues such as war, economic difficulties and the transformation of the political system on those who lived and worked in country houses and on their surrounding estate.⁸³ Domestic servants are only mentioned peripherally within these studies, and less still is said about those employed outside the household, such as gardeners, woodsmen, and estate workers. Casual employees, such as charwomen hired to clean country houses in preparation for the family's visits, have not been mentioned at all.

This thesis argues that it is not enough to consider the social history of English country estates from the perspective of the elite landlords who owned them. In the first half of the twentieth century, these estates functioned as living, working communities. In an effort to understand the Chatsworth estate in this manner, and address the key research question of the thesis, this investigation not only takes into account the social experiences of the Cavendish family, but also those of the wider estate population, including the part-time labourers and charwomen who resided in the estate villages, the indoor servants who lived in the great house itself, and

⁸² For example, Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* and Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* largely focus on the impact of technological advances on the architecture of the country; whereas Aslet, *The Last Country Houses* and F.M.L.Thompson, 'Presidential Address to the Royal Historical Society', published in installments in the *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* as 'Landed society in the twentieth century', 5th series, vol. 40 (1990) and 6th series, vols. 1-3 (1991-3) largely concern themselves with economic challenges to land ownership and landed power.

⁸³ For example, both Aslet and Girouard discuss domestic service within *The Last Country Houses* and *Life in the English Country House* respectively, but this is solely in relation to architecture and household management.

senior servants like the land agent, who, from the estate office, governed Chatsworth on behalf of the Duke. In order to appreciate how these disparate groups operated together as part of a complex social organism, this study does not regard them in isolation, but instead, it considers the interpersonal relations which connected individuals from different social categories to one another. In this manner, the thesis aims to expand upon the narrow outlook which, hitherto, has dominated academic discourse on the subject of the English country house. Nevertheless, through its focus on experiences of domestic work, this thesis also seeks to engage with, and build upon, literature written on the subject of domestic service, and to bridge the divide which exists between the two fields. The second literature review of this introduction will now turn its attention to this task.

1.5 Literature Review: Labour History, Feminism and Studies of Domestic Servants

In the opening chapter of his influential *What is History?*, E.H. Carr responded to his titular question with the following statement: ‘Our answer, consciously or unconsciously, reflects our own position in time, and forms part of our answer to the broader question what view we take of the society in which we live.’⁸⁴ This comment is especially true of the discipline of social history as a whole, and even more so of the ‘new’ social history of the working classes. When studying these strands of historiography, it is evident that academic interest has developed according to contemporary cultural and political concerns.

Social history began to develop as a field in the first half of the twentieth century. Up to this point, academic studies had largely concerned themselves with politics and diplomacy, although the new field of economic history had also become increasingly popular in the early

⁸⁴ E. H. Carr, *What is History* (London, 1990), p.8.

decades of the twentieth century.⁸⁵ One of the first pioneers of social history was George Macaulay Trevelyan. He described his 1942 study, *English Social History: A Survey of Six Centuries*, as an examination of the past ‘with the politics left out’.⁸⁶ In spite of this claim, Trevelyan’s work was clearly influenced by his Whig political leanings. One reviewer, Joseph M. Herson, described Trevelyan’s historical outlook as:

A sometimes paternalistic humanitarianism, confidence in progress, a dedication to constitutional and parliamentary government, a trust in free educated intelligence and a belief that rational people can resolve or live with their differences of opinion, and above all a habit of moral self-discipline and submission to rational procedures of government.⁸⁷

According to his political standpoint, Trevelyan chose to ground his social history studies in relation to the ‘great minds’ who had lived in the period he was examining, rather than focusing on the experiences of the working classes.⁸⁸ (His approach, therefore, was to consider society from the ‘top down’, rather than the ‘bottom up’.) Thus, whilst Trevelyan distanced himself from other scholars by focusing on social, rather than political history, in this regard he conformed to traditional historiographical trends. This was not social history as defined earlier within the introduction to this thesis, but was, rather, an earlier iteration. Until the 1960s, when new social history was established as a field and prompted a reconsideration of the ‘top down’ approach to the past, only a small number of academics considered ‘history from below’.

⁸⁵ John McIlroy, ‘The Road from Malet Street: The Society for the Study of Labour History, from 1960 to the New Millennium’, *Labour History Review*, Vol.75(1) (April, 2010), p.3.

⁸⁶ G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History: A Survey of Six Centuries* (London, 1942), p.xii.

⁸⁷ Joseph M. Herson, ‘The Last Whig Historian and Consensus History: George Macaulay Trevelyan, 1876-1962’, *The American History Review*, vol. 81, no. 1 (1976), p.66.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p.70.

G. D. H. Cole was the most notable scholar to focus on the development of the working class prior to the 1960s.⁸⁹ Writing between 1913 and 1959, he adopted the opposite approach to Trevelyan, considering the history of the British labour movement from a ‘bottom up’, socialist perspective. Early interest in working-class history also came from journalists like John and Barbara Hammond. Their enthusiasm for investigating this aspect of the past was sparked by a sympathy for the early twentieth-century labour movements taking place at the time of writing.⁹⁰ According to their background, the Hammonds also focused their attention on the most politically ‘relevant’ aspects of ‘labour history’, for example, Chartism, Marxism and the history of trade-unions.⁹¹ Neither the Hammonds nor Cole investigated the experiences of domestic servants. This was despite the extremely large numbers of workers who had traditionally found employment in the service sector across England and Wales. For example, 41 per cent of the total female labour force was recorded as working in domestic service in the 1891 census.⁹² The absence of scholarly attention can be largely put down to the distinct political and economic lens through which labour history was considered at this time. Domestic service was a predominantly female profession, and it existed outside of the ‘productive sphere’ which was traditionally associated with work.⁹³ Moreover, although there was a Domestic Workers Union (DWU), it was nowhere near as powerful, nor achieved as much, as the unions

⁸⁹ G. D. H. Cole, *A History of the Labour Party from 1914* (London, 1948); G. D. H. Cole, *British Labour Movement: Retrospect and Prospect* (London, 1951); G. D. H. Cole, Asa Briggs & John Saville (Eds), *Essays in Labour History: In Memory of G. D. H. Cole, 25 September 1889 – 14 January 1959* (London, 1960).

⁹⁰ Richard Price, ‘Histories of Labour and Labour History’, *Labour History Review*, Vol.75(3) (December,2010), pp.263-266.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p.263.

⁹² Delap, *Knowing Their Place*, p.11.

⁹³ Schwartz, “What we think is needed is a union of domestics such as the miners have”, *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 25, No, 2 (2014), pp.174-5.

which were formed by industrial workers.⁹⁴ This meant that labour historians considered it to be an unattractive research topic.

The dismissive attitude which labour historians held towards domestic service remained prevalent in the post-war period, when progressive politics reached new heights and labour history developed as a discipline and became significantly more popular.⁹⁵ Previously, it appeared that those participating in the burgeoning labour movements, like John and Barbara Hammond, were more interested in their own histories than the academics. However, as new social history began to develop from the 1960s onwards, this changed. As Melinda van Wingen describes:

Analysis [shifted] from the nation and its leadership to smaller social groups, identified primarily by gender, race, and class differences. The focus was no longer simply on powerful public figures but on the private lives of ordinary people. Neglected voices, lives, and activities of the past moved to the forefront of historical inquiry.⁹⁶

As a result, more researchers within the academy began to take an interest in history of the working class. Scholastic organisations such as the Society for the Study of Labour History (SSLH) were founded and developments were brought to the attention of the wider public by reviews of publications which appeared in the national press.⁹⁷ Yet, whilst the field developed in terms of its popularity, the traditional method of viewing working-class history through a political and economic lens remained. Marxism, in particular, had a great influence on the

⁹⁴ Ibid, see also Laura Schwartz, 'A Job Like Any Other? Feminist Responses and Challenges to Domestic Worker Organizing in Edwardian Britain', *International Labor and Working-Class History* No. 88 (Fall 2015), p.44.

⁹⁵ Price, 'Histories of Labour and Labour History', p.267.

⁹⁶ Melinda van Wingen & Abigail Bass, 'Reappraising Archival Practice in Light of the New Social History', *Library Hi Tech*, vol.26 (4) (2008), p.577.

⁹⁷ McIlroy, 'Asa Briggs and the Emergence of Labour History', p.226.

labour historians writing in the 1960s and workers' movements, class formation, and labour politics were predominately considered through its prism.⁹⁸

A good example of the relationship between Marxism and labour history can be found in E.P. Thompson's highly influential book *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), especially in relation to his thoughts on domestic service.⁹⁹ Although he recognized that service conducted in exchange for payment was a social fact, Thompson claimed that servants could not be considered a part of the working class that *made* itself, for they did not really fit with his definition of a worker.¹⁰⁰ For his study, Thompson drew on Weber's interpretation of 'Class', which is formed from an active economic relationship to the market, or the productive realm.¹⁰¹ As servants were engaged in the reproductive (domestic) sphere, rather than the productive (public) sphere, Thompson excluded them from his examination.

Thus, domestic service was ignored by pioneering social historians of the early twentieth century, including George Trevelyan, who took a 'top down approach', and labour historians like G. D. H. Cole, the Hammonds, and E. P. Thompson, who considered history from the 'bottom up' but through a distinctly socialist political and economic lens. Instead, the nature of the labour history movement at this time encouraged the emergence of narrow historical narratives which actively excluded certain groups including domestic servants and women more generally.

⁹⁸ Bryan Palmer, 'Is there now, or has there ever been, a Working Class?', *History Today* vol.42 (March 1992), p.52.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Steedman, *Labours Lost*, p.16-17

¹⁰¹ Max Weber, 'Class, status and party' (1924) in H.Gerth & C.W.Mills (Eds), *From Max Weber: Essays in sociology* (London, 1991), pp.180-195.

It was the Women's Rights movement of the 1970s and 1980s, and the second wave of feminism, which first created an interest in the development of 'traditional feminine roles' and highlighted a need for 'women's history'. One of the earliest academics to explore this aspect of the past was sociologist Ann Oakley. Although she was inspired by the political campaigns of the women's rights movements, Oakley's disciplinary heritage ensured that she put people rather than politics or economics in the foreground. In 1974, she described the way in which, historically, the 'preparation for housewifery [was] intermingled with socialisation for the feminine gender role'.¹⁰² Oakley was influential in developing a historical narrative which told how housewives lost their autonomy, individuality and independence as a result of industrialisation.¹⁰³

The history of domestic employment was first explored in relation to this narrative. Historians including Pamela Horn, Pam Taylor and Leonore Davidoff argued that as well as confining middle-class women to the home, society had forced working-class girls into restrictive domestic service roles.¹⁰⁴ In putting forward this argument, these scholars combined the feminist social history outlook of Ann Oakley, and the 'bottom up' approach of 'labour history' in order to explore the practice of service through the prism of class-struggle. Yet, although they emerged during an age of female empowerment, these studies did not explore the agency of domestic servants. Rather, they portrayed these women as victims of a paternalistic society. Davidoff, for example, discussed 'the persuasive paternalism of service' which forced

¹⁰² Ann Oakley, *The Sociology of Housework* (Oxford, 1985) [first published in 1974], quoted in Steedman, *Labours Lost*, p.24.

Also Ann Oakley, *Women's Work: The housewife past and present* (New York, 1976), pp.233-241.

¹⁰³ Oakley, *Women's Work*, pp.233-241; Steedman, *Labours Lost*, p.24.

¹⁰⁴ Davidoff, 'Mastered for Life', pp.406-428; Pamela Horn, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* (Dublin, 1975); Pam Taylor, 'Women Domestic Servants 1919-1939: A study of a hidden Army, illustrated by servants' own recollected experiences', *Stencilled occasional paper University of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies*, History series ; SP No.40. (April 1976) p.9.

domestic workers into a deferential position in her 1974 examination, 'Mastered for Life: Servant and Wife in Victorian and Edwardian England'.¹⁰⁵ According to Carolyn Steedman, a historian of domestic service writing in more recent times, the narrative presented by these academics was fuelled by the desire to rediscover working-class women who they felt had been unjustly ignored by past historians. She argued in her 2009 book *Labours Lost: Domestic Service and the Making of Modern England* that:

This feminist perspective on labour history worked hard to rescue domestic servants from historical silence, but preferred to hear them tell of their abuse, rather than listen to their loud opinions on an inequitable labour regime, or take notice of their effective and intelligent engagement with contemporary discourse.¹⁰⁶

In an effort to address this issue, some historians writing in the early 2000s, including Steedman, Alice Marie Lea, and Judy Giles, have turned their attention to the ways in which domestic workers may have exhibited defiance towards the system of paternalism rather than deference.¹⁰⁷ Whilst this was a necessary revision to the original narrative, the themes of victimhood, tension, antagonism, and class-struggle remained the primary concern. For example, in viewing domestic service through this lens, Giles concluded that households often became an 'emotional war zone' in the fight between master and servant.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Davidoff, 'Mastered for Life', pp.414-415.

¹⁰⁶ Steedman, *Labours Lost*, p.27.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, Alice Marie Lea, 'Domestic Service, Theft and Infanticide in Greater London, 1837-1901', Thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts, University of Missouri-Kansas City (Proquest, 2002); Giles, 'Authority, Dependence and Power', in Delap, Griffin & Abigail Wills (Eds), *The Politics of Domestic Authority*. Although slavery was a completely different practice to that of domestic service, it is possible to determine similar trends with regards to academic discourse, for research which focuses on defiance exhibited by slaves, see: Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South, Gender and American Culture* (North Carolina, 2004), pp. 1-59; and Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (Cambridge, 2008), pp.1-31, 63-96.

¹⁰⁸ Giles, 'Authority, Dependence and Power', in Delap, Griffin & Abigail Wills (Eds), *The Politics of Domestic Authority*, p.211.

Such narratives are problematic for numerous reasons. In the first place, scholars have limited access to documentary accounts of service and the day-to-day realities of such employment were not often recorded. It is, therefore, difficult for historians to assess the correlation between deed and thought.¹⁰⁹ By applying a rhetoric of tension to experiences of domestic service, scholars are in danger of assuming a one-to-one correspondence between recorded instances of behavior and long-term attitude. As Harold Newby observed within his sociological study, 'The Deferential Dialect', one-off acts of antagonism or 'defiance' do not always suggest total opposition to a particular system.¹¹⁰ In the context of domestic service, transgressions could be committed by individuals with specific grievances, who nevertheless identified with other, more positive, aspects of the profession. This practice was recently observed by Selina Todd, with regards to servants who engaged in gossiping about their mistresses or 'borrowed' their clothes: 'these practices were carried out by the same women who expressed some affection for their employers, or acknowledged the material benefits they received as workers.'¹¹¹

Moreover, even if the majority of sources referring to master-servant relations seem to suggest conflict, it does not necessarily follow that this was the most common experience of domestic employment. Instead, scenarios involving confrontation were more likely to stimulate the production of documentation. Additionally, the majority of scholars have only examined evidence pertaining to this form of labour within a certain setting: the middle-class household. As Carina McDowell noted in 2012: 'there was greater potential for class-friction in middle-

¹⁰⁹ Howard Newby, 'The Deferential Dialect', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.17(2) (1975) p.142.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.142.

¹¹¹ Todd, 'Domestic Service and Class Relations in Britain 1900-1950', pp.195-197.

class houses employing live-in servants than in the houses of the upper-classes which had more space, both physically and socially.’¹¹²

Thus, within the historiography of domestic service, the themes of conflict and tension may appear to have been more prevalent than they actually were. In order to redress the balance, two scholars who observed this trend, Alison Light and Sandra Stanley Holton, conducted studies which closely scrutinised the interpersonal relations which connected masters and servants.¹¹³ For example, by examining the relationships which existed between Virginia Woolf and her domestic staff, Alison Light was able to demonstrate the fact that emotional responses to domestic employment could vary enormously on both sides of the divide.¹¹⁴ In ‘Friendship and Domestic Service: The Letters of Eliza Oldham, general maid (c.1820-1892)’, Sandra Stanley Holton showed that in some cases, experiences of domestic employment could even be extremely positive for both master and servant.¹¹⁵

By placing interpersonal relations rather than class-struggle at the centre of their investigations, Light and Stanley aligned themselves with a historiographical movement spearheaded by Henry French and Jonathan Barry. French and Barry disagreed with Marxist historians about the degree to which a collective ‘class struggle’ contributed to an individual’s identity, and by extension, their social experiences. Instead, they argued that personal identities and power relations were much more informative for social historians.¹¹⁶ By focusing its investigation

¹¹² Carina McDowell, ‘Staffing The Big House: Country House Domestic Service in Yorkshire, 1800 - 1903’, Thesis for the degree of MA in History, University of Ottawa (Proquest, 2012).

¹¹³ Light, *Mrs Woolf and the Servants* & Sandra Stanley Holton, ‘Friendship and Domestic Service: The Letters of Eliza Oldham, general maid (c.1820-1892)’, *Women’s History Review*, Vol.24(3) (2015), pp.429-449.

¹¹⁴ Light, *Mrs Woolf and the Servants*, p.xxi.

¹¹⁵ Stanley Holton, ‘Friendship and Domestic Service’, pp.429-449.

¹¹⁶ Henry French and Jonathan Barry (Eds), *Identity and Agency in England 1500-1800* (Basingstoke, 2004), p.3.

around the interpersonal relations which connected different members of the Chatsworth estate community to one another, this thesis builds upon this movement, and the work undertaken by Light and Stanley Holton in particular. It highlights the great degree of variance which could exist in the relationships which connected masters and servants. Moreover, this study is also able to expand upon the examinations conducted by Light and Stanley Holton by showing that the relations which existed between different groups of servants could be similarly diverse. In his 2017 thesis, which investigated the industrial community of Elsecar, Nigel Cavanaugh observed that:

Power relationships are reinforced and legitimised through appropriate behaviours, rituals and language and are dependent upon context. Thus, for example, a workshop foreman might conduct himself in different ways and use different modes of language when reporting to his employer, than those he would use in dealing with a subordinate worker or within the home.¹¹⁷

By focusing on social relationships ‘through, across, and between social strata’, just as Cavanaugh did within his study of the community at Elsecar, this thesis is able to present a much more nuanced examination of the social and professional experiences of domestic employment than that which has been produced hitherto.¹¹⁸

Aside from the fact that there was a greater potential for friction between master and servant within middle-class households, there exists another, even more compelling, reason for the predominant focus given to experiences of service within this kind of establishment. This preference relates to the origins of this field of research. As this literature review has shown, the first scholars of domestic service were attempting to ‘rescue’ their working-class subjects from academic neglect, by exploring the history of the domestic sphere from the ‘bottom up’.

¹¹⁷ Cavanaugh, ‘Industrialising Communities’, p.33.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p.34.

As Rosie Cox has noted, ‘Formal, multi-staff households are the ‘elite’ of domestic employers’.¹¹⁹ Consequently, in comparison to domestic service practices taking place in middle-class establishments, experiences of service within upper-class households have been considered too ‘top-down’ to serve this field’s original ambition. This thesis responds to this perception and argues that studies of domestic employment within a country estate setting need not be elitist. Making observations about domestic employment purely from the perspective of those at the higher end of the estate hierarchy, such as the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, and their middle-class officials, like the land agent and the private secretary, would indeed produce a ‘top-down’ narrative. However, situated at the lower end of Chatsworth’s social hierarchy were charwomen and apprentices to skilled craftsmen, such as carpenters or blacksmiths, and the experiences of these individuals were far from elite. Thus, by considering the history of Chatsworth, not only in relation to those individuals who occupied the highest social stations on the estate, but also in relation to the wider community who lived and worked there, this investigation is able to avoid a ‘top-down’ outlook. Furthermore, in drawing attention to the great variety of service roles which could be found at Chatsworth during the first-half of the twentieth century, from land agent to apprentice blacksmith, this thesis has been able to add to scholarly discussions on the topic of how best to define a domestic servant. Alongside the debates surrounding deferential vs. defiant behaviour, this matter has attracted the most scholarly attention.

According to Carolyn Steedman, the traditional understanding of a servant, is that of a waged domestic worker, predominantly of the female sex, who was expected to live in their employer’s household.¹²⁰ This perception of service, which derives from the feminist origins

¹¹⁹ Rosie Cox, *The Servant Problem: The Home Life of a Global Economy* (London, 2006), p.77.

¹²⁰ Definition of service taken from Steedman, *Labours Lost*, pp.5-6.

of the field, was based on the homogenous workforce which could be found in middle-class households between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. However, a few researchers who have examined domestic work outside of such settings have argued against this archetype, pushing, instead, for the traditional definitions of domestic service to be broadened. Drawing upon examples from the nineteenth century, Jessica Gerard argued in her 1994 study, *Country House Life: Family and Servants 1815-1914*, that:

The staff of a nineteenth-century country house was an ever-changing group of people from diverse social and geographic backgrounds, varying in goals and motives in entering gentleman's service, and wide-ranging in age. The sheer range of occupations in country house service promoted this diversity, but servants themselves played a major role.¹²¹

Based upon her findings from both census returns and archival materials, Gerard identified four distinct types of servant:

The life-cycle servant who eventually abandoned service for another occupation or marriage; the career servant who made service a lifetime occupation; the "distressed gentlewoman," an impoverished single or widowed upper-or middle-class woman forced to earn a living; and the labourer, a un-skilled full- or part time worker.¹²²

Gerard's system of categorisation was an important development for this field of research. Nonetheless, whilst her work on the 'four categories of domestic servants' expanded upon more traditional definitions of service, some kinds of domestic employment do not conform to Gerard's model of classification. Most recently, in 2016, Tessa Chynoweth concluded her thesis 'Domestic Service and Domestic Space in London, 1750-1800', by drawing attention to the myriad tasks which were undertaken by domestic employees during the eighteenth century:

¹²¹ Jessica Gerard, *Country House Life: Family and Servants 1815-1914* (London, 1994), p.162.

¹²² Ibid.

The differences between servants has been an important theme of this thesis. Servants have, of course, been found labouring in kitchens, serving at table, and working their way up the traditionally-understood servant hierarchy. But they have also been identified working in shops and warehouses, serving in victualling houses, coffee shops and pubs, and assisting pawnbrokers and tradesmen and women.¹²³

By identifying domestic employees who worked outside of the conventional service hierarchy, Chynoweth's findings exposed the limitations of Gerard's model. Building upon the research undertaken by Chynoweth, this thesis also draws attention to examples of domestic work which lay outside of the traditionally understood parameters of service. However, whilst Chynoweth considered the variety of service roles which could be found in an urban setting, this study takes rural domestic work as its focus. Thus, instead of encountering servants in shops and pubs, and assisting pawnbrokers and tradesmen, this investigation finds them labouring in building yards, attending to golf and cricket grounds, and working in office spaces as secretaries, agents and comptrollers. Based upon these findings, this thesis argues for a more inclusive definition of domestic service, which extends beyond the rigid forms of delineation found within Gerard's model.

Through examining the historiography of domestic service, this literature review has ultimately identified three key ways in which this thesis contributes to this particular field. This thesis demonstrates how a 'top-down', elitist perspective of the history of the country estate can be avoided. It places interpersonal relationships through, across, and between social strata at the centre of the investigation, in order to present a more nuanced examination of the social and professional experiences of domestic employment than that which has been produced hitherto. Finally, it presents a more inclusive definition of domestic service.¹²⁴

¹²³ Tessa Chynoweth, 'Domestic Service and Domestic Space in London, 1750-1800', Thesis for the degree of PhD in History, Queen Mary University of London, (2016), p.239.

¹²⁴ Cavanaugh, 'Industrialising Communities', p.34.

1.6 Bridging the Gap: Investing Domestic Employment within a Country Estate

The literature reviews preceding this section have drawn attention to specific gaps within the historiographies of the country house and domestic service respectively. They have also identified the ways in which this thesis will engage with earlier studies from these fields, as well as those focusing on the broader themes of class, hierarchy, continuity and change. Building upon these foundations, this section considers how this thesis will act as bridge between the two distinct strands of scholarship by considering the social history of Chatsworth from the perspective of the entire community, rather than that of one particular group or another, and by taking into account the role played by social status and power-dynamics.

Thus far, most of the literature concentrating on experiences of country house service in the twentieth century tends to have been written for entertainment rather than for scholarly purposes. Works such as Ernest Sackville Turner's, *What the Butler Saw*, Frank Dawes, *Not in Front of the Servants*, and Frank E. Huggett's, *Life Below Stairs* have been described as 'impressionistic portraits of English domestic servants,' for they are anecdotal in nature and are predominantly comprised of personal reminiscences of service.¹²⁵ Whilst many vivid accounts of domestic service are contained within these works, there is no attempt to evaluate the stories told, or to create a balanced view of the social realities of domestic employment on a large country estate.

¹²⁵ Description from Lee Holcombe, [Review] 'Frank Dawes *Not in Front of the Servants: Domestic Service in England, 1850-1939*', *Victorian Studies* Vol. 19, No. 1 (September, 1975), pp. 121-122; see also E.S. Turner, *What the Butler Saw: Two Hundred and Fifty Years of the Servant Problem* (London, 1962); Frank Dawes, *Not in Front of the Servants: Domestic Service in England, 1850-1939* (London, 1973); and Frank E. Huggett, *Life Below Stairs* (London, 1977).

Gerard's study, *Country House Life*, is the best example of an academic investigation which has attempted to bridge the divide between the history of the country house and its estate, and that of domestic service. Reviewer, Albert J. Schmidt credited Gerard's 1994 investigation with breathing new life 'into a subject, generally thought to have been overworked and resistant to new ideas.'¹²⁶ Yet, whilst Schmidt's review was largely positive, he nevertheless identified some limitations in the outlook of *Country House Life*: 'the country house community is...wider-based than the author has made it...she has excluded the well-situated of the rural middle class. Budding professionals like country lawyers and doctors and, of course, prosperous farmers...'¹²⁷

I also argue that Gerard's assessment of such communities was incomplete. However, whilst Schmidt made reference to the fact that Gerard neglected to consider the lawyers, doctors, and farmers who interacted with the residents of country establishments, I instead draw attention to the kinds of 'budding professionals' who could be found living and working upon the country estate, and who occupied an important role within its social hierarchy.¹²⁸ This category of individuals includes wealthy tenant farmers, who rented land from members of the aristocracy, land agents who ran their estates for them, and private secretaries, who acted as their employers' official mouthpiece in both personal and professional matters.

Gerard's is not the only study which has overlooked the role the rural middle classes played within the country house community. McDowell's 2012 thesis, 'Staffing The Big House: Country House Domestic Service in Yorkshire, 1800 -1903', is one of the few scholarly

¹²⁶ Albert J. Schmidt, [Review], 'Jessica Gerard, *Country House Life: Family and Servants 1815-1914*', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Spring, 1997), p. 788.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 787-788.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*.

investigations which has built on the work undertaken by Gerard and has linked the fields of country house history and domestic service history.¹²⁹ Yet, in her thesis, McDowell focused her attention solely on small country establishments owned by the gentry. As McDowell acknowledged in her study, ‘they [the gentry landowners] were less well-to-do, they could not afford to maintain the variety of servants a wealthy aristocrat could.’ Due to these factors, the workforce of the gentry country house was not as diverse as the aristocratic equivalent. The most obvious distinction was the absence of rural middle-class professionals. Many such individuals could afford to keep substantial households of their own, and, as Schmidt pointed out in his review, they were more likely to ape, and occasionally mingle with, the gentry, than work for them.¹³⁰ In contrast, within the aristocratic country house community, there were situations available for middle class professionals which called for their specific skill-sets whilst enabling them to live in a manner which befit their senior social status, such as the role of land agent or private secretary.

The paper-trails left behind by the middle-class professionals who occupied these positions at Chatsworth have proved especially useful for this thesis. In particular, they have allowed me to access the experiences of working-class members of the estate community, which, due to the humble social status of these individuals, have neither been recorded, nor preserved elsewhere. In the subsequent section of this introduction I set out this specific methodological challenge and explain how the records of Chatsworth’s senior servants have allowed me to overcome it. I also outline the structure of the thesis and provide an overview of each of the four thematically organised chapters which, together, make up the thesis.

¹²⁹ McDowell, ‘Staffing The Big House’.

¹³⁰ Schmidt, [Review], ‘Jessica Gerard, *Country House Life*’, pp. 787-788.

1.7 Sources, Methodologies and Thesis Outline

This thesis is the product of a Collaborative Doctoral Award project conducted in collaboration with the Chatsworth estate. As such, the main body of sources utilised within the investigation came from the substantial archives of the Devonshire Collection held at Chatsworth. As this overview explains, the outlook, structure and methodological approach of my thesis has been determined by the strengths and weaknesses of this source material.

This thesis focuses on the period 1908-1950 for two reasons. Firstly, as already been discussed, the two wars meant that this was an era of great upheaval, both for country houses, and for British society as a whole. Secondly, this time period represents the tenures of two dukes: the 9th Duke of Devonshire (1908-1938) and that of his son and heir, the 10th Duke (1938-1950).

The records relating to those living and working on the estate in the period 1908-1950 are substantial but patchy. This material was compiled by the Chatsworth Estate Office for the attention of the chief land agent, and it includes household accounts, wage books for house and gardens, records of deaths and retirements, estate rental documents, and national insurance records. Certain years are represented in more detailed records than others. For example, there exists much more documentation dating from 1938, when the 9th Duke died and the 10th Duke inherited, than for 1937. Similarly, certain aspects of estate life were better documented than others. More records exist for those working in the gardens and building yard than for those employed in other departments. Yet, despite these gaps, the material offers a great deal of demographic information on those who made up the community at Chatsworth during this time. By assessing and scrutinising the available data, it was possible for the thesis to provide an overview of Chatsworth's workforce across the period.

The next step in my investigation was to supplement the quantitative material relating to the Chatsworth estate community with qualitative data. According to scholars Teun van Dijk and Norman Fairclough, such evidence acts as a lens through which the social norms, ideals, and behaviours of individuals, such as those living and working on Chatsworth estate, can be read.¹³¹ As a result, this kind of material has the power to allow the thesis to answer meaningful questions about how the estate functioned as a social organism. However, such evidence was much more difficult to find within the Devonshire Collection than quantitative data. As previously mentioned, it is generally difficult to find substantial quantities of material either referring to, or written by, the humblest members of a country estate community, including servants, estate workers, and tenants. This is due to the traditional outlook and objectives of a country house archive. For the most part, records were not kept with the needs and interests of social historians in mind. Rather, as archivist Melinda van Wingen has pointed out, the vast majority of archives have traditionally favoured the stories of the male white elite: ‘repositories focused on the papers of the most powerful. Government, business, and military records, along with the personal letters and papers of powerful and wealthy individuals, were most abundant and more likely to be preserved.’¹³²

This is particularly true of the archives of the Devonshire Collection, which were created by the Dukes of Devonshire and their family members in order to store their private papers and retain their financial accounts. The management of the archives has similarly revolved around the Dukes of Devonshire and their families. For example, the Devonshire Collection archives are organised in relation to Ducal period. For this reason, it seemed most expedient to set the

¹³¹ Martyn Hammersley, ‘On the Foundations of Critical Discourse Analysis’, *Language & Communication*, Vol. 17, No.3. (1997), pp. 237-248; T. van Dijk, ‘Introduction: the role of discourse analysis in society’ in T. van Dijk (Ed.) *Handbook of Discourse Analysis Volume 4* (New York, 1985); & Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (London, 1995).

¹³² van Wingen & Bass, ‘Reappraising Archival Practice’ pp.576-7.

temporal boundaries of this thesis according to these parameters. Whilst references to estate workers exist within the private correspondence exchanged by members of the Cavendish family, the majority of descriptions within the archival catalogues make no mention of these discussions. This is largely because, when writing descriptions of these sources, cataloguers traditionally gave preference to recording details about political and economic matters, as well as the Cavendish family themselves. Although it is difficult to identify evidence relating to the wider estate community within the catalogues of the family's private papers, it is even more challenging to find this material in the archival documents yet to be catalogued, which amounts to around forty per cent of the Devonshire Collection. Nevertheless, an examination of some of this uncatalogued material revealed that, whilst it can be difficult to locate the voices of the servants, estate workers, and tenants, who lived and worked at Chatsworth during the first half of the twentieth century, much evidence of their experiences has in fact survived within the archives. This evidence comes in a variety of forms, including correspondence exchanged between various members of the estate community on both professional and personal matters, as well as memoirs.

In a few cases, stand-alone documents created by those working in some of the humblest positions on the estate have been preserved intact, seemingly by chance. More frequent than this are instances when documents created by servants have survived because of their significance in relation to certain situations affecting Chatsworth more generally, or members of the Cavendish family in particular. For example, letters have been identified which discuss events like the outbreak of the First World War or the death of a Duke. However, the most prevalent sources relating to the servants and staff have been found in the records of the senior, middle-class employees, like the land agent and the Duchess's private secretary. In their roles as intermediaries, such individuals corresponded both with members of the estate community

who occupied more humble positions, such as low-ranking servants and labourers, as well as those members who occupied the highest social station within the estate hierarchy, including the Duke and the Duchess of Devonshire themselves. In doing so, they created large paper trails which can be used to trace the interpersonal relations connecting different members of the estate community to one-another. This thesis has, therefore, found that the substantial amount of source material created and compiled by senior servants in the period 1908 - 1950, can help to produce a good understanding of how the estate community functioned as a whole. By drawing upon this kind of source material, and by utilising it to consider how life and work at Chatsworth was experienced ‘through, across, and between social strata’, my thesis adopts a novel approach to source material which can be defined as neither ‘top down’ nor ‘bottom up’ history, but rather, history from ‘the middle’.

In this way, the thesis builds upon the work undertaken by Stewart McCain, a scholar whose research lies outside of the field of country house and domestic service history. In his 2018 study *The Language Question under Napoleon: War, Culture and Society, 1750-1850*, McCain highlighted the usefulness of studying the records compiled by certain regional notables who acted as intermediary figures within Napoleonic society.¹³³ He argued, ‘these figures were significant because they formed the backbone of the state on the ground.’¹³⁴ Due to their roles as arbiters, McCain found that the records kept by these individuals allowed him to drill down through the strata of Napoleonic society in order to understand how different groups of citizens experienced life under the regime.¹³⁵ In a comparable manner, this thesis draws upon the records compiled by middle-class senior servants who occupied intermediary roles, in order to

¹³³ Stewart McCain, *The Language Question under Napoleon: War, Culture and Society, 1750-1850* (London, 2018), pp.12-13.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid, pp.271-278.

shed light on the social and professional experiences of both the employers and the employees who made up the Chatsworth estate community. In particular, the interpersonal relations which connected different individuals to one another will be examined, and especial focus will be given to the 'performative' or 'coded' elements of social behaviours, as these can help us to understand how the estate functioned as a social organism. Although, due to the lack of available source material, it has not been possible to view the Chatsworth community 'from below', by using the approach of 'history from the middle' in order to scrutinise the experiences of a wide-range of individuals, including the Cavendish family themselves, the middle-class senior servants, and the working class labourers and estate workers, it has been possible, not only to avoid an elitist narrative, but also to develop an holistic understanding of the Chatsworth estate community.

Structurally, the thesis is comprised of four thematically organised chapters. Each investigation focuses on a different subset of the estate community and draws upon different kinds of archival material. Each chapter also adopts a distinct methodological approach in response to the source material under scrutiny. Together, they contribute to a comprehensive understanding of Chatsworth as a social organism.

The first chapter draws upon the official records of life and work at Chatsworth in the period 1908-1950, including household accounts, wage books, records of deaths and retirements, estate rental documents, and national insurance records. Where possible, this data has been supplemented with that found within census returns. Building upon methodological approaches developed by scholars like Michael Anderson, Mark Ebery and Brian Preston, who have conducted population studies, this chapter acts as a demographic overview of the Chatsworth

estate.¹³⁶ Its chief goal is to understand who made up the community at Chatsworth during this time, and this research question is tackled by drawing upon a series of databases created specifically for this chapter in order to answer a subset of research questions, including: How many individuals were employed upon the estate at any one time and in what capacity? In which departments and occupations were these employees situated? How was the hierarchy of the estate community structured? Where did estate employees hail from according to their place of birth? What was the ratio of male to female employees? What was the age range of those employed by the estate? What was their current address and their distance of commute? Did members of the same family often work for the estate, and if so, did they work in a similar capacity? What was the average rate of wages paid to employees and how did this differ according to department? What was the average career length and how did this differ according to department? What was the frequency of promotions and wage increases in different departments? How did circumstances such as war, economic depression, and the death of an employer affect employment trends at Chatsworth? Ultimately, this chapter will consider how an understanding of who made up the Chatsworth estate community 1908-1950 can help to produce a more inclusive definition of the term ‘domestic servant’.

Whilst this quantitative study helps to answer some key questions regarding the demographic make-up of the Chatsworth estate, and how this changed over the course of the first half of the twentieth century, it cannot help us to fully understand how the estate functioned as a social organism during this time. The subsequent three chapters of this thesis all seek to answer this question by focusing their investigations on texts such as letters, memoirs, and reports, which

¹³⁶ Michael Anderson, ‘Mis-specification of servant occupations in the 1851 census: a problem revisited,’ in Nigel Goose, (Ed.), *Women’s Work in Industrial England: Regional and Local Perspectives* (Hatfield, 2007); & Mark Ebery & Brian Preston, ‘Domestic Service in Late Victorian and Edwardian England, 1871-1914’, *Geographical Papers: Department of Geography, University of Reading* (July, 1976).

highlight some of the specific social codes and practices associated with the different groups of people populating the estate: the working-class lower-ranking servants, the upper-class masters, and the middle-class senior servants. The methodological approaches I adopt within these studies have been influenced by literature from the school of linguistics. In particular, inspiration has been taken from linguistics studies which have employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Whilst, in the strictest sense, I do not make use of CDA within my thesis, I do consider how language operates as medium for negotiating power and status, and I draw distinctions between explicit and implicit meanings within textual accounts.

I argue that historical research can benefit hugely by adopting such linguistics-inspired approaches. This is especially true for those interested in investigating the themes of class, power-dynamics, and social hierarchy. An argument in support of this can be found in Gareth Steadman Jones' 1983 examination *Languages of Class*. In this study, Steadman Jones explained that many historians, including G. D. H. Cole and Asa Briggs, had treated the rhetorical political demands of the chartists as symbolic or anachronistic, focusing instead on the perceived importance of economic phenomena, such as low wages and economic insecurity.¹³⁷ Yet, he felt that the true understanding was one which regarded the language of Chartism, 'not as a passive medium through which new class aspirations could find expression, but rather as a complex rhetoric binding together, in a systematic way, shared premises.'¹³⁸ By adopting this approach, Steadman Jones found that the lack of political representation and the corrupt system of power were the chief causes of working-class misery.¹³⁹ On the basis of this research, historians including Emma Griffin have credited Steadman Jones with prompting a

¹³⁷ Gareth Steadman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 2008), [first published in 1983] pp.99-100, see also G. D. H. Cole, *A Short History of the British Working-Class Movement, 1789-1947* (London, 1948); and Asa Briggs, *Chartist Studies* (London, 1959).

¹³⁸ Steadman Jones, *Languages of Class*, p.107.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, pp.105-106.

complete reassessment of class theory, and since the publication of *Languages of Class*, historians investigating the power-dynamics have increasingly seen the merits of adopting a linguistics-inspired approach.¹⁴⁰

In 'Fear, Hatred and the Hidden Injuries of Class in Early Modern England' (2006), Andy Wood argued that this 'linguistic turn' presented an opportunity for all scholars interested in social identities and class conflict. He drew attention to the fact that approaches like:

the emphasis upon language as a form of power; the hostility to grand narratives; the interest in understanding identities as relational and as constituted through discourse...can be usefully exploited in the exploration of social relations – not (as some postmodernist writers wish) to *dismiss* class as an analytical category, but to *rejuvenate* it, enabling us to understand...social conflicts in their own terms.¹⁴¹

Selina Todd also reflected on the advantages of utilising such methodologies in *Class, Experience and Britain's Twentieth Century*, (2014). She echoed Woods' assertions by concluding that linguistics-inspired approaches help historians to understand the discursive framework within which people from the past understood their lives.¹⁴²

Building upon the work conducted by Steadman Jones, Wood, and Todd, this thesis demonstrates how an appreciation of the field of linguistics can help to shed light on the asymmetrical relations connecting different members of a given community. Moreover, it can allow historians to determine the ways in which these relationships were both understood and negotiated. Yet, by grounding these linguistics-inspired methodologies in relation to the

¹⁴⁰ Griffin, 'Signposts: Working Class Histories', p.57.

¹⁴¹ Wood, 'Fear, Hatred and the Hidden Injuries of Class', p.804.

¹⁴² Todd, 'Class, Experience and Britain's Twentieth Century', pp.492-494.

findings of my initial, demographic-focused, chapter, I also intend for this thesis to show how the empiricism of social history might be of benefit to studies of language within historical contexts. Scholarship from the field of social history can help to identify which historical actors occupied positions of power and explain why they did so, an issue which academics conducting CDA investigations, such as Sheryl Prentice and Andrew Hardie, regard as especially important.¹⁴³ The empiricism of social history can also be implemented by scholars of historical linguistics in order to suggest the possible reasons why historical actors employed certain discourses, as well as to contextualise a piece of rhetoric in relation to the historical communities, events, and or movements it was linked to.¹⁴⁴

In addition to demonstrating the ways in which the fields of social history and linguistics can work in tandem in order to produce exceptionally well-rounded research, this thesis also expands upon the social history ‘linguistic turn’. It does so by not only seeking inspiration from studies utilising CDA, but additionally, from linguistics investigations making use of other innovative methodological approaches. This enables the thesis to break new ground and consider how other aspects of linguistics may be useful to social historians. In particular, as the section below will set out in more detail, my research has been influenced by a line of enquiry from the school of historical pragmatics, situated within the field of linguistics, which utilises computer-aided statistical analysis tools in order to examine corpora for discursive trends.

Building upon the demographic findings of the first chapter, the second case study of the thesis draws upon letters of application for positions on the estate, letters of recommendation,

¹⁴³ Sheryl Prentice & Andrew Hardie, ‘Empowerment and Disempowerment in the Glencairn Uprising: A corpus-based critical analysis of early modern news discourse’, *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, 10.1 (2009), p.51.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

character references, and letters regarding the dismissal of staff in order to conduct a more qualitative investigation into the role played by the lower-ranking servants who lived and worked at Chatsworth during the first half of the twentieth century. Methodological practices from historical pragmatics suited to examining corpus-based discourses are utilised within this case study. These methodologies combine the previously mentioned approach of computer aided statistical analysis (with the aid of freeware programme *Antconc*) with a close reading of the textual accounts influenced by the framework of CDA developed by Teun van Dijk in 1991.¹⁴⁵ By using this combination of approaches, the chapter answers a subset of research questions, including: In relation to those members of the community who were employed at Chatsworth, which qualities and skills were considered to be desirable and which were considered to be undesirable? Were there any differences between the notions of good service held by employers, senior- and lower-ranking employees? What can the applications, letters of recommendation and the references tell us about the means by which workers at Chatsworth found their jobs? For what reasons did the domestic workers at Chatsworth leave their positions, either voluntarily or as the result of dismissal? Finally, and above all, what social norms, practices, and codes existed in relation to employment at Chatsworth during the period 1908-1950, and what can such expectations tell us about the professional relationships which existed within the Chatsworth estate community during the first half of the twentieth century?

The third chapter of this thesis considers some of the expectations, rules and social codes which regulated the behaviour of members of the Cavendish family in the period 1908-1950. It makes use of a variety of evidence, including letters written by estate employees requesting aid and assistance, correspondence exchanged between senior servants and members of the family

¹⁴⁵ T. van Dijk, *Racism and the Press*, (London 1991).

detailing acts of philanthropy, and records of gifts and payments found within account books. The methodological approach adopted towards this material takes inspiration from literary studies, like that conducted by Megan Benner Vasavada entitled, ‘Novel Gifts: The Form and Function of Gift Exchange in the Nineteenth-Century’, as well as drawing from the anthropological theories relating to gift exchange which were developed by Marcel Mauss.¹⁴⁶ A linguistics-influenced historical approach is employed in order to set textual sources within their historical and anthropological context, thereby allowing us to ‘read’ into the practice of charitable giving at Chatsworth. The chapter engages with the following subset of research questions: What examples are there of philanthropic giving taking place within the Chatsworth community? What was given/received? Who were the benefactors/beneficiaries of these exchanges? What impulses led to such exchanges? How do examples of philanthropy correlate with formal financial arrangements and the idea that, during this period, newer ideas of domestic service as a contract relationship, were replacing older, paternalistic ideals? What can these examples of philanthropic giving tell us about social relations between individual members of the Cavendish family and their employees? Furthermore, what can such interactions tell us about social norms and the perceived roles/identities of different members of the Chatsworth community more generally?

The second and third chapters of this thesis predominantly draw on textual sources compiled by Chatsworth senior servants in order to closely examine the roles played by the highest and lowest members of the estate community. However, the final chapter of the thesis fully embraces ‘history from the middle’ by focusing specifically on those who occupied the central

¹⁴⁶ Megan Benner Vasavada, *Novel Gifts: The Form and Function of Gift Exchange in Nineteenth-Century*, Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Oregon (June 2013) & Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, Trans W. D. Halls (London, 1996).

social strata at Chatsworth. As the Cavendish Collection archives contain many files of correspondence relating to the senior servants who worked for the estate during the first half of the twentieth century, it would have been beyond the scope of this thesis to examine all of the material available. Instead, it has been most expedient to focus upon two individuals in particular. These individuals have been selected for this study because they both served the Chatsworth estate for a particularly long period of time, and because the majority of their records have been preserved within the Cavendish archives. Roland Burke was chief agent to the 9th Duke of Devonshire from 1908 to 1938. Elsie Saunders acted as Private Secretary to Duchess Evelyn, wife of the 9th Duke of Devonshire, for the same duration, although she also remained in contact with Evelyn Cavendish throughout her retirement and continued to offer her services to the Duchess until her death in 1950. In order to interrogate the correspondence exchanged between these two individuals and other members of the estate community during times of crisis, this study once again makes use of methodologies and theories associated with the field of historical pragmatics. It has been influenced by three key frameworks. Firstly, it considers Teun Van Dijk's model for Critical Discourse Analysis, which was also utilised within the second chapter of the thesis.¹⁴⁷ Secondly, it has been inspired Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen's approach for investigating the concept of 'face-work' within literary accounts, based upon the theory originally developed by Erving Goffman.¹⁴⁸ Finally, the chapter takes into account the notion of 'politeness theory', as developed by Brown and Levinson.¹⁴⁹ By seeking inspiration from these concepts and frameworks in order to explore the source material available, the fourth chapter of the thesis focuses on the following subset of research questions: Who was the senior servant and what was their role within the

¹⁴⁷ van Dijk, *Racism and the Press*.

¹⁴⁸ Andreas H. Jucker & Irma Taavitsainen, 'For your courtesie: Forms of Politeness and Impoliteness' in *English Historical Pragmatics* (Edinburgh, 2013), p.115; & Erving Goffman, 'On Face-work: An Analysis of Ritual Elements in Social Interaction' *Reflections: The SoL Journal*, Vol.4(3) (2003), pp.7-13.

¹⁴⁹ Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge, 1987), [2nd ed.].

Chatsworth estate community? How can the correspondence of senior servants and the concept of ‘history from the middle’ help us to better understand how Chatsworth functioned as a community? How were social relations at Chatsworth affected by some of the extreme events which characterised this period of history, such as the outbreak of the First and Second World Wars? How did the senior servants mediate between their subordinates and their superordinates during these circumstances? What was the lived experience of service at Chatsworth when the usual rules governing life and work within the estate community broke down?

Whilst each chapter of this thesis makes use of different kinds of source material and adopts different methodological frameworks in order to scrutinise this material, the four sections complement each other. By using a combination of innovative methodologies in order to interrogate the archival material found within the Devonshire Collections, this thesis has been able to move beyond an elitist, top-down understanding of the country house community, and instead, gain insight into the relationships connecting a broad cross-section of the Chatsworth estate community to one another.¹⁵⁰ It sheds light on social practices, and considers how individual identities and experiences upon the estate were defined by communal relations.

Consequently, these four chapters provide an answer to the key research question: how can we best understand the history of Chatsworth between 1908 and 1950, not from the perspective of a single social group, but in relation to the whole community who lived, worked and interacted within its boundaries? Furthermore, the adoption of this mixed methods approach has allowed this thesis to suggest new uses for materials previously thought to possess little historical value.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ van Wingen & Bass, ‘Reappraising Archival Practice’, p.577.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p.580.

Investigating the Chatsworth Estate Community: A Demographic Study

2.1 Introduction to the Study

Chatsworth is the historic seat of the Cavendish family. However, while the Cavendish family may have owned Chatsworth, the house, its grounds, and the surrounding estate were also home to many other families. These were the people who ran the duke's household, who resided within the estate villages, and who maintained the parkland and gardens. Within literature relating specifically to Chatsworth, as well as the more generalist country house scholarship explored in the introduction to this thesis, the presence of these servants and tenants has, heretofore, been largely overlooked. Instead, historical works have focused upon either the Cavendish family themselves, or upon aspects of the estate and its collection of architectural or artistic significance.¹⁵² Yet, it was these people who, together with members of the Cavendish family, made up the community of this rural estate. Between 1908 and 1950, this community was confronted by numerous 'challenges of modernity', including: the effects of two world wars, significant technological advancements, great economic difficulties, and shifts in traditional political power and social hierarchies. By drawing on material found within the Cavendish archives at Chatsworth, this first chapter chiefly concerns itself with exploring the impact that this period of tumultuous change had upon the demographic makeup of the estate community.

¹⁵² For examples of work focusing on aspects of the Chatsworth estate of architectural or artistic significance, see Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, pp.9-10; Worsley, 'Beyond the powerhouse', pp.424-5 & 434; John Martin Robinson, 'The Function, Planning & Social Use of the English Country House', in Mary Miers (Ed.) *The English Country House - From the Archives of Country Life* (New York, 2009), p.75. For an example of historical works focusing on the Cavendish family themselves, see Paula Byrne, *Kick: The True Story of Kick Kennedy, JFK's Forgotten Sister, and the Heir to Chatsworth* (London, 2016); Roy Hattersley, *The Devonshires: The Story of a Family and a Nation* (London, 2013).

As the introduction to this thesis has already identified, for the most part, examinations of domestic work have traditionally concentrated on servants employed in middle class homes during the ‘heyday of service’: the period from 1815 to 1914. The majority of these studies with a demographic slant were based upon census records.¹⁵³ There are numerous reasons for the importance placed upon these resources by scholars of domestic employment. Whilst the Devonshire Collection archives at Chatsworth are particularly rich in quantitative material relating to the wider estate community, this is not true of all country house archives. This is because the creation, survival, and scope of this material depended on a combination of factors including: the outlook of individuals who kept account books, the importance placed upon such records by the powerful individuals who kept archives, the impact of certain significant events such as the untimely death of a landowner, and the manner in which these records were stored. Thus, the availability of such resources varies greatly from one country house to another, and, whilst a great deal of evidence relating to the staff who worked at Chatsworth has been preserved, other establishments do not make good case studies for scholars of domestic service. Jane Homes pointed out in her 1989 thesis, ‘Domestic Service in Yorkshire 1650 – 1780’, that ‘the existence of a good collection of correspondence and account books together in the same collection is rare’, and she described how, whilst the archives of Everingham Hall preserved some useful correspondence relating to the practice of domestic service, the account books for this establishment were not a ‘fruitful’ resource for scholars.¹⁵⁴ In addition, many tragedies, such as fires and floods, have befallen private archives, thereby wiping out part of their

¹⁵³ For example see: Anderson, ‘Mis-specification of servant occupations’ in Goose, (Ed.), *Women’s Work in Industrial England*; Delap, *Knowing Their Place*; Ebery & Preston, ‘Domestic Service in Late Victorian and Edwardian England’; Jacob F. Field, ‘Domestic service, gender, and wages in rural England, c.1700–1860’, *Economic History Review*, 66, 1 (2013), pp.249-272; Edward Higgs, *Domestic Servants and Households in Rochdale 1851-1871* (London, 1986).

¹⁵⁴ Jane Holmes, ‘Domestic Service in Yorkshire 1650 – 1780’, Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (The University of York, 1989), p.29.

collections. In contrast, for scholars of nineteenth century domestic service, census records are both easily accessible and consistent in quality.

Census records are also very useful for providing a demographic overview of the domestic service sector, and for drawing comparisons with other occupational groups. By analysing census returns, scholars such as Mark Ebury and Brian Preston have been able to determine that domestic servants comprised the largest single occupational group in the census years of 1901 and 1911, outnumbering those engaged in ‘metals, machines, implements and conveyances’ (the largest manufacturing category).¹⁵⁵ Ebury and Preston determined that, in particular, an especially high percentage of the female workforce was employed within service: ‘at no census between 1871 and 1911 did the number of women employed in domestic service, as a percentage of women occupied, fall below 37%. And of occupied women aged 15 to 19 years in 1901, 40% were so employed.’¹⁵⁶

Whilst a substantially smaller percentage of the male workforce found employment in the service sector, there were still significant numbers of men recorded as working within this occupational category. According Lucy Delap’s study, *Knowing Their Place: Domestic Service in Twentieth Century Britain*, ‘as many as 214,388 men were employed in domestic service in 1904, mostly in gardening, care of horses, and as drivers.’¹⁵⁷ She estimates that around 1 per cent of the male workforce in urban areas, and 4-5 per cent of the rural workforce, found employment within service between 1900 to 1911.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Ebury & Preston, ‘Domestic Service in Late Victorian and Edwardian England’, p.2.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Delap, *Knowing Their Place*, p.14.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

When conducting a demographic study of domestic service, the benefits of drawing upon census records are clear. However, there are also some drawbacks connected to this methodological approach which must be considered. When focusing on an unregulated and disparate social practice such as domestic service, national statistics, like those recorded within census material, may well obscure the existence of important differences between individual regions and households.¹⁵⁹ Census returns are also littered with ‘statistical imperfections’. For example, in his examination of domestic service in Rochdale between 1851 and 1871, Edward Higgs found that in contrast to their English counterparts, it was usual for the records to state only the country of birth for servants who had emigrated from Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, rather than the exact city or parish.¹⁶⁰ Higgs also discovered that family members with a blood relationship to the household head were sometimes recorded within census records under the label of ‘Housekeeper’.¹⁶¹ Higgs suggested that these records referred to female relatives who were in charge of domestic tasks within the household, and his findings have thus challenged the traditional understanding of a servant as a *waged* domestic worker.

Twenty years after Higgs’ report was published, Michael Anderson revisited the 1851 census and found that it was taken on Mothering Sunday, when servants were likely to have been on leave. Anderson suggested that servants visiting their family members may have been erroneously recorded as fulfilling the role of ‘Housekeeper’ within their familial home, when in fact, they held this position elsewhere. He has argued that this confusion might have been

¹⁵⁹ Higgs, *Domestic Servants and Households in Rochdale*, p.4.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*; p.69.

¹⁶¹ Edward Higgs, “The tabulation of occupation in the nineteenth-century census, with special reference to domestic servants” in Nigel Goose, ed., *Women’s Work in Industrial England: Regional and Local Perspectives* (Hatfield, 2007), p.251; Edward Higgs, ‘Domestic Service and Household production’ in Angela V. John (Ed.) *Unequal Opportunities. Women’s Employment in England 1800-1918* (Oxford, 1986), pp.125-152.

behind Higgs' findings.¹⁶² Nonetheless, whilst Anderson disagreed with Higgs, his research has still demonstrated the need to engage with census records critically. Consequently, Higgs' findings have been extremely important for encouraging the re-evaluation of the traditional definition of a domestic servant.

After Higgs' 1986 study was published, some scholars, including Michael Drake, Carina McDowell and Michael Anderson, recognised the need to base studies of domestic employment upon a greater variety of documentary evidence.¹⁶³ In particular, after critically engaging with census records in *Domestic service, gender, and wages in rural England, c.1700–1860*, Jacob Field argued that scholars cannot entirely rely on such material for definitions of domestic service. He asserted that the line between domestic and agricultural work was often blurred within farm settings, and highlighted the fact this was not accurately reflected within census returns.¹⁶⁴ As such, it seems as though the best approach for demographic studies is to use the census material as a foundation, and then to enrich this dataset by drawing upon quantitative evidence from private archives wherever possible.

In a limited number of cases, the evidence found within private archives is so thorough, it can overcome the absence of census material. The best example of this is Steve Hindle's study of the Arbury Hall community in the period 1670 to 1710. Hindle was unable to draw upon archival material as the era under scrutiny pre-dated national census returns. However, the examination was primarily based upon some astonishing 1684 'census-type' records which listed the inhabitants of the estate village of Chilvers Coton by name, by age, by occupation,

¹⁶² Anderson, 'Mis-specification of servant occupations' in Goose, (Ed.), *Women's Work in Industrial England*, pp.263-264.

¹⁶³ Ibid; see also Michael Drake, 'Aspects of Domestic Service in Great Britain and Ireland, 1841-1911', *Family and Community History*, 2 (1) (1999), p.127; Field, 'Domestic Service, Gender and Wages in rural England', pp.249-272; & McDowell, 'Staffing the Big House'.

¹⁶⁴ Field, 'Domestic service, gender, and wages in rural England', pp.249-251.

and by relationship to the household head.¹⁶⁵ To these records, Hindle added data he had gathered from account books for the period 1678 to 1710, which listed tasks performed by employees along with their wages, and also information from estate surveys for the period 1681-4. As a result, Hindle was able to create a demographic snapshot of Arbury Hall and the surrounding estate, from which it was possible to infer details such as the size and structure of the household staff, the range of jobs undertaken, and the rate of payment.¹⁶⁶

My own demographic study faces similar challenges to those faced by Steve Hindle's examination of Arbury Hall. Census records are not as readily available for scholars of twentieth century domestic service as they are for their nineteenth century colleagues. Since 1966, there has existed a '100-year closure rule', which prohibits access to census material until 100 years after the survey was taken. At the time of undertaking this demographic investigation of the Chatsworth estate community during the first half of the twentieth century, only the 1911 census is available to be accessed. It is my intention to revisit this study once the 1921 census becomes available in 2022, so that these records can be taken into account. Nevertheless, it will, unfortunately, be impossible to continue this process in subsequent years. This is due to the fact that no returns for England and Wales exist for either 1931 or 1941. The records for 1931 were destroyed in a fire, and the census was abandoned entirely in 1941 as a direct consequence of the Second World War. There does exist a national register of civilians dating from the 29th September 1939. This register was not as detailed as typical census returns, and certain information, such as an individual's relationship to the head of the household, and their place of birth, was excluded. Nevertheless, the register does include valuable information such as the full name, address, date of birth and occupation of the individuals listed. This was

¹⁶⁵ Steve Hindle, 'Below stairs at Arbury Hall: Sir Richard Newdigate and his household staff, c. 1670–1710', *Historical Research*, 85 (2012), p.71.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

used during the course of the war to produce identity cards and ration books, to facilitate conscription and war effort labour programmes, and to monitor and control military mobilisation and mass evacuation.

However, caution must be used when drawing upon the 1939 register for demographic research. Firstly, it is often difficult to correlate the information included within the register to that found within census returns, as the geographical boundaries used were slightly different. In particular, this poses difficulties when searching for information relating to those living in rural locations, because small villages and hamlets may have been assigned to a different borough, and the house or street addresses may not include the name of the hamlet or village. Moreover, all military personnel were excluded from the register. These individuals would have accounted for a small, yet significant, number of the population in the first months of the Second World War. Finally, this register is subject to similar restrictions to those placed upon census returns: records of individuals included within the register remain closed until 100 years after their date of birth, unless proof of their death can be found. The combination of these factors ensures that the 1939 register is not a useful resource for a demographic study of the Chatsworth estate.

Due to these restrictions, in a similar manner to Hindle's study of Arbury Hall, this demographic investigation will be based primarily upon archival material. Within the Cavendish archival collection, there exist many records pertaining to those living and working upon the Chatsworth estate during the first half of the twentieth century, which were compiled by the Chatsworth Estate Office for the attention of the chief land agent. These records include: household accounts, wage books for individual departments, records of deaths and retirements, estate rental records, and national insurance records. Yet, whilst the records found within the

Cavendish archives are substantial, they are not as consistent as the records which Hindle drew upon for his study. In certain years, more detailed records were produced than in others. In particular, there exists much more documentation for the beginning of the period in question than for the end. Moreover, individual departments had different methodological approaches to record keeping, with some departments listing the full names, addresses, and ages of employees, whilst others merely listed their surnames and wages.

It has been established that national statistics, such as census returns, may well obscure the existence of important differences between individual regions and households.¹⁶⁷ However, as has also been highlighted, when used in conjunction with archival material, data collected as part of the census returns can be extremely useful for augmenting demographic information and ‘plugging’ gaps. The limited availability of census returns dating from the first half of the twentieth century has, therefore, presented this study with a few difficulties. It has been necessary to take into account both the strengths, and the weaknesses, of the archival sources found at Chatsworth, in order to develop a methodological approach for this study which will centre around four case studies. By drawing upon the material contained within the Cavendish archives and by investigating the ways in which the Chatsworth estate functioned as a social organism, these snapshot studies will consider what life and work at Chatsworth was like for members of the estate community. In particular, attention will be given to any changes which occurred within the demographic makeup of this particular community over the course of the first half of the twentieth century, an era for which, on a national level, only limited demographic documentation exists. As a result, this demographic investigation has presented the unique opportunity to examine the various ways in which both world wars impacted upon life and work at one rural community. Consequently, it is hoped that this study will not only

¹⁶⁷ Higgs, *Domestic Servants and Households in Rochdale*, p.4.

be useful to scholars of domestic service and country estates, but to all social historians interested in this time period.

The first section of this demographic study shall be comprised of an overview focusing upon the entire Chatsworth estate community for the years 1908 –1913; the period immediately following the accession of the 9th Duke of Devonshire. This overview has been created by drawing upon the substantial archival material dating from this period and augmenting these findings with data from the 1911 census returns. The introduction to this section of the study will describe this source material in detail and consider the reasons behind the existence of so much documentation from this period. Following on from this, the evidence found within the archives will be analysed in order to develop a greater understanding of who made up the Chatsworth estate community at this time. The study will focus on answering a number of research questions, including: how many individuals were employed upon the estate at any one time and in what capacity? In which departments and occupations were these employees situated? How was the hierarchy of the estate’s workforce structured and what can this tell us about power-dynamics? Where did estate employees hail from according to their place of birth? What was the ratio of male to female employees? What was the age range of those employed by the estate? What was their current address and their distance of commute? By investigating such issues, this overview will be able to highlight some of the key demographic features of the Chatsworth estate community at this time. In particular, it will help to demonstrate the class-based nature of the estate’s professional hierarchy. The study will also compare Chatsworth-specific demographic trends to more general trends previously identified by scholars. For example, the case study will seek to reassess the notion that domestic service was predominantly a feminine profession, or that many employees fell under the category of ‘life cycle’ servant.

It is much more difficult to build up a complete picture of the estate in later years. Nevertheless, records kept by individual departments ensure that it is possible to trace particular members of the Chatsworth community across the first half of the twentieth century. Therefore, the following three sections of this examination will also consist of case studies, and each will focus upon one department in turn. The second investigation within this study will concentrate on the gardens, for which there is a wealth of information pertaining to those employed between 1912 – 1938. Following on from this, those employed within the building department will be considered. There is a great deal of demographic information pertaining to the building department for the periods 1912 – 1922 and 1929 – 1949. Finally, a case study will focus upon the indoor female servants permanently based at Chatsworth; a group which was made up of various types of maid servants, and who were overseen by a house keeper. Documents relating to this group span the period 1908 – 1911 and 1925 – 1940.

Because a large amount of data exists in relation to each of these departments, the three case studies will focus on providing an even deeper understanding of some of the people who made up the Chatsworth estate community during the first half of the twentieth century. This will be achieved by concentrating on some key employment trends, such as the average rate of wages paid to employees, the average career length, the frequency of promotions and wage increases. This allows the studies to focus upon the issue of social mobility and aspiration, an avenue of research of especial interest to historians of class. By reflecting upon scenarios including the two world wars, economic depression, and the introduction of death duties, and their impact upon employment trends at Chatsworth, these case studies will also speak to scholarship on the theme of continuity vs. change.

As has been highlighted, the scope of this demographic study has largely been dictated by the contents of the source material available. Yet, there are reasons for concentrating on these three particular departments aside from the fact that there exists a substantial amount of information relating to them. According to the initial snapshot overview of the entire Chatsworth estate community, the gardens and building departments were the first and second most populous departments during the period 1908 - 1913. This suggests that it would be especially fruitful for the study to focus on the individuals working within these sectors in greater detail, as doing so would allow the study to capture the greatest number of estate employees. The category of indoor servants permanently based at Chatsworth, which ranked as the seventh most populous department in the period 1908 - 1913, was nowhere near as large these other two categories. Nevertheless, previous demographic studies of domestic employment have principally concerned themselves with female indoor servants. Accordingly, the study needs to pay particular attention to this subset of the domestic workforce in order to intersect with, and build upon, this pre-existing research. Moreover, in addition to the individual factors supporting the closer investigation of these three departments, there is the consideration that together, they represent a broad spectrum of the different types of servant who could be found working as part of the estate community at this time. Drawing upon this, the chapter will consider how an understanding of who made up the Chatsworth estate community 1908 - 1950 can help us to produce a more inclusive definition of the term 'domestic servant'. Thus, together, the findings of these four case studies will engage with and challenge the pre-existing definitions of domestic service which were discussed within the introduction to this thesis, as well as research on class, power-dynamics, continuity and change more broadly.

2.2 Snapshot Overview of the Chatsworth Estate Community 1908-1913

Upon the death of his uncle on 24th March 1908, Victor Cavendish inherited Chatsworth and became the 9th Duke of Devonshire. It seems very likely that the surveys of those living and working upon the estate, dating from the years immediately following his accession, were undertaken because a change of employer had occurred and a new chief agent had been installed. Indeed, the records produced for the attention of the new chief land agent, Roland Burke, between 1908 and 1913 are far more detailed than those produced in the following decades. Amongst the number of documents produced by the estate office during this period, is a register of household accounts and wages for 1908, which includes information on the indoor servants permanently based at Chatsworth, as well as stable hands, and chauffeurs.¹⁶⁸ There also exists a list of all the agents and officials working on the estate in the year 1912, alongside their salaries and emoluments.¹⁶⁹

Nevertheless, the surplus of documentation available from this period is not purely due to the transference of ownership from one duke to another. Following the National Insurance Act of 1911, the years 1912-1913 saw the introduction of National Insurance payments. This resulted in the production of a new set of records, detailing the names, ages, addresses and salaries of all male employees over the age of sixteen.¹⁷⁰

In addition to these documents, the availability of the 1911 census returns ensures that even more information can be found for this period.¹⁷¹ In particular, female employees who did not

¹⁶⁸ DC, FM/10, Duke of Devonshire's Household Accounts Register of Wages, 1908.

¹⁶⁹ DC, FM/4, List of Agents, Officials and Others with their Salaries and Emoluments, 1912.

¹⁷⁰ DC, DE/CH/6/3/2, National Insurance Records, 1912-1913.

¹⁷¹ The National Archives [Hereafter NA], RG 21191-3 & RG 21198, National Census, Sub-District: Bakewell Civic Parish, Township or Place: Beeley, Chatsworth, Edensor, Pilsley & Baslow, 1911.

work within the household itself are not covered by the records found within the archives. Nevertheless, the details of some of these employees have been captured within the census returns. I was, therefore, able to add the records of these individuals to the data I had already gathered and begin to create a spreadsheet documenting those living and working upon the Chatsworth estate in the period 1908-1913.

As well as including individuals absent from other resources, the 1911 census provides more details about those servants already accounted for. Whilst the National Insurance documents list the address of employees, they only go as far as stating the town, village, or hamlet in which the individual resides. However, the census returns list the exact house or dwelling occupied by these employees. Also found recorded within the census are details pertaining to the familial relationships of the employees residing in the local estate villages, and their place of birth. Data relating to place of birth proves to be extremely useful, as it suggests the distance some employees were able/willing to travel for work. Furthermore, it can provide greater insight into the degree to which the Chatsworth estate can be considered to have been isolated from the rest of society – a detail which scholars like John Burnett have often associated with country house communities.¹⁷² These details were added to the spreadsheet documenting those living and working at Chatsworth during this time period.

Although the records contain a great deal of information relating to servants who permanently resided within the vicinity of the Chatsworth estate, including even those who did not hold permanent positions, I have not been able to locate similar information for employees not living in the local villages. In particular, it is extremely difficult to uncover demographic material

¹⁷² John Burnett, *Useful Toil: Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820s to the 1920s* (London, 1994), p.187.

relating to the 'itinerant' servants who travelled with the family from one household to another. In the early twentieth century, the family would often only spend a few months of the year at Chatsworth. Usually, they were in residence over Christmas, for a few weeks over May or June, and then again at the end of August/beginning of September. For the rest of the year, they travelled between their other properties accompanied by a retinue of servants.¹⁷³ Alongside the travelling stables and motor department employees, the category of itinerant servant includes footmen, ladies' maids, and valets amongst others. It was unlikely for these 'itinerant' servants to be in census returns, unless the Cavendish family were in residence at Chatsworth on the date the census was taken. For 1911, when the census was recorded on 2nd April, this was not the case. Nor do itinerant servants show up in the household accounts or the national insurance documents for Chatsworth. The only exception to this gap within the archival material, is the departmental records found for those employed within the stables or motor department.

However, it is possible to uncover details about these individuals within the 'vouchers' relating to the household of the 9th Duke of Devonshire. These vouchers, or receipts, hold detailed information about payments made by the Duke of Devonshire to all of his employees, as well as to tradesmen, service providers, and other large institutions. They are organised, not according to household, but according to date. It would be far too time consuming to examine all the vouchers for the period 1908-1950. Nonetheless, as there already exists a great deal of information on those employed within the Chatsworth estate in the years 1908-1913, it has not been too difficult to isolate the vouchers dating from this particular time period which may contain some details for the itinerant servants missing from other records. For the purpose of this investigation, it was most expedient to examine vouchers dating from a specific time-frame during the years 1908-1913, for which there existed evidence that the Cavendish family was in

¹⁷³ DC, DF28/1/4, Memoirs of Lady Maud Baillie (Cavendish), [Undated].

residence at Chatsworth. For this reason, after careful examination, I chose to study those vouchers belonging to the period December 1909-January 1910, for records of payments to itinerant servants.¹⁷⁴ The details found within these vouchers include: name, position, and rate of pay. This information was added to the spreadsheet created from the other resources documenting Chatsworth estate employees.

After transcribing all of the aforementioned documents, and using the information contained within them to create a spreadsheet ‘overview’ of those living and working within the Chatsworth estate between 1908 and 1913, I then manually searched the spreadsheet for any duplicates and removed them. The various records which had been used to create the spreadsheet, referred, for the most part, to different groups of estate employees. As such, there were very few duplicates to deal with. For the same reason, although the overview accounts for a time-frame of five years, it is unlikely to include both the details of individuals who left their employment at Chatsworth and those individuals who subsequently replaced them, although it is, of course, impossible to be completely certain in this respect. This, in combination with the fact that the Chatsworth estate experienced a period of stability between the accession of the 9th Duke and the outbreak of the First World War, suggests that the breakdown of employees recorded in the spreadsheet should be a good representation of the numbers found working for the Chatsworth estate in *any* given year between 1908 and 1913.

The overview indicates that up to 462 members of staff could be found working on the Chatsworth estate during these early years of the twentieth century. Table 2.1 shows how this total number of employees was divided between the various estate departments. As was mentioned during the introduction to this study, the two most populous departments at this time

¹⁷⁴ DC, Duke of Devonshire’s Household Accounts, Vouchers for November 1909 – January 1910.

were, in turn, the gardens and the building departments, which employed 87 and 78 individuals respectively. Following this, the next largest departments were the forestry with 54 employees, which saw to the planting, chopping and preservation of trees upon estate land, and the domain with 46 employees, which employed labourers for the maintenance of the estate. The estate office, with 38 recorded employees, was concerned with all administration relating to the running of the estate. The house labour department, which employed 33 individuals, was separate from both the building and the domain departments. This department was made up of those with specific mechanical and technical skills, which were required for running a large house such as Chatsworth, including electricians, boiler men and firemen. The librarian was also included within this category. The game and the stables departments were the next most populous, with 32 employees each. These figures demonstrate the extent to which aristocratic country house life in this period revolved around 'traditional' pastimes such as riding and hunting. The category of servants who have hitherto received the greatest attention from academics, the indoor servants permanently based within a household, numbered only 24 for the period 1908-1913. The figure which represented the itinerant indoor servants, the employees who journeyed with the family as they travelled between their households, was 19. Amongst the smallest departments at this time was the motor department, with only 3 individuals listed within this category. However, although this particular snapshot is not able to demonstrate change over time, it is worth noting that as the twentieth century progressed, this number continued to rise.

Table 2.1: Number of Chatsworth Estate Employees for the period 1908-1913 by Department

Department	Number of Employees
Gardens	87
Building	78
Woods/Forestry	54
Domain	46
Estate Office	38
House Labour	33
Game	32
Stables	32
Indoor (Servants Permanently based at Chatsworth)	24
Indoor (Itinerant Servants)	19
Temp Labour	6
Farm	6
Coal Pit (Not Included Within Study)	5
Golf & Cricket Grounds	4
Motor	3
Total Number of Estate Employees	462

The census returns for 1911 record the fact that, on a national level, a significantly higher proportion of working women were engaged within the service sector than working men, with women making up 81.7 per cent of the workforce.¹⁷⁵ Traditionally, this has led historians to conclude that domestic service was a feminine profession. However, as this study has also highlighted, national statistics can often obscure regional trends. Table 2.2 demonstrates that the majority of employees working in service at Chatsworth during the period 1908 to 1913

¹⁷⁵ Percentage calculated from the figures recorded in Great Britain, Census Office, and Bernard Mallet, *Census of England and Wales, 1911. (10 Edward 7 and 1 George 5, ch.27.): General Report with appendices, Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty* (His Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1917), p.106.

were, in fact, male. Female employees only accounted for eight per cent of the entire workforce, although they did make up fifty-three per cent of all indoor staff members: a category which, for the purposes of this part of the investigation, included both itinerant servants and those indoor employees permanently based at Chatsworth.

Table 2.2: Number of Departmental Employees on the Chatsworth Estate 1908-1913 by Gender

Department	Number of Male Employees	Number of Female Employees
Gardens	85	2
Building	78	0
Woods/Forestry	53	1
Domain	46	0
Indoor (Including both Itinerant Servants and those Permanently at Chatsworth)	20	23
Estate Office	34	4
House Labour	33	0
Game	32	0
Stables	31	1
Temp Labour	0	6
Farm	6	0
Coal Pit (Not Included Within Study)	5	0
Golf & Cricket Grounds	4	0
Motor	3	0
All Departments	425	37

By investigating the comparatively high ratio of male-to-female employees at Chatsworth, this study is able to further illustrate the varied and disparate nature of domestic service within Britain at this time.

In part, the relatively high numbers of male servants employed at Chatsworth can be attributed to the social status of the household. The introduction to this chapter discussed the fact that indoor servants employed within middle-class households have received the most attention from historians conducting studies into domestic service trends.¹⁷⁶ Male servants were much more expensive than their female counterparts, and, as a result, middle-class households would not have been able to afford a high number of male servants.¹⁷⁷ This explains why the ratio of male-to-female servants during this period is often cited as being much lower than the figures relating to the Chatsworth estate. Not only did male servants often command higher wages, but also, from 1777, households were required to pay an annual tax for every male servant in their employment.¹⁷⁸ The correlation between male servants and the notion of luxury was the chief justification behind the creation of a male servant tax in order to generate more revenue for the government.¹⁷⁹ In 1785, Pitt the Younger stated in a parliamentary debate that these male servants were kept ‘more for vanity than for real use, more for vanity than for actual service’ and that, therefore, the tax on them could be considered ‘more a tax upon unnecessary extravagance, than upon either industry or servitude.’¹⁸⁰ In 1869, when a new Revenue Act

¹⁷⁶ For assertions that the majority of servants were employed within middle-class homes see: Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society*, pp.247-248; Giles, ‘Help for housewives’, p.300; Giles, ‘Authority, Dependence and Power’ in Delap, Griffin & Wills (Eds), *The Politics of Domestic Authority in Britain*, p.206; Delap, *Knowing Their Place*, pp.11-12.

¹⁷⁷ Leonard Schwarz, ‘English Servants and their Employers during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries’, *Economic History Review*, 52(2) (1999) p.240; & F. Field, ‘Domestic service, gender, and wages in rural England’, pp.252-3.

¹⁷⁸ Susan E. Brown, ‘Assessing Men and Maids: The Female Servant Tax and Meanings of Productive Labour in Late-Eighteenth-Century Britain’, *Left History*, 12:2 (2007), pp.11-32.

¹⁷⁹ Brown, ‘Assessing Men and Maids’, pp.12-13.

¹⁸⁰ J. Debrett (Ed.), *The Parliamentary register: or, History of the proceedings and debates of the House of Commons [and of the House of Lords] containing an account of the interesting speeches and motions ...*

was passed by parliament, this tax was fixed at 15 shillings (s) for every male domestic employee. According to a relative worth calculator developed by *MeasuringWorth*, this tax would cost around £611 today.¹⁸¹ The 15 s tax on male servants remained in effect until 1937.¹⁸² The same relative worth calculator indicates that, in comparison to when it was first introduced, the tax would have cost employers considerably less in 1937: 15 s during this time period equates to around £209 in today's money.¹⁸³ Yet, the very fact that the tax remained in existence until 1937, suggests that male servants were still associated with the concept of extravagance well into the twentieth century. It is possible to observe this association by scrutinising the list of itinerant indoor servants employed by the Cavendish family in the period 1908-1913. All of the job titles recorded for this department, including butler, footman, private secretary, valet, and ladies' maid, relate to specific personal and ceremonial duties found only in the households of the upper classes. With 14 men and 5 women listed as working in this department, male employees accounted for 78.9 per cent of the staff.

Whilst there was considered to be a correlation between male servants and the concept of luxury, this was not true for female servants. In 1785, a tax on female servants was introduced. However, it was repealed soon after in 1792, due to public pressure. It was argued that female domestic employees could not be regarded as 'objects of conspicuous consumption' in the same way as their male counterparts, because maidservants in particular were 'essential' to the management of middle-class households.¹⁸⁴ The job list relating to the indoor servants

during the 1st session of the 14th [-18th] Parliament of Great Britain. [Printed for J. Almon]. ser.2 v.18 (1785), p.213.

¹⁸¹ 'Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount, 1270 to Present', *MeasuringWorth*, 2016 www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/ [accessed on 05.07.2016].

¹⁸² Hansard, HC Deb vol. 285 c540, Male Servants' License Duty, 01 February 1934 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1934/feb/01/male-servants-licence-duty> [accessed on 01.10.2017].

¹⁸³ 'Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount, 1270 to Present', *MeasuringWorth*, 2016 www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/ [accessed on 05.07.2016].

¹⁸⁴ Brown, 'Assessing Men and Maids', p.19.

permanently based at Chatsworth in the period 1908-1913 includes the titles of laundry maids, housemaids, dairy maids, a housekeeper and lodge porters. With the exception of the two latter figures, the job titles which made up this workforce were consistent with those found in middle-class establishments, where the majority of British servants found employment. This explains why the gender ratio recorded for this sub-group of the workforce is much more in line with that recorded on a national level in the 1911 census returns, with 75 per cent of the staff being listed as female.

Thus far, my investigation into gender has only considered domestic servants employed within the household. However, by expanding the parameters of the examination to include servants working outside, this thesis can draw attention to other reasons for the disparity between the gender ratio of male-to-female servants working at Chatsworth, and the national average. Unlike middle class establishments, aristocratic rural estates such as Chatsworth, would, by virtue of their geographic settings, have had both the resources and the need to employ domestic servants for a variety of outdoor roles. These roles, such as game-keeping or gardening, were traditionally associated with male employees. As table 2.2 demonstrates, very few women were employed within the outdoor departments at Chatsworth in the period 1908 to 1913.

By including the variety of outdoor roles undertaken by Chatsworth estate employees within this investigation of domestic employment, I have adopted a broad definition of the term ‘servant’, and have drawn upon the legal description contained within the 1869 Revenue Act, which stated that for the purposes of the tax, a ‘servant’ could be defined as any male:

employed either wholly or partially in any of the following capacities; that is to say, maître d’hôtel, house steward, master of the horse, groom of the chambers, valet de

chambre, butler, under butler, clerk of the kitchen, confectioner, cook, house porter, footman, page, waiter, coachman, groom, postilion, stable boy or helper in the stables, gardener, under gardener, park keeper, gamekeeper, under gamekeeper, huntsman, and whipper-in, or in any capacity involving the duties of any of the above descriptions of servants, by whatever style the person acting in such capacity may be called.¹⁸⁵

According to this definition, a ‘servant’ was not simply a domestic employee who worked indoors within a private household. Rather, the large numbers of men employed either full- or part-time within the gardens, woods, the stables/motor and game departments at houses such as Chatsworth were also servants. Yet, the considerably high ratio of male to female servants found in the overview of Chatsworth for the period 1908-1913, can also be attributed to my decision to include estate builders and labourers under the term ‘servant’. Although the 1869 Revenue Act makes no reference to skilled or semi-skilled builders and labourers in its description of the male servant, it is the contention of this investigation that these individuals *could* be considered servants when employed by estates like Chatsworth. In 1913, C. B. Labatt wrote a commentary on the laws of Master and Servant and drew upon the 1869 Revenue Act and other bills in order to establish an absolute definition of servitude. In his study, Labatt stated: ‘the element by which service is distinguished from other contracts of employment seems to be... the submission of the employee to the control of the employer.’¹⁸⁶ He also argued: For the purposes of jurisprudence he [the servant] may be described with greater precision as a person who has assumed a more or less permanent relation which, in respect to his employer, subjects him to certain definite duties.¹⁸⁷

In the Cavendish archives, a great deal of evidence exists which demonstrates that individuals employed within the building and labouring departments of country estates were subject to

¹⁸⁵ *Revenue Act 1869, Chapter XIV, Part V* (Great Britain, 1869), available at: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1869/act/14/enacted/en/print.html> [accessed on 17.08.2017].

¹⁸⁶ C. B. Labatt, *Commentaries on the Law of Master and Servant, Including the Modern Laws on Workmen’s Compensation, Arbitration, Employer’s Liability, Etc.* (1913), p.12.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

certain behavioural restrictions according to their employer's whims. As the third case study of this chapter will show, the vast majority of the building yard workers at Chatsworth (98%) were not contractors, but were employed directly by the estate itself. Whether they were employed on temporary or permanent contracts, the majority of these individuals lived within the estate villages. Moreover, for as long as they lived and worked at Chatsworth, these employees were expected to play a role as fully-fledged members of the estate community. The social obligations placed upon them were separate to any services they were required to render during working hours. In particular, it is because of the personal expectations placed upon such individuals that individuals employed as labourers and builders upon estates such as Chatsworth *must* be considered servants. These expectations were analogous to the constraints placed upon other servants by their master and mistress. For example, in 1919, a building department employee from the Chatsworth estate applied for the post of Clerk of Works at Apethorpe. Leonard Brassey, the owner of Apethorpe, wrote to the Duke of Devonshire's Chief Agent in order to obtain a character reference for the applicant. When describing the duties of the role, Brassey explained that in addition to the tasks traditionally associated with the job:

I shall also want his [the successful applicant's] help in various local and parochial matters, such as helping with the local Coal Club, possibly act as Manager of our little village school etc. It is necessary that he should be a Churchman and be willing to take an interest in Church affairs and act as Churchwarden if required.¹⁸⁸

The kinds of additional responsibilities listed above made working as builder or labourer upon an estate like Chatsworth or Apethorpe different from other types of construction employment. The inclusion of construction workers under the heading of 'domestic servant' further demonstrates the extremely varied nature of this category of employment. Nevertheless, whilst this study has included many different groups of workers under the label of 'servant', the

¹⁸⁸ DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 4/5, Letter from Leonard Brassey to U. R. Burke, 10.12.1919.

individuals listed as working within the 'Coal Pit' department have not been included. This is because they neither lived nor worked within the Chatsworth estate, and, furthermore, they were not subjected to the kind of social obligations set out above.

Alongside the idea that service was chiefly a feminine profession, one of the most commonly-held perceptions of service within scholarship, is that the majority of servants were relatively young.¹⁸⁹ In order to explain the trend for many young people entering service in their mid-teens, and then leaving this employment in their early to mid-twenties, historians such as Theresa McBride developed the label of 'life-cycle' service, which was used to describe young employees who saw service as a kind of 'bridging occupation'.¹⁹⁰ In his study of domestic servants in Rochdale, Higgs described some of the factors which could influence young people to engage in 'life-cycle' service:

Whereas the daughter of a middle-class family could expect to pass directly from the house of her parents to that of her husband, her working-class contemporary might well expect to move out of her parental home into that of an employer, before setting up a household of her own.¹⁹¹

However, whilst Higgs accepted that this was sometimes the case, he also stressed that it would be incorrect to assume that this was a fixed pattern for domestic service across Victorian and Edwardian Britain. The data he uncovered for Rochdale in 1871 indicated that there appeared to be a great deal of regional variation in the age range of servants.¹⁹² Furthermore, as with the gender of servants, Higgs' findings suggested that the age of servants was connected to the

¹⁸⁹ For example, see Taylor, *Women Domestic Servants 1919-1939*, pp.1-3; Selina Todd, *Young Women, Work and Family in England, 1918-1950* (Oxford, 2005); Delap, *Knowing Their Place*, p.14.

¹⁹⁰ Theresa McBride, *Domestic Revolution: The Modernisation of Household Service in England and France, 1820-1920* (London, 1976), pp.83-98.

¹⁹¹ Higgs, *Domestic Servants and Households in Rochdale*, p.59.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, p.60.

type of work they performed.¹⁹³ As table 2.3 demonstrates, this does seem to have been the case at Chatsworth in the years 1908-1913.

Table 2.3: Mean Age of Chatsworth Estate Employees in the years 1908-1913 According to Department

Department	Mean Age of Employees (in years)
Gardens	36
Building	41
Woods/Forestry	29
Domain	32
Indoor (not including Itinerant Indoor Servants, for which there is no data)	33
Estate Office	28
House Labour	38
Game	30
Stables	34
Temp Labour	No Data
Farm	46
Coal Pit (Not Included Within Study)	36
Golf & Cricket Grounds	25
Motor	No Data
Overall Mean Age of Estate Employees	34

Although there is not data on the ages of employees from every department, the data which does exist indicates that the mean age of domestic workers could vary by as much as 21 years depending on the role a servant occupied. According to the averages indicated within table 2.3,

¹⁹³ Ibid, p.64.

the department with the youngest employees was Golf & Cricket Grounds, with a mean age of 25 years. The department with the oldest employees was Farming, with a mean age of 46 years.

Perhaps the most interesting mean age relates to the Indoor Servants. The data for the ages of indoor servants at Chatsworth in the period 1908-1913 suggests that, at this particular estate, domestic employees tended to be older than age associated with 'life-cycle' service.¹⁹⁴ Unfortunately, the data set used to produce this average does not include the ages of itinerant servants such as footmen, ladies' maids, cooks and kitchen staff. However, it does include the ages of those indoor servants permanently based at Chatsworth, such as the house maids, laundry maids, still room maids, porters and odd-men. As table 2.3 shows, the mean age of all indoor domestic servants permanently based at Chatsworth in the period 1908-1913 was 33 years.

Nevertheless, when considering averages, it is important to be aware that some returns may 'skew' the net result, and produce what can be considered to be a 'statistical abstraction': a generalised overall average which does not take into account the specific context of the data set and the questions that are being asked of it.¹⁹⁵ As, hitherto, scholars have chiefly restricted their attentions to *female* indoor servants, it was data relating to these individuals upon which the concept of 'life-cycle' service was originally based. Male indoor employees, such as those included within this particular data range, have not traditionally been categorised as 'life-cycle' servants. Therefore, in order to discover whether the average age of the indoor female servants at Chatsworth deviated from the age conventionally associated with 'life-cycle' servants, another mean age was calculated which excluded the porters and odd-men and took into

¹⁹⁴ McBride, *Domestic Revolution*, pp.83-98 & Higgs, *Domestic Servants and Households in Rochdale* p.59.

¹⁹⁵ Nate Silver, *The Signal and The Noise*, (New York, 2012) p.82

account only the female indoor employees. The average age for this revised data set was 30 years. Whilst slightly lower than the average for the previous data set, this age still seems to be somewhat older than that expected for a 'life-cycle' servant. This study will now consider some factors which may explain these findings.

One consideration is the fact that the status of Chatsworth may have ensured that the employees working there were individuals who viewed service as a profession rather than those who viewed it merely as 'bridging occupation'. Whilst middle-class homeowners who could afford servants found it increasingly difficult to hire and retain skilled domestic employees from the later years of the nineteenth century, the upper classes did not face such difficulties until after the outbreak of the Second World War. An essay entitled *The Servant Question*, written in 1892 by the social commentator Lady Jeune, focused on the problems faced by middle class homeowners wishing to hire servants. In the essay, Jeune partially blamed these difficulties on the actions of young servants desirous to 'get on' in their career: 'there is no modesty in their desire for promotion'.¹⁹⁶ She went on to claim that a servant is 'often carefully trained by a mistress in cooking or waiting at table, only to leave that mistress for a better situation the moment she thoroughly understands her duties.'¹⁹⁷ A position working for the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire at Chatsworth would almost certainly have been regarded as a 'better situation' than a similar engagement at a smaller household. Therefore, vacant posts at Chatsworth may have attracted older and more skilled servants than those traditionally associated with the concept of 'life-cycle' service. Likewise, with no shortage of potential domestic employees prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire would have been able to have their pick of the applicants. It is very probable that

¹⁹⁶ Lady Susan Mary Elizabeth Jeune, 'The Servant Question', *LSE Selected Pamphlets* (1892), p.70.

¹⁹⁷ Aslet, *The Last Country Houses*, p.92.

the Duke and Duchess would have chosen the most professional applicants to join their household, although this issue will be explored in greater detail in the second chapter of this thesis.

As was stated within the introduction to this study, Jessica Gerard has argued that ‘life-cycle’ servants only accounted for one of four different types of servants, to which she added ‘career’ servants who made service a lifetime occupation; the ‘distressed gentlewoman’; impoverished single or widowed upper-or middle-class women forced to earn a living; and the ‘labourer’, an un-skilled full- or part-time worker.¹⁹⁸ By contrasting this theory with both the evidence found within the snapshot overview of Chatsworth for the period 1908-1913, and that relating to the perceived status of service within country houses at this time, it seems possible that the majority of indoor female servants employed on the estate in the years 1908-1913 could be considered ‘career’ servants rather than ‘life-cycle’ servants. However, I contend that models such as ‘life-cycle’ service and ‘career’ service are too simplistic, and that not all domestic workers conform to them. In order to thoroughly investigate this issue, and to move beyond such prototypes in the subsequent three sections of this study I examine statistics relating to ‘length of employment’ and use these findings in order to re-consider Gerard’s system of categorisation.

The final factor which this case study will focus on is the mean distance of commute travelled by Chatsworth estate employees in the period 1908-1913. Once again, it seems most useful to display this data according to job role, as only servants belonging to certain departments would have been expected to live within the household itself. Table 2.4 provides a breakdown of commuting distance according to department. The data displayed in this table is based on a mixture of census records and archival material which contained information on the estate

¹⁹⁸ Gerard, *Country House Life*, p.162.

employees' home addresses. All distances from an employee's address to the great house at Chatsworth were calculated 'as the crow flies', in order to avoid any potential discrepancies caused by route variation.

Table 2.4: Mean Distance of Commute Travelled by Chatsworth Estate Employees in the period 1908-1913 According to Department

Department	Mean Distance of Commute Miles)
Gardens	1.57
Building	2.29
Woods/Forestry	2.66
Domain	2.64
Indoor	0.1
Estate Office	1.46
House Labour	3.95
Game	2.36
Stables	0.66
Temp Labour	No Data
Farm	1.6
Coal Pit (Not Included Within Study)	7.5
Golf & Cricket Grounds	1.57
Motor	0
Overall Mean Distance of Commute (Miles)	1.92

Unsurprisingly, the two departments with the shortest mean distance of commute for the period 1908-1913 were the Indoor and Motor departments. Most of the employees working within these departments would have been required to live in the household itself, or another building

set in the park, such as the garage. Of the indoor servants, only the Lodge Porters and an odd man lived outside of the park and travelled in from the estate villages. The distance of commute travelled by these individuals pushes up their department's average slightly, from 0 miles to 0.1 miles.

Whilst those employed within the Indoor and Motor departments had the shortest distance of commute, it is clear from table 2.4 that none of the estate employees had to travel great distances in order to get to work; most lived within 3 miles of the house, and the overall mean distance of commute was only 1.92 miles. Those situated within the House Labour department travelled, on average, nearly 4 miles in order to get to work. However, these individuals were employed only on an ad hoc basis, and therefore they would not be commuting this distance every day.

Whilst the majority of individuals working upon the Chatsworth estate lived locally, it does not necessarily follow that most employees were born within the vicinity, or that they spent their formative years there. Unfortunately, less than a quarter of those employed upon the estate in the years 1908-1913, 104 employees out of the total number of 467, had their place of birth recorded in documents which have survived within the archives. As a result, it is difficult to calculate, with any degree of certainty, the mean distance an employee travelled from their hometown in order to work in the service of the Duke of Devonshire. However, the information that does exist suggests a couple of interesting factors. On the one hand, those employed either indoors or in high ranking positions, such as foremen, heads of department, and estate office workers, seem to have travelled the furthest from their place of birth. Many of the individuals listed came from the other countries within the United Kingdom: Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Some came from even further afield: France, Germany, and even India. On the other hand,

those employed as gardeners or labourers, either full or part time, appear more likely to have been born on the estate or close by. Many of these individuals also had family members who were employed within the same department as themselves. Once again, it is evident that a greater demographic understanding of the estate can be achieved by scrutinising the records pertaining to some of the individual departments which, together, made up the whole. As such, this case study will now be followed by three others. These will investigate the employment trends relating to the gardens, building and indoor departments, starting with the former.

2.3 Snapshot of the Gardens Department 1912-1938

This snapshot of the gardens department at Chatsworth in the years 1912-1938 is primarily based upon information found in account books, which were produced by the estate office for the attention of chief agent Roland Burke. Departmental account books exist for the years 1919-1931 and 1933-1938, and they list the garden employees' names and corresponding wages for every calendar month within this time period.¹⁹⁹ It would have been beyond the scope of this thesis to transcribe all of these records. However, in order to create an accurate data set for this study which reflects the entire period, records were transcribed for the same calendar month of every year accounted for. In order to be consistent, this same approach has been adopted for the following two snapshot studies, which focus on the building department and the indoor female servants. The calendar month selected was the month of December. Primarily, this month was chosen because the Cavendish family were always in residence at this time. A greater amount of domestic work was undertaken whilst the Ducal family were at the estate, and transcribing records for this particular month allows the study to capture part-time labourers and other ad-hoc employees who did not appear on the pay roll for quieter months.

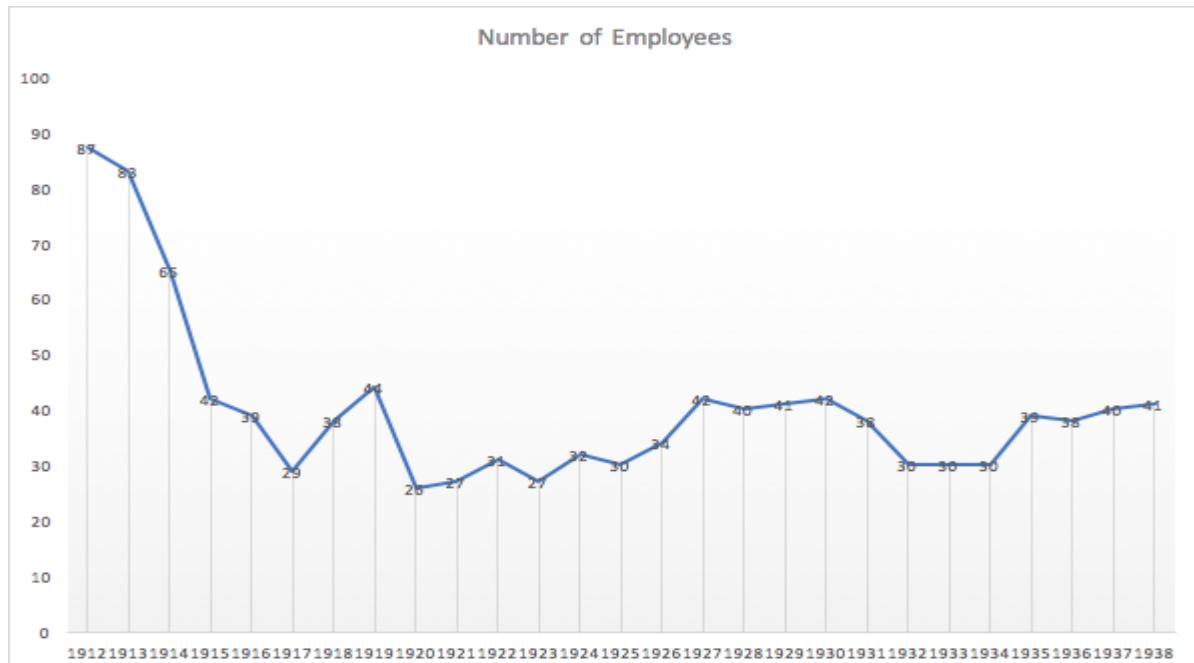
¹⁹⁹ DC, CH14/7/2/5 & CH14/7/2/6, Wage Books for Gardens Department 1919-1931, 1933-1938.

The data transcribed from the account books for the month of December was entered into a spreadsheet. Where they could be found, other employment records relating to the gardens, including job descriptions dating from 1917, and national insurance documents for the period from 1912, were also transcribed and the information entered into the spreadsheet.²⁰⁰ The evidence contained within these records, therefore, augmented the information which had already been found within the account books, ensuring that there was evidence of all 190 individuals who were employed within the gardens department for some time during the period 1912-1938.

By analysing the data contained within the spreadsheet, this study is able to make some important demographic observations. In the first instance, it is possible to track the numbers of those working within the gardens at any one time over the course of the period 1912-1938. This is depicted within Chart 2.1.

²⁰⁰ DC, CH14/7/1, List of Men Employed in Chatsworth Gardens, 1917; DC, DE/CH/6/3/2-7,12, National Insurance Documents 1912-1922, 1929; DC, FM/4, List of Agents etc., 1912, DC, FM/17, Salaries of Office Staff, Heads of Department and Foremen, 1926-1938.

Chart 2.1: Number of Employees Working Within the Gardens Department in the Period 1912-1938 by Year



By looking at the figures represented within this chart, it is immediately apparent that there was a dramatic reduction in the number of gardeners employed at Chatsworth in the period following the outbreak of the First World War. In 1912, 87 individuals were recorded as working in the gardens department. In December 1914, after war was declared, this number fell to 66. By 1917, there were only 29 employees.

These figures are not coincidental. A great deal of evidence exists within the Cavendish archives at Chatsworth which proves that the gardens department was especially affected by the events of the First World War. Many of the men employed within the department joined the armed forces. A ledger was produced by the estate office to document the names of all those working at Chatsworth who enlisted in the military. Recorded within it are the details of 18 employees from the Gardens department. However, more than this number left the

department over the course of the war. It is possible that the other individuals left in order to contribute in some other way to the war effort, such as by working in an agricultural capacity. Unfortunately, there are no records which document their movements. Yet, it is evident from the employment figures found within the account books that the department was left drastically short of workers during the war years.

As a result, the Cavendish family were required to hire both workers who were considerably older than their pre-war staff, and those who were markedly younger. For the period 1908-1913, the mean age of a gardener at Chatsworth was 36 years. A list of men employed within the gardens exists for the year 1917, and according to the data contained within this document, the mean age of a gardener at Chatsworth in 1917 was 54 years.²⁰¹ In addition to the men named in the list, there is an annotation which states: 'Also [employed] 5 Boys & 4 Girls. The 2 oldest boys will join up next year'.²⁰²

As the war continued, the gardens department also faced challenges due to coal shortages. These shortages meant that the great conservatory, built by Sir Joseph Paxton in the nineteenth century, and housing the most exotic plants on the estate, had to be neglected. Instead, attention was turned to the smaller glass houses and to growing produce such as tomato plants. In a letter written by Duchess Evelyn Cavendish to her husband Victor in May 1915, the changes taking place in the gardens as a result of the war were discussed:

Flowers don't matter, and we really could manage vegetables and fruit with the old men and girls. I have settled with Jennings [the Head Gardener] to move as many carnations and orchids as the houses up here will hold as soon as possible. The houses in the kitchen garden either to be left empty or used to grow tomatoes for the market. It seems that there is a great demand for them. Whatever else we may settle this will be

²⁰¹ DC, CH14/7/1, List of Men Employed in Chatsworth Gardens, 1917.

²⁰² Ibid.

something definite in the right direction. The war news does not seem to be good anywhere today but perhaps one thinks it worse when one is alone.²⁰³

In the list of employees for the year 1917, the locations and job roles of the individual gardeners were included. None of the gardeners were recorded as working in the great conservatory. After the war, the plants in the conservatory had decayed to such an extent that it was more cost effective to pull down the structure than to attempt to regenerate it.

Chart 2.1 demonstrates that following the armistice in 1918, there was a noticeable increase in the number of employees in the gardens. By 1919, the number had risen to 44, although this figure represented only half the amount recorded during the pre-war years. Nevertheless, by 1920, the number of employees plummeted to its lowest amount for the entire period: 26. By examining the details of those working in the gardens during this period, it seems that the number of employees increased as men returned home from fighting in the trenches. Subsequently, the older men, who had been hired throughout the war, retired.

Throughout the 1920s and 30s, the numbers of those employed within the gardens fluctuated between 26 and 42. The number of employees never returned to that of the pre-war period. The number of estate employees during the inter-war years reflected the fact that the great conservatory no longer existed. In addition, it was likely to have been affected by the economic stability of the estate, and the availability of suitable gardeners within the job market. The mean number of employees for the years 1920-1938 was 35. In 1924, the 9th Duke of Devonshire's chief agent, who was looking for applicants for the post of head gardener at Chatsworth, wrote

²⁰³ DC, M19 5072, Letter Written by Duchess Evelyn Cavendish to her husband, Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, May 1915.

to the Director of the Royal Horticultural Society. He described the gardens department at that time:

Although the responsibilities are not so great as they were before the war, naturally a very good man is required. Since the War a good deal of the glass has been discontinued, but we have still a staff of from 20 to 35 men, and enough glass to produce everything which is required in the way of fruit and general production.²⁰⁴

Together, the letter written by Evelyn Cavendish in 1915, and the one quoted above, written by the Duke's chief agent nearly ten years later, reveal how a wide variety of people connected to the gardens at Chatsworth were affected by the events of the First World War. This group of people ranged from the gardeners themselves, to the retired men and young boys and girls who were called upon to fill in for the employees fighting in the trenches, to the head gardener, Jennings, and even further up the estate hierarchy, to the chief agent and Duke and Duchess of Devonshire themselves. Such insight was not available through the analysis of quantitative data alone, and it is for this reason that the subsequent three chapters of this thesis will focus their attentions upon scrutinising qualitative data. In particular, the first case study of the fourth chapter of this thesis will consider in detail how the challenges faced by the gardens department as a result of the First World War affected the interpersonal relations connecting different members of the estate community to one another, thus threatening the estate's ability to function properly as a community.

However, there is still a great deal more information, besides the number of individuals who were employed within this particular estate category, which can be extracted from the quantitative data pertaining to the gardens department. For example, it is also possible to

²⁰⁴ DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, [Uncatalogued], Letter written by U. R. Burke to the Royal Horticultural Society, 09.09.1924.

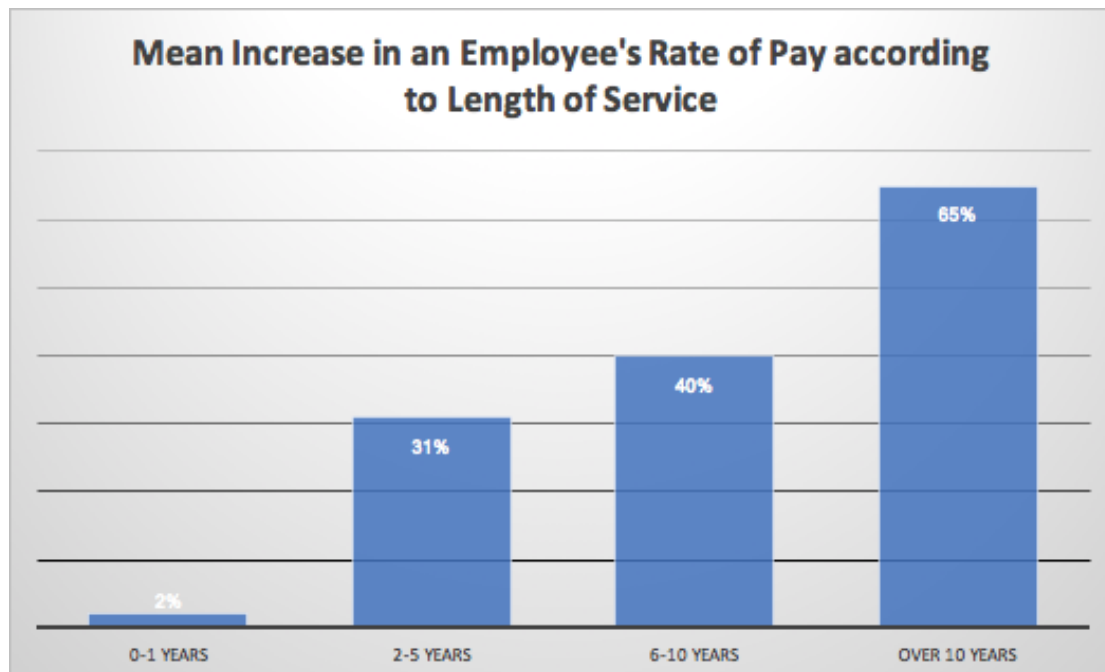
establish the number of years a gardener spent working at Chatsworth. In the period 1912-1938, 38 gardeners out of a total number of 190, worked for the department for less than a year. At the other end of the data set, 7 individuals were employed by the gardens department for the entire period in question, and, therefore, worked for at least 26 years. When considering Jessica Gerrard's four categories of servant in connection to the Chatsworth gardens department, it initially appears that the employees in question could be divided into two separate groups; with those working for only a short period of time being labelled 'life-cycle servants', and those with a longer period of service being categorised as 'career servants'. However, this investigation argues that it would be far too simplistic to classify workers within these categories without also taking into account the external factors which affected employment during this time. Whilst the mean length of employment for the gardeners across the entire period 1912-1938 was 5 years, this average will have been affected by the exceptional high rate of turnover experienced by the department during the years of the First World War. As such, I have calculated another average in order to consider the amount of time an individual would have spent working in the Chatsworth gardens in ordinary circumstances. This second average was calculated from a data set excluding all individuals who were hired and/or who left during the years 1914-1920. The mean length of employment for this data set was 8 years. Of course, there may have been individuals who were hired and/or who left Chatsworth between 1914 and 1920 for reasons not relating to the war. Therefore, this second average is still not entirely representative of the 'true' average length of service of a gardener at Chatsworth in the first half of the twentieth century. However, the second figure is likely to be more accurate than the initial calculation.

As was indicated in the first case study of this chapter, of those employed by the gardens department at Chatsworth in the period 1912-1938, around half had some kind of familial link

to the department. Some of these connections were to past employees, following in the footsteps of their fathers, elder brothers, uncles, and grandfathers. Many other individuals worked in the gardens alongside their family members. Nevertheless, neither factor seems to have affected the length of time an individual spent working within the gardens.

However, as might be expected, there is a correlation between the length of time an employee spent working within the gardens department at Chatsworth, and their rate of pay. The investigation into this connection forms the final section of this case study. Where they could be found, the starting wage and the last recorded wage of an employee were entered into the spreadsheet created for this snapshot study. Gardeners were then grouped according to their length of service and divided into four categories: those who worked at Chatsworth for 0 to 1 years, 2 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, and over 10 years. The mean starting wage and the mean final wage for each of the categories was calculated and then compared. From these initial calculations, the mean increase to each category's wages was calculated as a percentage of the rate of their starting salary. Chart 2.2 displays these findings.

Chart 2.2: The Increase to an Employee's Wages According to Length of Service



This chart demonstrates that an employee who worked within the gardens department for between 0 and 1 years could only expect a pay rise of about 2%, According to this rate of growth, over ten years, these individuals could hope to see their wages increase by 21.9%. However, those employees who stayed over 10 years could see their initial wages increase by around 65%. As such, it seems as though long-serving members of staff working within the gardens department at Chatsworth enjoyed a 'boosted' rate of salary growth. If this investigation were interested in developing a quantitative understanding about these salary rises in relation to the national average, it would be necessary to contrast these figures with rates of inflation. Nevertheless, inflation is not an important factor for the particular examination I am carrying out here. This is because I am chiefly interested in making a qualitative assessment as to whether the Chatsworth estate gardens department valued loyal service, and whether this was expressed by an increase in pay. As inflation would have affected

the purchasing power of all four sub-populations considered within chart 2.2 in a similar manner, and as I am only interested in the difference which existed between the groups, the need to consider inflation is obviated. The findings of this particular examination suggest that an increased rate of salary growth may have been employed as a tactic to reward loyal staff members, or it may have been used to encourage certain staff members to stay working at Chatsworth for longer. Most likely, it aimed to achieve both of these outcomes.

In conclusion, this examination of data relating to the gardens department has served to enrich our understanding of this particular subset of the Chatsworth estate community. By drawing upon account books and other employment records, I found that the gardens department was acutely affected by the outbreak of the First World War. The number of employees fell drastically from 87 to 29 as men left to help the war effort, and the mean age of the garden department workers also changed, increasing from the pre-war average of 36 years of age to 54. In addition to these findings, I was also able to calculate the mean length of employment for an individual working in the gardens at Chatsworth. After excluding data relating to the tumultuous years of the First World War, I found that gardeners worked for the Chatsworth estate for an average of 8 years. Moreover, I was able to determine that there was a correlation between the length of time an employee spent working within the gardens department at Chatsworth, and their rate of pay. Ultimately, I concluded that long-term employees were rewarded with more substantial pay rises. I argued that this tactic may have been used in order to reward loyal staff, and in order to encourage other employees to stay at Chatsworth for longer.

2.4 Snapshot of the Building Department in the years 1912-1922 and 1929-1949

Like the previous study relating to the gardens, this snapshot study is primarily based upon the account books relating to a specific subset of the Chatsworth estate workforce: the building department. These documents were produced by the estate office for the attention of chief agent, Roland Burke. However, the records found in connection to the building yard were discovered to be more incomplete than those used in the previous case study concerning the gardens. Account books for the building department exist for the years 1931-1950, and they list employees' names and their wages for every calendar month within this time period.²⁰⁵ In addition to these materials, the National Insurance records list all building department employees for the years 1912-1922, and for the year 1929.²⁰⁶ An estate terrier from 1922 also captures some of the employees from this department.²⁰⁷ Finally, a list of Heads of Department and Foremen for the period 1926-1938 provides more information for the higher-ranking individuals within the building department.²⁰⁸ Because of the patchy nature of this material, the most appropriate course of action was to split the study across two data sets, one focusing on the period 1912-1922 and one focusing on the years 1929-1949.

It would have been beyond the scope of this thesis to transcribe all of these records. However, as in the previous study for the gardens department, individual records were transcribed for the same calendar month of every year accounted for: the month of December. The data transcribed was then entered into a spreadsheet, which documents all of the 246 individuals employed

²⁰⁵ DC, DE/CH/6/1/4, List of Building Department Employees, 1931-1950.

²⁰⁶ DC, DE/CH/6/3/2-7, National Insurance Records, 1912-1922; DC, DE/CH/6/3/12, National Insurance Records, 1929.

²⁰⁷ DC, DE/CH/4/3/16, Estate Terrier of Beeley, Calton Lees, Calton Houses, Chatsworth, Edensor, Pilsey, Compiled by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, August 1922.

²⁰⁸ DC, FM/17, Salaries of Office Staff, Heads of Department and Foremen, 1926-1938.

within the building department for some time during the period 1912-1922 and 1929-1949. By analysing the data contained within the spreadsheet, this study is able to make some important demographic observations. In the first instance, it is possible to track the numbers of those working within the department at any one time. This is depicted within charts 2.3 and 2.4.

Chart 2.3: Number of Employees Working Within the Building Department in the Period 1912-1922 by Year

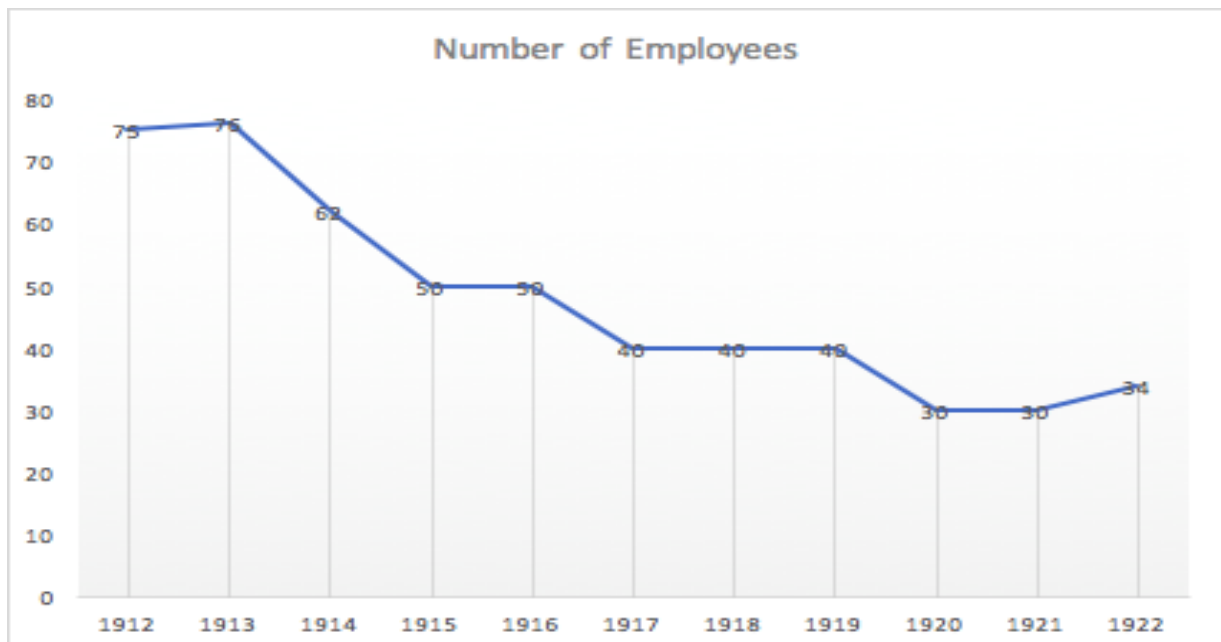
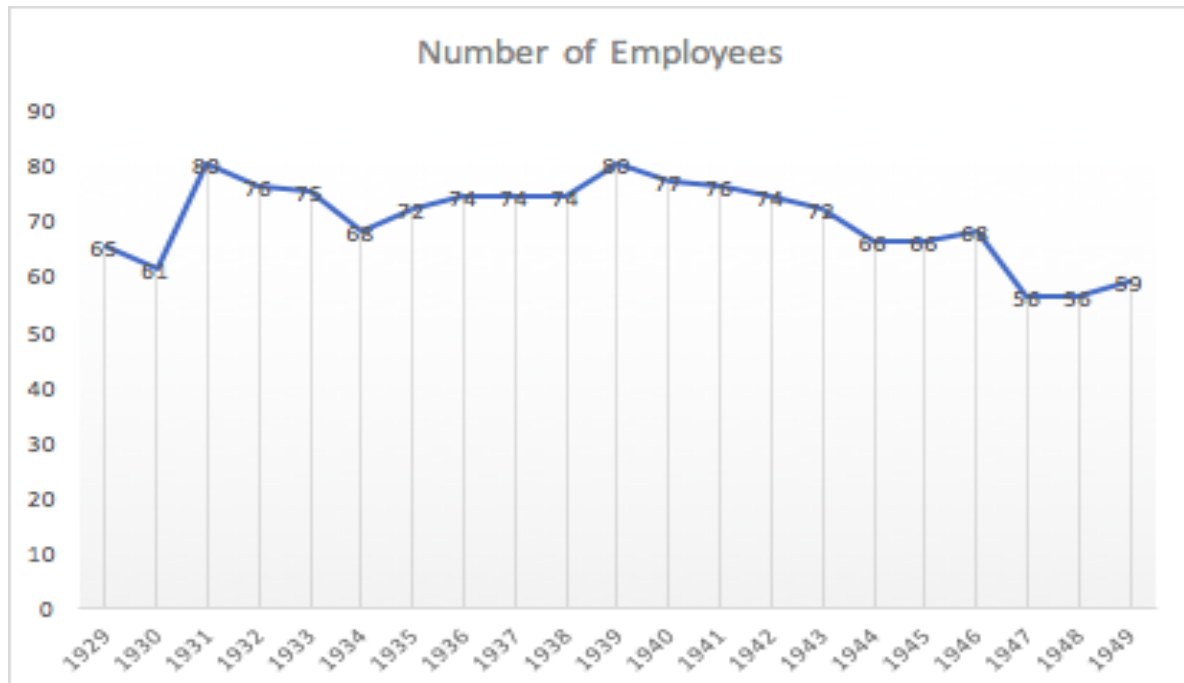


Chart 2.4: Number of Employees Working Within the Building Department in the Period 1929-1949 by Year



Together, the two charts tell the narrative of the building department at Chatsworth over the course of the first half of the twentieth century. Chart 2.3 demonstrates the impact of the First World War on the department. In 1912, prior to the outbreak of war, 75 individuals were employed within the building department. By 1917, this figure had plummeted to 40. Like the changes which also occurred within the gardens at this time, it is evident that the drop in employee numbers was not coincidental. A great deal of evidence exists within the Cavendish archives at Chatsworth which proves that, like the gardens department, the building department was especially affected by the events of the First World War.

Some of the men employed within this department also joined the armed forces. In the ledger produced by the estate office, 8 employees from the building department were recorded as

serving in the military. It is possible that the other individuals left in order to contribute in some other way to the war effort, such as by working in an agricultural capacity. Unfortunately, as with the gardens department, there are no records which document such movements. These two factors alone do not seem to account for the large number of men who left the building department over the course of the war. However, it is the contention of this study that two other issues directly related to the First World War affected the department's employment figures at this time. In the first instance, the 9th Duke of Devonshire was appointed Governor General of Canada during the war. He held this position from 1916 until 1921, and as a result, Victor Cavendish, his wife, and his younger children all moved to Ottawa for the duration of his tenure. In the second instance, the turbulent events of the First World War had a negative impact on Britain's economy. As the Cavendish family were not living at Chatsworth during this period, and as many of the other estate employees had left in order to help the war effort, there was less need to undertake major building works during the period 1914-1921. Moreover, as the financial health of the estate was suffering, there was less capital to invest in such building projects. The fall in employment figures during this period undoubtedly reflects these issues, and, once again, it seems apparent that external issues could greatly affect employment trends at Chatsworth. Of course, in addition to these factors, it is likely that some individuals during this period left for their own personal reasons, and that others retired due to old age and illness. Nonetheless, the number of employees fitting into this category would have been quite small, and in normal circumstances, these individuals would have been replaced with newly recruited employees.

Chart 2.4 shows the number of those employed within the building department in the years 1929-1949. As the first entry demonstrates, by the end of the 1920s, the building department had almost returned to its pre-war size, with a staff of 65 in 1929. Over the course of the period,

the size of the department fluctuated greatly; between 56 employees at its lowest count, and 80 employees at its highest. Therefore, chart 2.4 does not reveal a particularly stable department. However, whilst the number of employees did fall during the course of the Second World War, it never fell to the level it descended to during the early 1920s. This was despite the fact that the Cavendish family vacated Chatsworth in 1939 and did not return until after the death of the 10th Duke in 1950. Thus far, no documentary evidence has been found within the Cavendish archives which explains this trend.

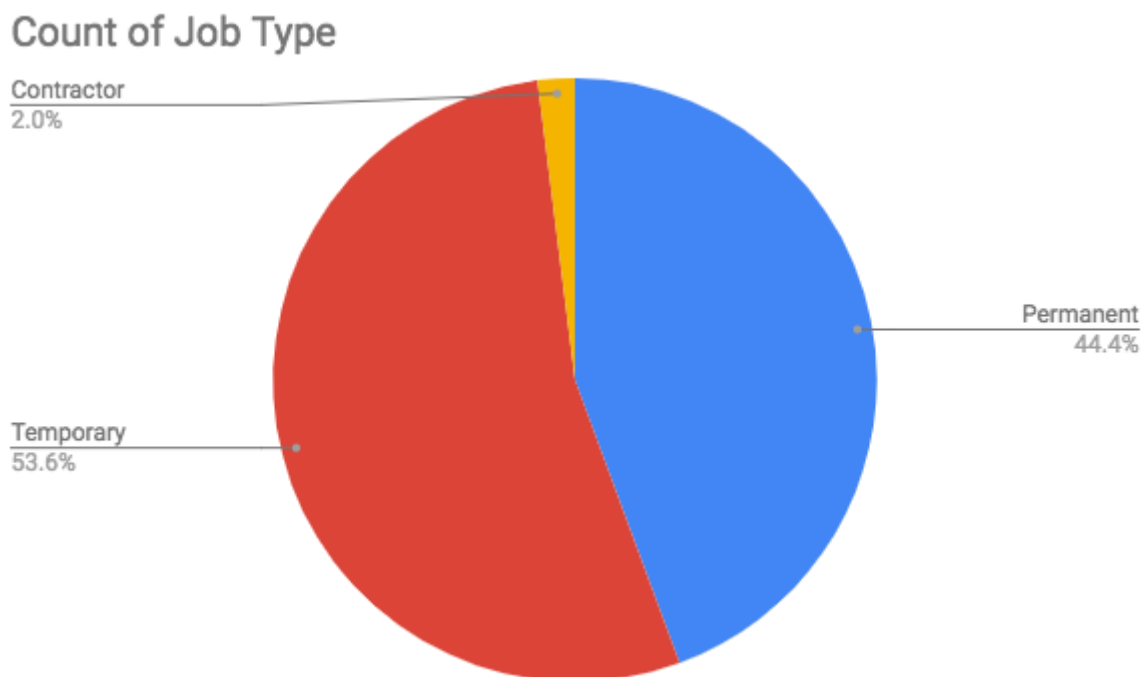
As in the previous case study, the spreadsheet created from the records of the building department can tell us a great deal more besides the number of individuals employed within this particular estate category. It can also demonstrate the wide range of roles which made up this department. According to the spreadsheet, employees occupied at least 25 different job titles within the building department. These were as follows: Blacksmith, Carpenter, Carter, Clerk, Drainer, Foreman, Gasman, Gate Attendant & Labourer, Groom, Joiner, Joiner's Apprentice, Labourer, Mason, Mason's Apprentice, Mason & Labourer, Painter, Plasterer, Plumber, Plumber's Apprentice, Plumber's Labourer, Sawyer, Smith, Smith's Labourer, Store Keeper, and Water Man. Nevertheless, the National Insurance Records do not consistently list the job title of all employees, so the building department may well have contained employees with other job titles. Some of these job titles are consistent with the category of 'labourer' proposed by Gerard as one of the four categories of servant, which she describes as 'a unskilled full- or part-time worker'.²⁰⁹ However, many roles, including that of Blacksmith, Carpenter, Mason, Painter, Plasterer, Plumber and Smith, cannot be considered as part of this 'category'. Rather, these were skilled, professional positions. This study's expansion of the

²⁰⁹ Gerard, *Country House Life*, p.162.

definition of domestic service to include building department employees, therefore, challenges Gerard's model and illustrates the need to move beyond such forms of delineation.

The multifarious nature of this department can not only be appreciated by studying the range of different skilled and unskilled job titles it encompassed, but also by considering the working arrangements which the employees holding these job titles laboured under. The data shows that department was made up of both temporary and permanent employees, as well as a small number of contractors. Chart 2.5 demonstrates how the employees within the department were divided between these different categories.

Chart 2.5: Percentage of Building Department Employees holding Permanent, Temporary, and Contractor Positions



As chart 2.5 demonstrates, whilst 53.6% of individuals held temporary positions, permanent employees also constituted a large percentage of the workforce at 44.4%. Contractors were

significantly less common, representing just 2% of employees. Whilst both temporary and permanent workers were employed directly by the estate itself, contractors were not. As such, this group cannot be considered to be fully fledged members of the estate community.

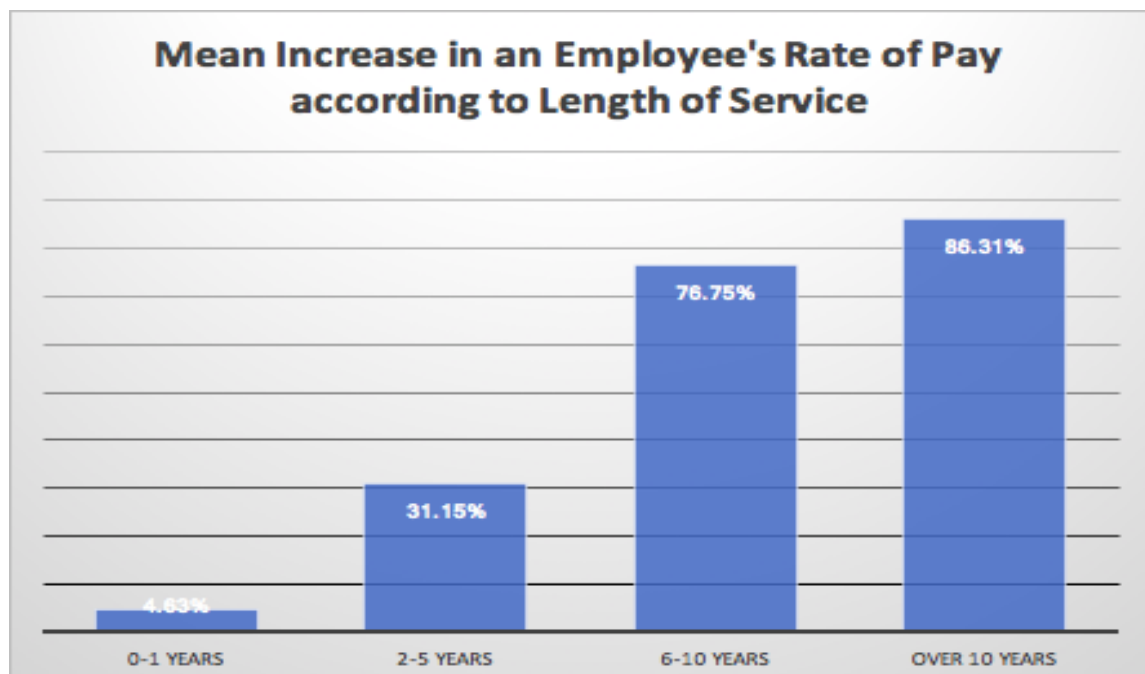
Aside from providing information on who made up the building department, the spreadsheet created from the archival material can also highlight certain trends, such as length of employment. According to the data, the mean length of service for a building department employee was 7.33 years. However, as within the study relating to the gardens department, this figure was likely affected by the high rate of turn over experienced during the period 1914-1920. Just as within that examination, a second average has been calculated in order to consider the amount of time an individual would have spent working in the Chatsworth building department in ordinary circumstances. This second average was calculated from a data set which excluded all those who were hired and/or who left during the years 1914-1920. The mean length of employment for this data set was 8.19 years. Of course, there may have been individuals who were hired and/or who left during this period for reasons not relating to the war. Therefore, this second average is still not entirely representative of the 'true' average length of service of some employed within the building department at Chatsworth in the first half of the twentieth century. However, the second figure is likely to be more accurate than the initial calculation.

It also proves interesting to compare the average length of employment for temporary and permanent workers as there exists a significant difference. Taken from the second data set, the mean length of employment for a temporary worker within the building department was 3.5 years, whereas the average for a permanent employee was 16.97 years. The tremendous difference between these two figures suggests that temporary employees were a part of a more

transient workforce. They were hired by the estate on an as-needed basis in relation to specific building projects and would subsequently move on to other sites once the work was completed. In contrast, the average representing the permanent workforce suggests that these employees spent the greater part of their working life upon the Chatsworth estate.

As was the case for the gardens department, the rate of pay for those working within the building department was also correlated to the length of employment in order to determine whether long-serving employees saw their salaries increase at a higher rate of growth. The results of this investigation are shown in chart 2.6, which displays the mean increase in an employee's rate of pay according to length of service.

Chart 2.6: The Increase to an Employee's Wages According to Length of Service



Those employed for between zero and one years could hope for a 4.63% increase to their starting salary. According to this rate of growth, over ten years, these individuals could hope

to see their wages increase by 56%. However, as chart 2.6 shows, those who worked in the department for ten years and over actually saw an 86.31% increase on their starting salary. This rate of growth is in line with a salary increase of 6.4% per year. Once again, it seems as though long-serving members of staff were rewarded with a ‘boosted’ rate of salary growth. Nevertheless, this especially high rate of growth associated with those working at Chatsworth for over a decade can perhaps be attributed to the unique types of roles found within the building department. For example, there were many apprentices who would have started off their career on quite a low salary, and who would have received a significant pay raise upon qualifying as a plumber, mason or joiner. Thus, it can be considered that there were two key reasons for this boosted rate of salary growth. Firstly, it was intended to act as an inducement for long service. Secondly, it was a reflection of greater skillset and experience.

In conclusion, like the case study concerning the gardens department, this examination of data relating to the buildings department has served to enrich our understanding of a particular subset of the Chatsworth estate community. Once again, I was able to highlight the impact the First World War had on certain individuals by drawing attention to the changes in the employment figures recorded within account books and other estate documents. The job titles listed within these documents also enabled me to draw attention to the wide range of individuals who could be found working in this department. According to the spreadsheet I created, employees occupied at least 25 different job titles within the building yard. Whilst I found that some of these job titles were consistent with Gerard’s system of categorisation for domestic service, I concluded that many roles, such as ‘Blacksmith’, did not conform to Gerard’s model.²¹⁰ On that basis, I drew attention to some of the problems associated with Gerard’s categorisation system, and argued the need to move beyond such forms of delineation. In

²¹⁰ Gerard, *Country House Life*, p.162.

addition to emphasising the variety of job roles which this department encompassed, I also drew attention to the difference between temporary workers, permanent employees and contractors. In particular, I found that there was a correlation between type of contract and mean length of employment, with temporary workers staying on the estate for an average of 3.5 years, whilst permanent employees stayed at Chatsworth for an average of 16.97 years. Finally, as was the case for the gardens department, I found that the rate of pay for those working within the building department was also correlated to the length of employment: the longer an employee worked at Chatsworth, the greater the increase to their salary. Ultimately, I concluded that there were two key reasons for this: firstly, the increase in wages could be used to encourage long service, secondly, the salary boost reflected the development of certain skills and experience.

2.5 Snapshot of the Indoor Female Servants 1925-1940

Like those relating to the gardens and building departments, this snapshot is primarily based upon household account books, produced for the attention of the chief agent, Roland Burke, in relation to a particular subset of the Chatsworth estate community. Within the Cavendish archives, account books referring to indoor female employees working at Chatsworth exist for the years 1908-1910 and 1925-1940.²¹¹ These books list employees' names and their annual wages for every calendar month within this time-frame. In addition to these materials, the census, taken in April 1911, recorded all female employees who lived within the household at

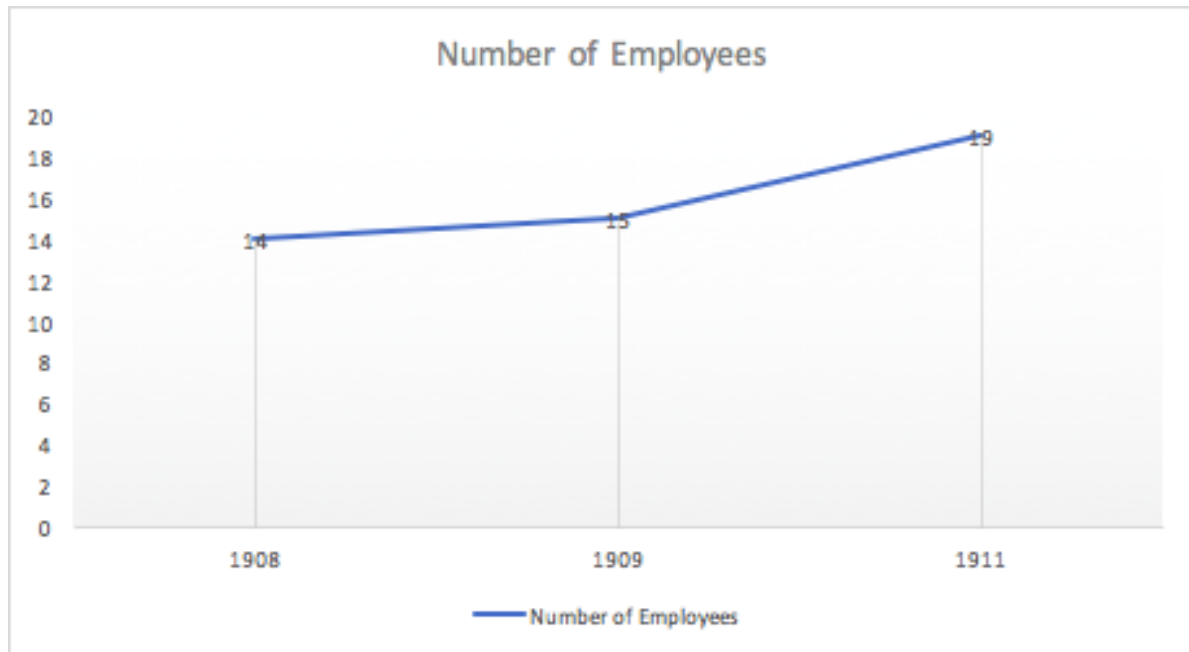
²¹¹ DC, FM/9, Duke of Devonshire's Household Accounts: Register of Wages, Allowances, Etc., 1909; DC, FM/10 Duke of Devonshire's Household Accounts: Register of Wages, Allowances, Etc., 1908; DC, FM/5, Servants Wages and Allowances; 1925-1933, DC, FM/6, Servants Wages and Allowances, 1933-1940.

Chatsworth.²¹² It was very unusual for female servants to live outside the great house at Chatsworth. For the years immediately preceding the census, only char women and temporary ('tempy') maids lived externally and travelled in to work. Consequently, although the 1911 census records are not entirely inclusive, they do contain evidence relating to the majority of the indoor female employees who worked at Chatsworth at this time. However, for many of the investigations conducted within this snapshot study, I have discounted all records prior to 1925. This is because of the significant period (of 14 years) between 1911 and 1925 for which there exists no information on the female servants. If information for the years 1908-1911 had been included for all the examinations being undertaken within this snapshot study, calculations relating to the mean length of service, rate of promotion and the likelihood and mean rate of pay rises, would have been compromised due to this lack of information. Thus, for the majority of this investigation, only information contained within the household account books for the years 1925-1940 was considered. Like within the two previous studies, this examination has only drawn upon records relating to the month of December. This data was then entered into a spreadsheet which has been the primary resource for this study.

Nevertheless, information for the period 1908-1911 has proved extremely useful for one aspect of this study: when considering how the number of indoor female servants employed at Chatsworth changed over the course of the first half of the twentieth century. This is depicted within charts 2.7 and 2.8.

²¹² NA, RG 21192, National Census, Sub-District: Bakewell Civic Parish, Township or Place: Chatsworth, Edensor, 1911.

Chart 2.7: Number of Female Indoor Employees Working at Chatsworth in the Period 1908-1911 by Year



As chart 2.7 demonstrates, when the 9th Duke first inherited Chatsworth, in 1908, there were 14 indoor female employees working within the house. Table 2.5 shows that the servants making up this figure were mostly split up into two different categories, house maids and laundry maids, although there was also one stillroom maid. In addition, the table indicates that a strict hierarchy existed within the department, with the Housekeeper at the top and the 4th Housemaids and 6th Laundrymaid at the bottom.

Table 2.5: Names and Job Titles of Indoor Female Servants working at Chatsworth in 1908

Name	Job Title
Young, Annie	Housekeeper
Miller, Jane	Head Housemaid
Blake, Annie	1st Housemaid
McEntee, Minnie	2nd Housemaid
James, Eva	3rd Housemaid
Blagg, Ellen	4th Housemaid
Lockett, Grace	4th Housemaid
Lester, Susan	1st Laundrymaid
Bird, Mary	2nd Laundrymaid
Jones, Beatrice	3rd Laundrymaid
Powie, Agnes	4th Laundrymaid
Edwards, Annie	5th Laundrymaid
Joynes, Ellen	6th Laundrymaid
Burton, Frances	Stillroom maid

In the years initially following Victor Cavendish's accession to the Dukedom of Devonshire, the number of indoor female servants at Chatsworth rose by 36%: from 14 employees in 1908 to 19 in 1911. This is demonstrated in chart 2.7. This constituted quite a significant increase in household staff and was likely related to the fact that, in contrast to his childless predecessor, Victor had a large family including a wife and seven children. The 9th Duke and his family did not make Chatsworth their home until 1909, as significant building works were being carried

out during the first year of his tenure, which included improvements to the plumbing systems. This explains why the number of indoor servants only increased from 1909 onwards.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to see how the various sub-categories of indoor female servants were immediately affected by this increase in staff numbers. This is due to the fact that there is a gap in the account books for the period between 1910 and 1925. Whilst the 1911 census records do provide some information on the female indoor servants at Chatsworth for this otherwise undocumented time-frame, including the number of servants employed, specific job titles were not recorded by census officials. Instead, all female servants except the housekeeper were simply recorded as ‘maid’.

Likewise, no household accounts exist for the female indoor servants during the period of the First World War. From 1916 to 1921, when Victor Cavendish held the title of Governor General of Canada, the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, and their younger children, lived in Ottawa. It seems likely that, as Chatsworth was mostly vacant at this time, the number of indoor female servants employed there would have decreased. It is, therefore, problematic that no account books exist for this period. However, a report written in 1920 by the Duke’s chief agent, Roland Burke, does outline the proposed number of female indoor servants, and their job descriptions, for the running of Chatsworth upon the Duke and Duchess’s return. In this document, he also compares some aspects of the proposed system to the system which was previously in place prior to the outbreak of war in 1914. Thus, it is possible to gain some insight into the traditional makeup of this department, and also see how its employees were affected by the events of the First World War and the Duke and Duchess’s absence in Canada. The contents of the report are laid out in table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Proposed Outline of Indoor Female Domestic Servants at Chatsworth upon the Duke and Duchess's return from Canada²¹³

Job Title	Notes and Remarks
Housekeeper	Mrs Young.
1st Housemaid	The one now at Chatsworth.
2nd Travelling Housemaid	To be engaged to travel wherever the family goes.
2nd Travelling Housemaid	Lady Hartington's [The Duke and Duchess's daughter-in-law] maid, but to take orders from Mrs. Young.
3rd Travelling School-room maid	To be engaged for the schoolroom, to wait on Anne [the Duke and Duchess's youngest daughter] and Miss McCullagh [her governess], and to mend Anne's clothes and keep them in order, she would also curl her hair and brush and wash it. Extra wages for being on duty as a rule in the evening for bedtime.
3rd Housemaid	I am doing away with one of the Bolton [another house owned by the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire] housemaids. Would she do as 2nd or 3rd or 4th?
3rd Housemaid	Extra from Hardwick [another house owned by the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire] for big parties.

²¹³ DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 108/1/2, Report written by Roland Burke, Chief Agent to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 21.05.1920.

4 others	
Maid to wash up breakfast and tea things.	This girl should also mend linen
	Her Grace adds the following note:- “Would be better to have one Head Housemaid and all the others equal 2nd and equal 3rd. Formerly there were only equal firsts and equal seconds, this was altered because it was supposed to encourage them if they had a chance of being promoted - as they don’t stay now this is hardly a consideration.”
Stillroom	As at present arranged, Her Grace proposes to try without a Stillroom. She is much against starting a Stillroom again if it can be avoided.
Laundry	Question whether, if there are difficulties about the Laundry, it would be better to have the washing sent out till these are discussed and decided.
Head Laundry Maid	
2nd Equal Laundry Maid	
2nd Equal Laundry Maid	Lady Hartington’s [The Duke and Duchess’s daughter-in-law] Maid
3rd Laundry Maid	
4th Laundry Maid	Less than this if some of the linen is put out. All depends on rate of transport, cost per hamper by goods and passenger to be considered. Board wages most or all the year.

The report displayed in table 2.6 suggested that, from the Duke's return in 1921, 17 indoor female servants would be employed at Chatsworth. Reading between the lines of this report, we can infer that the household at Chatsworth was staffed by a considerably smaller number of servants during the period of the Duke's absence.

In particular, this report suggests that the indoor female servants were expected to be much more flexible in their approach to work in the period immediately following the First World War. Although the figure proposed by Roland Burke within this document was only two less than the number of servants employed prior to the outbreak of the First World War, the report indicates that at least two of these servants would be 'borrowed' from other establishments. One maid was actually employed by the Duke and Duchess' daughter-in-law, Lady Hartington, whilst another maid identified in the document was employed at Hardwick, another establishment owned by the Cavendish family. She was to be called upon when required for big house parties. This was likely an attempt to make economies.

More so than table 2.5, table 2.6 also indicates the wide variety of duties carried out by the indoor female servants employed at Chatsworth. As is to be expected, there was a great difference between the roles of those employed as housemaids and those employed as laundrymaids. Nevertheless, even within these sub-categories, there existed a tremendous amount of variation between the job descriptions of individual servants. The proposed outline for indoor servants at Chatsworth following the end of the First World War suggests that, in a break with tradition, some housemaids would be expected to travel with the family from one household to another. By adopting this approach, the Cavendish family would require less servants at their other properties, and they would be able to make economies. Another housemaid would be expected to have sole responsibility of the schoolroom, which included

curling, brushing and washing the hair of the Duke and Duchess's youngest daughter, Lady Anne. In addition, one housemaid would be required to wash up breakfast and tea things and to mend linen. With such varied job roles, experiences of domestic service would have been extremely different for all these individuals. Thus, we can conclude that, like the employees of the gardens department, Chatsworth's indoor female servants were likely to have been greatly affected by the events of the First World War.

Furthermore, table 2.6 also provides more information regarding the strict hierarchy which existed within the department. A remark made by the Duchess is particularly illuminating, as it indicates that this hierarchy was originally created with the intention of encouraging longevity of service in employees: 'it was supposed to encourage them if they had a chance of being promoted'. The Duchess then stated that 'as they don't stay now this is hardly a consideration.' This statement, and the average length of service for indoor female servants working at Chatsworth, will be considered in more detail later on in this snapshot study.

Due to the gap in the account books, it is impossible to ascertain how many female servants were actually employed upon the Duke and Duchess's return from Canada in 1921, or the job roles that were assigned to them. However, account books do exist for the period 1925-1940. These have been used to produce chart 2.8, which shows the number of female indoor employees working at Chatsworth throughout this period. As can be seen from the first entry in the chart, in 1925 there were 20 employees within this department; one employee more than the pre-war period.

Chart 2.8: Number of Female Indoor Employees Working at Chatsworth in the Period 1925-1940 by Year

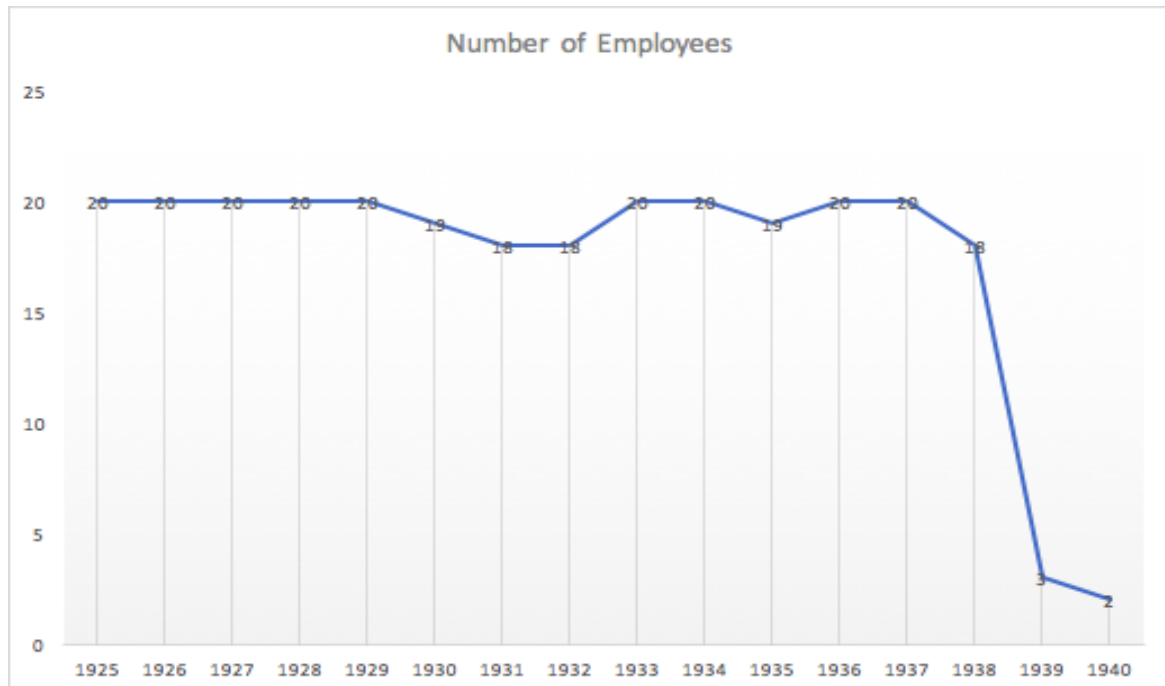


Table 2.7 shows how this figure translated into job roles.

Table 2.7: Names and Job Titles of Indoor Female Servants working at Chatsworth in 1925

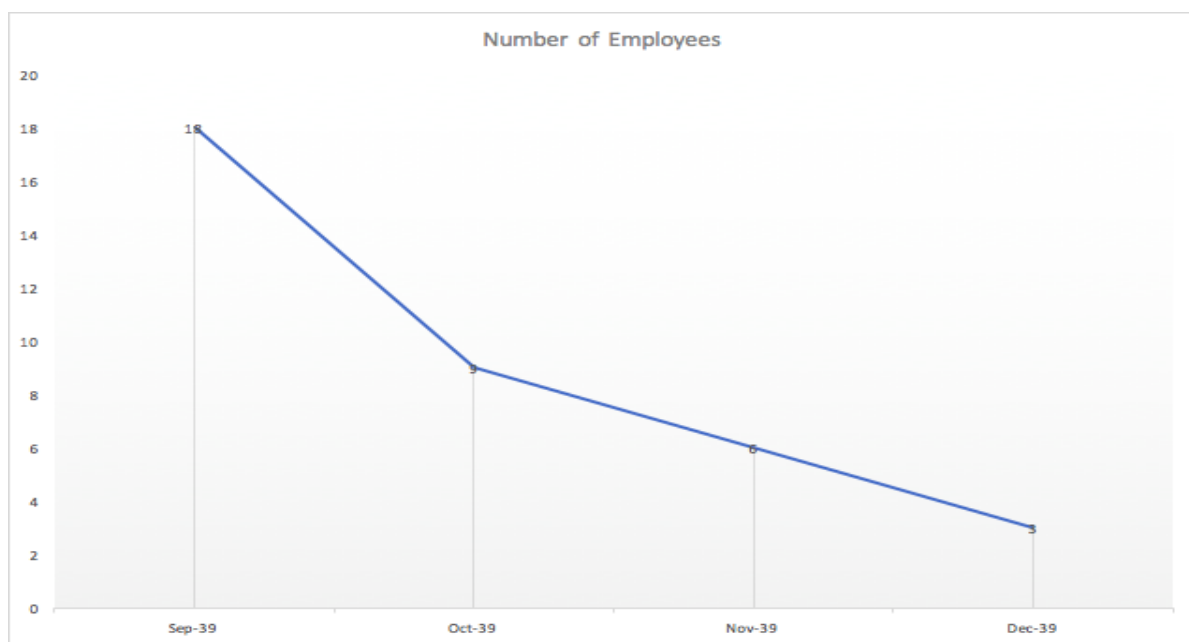
Name	Job Title
Braine, L.	Housekeeper
Wheatley, E.	1st Housemaid
Lea, N.	2nd Housemaid
Wilden, E.	2nd Housemaid
Houlston, M.	3rd Housemaid
Spencer, A.	3rd Housemaid
Whitton, J.	4th Housemaid
Williams, D.	4th Housemaid
Robinson, N.	5th Housemaid
Hopkins, G.	6th Housemaid
John, M.	6th Housemaid
Foster, L.	1st Laundrymaid
Hall, D.	2nd Laundrymaid
Jones, M.	3rd Laundrymaid
Watt, M.	4th Laundrymaid
Ovenden, D.	5th Laundrymaid
Twigg, E.	6th Laundrymaid
Dolby, D.	1st Stillroom maid
Walker, C.	2nd Stillroom maid
Messenger, E.	Linen Maid

As table 2.7 demonstrates, despite the suggestion in Roland Burke's 1920 report that laundry could be sent out and that the workforce for the laundry could, therefore, be decreased in size, there were just as many individuals employed within this sub-category in 1925 as there were

prior to the war. Additionally, in spite of the Duchess of Devonshire's hesitation with regards to the stillroom, and the proposal within the report that this could be dispensed with, this subcategory was actually larger in 1925 than it was prior to the war. Moreover, the strict hierarchy of job titles was retained.

The size of the department remained fairly constant until 1939, as is shown within chart 2.8: it fluctuated between twenty employees at its largest, and eighteen employees at its smallest. Yet, in 1939, the number of employees fell drastically by 83%; decreasing from eighteen to just three. By 1940, there were only two indoor female servants still employed at Chatsworth. The extreme change in the size of the department was directly related to the outbreak of the Second World War. Chart 2.9 exhibits this in greater detail by displaying the sharp decline in the number of employees over the course of the period from September 1939 to December of the same year.

Chart 2.9: Number of Female Indoor Employees Working at Chatsworth September 1939-December 1939 by Month



Upon the outbreak of war in September 1939, the 10th Duke of Devonshire, who had inherited the estate upon the death of his father in the previous year, arranged for the house at Chatsworth to be occupied by an evacuated girls boarding school: Penrhos College. He and his family moved out, and the school brought their own domestic staff to Chatsworth. As a result, there was no longer the need for a large staff of indoor servants. No account books exist for this department following the end of the Second World War. This can be explained by the fact that, even after Penrhos College vacated Chatsworth, the Cavendish family never inhabited the house again prior to the death of the 10th Duke in 1950.

Earlier within this snapshot study, the theme of longevity of service was introduced with the following statement made by the wife of the 9th Duke of Devonshire:

Would be better to have one Head Housemaid and all the others equal 2nd. and equal 3rd. Formerly there were only equal firsts and equal seconds, this was altered because it was supposed to encourage them if they had a chance of being promoted – as they don't stay now this is hardly a consideration.²¹⁴

In her closing phrase, the Duchess indicated that the average length of service worked by an indoor female servant was considerably shorter in the period following the First World War than it was before. Unfortunately, due to the gap in the evidence, it is impossible for this study to compare the average duration of service for these two eras. But it is possible to examine the average length of employment for the period 1925-1940. According to the spreadsheet I created from the account book entries, the mean length of service for this period was relatively short: only 1.43 years. Nonetheless, as has already been demonstrated elsewhere within this chapter, significant events, such as war, or the acquisition of the estate by a new employer, could have

²¹⁴ DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 108/1/2, Report written by Roland Burke, 21.05.1920

a profound impact upon employment trends. In 1938, when Chatsworth was inherited by Edward Cavendish, a change of employer precipitated a high rate of turnover amongst the indoor female domestic servants. In 1938, ten new employees were hired. The following year, as has been discussed, the majority of servants left Chatsworth as a direct consequence of the Second World War. Thus, the inclusion of data relating to the period 1938 - 1940 has undoubtedly skewed the overall mean length of service. A second average has been calculated, which excludes data for these particular years. As with the studies relating to the garden and building departments, there may have been individuals who were hired and/or who left during the discounted period for reasons not relating to the change in employer or the outbreak of war. Therefore, the second average cannot be understood to be a 'true' average. Nonetheless, the second calculation is likely to be more accurate than the one initially produced. The average length of employment for indoor female servants as indicated by the second calculation is 1.8 years. Whilst this figure represents a slightly longer duration of service than the previous average, it is still relatively short. This suggests that perhaps the Duchess was correct in claiming that indoor female workers didn't 'stay' long in employment. Indeed, as was highlighted earlier within this study, this group of workers was connected to the concept of 'life-cycle service', because the high rate of turnover associated with them was considered to be evidence that they saw service as a 'bridging occupation' rather than a career.

Nevertheless, there is evidence which seems to contradict this line of argument. It is apparent from the spreadsheet of indoor female servants that the job title with the highest rate of turnover was that of 2nd housemaid, closely followed by the position of 3rd housemaid. As the female servants at Chatsworth worked within a hierarchical system with up to seven grades, it seems unlikely that, having worked their way up to the position of 2nd or 3rd out of seven, all of these employees were leaving their position in order to get married or change their career. Rather, it

is more probable that many of them were leaving in order to 'better' themselves. Due to the prestige associated with service in country houses, a servant who had held the position of 2nd housemaid within a large household like Chatsworth, could hope to be hired as head/1st housemaid, or even housekeeper, in a smaller house. In addition to the claim made by Lady Jeune in her pamphlet *The Servant Question*, that: 'there is no modesty in their [a servant's] desire for promotion', which was mentioned earlier within this chapter, there is some documentary evidence within the Cavendish archives at Chatsworth which supports this hypothesis.²¹⁵ In a letter written to Victor Cavendish by his Aunt by marriage, Lucy, the latter described the changes to her indoor staff which had taken place during the first few years of the First World War. She wrote: 'I have been trying to do my "bit" in the way of war economy, having put down my second housemaid (she went off - I fear not to munitions work but to "better herself", and I have not refused her.)'²¹⁶

From this evidence, it seems evident that the strict hierarchy of service which existed within the indoor department, and the promise of promotion, did, in fact, encourage some employees to consider domestic service as a profession. Perhaps this is why the hierarchy was retained despite the Duchess's misgivings that servants didn't tend to stay in their place of employment for long. Nevertheless, it is also clear that the Duchess was correct in one respect: the hierarchy of service did not ensure that individuals would remain working for the same family. Rather, servants with enough experience were sometimes inspired to apply for better jobs elsewhere. Consequently, it would be incorrect to conflate a short length of employment with 'life-cycle service', or a long length of service with 'career service'. Of course, it must be considered there

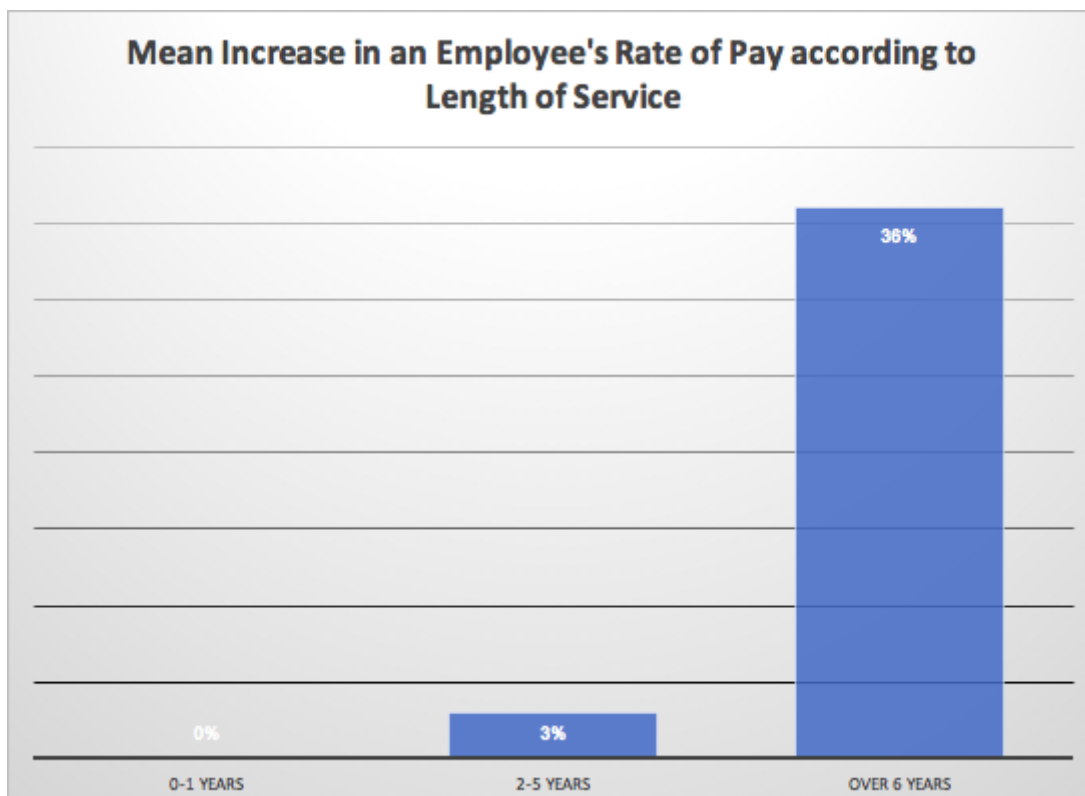
²¹⁵ Lady Jeune, *The Servant Question*, p.70.

²¹⁶ DC, Z10 11,348, Letter from Lucy Cavendish to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 07.03.1916.

were various other personal and individual circumstances which also could affect length of employment.

As with the garden and building departments, it is clear that those indoor servants at Chatsworth who remained in their employment for longer benefited from an increase in salary. This is shown in chart 2.10.

Chart 2.10: Mean Increase in an Employee's Rate of Pay according to Length of Service



Whilst those working at Chatsworth for five years or less could only hope for a slight increase to their starting salary, female servants employed for more than six years could hope to increase their yearly earnings by around 36%. This salary boost occurred as servants were promoted from one grade to another. It was a reflection of the development of their skillset and

experience, and at the same time, it operated as an inducement, which would persuade the female indoor servants to remain working at Chatsworth for a long period of time.

In conclusion, like the previous two case studies, this investigation concerning the female indoor servants has served to enrich our understanding of a particular subset of the Chatsworth estate community. In it, I have drawn attention to some of the ways in which the two world wars impacted upon Chatsworth's indoor employees. For instance, from the evidence available, it seems very likely that the overall number of those employed within the department fell below 17 during the years of the First World War. Moreover, these servants were expected to be much more flexible in their approach to work in the period immediately following this conflict. For instance, the suggestion was made that some employees would be 'borrowed' from other establishments owned by the Duke and Duchess or their family, as the need required. Nevertheless, by drawing on employment records from later in the period, I ascertained that the effects of the First World War were not felt for long. In 1925 there were 20 employees within this department; one employee more than in the pre-war period. Rather, it was the Second World War which proved to have lasting consequence for the indoor female servants at Chatsworth. Between September and December 1939, the number of those employed within this department fell drastically by 83%; decreasing from eighteen to just three. This figure never recovered.

In addition, I have also mapped some trends relating to the mean length of employment for Chatsworth's indoor female servants. I found that such employees only worked for the Chatsworth estate for around 1.8 years on average, and that, accordingly, there was a high rate of turnover for this department. Traditionally, historians such as Gerard have considered this high rate of turnover to be evidence that many female domestic workers saw service as

‘bridging occupation’ rather than a career. However, by drawing on Chatsworth’s employment records, I have been able to challenge this theory. I found that the job title with the highest rate of turnover was that of 2nd housemaid, closely followed by the position of 3rd housemaid. As the female servants at Chatsworth worked within a hierarchical system with up to seven grades, I concluded that it was unlikely that all of these employees were leaving their position in order to get married or change their career. Rather, I contend that many of these individuals were leaving Chatsworth in order to seek promotion and ‘better’ themselves. On this basis, I argue it would be incorrect to conflate a short length of employment with ‘life-cycle service’, or a long length of service with ‘career service’. In this manner, I have been able to further problematise Gerard’s system of categorisation for domestic servants.

2.6 Conclusion

Together, the four separate case studies which form this chapter have contributed to a solid understanding of who made up the Chatsworth estate community between 1908 and 1950. This chapter has found that, for the first few years after Victor Cavendish inherited the estate, up to 462 employees could be found working on the estate at any given time. These employees were divided across fourteen different departments. These departments included categories more traditionally associated with domestic service, such as the ‘indoor’ department, and those which have not previously been considered by scholars of domestic employment, such as the building yard. Although for each department, a departmental head occupied the most senior position, the chapter found that different branches of the estate’s workforce were organised around their own, specific, internal hierarchies. For example, the indoor domestic servants in particular were organised according to rank, in a manner akin to a grade system. In contrast, the hierarchy found within the building yard was much less rigid, although differentiation was

made between apprentices and the master craftsmen they laboured under. Thus, this study has shown that authority and status could vary greatly even amongst individuals from the same class background. Nevertheless, all departments fell under the jurisdiction of the estate office, which was headed by the chief agent, Roland Burke. He answered only to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire. These discoveries shed light on the power-dynamics which existed within the Chatsworth estate community.

As there existed such great variation in the roles undertaken by employees of different estate departments, the demographic make-up of each branch of the estate workforce also differed. This investigation found that some departments hired, on average, much younger employees than others. For instance, the Golf & Cricket Grounds department employed the youngest workers, with a mean age of 25 years, whereas the Farming department hired the oldest employees, with a mean age of 46 years. Likewise, the average distance of commute varied across the departments, as did the rate of wages paid out to employees, the frequency of promotion/salary increases, the average career length, and the likelihood that an employee would hail from close to the estate, or from farther afield. For example, those working in the buildings and garden departments were found most likely to have been born in one of the local estate villages. The demographic understanding of the Chatsworth estate community produced within this chapter has, thus, brought to light the varied nature of domestic work.

It is the appreciation of diversity which has enabled the chapter to engage with and build upon pre-existing research concerned with domestic employment, as well as that engaged with class, power-dynamics and social mobility. Ultimately, through this examination I have developed a more inclusive definition of the term 'domestic servant'. By drawing upon evidence pertaining

to the Chatsworth estate, and by making use of legal definitions such as C. B. Labatt's 1913 *Commentaries on the Law of Master and Servant*, I found that the key element which distinguished service from other forms of employment was the social conditions it placed upon the employee, which were established in accordance with the whims and expectations of their employers.²¹⁷ In defining domestic service in these terms, this investigation engaged with the concept of social power in order to draw attention to situations in which builders and skilled craftsmen could be considered domestic workers. This investigation was able to challenge the perception that service was an overwhelming feminine profession, and to expand upon the four categories of servant identified by Gerard, which did not account for skilled artisans. Nevertheless, it was not only the holistic outlook adopted by this investigation which allowed it to expand upon Gerard's categorisation system. The demographic insight achieved by focusing on three key estate departments over long periods of time enabled the chapter to reassess the theorisation behind three of these categories: 'unskilled labourer', 'life-cycle servant', and 'career servant'. These findings have demonstrated the need to move away from such forms of delineation.

Focusing in detail on the gardens, building, and indoor departments over the course of the first half of the twentieth century has, moreover, allowed this chapter to contribute to discourse on the themes of continuity and change. By considering some of the ways in which the challenges of modernity affected the makeup of the estate community, the investigations indicate that it was the outbreak of the Second World War, in 1939, which precipitated the greatest change to the employment of indoor members of staff. However, even following the end of the Second

²¹⁷ Labatt, *Commentaries on the Law of Master and Servant*, p.12.

World War, the building department exhibited a degree of continuity in relation to earlier employment trends.

In conclusion, this quantitative study has allowed me to answer some key demographic questions about the Chatsworth estate community in the years 1908-1950. In the process, I have built upon research relating to country houses and domestic service. Additionally, I have drawn some conclusions in relation to the second constituent part of a community, as determined by Shepard and Withington. This aspect of community concerned membership: the people who part of it, were not part of it, did not want to be part of it, and were excluded from being part of it.²¹⁸ I have also contributed to debates on the topic of class, social status and power, as well as that on the concept of consistency and transformation in relation to twentieth-century British society. Yet, this chapter has also identified the importance of further research into how members of Chatsworth's estate community navigated the issues of power-dynamics, social hierarchy, and cross-class relations. This insight can be gained by drawing upon more qualitative material, such as letters and memoirs. In the following three chapters, I scrutinise these kinds of documents for more information relating to the specific social conditions and practices which were associated with three different sections of the estate community: the lower-ranking servants, members of the Cavendish family, and the senior servants, who mediated between these two other groups and operated from the middle of the estate hierarchy. Focusing on 'performative' or 'coded' elements of social behaviour allows me to shine a light on the interpersonal relations which connected different members of the estate community to one another. In this way, the three studies can help us to understand how the Chatsworth estate functioned as a social organism.

²¹⁸ Shepard & Withington (Eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place and Rhetoric*, p.12.

The first in this series of case studies, which immediately follows this conclusion, builds directly upon this chapter's findings in relation to the estate workforce by posing the question: how was the concept of the 'ideal' servant interpreted by members of the Chatsworth community?

'A Special Sort of Person':

An Examination into the Concept of the '(Un)Ideal' Domestic Servant

3.1 Introduction

On 8th February 1912, one of the officials of the royal household at Buckingham Palace wrote to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, in order to ask for her assistance in hiring domestic staff. The letter opened with the follow line: 'Dear Duchess, if you by any chance know of a good Housekeeper the present one is leaving Windsor Castle to be married - a special sort of person is wanted...'²¹⁹

By suggesting that only a 'special sort of person' would be suited to the role of Housekeeper within a high-profile establishment such as Windsor Castle, this missive implies that there existed a concept of an 'ideal servant' which was widely understood within the social circles occupied by the Cavendish family.

Academics including Janet Momsen have argued that domestic service operated as an arena in which asymmetrical social relations were both structured and negotiated.²²⁰ The demographic study which made up the first chapter of this thesis answered the question 'who made up the community at Chatsworth between 1908 and 1950?', and it drew attention to the social and professional hierarchy which existed within the estate community. However, the numerical data examined in this study did not lend itself to an investigation into how this hierarchy was conceived of, experienced, and navigated. In short, how the Chatsworth estate functioned as a

²¹⁹ DC, AA12 12077, Letter from Charles Frederick to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire from Buckingham Palace, 08.02.1912.

²²⁰ Janet Henshall Momsen (Ed.), *Gender, Migration and Domestic Service* (London, 1999), p.6.

social organism. By drawing upon letters like the one quoted above, this second chapter builds upon the foundations laid by the former, and concentrates on some of the specific social codes and practices associated with one particular section of the estate community: lower-ranking domestic employees. An investigation into the different ways the concept of the ‘ideal servant’ was interpreted and presented by masters, lower-ranking servants, and senior servants, can provide a lens through which to observe the formation and negotiation of these asymmetrical relationships. This examination of the power-dynamics which existed at Chatsworth during the first half of the twentieth century can, in turn, help us to understand how estates like Chatsworth functioned as a community of employers and employees.

In particular, the missive written to the Duchess of Devonshire raises the following questions: for members of the employing classes like the Cavendishes and the royal family, which qualities were associated with the ‘special sort of person’ alluded to within the text? Who or what made an ‘ideal’ servant? Conversely, who or what made an ‘unideal’ servant? Were the same notions of ‘ideal and ‘unideal service shared by both their senior- and their lower-ranking employees? Above all, what can such concepts tell us about the social practices encompassing domestic service?

Hitherto, little research has focused on the concept of the ‘(un)ideal’ servant. Most recently, a few studies have considered the links between race and ethnicity and the perceived ‘suitability’ of domestic workers.²²¹ In 2012, for example, Branch and Wooten conducted an examination

²²¹ Abigail B. Bakan & Daiva K. Stasiulis, ‘Making the Match: Domestic Placement Agencies and the Racialization of Women’s Household Work’, *Signs*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Winter, 1995), pp.303-335; Enobong Hannah Branch & Melissa E. Wooten, ‘Suited for Service: Racialized Rationalizations for the Ideal Domestic Servant from the Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Century’, *Social Science History*, Volume 36, Number 2 (Summer, 2012), pp.169-189; Frank Caestecker & Bob Moore, ‘Female Domestic Servants as Desirable Refugees: Gender, Labour Needs and Immigration Policy in Belgium, The Netherlands and Great Britain’, *European History Quarterly* 41(2) (2011), pp.213-230; & Susan N. Bayley, ‘The English

into the ways in which middle-class American employers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries rationalised the suitability of domestic servants along racial lines.²²² In order to do so, they considered popular literature and demographic surveys. Whilst such studies are undoubtedly useful, their particular focus on race and ethnicity in an American context means that they do not translate directly to the British context.

Other research investigating the concept of the ‘ideal servant’ has largely concentrated on examining negative and positive representations of servants within eighteenth and nineteenth century literature.²²³ Erin Chamberlain, for example, focused on tropes associated with fictional servants.²²⁴ In her 2007 thesis, ‘Servants, Space, and the Face of Class in Victorian Fiction’, she compared positive characteristics of literary servants, such as being quiet, efficient, and presentable, with more negative traits, such as being clumsy, rude, and slow. Although often exaggerated, literary tropes expose and reflect the ideals which held social currency at the time that they were written. In turn, these tropes could also feed back into society, serving as means by which individuals could learn about domestic service.²²⁵ In this

Miss, German *Fräulein* and French *Mademoiselle*: Foreign Governesses and National Stereotyping in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Europe’, *History of Education* 43(2) (2014), pp.160-186.

²²² Branch & Wooten, ‘Suited for Service’, pp.169-189.

²²³ For work examining negative and positive representations of servants in literature, see: Susan Nash, ‘“Wanting a Situation”: Governesses and Victorian Novels’, Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (ProQuest, 1980); Eve M. Lynch, ‘Out of Place: The Masquerade of Servitude in Victorian Literature’, *Pacific Coast Philology*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1996), pp. 88-106; Jennifer Kunka, ‘Acts of Distinction: Victorian Servants and Constructions of Middle-Class Subjectivity’, Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (ProQuest, 2002); Allan Ramsay, ‘The Green Baize Door: Social Identity in Wodehouse – Part One’, *Contemporary Review*, Vol.285(1667) (December, 2004), pp.352-57; Allan Ramsay, ‘The Green Baize Door: Social Identity in Wodehouse – Part Two’, *Contemporary Review*, Vol.286(1668) (January, 2005), pp.39-46; Erin Chamberlain, ‘Servants, Space, and the Face of Class in Victorian Fiction’, Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (ProQuest, 2007); Andrew Goldstone, ‘Servants, Aestheticism, and the Dominance of Form,’ *ELH*, Vol. 77, No. 3 (2010), pp.615-643; Ruby Ray Daily, ‘The Victorian Governess As Spectacle Of Pain: A Cultural History of the British Governess as Withered Invalid, Bloody Victim and Sadistic Birching Madam, From 1840 To 1920’, Dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts (ProQuest, 2014).

²²⁴ Chamberlain, ‘Servants, Space, and the Face of Class’.

²²⁵ Kunka, ‘Acts of Distinction’, p.4.

manner, tropes which played upon specific thoughts and anxieties about servants, could eventually begin to influence these thoughts and anxieties.

Tropes associated with fictional servants are especially useful sources for investigations which consider how employers viewed their domestic staff. For the most part, contemporary novels containing references to domestic service were written by members of the employing classes. Moreover, employers are generally the protagonists of such novels. In light of this, in her 2002 thesis, 'Acts of Distinction: Victorian Servants and Constructions of Middle-Class Subjectivity', Jennifer Kunka argued that fictional attitudes towards domestic employees can not only help us to understand how members of the employing class viewed their servants, but that they can also enable academics to determine how employers viewed themselves.²²⁶ In order to investigate this theory, Kunka examined the portrayal of servants in Victorian fiction and explored the manner in which these depictions both corresponded, and contributed, to the subjectivity of middle-class employers.²²⁷ She concluded that the concept of the 'ideal' servant is intrinsically linked to the notion of the 'ideal' master: 'the employing classes were particularly anxious about the appearance of their households and the successful administration of their servants because these signifiers were implicitly tied to their own status within British society.'²²⁸ Research like Kunka's certainly raises important questions for scholars of service. Yet, investigating the portrayal of domestic workers within fiction can only provide a certain level of insight into how notions of suitability for service were both conceptualised and constructed. In particular, popular literature is more representative of the sentiments of the employing classes who wrote them, than those of their employees. As a result, the thoughts and attitudes of servants themselves have hitherto been absent from academic studies. In 'Acts

²²⁶ Chamberlain, 'Servants, Space, and the Face of Class', p.9.

²²⁷ Kunka, 'Acts of Distinction'.

²²⁸ Ibid.

of Distinction', Kunka did consider how both positive and negative representations of domestic workers in fiction may have fed back into society and affected the working situations of servants. However, Kunka's study did not investigate how domestic workers reacted and contributed to fictional ideals of service. It is the contention of my study that employees were also complicit in structuring and developing a concept of the 'ideal servant'. In order to negotiate the landscape of domestic employment, servants responded to the demands of the employing classes. They did so by altering the manner in which they presented themselves, and by manipulating their 'image'. Letters and documents written by servants can reveal their contribution to the concept of the 'ideal servant', and thus, by drawing upon such documentary evidence, my study will attempt to consider the lived experience of power dynamics in relation to the '(un)ideal' servant. By adopting this approach, and by focusing on a variety of factors which contributed to the idea of the '(un)ideal' servant at Chatsworth, I aim to provide an alternative perspective which will both contrast with, and complement, literary studies on the subject, and those focusing on the American context.

Unfortunately, as the introduction to this thesis explained, the private archives of country houses were created to preserve documents relating to members of the employing classes rather than their employees. Consequently, only a small number of these sources have survived. The Cavendish Archives at Chatsworth, Derbyshire, appears to be a notable exception. In this collection, there is a wealth of information relating to the appointment and dismissal of estate staff during the first half of the twentieth century. This includes sources constructed by domestic workers as well as their employers. Of especial interest to this study are ten complete sets of letters, dating from 1906 to 1930, which relate to the recruitment or dismissal of

domestic staff.²²⁹ Some refer to the most important posts within the estate's hierarchy: that of the agent, house steward /butler, clerk of works, head coachman, head gardener, and housekeeper. Yet, many documents also relate to the recruitment of servants for lower-ranking roles, including charwomen and housemaids. These sets of correspondence are each comprised of a variety of different textual sources, including letters written by members of the Cavendish family and senior servants involved in the recruitment process, 'characters' (references) written by former employers, and letters of application written by the potential employees themselves.

These appear to be the only complete records of their kind which have been preserved within the archives. While it is unfortunate that similar sets of documents no longer exist, it is extremely fortunate that these collections have survived. There does not appear to have been a fixed policy for preserving recruitment letters within private archives. Of the ten sets of correspondence, only those relating to the recruitment of a housekeeper and butler/house steward had been filed with the personal papers of the 9th Duke of Devonshire and his wife Duchess Evelyn.²³⁰ This is likely because the recruitment of individuals to fill such important posts necessitated a great deal of involvement from the Duke and Duchess themselves. In all likelihood, this is why these two complete sets of records have survived. In comparison, the recruitment of staff for more subordinate posts would have required a considerably smaller

²²⁹ DC, DF 15/3/2/3/3/1-6, Letters regarding the appointment of a housekeeper for Compton Place, 1911; DC, Z7 11233-9, Application for the post of butler/house steward, 1910-1911; DC, L/96/127, Letters regarding the appointment of Frank Jennings as Head Gardener at Chatsworth, 1906; DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 4/3-4/5, series of letters regarding the position of clerk of works, 1919-1922; DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 4/140, series of letters regarding the position of head gardener at Woburn, 1930; DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 4/2, series of letters regarding head gardeners Marples and Weston, 1923-1927; DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 4/10 series of letters regarding the dismissal of Frank Jennings as head gardener at Chatsworth, 1920; DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 4/19, series of letters regarding head coachman R. Clarke, 1919-1922; DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 108/1, series of letters relating to the recruitment of staff upon the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire's return from Canada, 1921.

²³⁰ DC, DF 15/3/2/3/3/1-6, Letters regarding the appointment of a housekeeper for Compton Place, 1911; DC, Z7 11233-9, Application for the post of butler/house steward, 1910-1911.

level of involvement from the Duke and Duchess, and therefore the majority of documents relating to these matters would not have been filed with the family's personal papers.

Of the remaining records, seven sets of letters had been filed with the Chief Agent's papers.²³¹ Land Agents were responsible for overseeing the management of country estates. They operated on behalf of the landlord, communicating and negotiating with all who had business with the estate, both internally and externally. As an occupational group, they produced a great number of written records. Besides the upper-class owners of such estates, Land Agents have typically left behind the largest paper-trail of all those living and working within country estate communities. I argue that there are two reasons for this. In the first instance, as Land Agents were such prolific writers, there was a greater chance that their material would survive. Secondly, Land Agents occupied extremely powerful positions within the hierarchy of a country estate community, and country house archives were designed to retain the records of their most powerful residents. Thus, their records were more likely have been deemed worthy of being preserved than documents pertaining to lower ranking servants. Due to the fact that the Land Agents have left behind such great paper-trails, there has been a growth of academic interest in land agent records in recent years. Subsequently, historians such as Carole Beardmore, Steven King and Geoff Monks have argued that such material can act as a 'prism' through which it is possible to observe social relations within country estates.²³² This is a theme which is explored and developed, not only in this chapter, but in the subsequent two chapters

²³¹ DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 4/3-4/5, series of letters regarding the position of clerk of works, 1919-1922; DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 4/140, series of letters regarding the position of head gardener at Woburn, 1930; DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 4/2, series of letters regarding head gardeners Marples and Weston, 1923-1927; DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 4/10 series of letters regarding the dismissal of Frank Jennings as head gardener at Chatsworth, 1920; DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 4/19, series of letters regarding head coachman R. Clarke, 1919-1922; DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 108/1, series of letters relating to the recruitment of staff upon the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire's return from Canada, 1921.

²³² Carol A. Beardmore, 'The Rural Estate through the Eyes of the Land Agent: A Community in Microcosm c1812 – 1844,' *Family & Community History*, 19:1 (2016), pp.17-19.

of this thesis. I argue that, due to the intermediary role undertaken by senior servants like the land agent within the country estate hierarchy, their records are uniquely placed to help historians understand how such places functioned as communities. It gives us access to documents produced by lower-ranking servants, estate workers and tenants, which are unlikely to have been preserved elsewhere within the archives. Roland Burke was Chief Agent at Chatsworth between 1908 and 1938. During that time, he would have produced a great number of records relating to recruitment. However, as only seven sets of documents appear to have survived, and as they were found amongst the uncatalogued papers belonging to the Chief Agent, it seems likely that there was no concerted effort to preserve such recruitment material. Perhaps they were initially retained as part of the estate's employment records. After this, it is probable that the documents survived only by chance due to the fact that they were filed amongst the Land Agent's papers. Currently, only sixty percent of documents contained within the Cavendish Archives have been catalogued, and it is possible that even more sources relating to recruitment are yet to be rediscovered amongst other uncatalogued material. Combined, the seven sets of documents I uncovered are comprised of a total of 20,728 words, and they make up nearly two-thirds of the overall corpus I draw upon within this study.

The final set of documents, relating to the recruitment of a head gardener, had been filed with a miscellaneous assortment of estate papers. Like the seven set of letters found amongst the Chief Agent's papers, it is possible that other documents may also have been filed in a similar manner. However, without dedicating a great deal of time to examining uncatalogued archival material, it is impossible to determine whether or not this is the case.

Thirty-seven individual letters and textual accounts are also used in this study to supplement the complete sets of correspondence.²³³ These sources have also been found within the personal papers of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, and that of other family members. They include various stand-alone letters pertaining to the recruitment of domestic staff during the period 1908-1950. The information contained within these documents is not as rich as that found within the complete sets of letters, but it is complementary and the addition of it serves to expand the study further. Some of these individual letters look beyond the subject of recruitment and also cover topics such as the dismissal of domestic workers, as well as accounts of 'bad' service. Such sources are often much harder to find within country house archives, not only because there was no established practice for preserving them, but also because upper-class families like the Cavendishes tended to self-censor, destroy, or limit access to, documents which might present the family or their estate in a 'negative' light. For example in, a letter

²³³ DC, AA12 12077, Letter from Charles Frederick to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, from Buckingham Palace, 08.02.1912; DC, AA22 12225, Letter of recommendation written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, for Fraulein Fischer, 16.07.1912; DC, C17 1698-9, Letters regarding the recommendation of a chef, 1909; DC, C17 1716, Letter written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to private secretary, Manners-Sutton, 27.05.1910; DC, C17 1719, letter written by Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, to private secretary, Manners-Sutton, 06.10.1910; DC, C17 1802 & C17 1804, letters written by Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, to private secretary, Manners-Sutton, January 1914; DC D4 1961-2 & D4 1969, 09.02.1916, letters written by Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, February-March 1916; DC, DF 33/10, Solymossy Papers letters K1, G11, R15 & L14, 1948-9; DC, J10 4314 letter written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 20.12.1911; DC, L14 4902, letter written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 10.06.1913; DC, L14 4918 & 4922, letters written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, July 1913; DC, M22 5201, 5209 & 5216, letters written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 1913; DC, M23 5231, letter written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 27.02.1914; DC, M25 5321, letter written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 17.07.1912; DC, M32 5497, letter written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 11.12.1914; DC, N9 8094 letter written by Lady Maud Cavendish to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire 24.01.1918; DC, Q2 8490 letter written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 01.07.1920; DC, R11 9521, Letter written by Robert Booth to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 23.09.1912; DC, S2 9840 & 9845, letters written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, January 1919; DC, S10 10,037 & 10,041, letters written by J.P. Cockerell to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 1917-1918; DC, DF28/1/4, Unpublished memoirs of Lady Maud Baillie (Cavendish), [Undated]; DC, M29 5453, letters written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, March 1916.

written in 1942 to the Chatsworth archivist, Victor Cavendish's cousin, Blanche Egerton, made it clear that she did not wish for certain letters to be made widely available, most likely because their contents would have had a detrimental effect on her image: 'I've kept a whole heap of letters which must not be known of, or seen by mortal eye till my generation and next generation are beneath the green grass. I will seal them up.'²³⁴

As pre-eminent aristocratic landowners, the Duke and Duchess were required to carry out their role on the public stage where their behaviour and, moreover, that of their employees, was open to scrutiny. Any transgressions on the part of their servants would have been ascribed to them and would have diminished their status in the wider British society. This links to Sennett and Cobb's arguments that powerful individuals within society are forced to act in a manner that 'maintains their power', as was discussed in the examination of class theory found within the introduction of this thesis.²³⁵ This understanding of power, class, and social status suggests that any documents referring to bad behaviour could have been extremely damaging to the Cavendish family had they been circulated. Consequently, it is extremely fortuitous for this study that some documents which reference inappropriate behaviour and the dismissal of estate staff have survived within the Devonshire Collection archives, rather than being hidden away like the letters pertaining to Blanche Egerton.

In total, I have gathered together enough evidence of Chatsworth's employment conventions to form a corpus of 34,497 words. This small corpus provides insight into how the notion of the 'ideal servant' was understood and interpreted by the Cavendish family, their acquaintances, *and* their servants during the period 1908 to 1950. Drawing on this evidence, I

²³⁴ DC, CH12/1/32, Letter from Blanche Egerton to Mr Thompson, 03.02.1942.

²³⁵ Sennett & Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, p.28.

argue that the notion of the ‘ideal servant’ was constructed by both masters, who hired staff within a specific framework, and servants, who presented themselves in a particular way. In order to investigate how different members of the Chatsworth estate community understood, reacted and contributed to notions of ‘ideal’ and ‘unideal’ service, I have found it most expedient to divide the overall corpus of 34,497 words into three categories. These categories have been defined, not according to where the documents were found within the Cavendish archives, but according to who originally produced the text in question. Of the total 34,497, 12,235 words are derived from sources which were written by the Cavendish family and other members of the employing classes, 12,008 words originate from sources produced by senior servants involved in the recruitment process, such as the chief agent, and 10,254 words are from documents written by prospective/current servants. Thus, although there existed no policy at Chatsworth for preserving the textual accounts of lower ranking servants, by making use of the records compiled by senior-servants like the chief agent, it has been possible to achieve a degree of parity between the three different types of text producers.

3.2 Methodological Approach

In order to examine the source material which has been collated, this study takes inspiration from the work of historical pragmatic scholars such as van Dijk (1991), Baker and McEnery (2005), and Prentice and Hardie (2009).²³⁶ In their study, ‘A corpus-based approach to discourse of refugees and asylum seekers in UN and newspaper texts’ Baker and McEnery made use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in order to analyse

²³⁶ van Dijk, *Racism and the Press*; Paul Baker and Tony McEnery, ‘A corpus-based approach to discourse of refugees and asylum seekers in UN and newspaper texts’, *Journal of Language and Politics*, 4.2 (2005), pp.197-226; Prentice and Hardie, ‘Empowerment and Disempowerment’, pp.23-55.

representations of, and attitudes towards, asylum seekers and refugees.²³⁷ By adopting a similar approach, this investigation uses a combination of statistical methods and a method influenced by the more qualitative framework of CDA to examine how language in relation to servants was used overall within the source-material.

I made use of corpus linguistic software in order to conduct the initial statistical analysis of the corpus. Increasingly, scholars of historical pragmatics have found that such software makes it easier to get better acquainted with their source material as it enables them to observe and scrutinise subtle linguistic trends.²³⁸ In particular, software such as the freeware programme *Antconc* can aid investigations by generating searchable word lists, identifying concordance lines with a particular high level of frequency, and, by use of the Keyword in Context (KWIC) feature, it can also highlight the context in which certain words and phrases are used. A preliminary search of the corpus material for nouns used in relation to domestic servants, such as ‘House Keeper’, ‘Butler’, ‘Gardener’, ‘Staff’, ‘Maid’, and ‘Man’, generated a list of the most popular collocating words used to describe domestic servants. By using the KWIC feature, it was possible to view the concordance lines containing these words, allowing me to read in greater detail language associated with good and bad servants. This initial analysis of the corpus indicated that words or phrases associated with the concept of the ‘(un)ideal servant’ could be divided into one of four distinct semantic groups of recurring themes or elements of meaning.²³⁹ Each corresponds to a different aspect of a servant’s identity. They are as follows:

²³⁷ Baker and McEnery, ‘discourse of refugees and asylum seekers in UN and newspaper texts’, pp.197-226.

²³⁸ Jucker & Taavitsainen, *English Historical Pragmatics*.

²³⁹ Definition of semantic groups taken from Prentice and Hardie, ‘Empowerment and Disempowerment in the Glencairn Uprising’, p.34.

1. Semantic terms which appear to refer to the ‘status’ or ‘background’ of a servant, such as their religion, marital status, or nationality.
2. Words that relate to the ‘physical characteristics’ of a servant, such as their age or height.
3. Phrases that take into account a servant’s ‘behavioural traits’, for instance whether or not a servant could be considered *polite* or *quiet*.
4. Semantic terms which reference ‘skill-set and experience.’

These four different facets of a servant’s identity operated in unison, rather than autonomously. Together, they determined the extent to which a servant could be considered ‘(un)ideal’. Nevertheless, from a structural point of view, it appears most expedient to consider each category separately. By examining the concept of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ service in relation to a specific set of qualities, the first four sections of this study focus on each of these different semantic categories in turn.

Baker and McEnery have argued that in language, there are many ways of referring to the same idea or subject, either by using different grammatical constructions, or words or phrases which contain similar meanings.²⁴⁰ Due to the linguistic diversity of the corpus material, it was not always easy to identify all of the word-forms associated with a particular semantic category through the use of *Antconc*. In order to utilise the software in a manner which would allow it to identify all pertinent concordance-lines, thereby enabling my study to be as thorough as possible, I have closely examined the source material and labelled phrase usage according to which of the four semantic categories it belongs to. This methodology is based upon the approach adopted by Prentice and Hardie in their study examining the representation of actors

²⁴⁰ Baker and McEnery, ‘Discourse of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in UN and Newspaper Texts’, p.201.

on both sides of the mid-seventeenth century Glencairn uprising in the London press.²⁴¹ As in Prentice and Hardie's investigation, each concordance line of the corpus has been labelled according to the semantic category it presented.²⁴² In table 3.1, I provide a comprehensive listing of the semantic categories I have used within this analysis, with examples for each. The words and phrases in italics indicate the key elements of the concordance line that determined its assignment to a particular category; the emboldened word is the label that produced that concordance line. One notable difference between my approach and that adopted by Prentice and Hardie is that where a phrase seemed to relate to more than one category, I have added multiple tags. This does present some difficulties for the quantitative analysis aspect of this study, as single examples of linguistic formations are represented in multiple categories. However, as previously stated, the four different categories adopted for this study represent the four different perceived aspects of a servant's identity, and they operated in concert rather than autonomously to affect the degree to which a servant could be considered '(un)ideal'. Therefore, it is difficult to entirely divorce one semantic category from another. Adopting this approach enables me to 'search' for the tags in *Antconc* in the same manner as the initial search I conducted for nouns. This search then identifies all KWIC concordance lines associated with one of four tags corresponding to the different aspects of a servant's identity.

²⁴¹ Prentice and Hardie, 'Empowerment and Disempowerment in the Glencairn Uprising', pp.23-55.

²⁴² *Ibid*, p.34.

Table 3.1: Semantic categories and examples

Category	Example
Status and Background	‘I now require a <i>French</i> governess’ ‘The <i>poor</i> housemaid nearly died (of fright)’ ‘Have always belonged to <i>Church of England</i> ’ ‘These <i>darkies</i> always get chills’ ‘6ft in height and <i>unmarried</i> ’
Physical Characteristics	‘she must be <i>active</i> ’ ‘a nice quiet <i>little woman</i> ’ ‘My <i>age is 40. Height 5ft 8in</i> ’ ‘She is very jumpy and <i>looks so ill</i> ’ ‘These darkies always get <i>chills</i> ’
Behavioural Traits and Personality	‘a <i>nice quiet</i> little woman’ ‘a bit of a <i>mischief maker</i> ’ ‘Jack and Charles <i>grumbled</i> a lot’ ‘if you found him thoroughly <i>honest, sober...</i> ’ ‘a <i>rare sense of humour</i> ’
Skill Set and Experience	‘a <i>good disciplinarian</i> ’ ‘governess <i>for about 2 ½ years</i> ’ ‘very <i>good & careful in her work</i> ’ ‘could <i>manage the duties</i> ’ ‘the <i>tastiest man for the shrubs</i> ’

Within each section of this study, a quantitative analysis of the source material is followed by a more qualitative analysis, where individual words and phrases identified within the semantic categories are discussed and analysed in more detail. Particular focus is given to words and

phrases with high frequency rates and those such as ‘little’, ‘old’, and ‘poor’, which can be defined in a variety of ways. Ultimately, language use within the corpora is scrutinised for evidence which may be able to answer the questions laid out earlier within this introduction: Who or what made a ‘good’ servant? Conversely, who or what made a ‘bad’ servant? How did these concepts differ according to one’s place within the social hierarchy at Chatsworth? Finally, and above all, what can these sources tell us about how master-servant relations were structured and negotiated within the Chatsworth community on particular occasions?

In order to explain how CDA influenced this study, it is first necessary to discuss the origins of this methodological approach. CDA was first adopted as a distinct analytical approach to textual sources within the writings of scholars such as Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, and Gunther Kress.²⁴³ In the work produced by each of these scholars, CDA has been used and interpreted somewhat differently in relation to analysing texts. According to Martyn Hammersley, who wrote an article on the foundations of CDA, there has been no agreement on the use of a specific set of CDA techniques. Rather, scholars using CDA have only agreed that techniques should centre around a deliberate ‘attempt to locate discourse within a particular conception of society, and [the] adoption of a thoroughly ‘critical’ attitude towards that society.’²⁴⁴ Hammersley went on to explain that critical researchers have sought to challenge conventional forms of research by studying particular texts in relation to the context in which they were written. They have argued that, by not doing this, other scholars have ‘ignore[d] the ways in which the capitalist, sexist, and/or racist character of that society shapes

²⁴³ van Dijk, ‘Introduction: the role of discourse analysis in society’, van Dijk, *Racism and the Press*; Norman Fairclough, ‘Critical and Descriptive goals in discourse analysis’, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 9 (1985), pp.739-763; Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*; Gunther Kress, ‘Representational Resources and the Production of Subjectivity: Questions for the Theoretical Development of Critical Discourse Analysis in a Multicultural Society’, in *Text and Practice: readings in critical discourse analysis*, (Eds) Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard (London, 1990); Gunther Kress, ‘Critical Discourse Analysis’, *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 11 (1990), pp.84-99.

²⁴⁴ Hammersley, ‘On the Foundations of Critical Discourse Analysis’, p.237.

all that goes on within it.²⁴⁵ In seeking inspiration from CDA in order to analyse corpus material in more detail, this study adopts this outlook.

Specifically, this examination has been influenced by the model for Critical Discourse Analysis developed by van Dijk in 1991 for analysing racist ideology contained within right-wing news reports.²⁴⁶ Although this study differs from van Dijk's in relation to the research questions it poses, and the source material it uses, there are parallels between the two investigations: namely, both studies examine how specific groups of individuals are conceived of and represented within textual accounts. Van Dijk's framework for Critical Discourse Analysis is comprised of three key focuses: 'perspective', 'implicit meanings', and 'semantic strategies'. The first considers what the linguistic features of a source can tell us about its perspective or point of view.²⁴⁷ The second aspect of this model recognises that much of a document's meaning may remain unsaid or implicit, such as in the context of the reference to 'a special sort of person' made by the official of the royal household at Buckingham Palace. Van Dijk proposes different strategies for investigating the implicit meanings of a text, including: examining the implications of statements; analysing a text's presuppositions; and focusing on the seemingly irrelevant details contained within an account.²⁴⁸ Finally, van Dijk argues that it is important to consider the specific goals and motivations for employing certain semantic strategies within a text. In relation to this study, this could include the use of hyperbole (by either servants or their masters) to exaggerate the positive or negative qualities of a member of staff in order to justify their employment, the use of comparisons between different servants to generate implied meanings, or even an employer's admission of some point that favours a

²⁴⁵ Ibid, p.239.

²⁴⁶ Teun van Dijk, *Racism and the Press*.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, p.180.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, pp.180-187.

servant or excuses their actions in an otherwise negative situation.²⁴⁹ By taking into account these three factors, in line with van Dijk's model, this investigation endeavours not only to determine which qualities appear to have been considered desirable in a servant, and which appear to have been considered undesirable, but also to reflect on these concepts further and question *why* this may have been the case.

The conclusion of this study draws these ideas together, in order to build a more complete picture of the '(un)ideal servant'. This closing section considers each group of text producers in turn. It will consider how the notion of the 'ideal servant' was perceived by each of the three groups and highlight both differences and similarities between their understanding of this concept. This final section takes into account the idea that, as Jaworski and Coupland point out, 'most texts are not 'pure' reflections of single discourses.'²⁵⁰ As a result, the study concludes that there was not a singular concept of the '(un)ideal servant' shared by the entire Chatsworth community. Indeed, some opinions on service explored within this study conflict with others. However, this does not detract from the usefulness of exploring such thoughts and ideals. It merely raises further questions relating to the identity and social status of different text producers as well as the intended audience of the source. Investigating these points further allows us to better understand the power-dynamics and inter-class relations which determined how the Chatsworth estate functioned as a community. Furthermore, by taking inspiration from linguistics studies which use CDA and computer aided statistical analysis, as well as grounding the study in the empiricism of social history research, this chapter demonstrates the usefulness of adopting a mixed methods approach in order to better understand communal identities.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, pp.187-198.

²⁵⁰ Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland, *The Discourse Reader* (London, 1999).

3.3 Semantic Category 1: Status and Background

After the texts which made up the corpus had been labelled, a search completed with the aid of *Antconc* identified thirty-five different words and phrases, appearing in ninety-four concordance lines, which related to the ‘status and background’ of individuals employed in service roles. In turn, the key linguistic elements of these concordances, which determined assignment to this particular category, could be identified as belonging to one of four sub-categories, namely: class/economic status; nationality/ race/ ethnicity; religious background; and relationship status. Figure 3.1 shows the apparent schema of how a servant’s background or status is conceptualised within the corpus.

Figure 3.1: Schema for the conceptualisation of a servant’s status and background

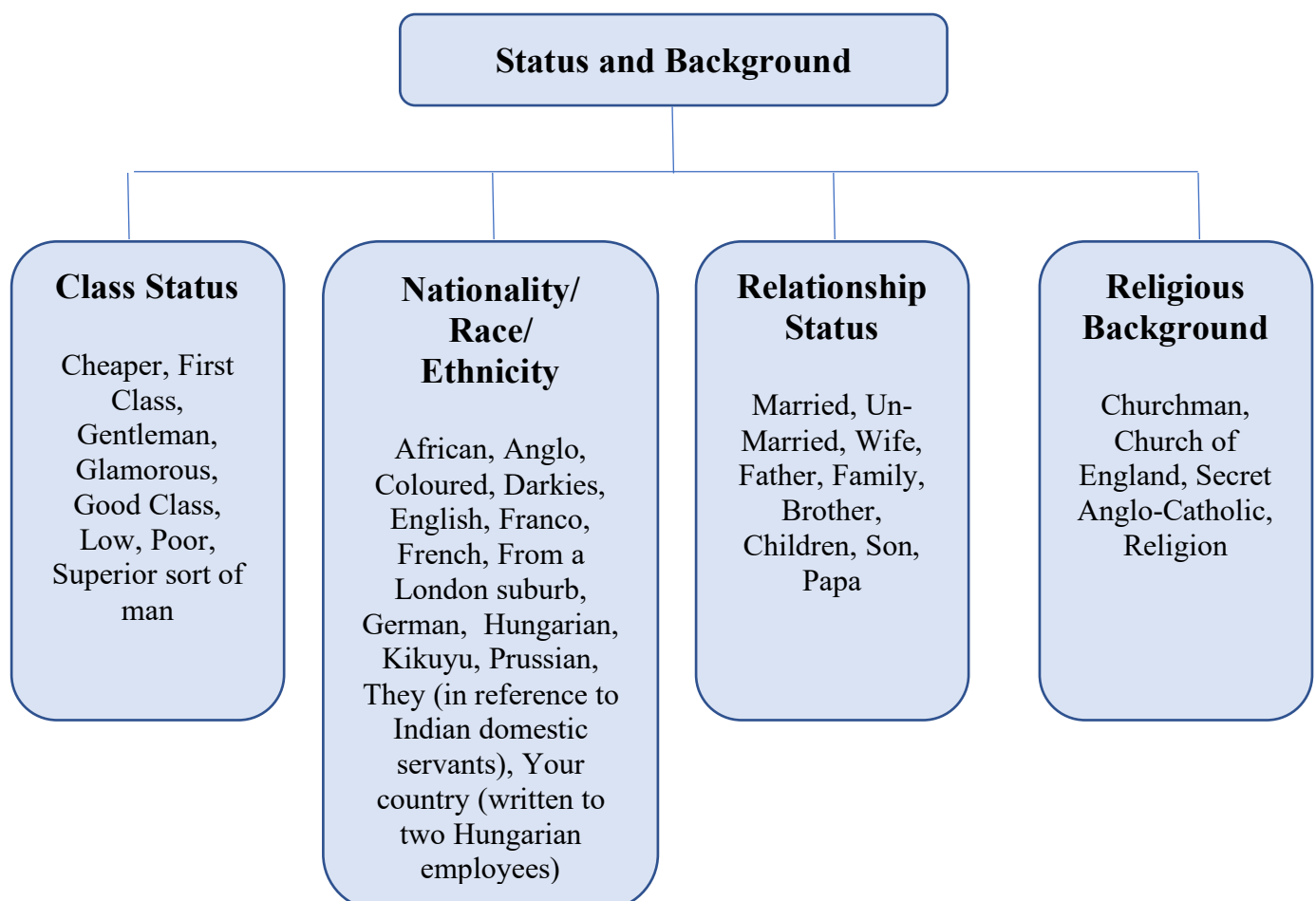


Table 3.2: Quantitative Overview for the Semantic Category relating to Status and Background

Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Class Status	Cheaper	2	2	0	0
Class Status	First Class	1	0	1	0
Class Status	Gentleman	2	1	0	1
Class Status	Glamorous	1	1	0	0
Class Status	Good Class	1	1	0	0
Class Status	Low	1	0	0	1
Class Status	Poor	9	7	1	2
Class Status	Superior Sort of Man	1	0	0	1
Nationality/ Race/ Ethnicity	African	1	1	0	0
Nationality/ Race/ Ethnicity	Anglo	1	1	0	0
Nationality/ Race/ Ethnicity	Coloured	2	2	0	0
Nationality/ Race/ Ethnicity	Darkies	1	1	0	0
Nationality/ Race/ Ethnicity	English	2	2	0	0
Nationality/ Race/ Ethnicity	Franco	1	1	0	0
Nationality/ Race/ Ethnicity	French	6	6	0	0
Nationality/ Race/ Ethnicity	From a London suburb	1	1	0	0

Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Nationality/ Race/ Ethnicity	German	2	2	0	0
Nationality/ Race/ Ethnicity	Hungarian* (also includes Hungarians)	3	3	0	0
Nationality/ Race/ Ethnicity	Kikuyu	1	1	0	0
Nationality/ Race/ Ethnicity	Prussian	1	1	0	0
Nationality/ Race/ Ethnicity	They (in reference to Indian Servants)	1	1	0	0
Nationality/ Race/ Ethnicity	Your country (in reference to Hungary)	1	1	0	0
Relationship Status	Married	12	3	6	3
Relationship Status	Wife	10	0	4	6
Relationship Status	Un-Married	2	0	0	2
Relationship Status	Father	5	0	1	4
Relationship Status	Family	5	0	4	1
Relationship Status	Brother	5	0	1	4
Relationship Status	Children	3	0	1	2
Relationship Status	Son	2	0	1	1
Relationship Status	Papa	1	0	1	0
Religious Background	Churchman	3	1	1	1

Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Religious Background	Church of England	2	0	0	2
Religious Background	Secret Anglo-Catholic	1	1	0	0
Religious Background	Religion	1	0	0	1
	Totals	94	41	22	32

Table 3.2 gives a quantitative overview of the semantic category, stating the frequency of word/phrase use within the ninety-four concordance lines. The words highlighted in bold have the first, second, third, and fourth highest frequencies of use for the entire category. The total frequency of word use is displayed (in red) at the bottom of the table.

The data displayed within table 3.2 suggests that members of the employing classes placed more importance upon the status and background of a servant than their employees. In comparison to the forty-one references made by their employers, servants only made thirty-two direct references to traits associated with this semantic category, whilst senior servants acting on behalf of the employing classes only made twenty-two references. Not only was there a disparity between the overall frequency rates of this semantic category, but there was also a difference between the specific attributes and identifying factors focused on within each of the three corpora. This suggests that employers, senior servants and prospective employees all held very different notions as to how status and background played a role within the concept of the '(un)ideal servant'.

According to table 3.2, nationality and ethnicity seem to have been regarded as an especially important feature of an employee's identity by the members of the employing classes. The considerable number of references made to the nationality/ethnicity of employees within the corpora seems to corroborate the findings of studies conducted by historians such as Branch and Wooten, who have asserted that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries 'at all times the racial/ethnic identity of the domestic servant played a critical role.'²⁵¹ The concept of eugenics held a great deal of weight at this time, and, when reflecting on the practice of domestic service in the United States of America, Branch and Wooten claim that employers

²⁵¹ Branch & Wooten, 'Suited for Service', p.169.

‘believed that black women were uniquely endowed with the deference and nurturance required [for service].’²⁵² However, whilst Branch and Wooten’s research has shown that Americans regarded servants of colour as more suited to domestic employment than their Caucasian counterparts, some British employers seemingly did not hold the same view, as a letter written by the 9th Duke’s eldest daughter shows. After recently moving to the United States of America and setting up home there, Lady Maud Cavendish wrote to her mother, Duchess Evelyn, about her new domestic situation and made the following observation: ‘These darkies always get chills in their insides as soon as it starts freezing hard - it makes them a little unreliable!’²⁵³ Maud’s negative perception of servants of colour seems diametrically opposed to the way in which they were ‘idealised’ by American employers. Nevertheless, like the sources Branch and Wooten have examined, in this comment we can observe Maud basing her ideas of suitability for service purely around race/ethnicity. As Elizabeth O’Leary argued in her book, *From Morning to Night: Domestic Service in Maymont House and the Gilded Age South*, both views had the effect of ‘reinforc[ing] social distance and underscore[ing] notions of superiority and subordination between employers and [certain groups of] domestic workers.’²⁵⁴

By the 1860s, the concept of ‘national character’, which had been developed earlier by the Scottish philosopher David Hume in the eighteenth century, was also being linked to the discourse on eugenics. Scholar Susan N. Bayley has described ‘national character’ as the theory that each nation has a set of ‘common interests, attitudes and preferences’.²⁵⁵ Just as social commentators drew upon the theory of eugenics to idealise certain racial and ethnic groups, they also reasoned that an individual of one nationality would be better suited to carrying out

²⁵² Ibid, p.186.

²⁵³ DC, N9 8094, Letter from Lady Maud Cavendish to Evelyn, Duchess of Devonshire.

²⁵⁴ Elizabeth O’Leary, *From Morning to Night: Domestic Service in Maymont House and the Gilded Age South* (2003), as quoted in Branch & Wooten, ‘Suited for Service’, p.185.

²⁵⁵ Bayley, ‘The English Miss, German Fräulein and French Mademoiselle’, p.165.

a certain role than another. For example, France had a reputation for producing excellent chefs during the early twentieth century; a stereotype which arguably still exists today.²⁵⁶ Although the meaning is not explicit, it is possible that Lady Maud Cavendish's description of Chatsworth chef, Monsieur Dupuis, as 'a wonderful French chef', spoke to this 'national character' stereotype.²⁵⁷

Nevertheless, whilst scholars like Branch, Wooten and Bayley have argued that ideals relating to eugenics and 'national character' were considered increasingly important within the domestic service sector during the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries, they do not seem to have been concepts which were held in particularly high esteem by the majority of the Chatsworth estate community. Two further sources explicitly discussed how an individual's country of origin could make them more or less suited to service. Yet, they focused, not on the concept of eugenics, but on the practical skills a foreign servant could possess i.e. the ability to speak another language. In a letter written by Duchess Evelyn, wife to the 9th Duke of Devonshire, which functioned as a 'character', or reference, employee Fraulein Fischer was described as a German governess who is leaving her employment through no fault of her own. Rather, within the document, the Duchess emphasised the fact that: 'F. Fischer is leaving because I now require a *French* governess.'²⁵⁸ A concordance line found within the memoirs of the Duchess' eldest daughter, Lady Maud, stated that: 'Our first governess was an old French lady, who had taught one of my aunts. My brother and I spoke some French before we could read... We had two governesses, generally one French and one German.'²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ Gerard, *Country House Life* p.169.

²⁵⁷ DC, DF28/1/4, Unpublished Memoirs of Lady Maud Baillie (Cavendish), [Undated].

²⁵⁸ DC, AA22 12225, Character reference for F. Fischer written by Duchess Evelyn.

²⁵⁹ DC, DF28/1/4, Unpublished Memoirs of Lady Maud Baillie (Cavendish), [Undated].

When studied together, these two documents suggest that the nationality of a governess did indeed contribute to their perceived suitability for the role, but only in a practical sense. For the Cavendish family, it seems that French and German governesses were thought to be the ‘ideal’ for providing instruction in foreign languages.

Yet another factor to consider is that more documentation would have been produced in reference to individuals, like the governesses and the chef, who occupied prominent roles within the estate community hierarchy. In the sub-section relating to nationality and ethnicity, after the word ‘French’, the word ‘Hungarian’ appeared most frequently within the corpus material. In the late 1940s, the 10th Duke of Devonshire and his wife hired two Hungarian sisters to jointly share the role of Housekeeper at Chatsworth. This is why this particular ‘communicative snapshot’ contained such a high number of references to individuals from these specific countries of origin. Such findings indicate that quantitative approaches can only allow for a limited understanding of the material. Sometimes, as in this instance, there are highly specific reasons why terms enjoy high frequency rates. This does not mean that the finding is generalisable to the whole corpus. Rather, it is a ‘statistical abstraction’ which needs to be contextualised in order that it be understood properly.²⁶⁰

As table 3.2 demonstrates, neither the senior nor the lower ranking-servants mentioned their/another’s nationality, race, or ethnicity at all within their textual accounts. It is my contention that, in order to negotiate the landscape of domestic employment and further their career, servants responded to the demands of the employing classes. They did so by altering the manner in which they presented themselves, and manipulating their ‘image’. The choice not to state their nationality, race, or ethnicity, suggests that lower-ranking servants

²⁶⁰ For discussions on ‘Statistical Abstraction’ see Silver, *The Signal and The Noise*, p.82.

working/hoping to work at Chatsworth, did not consider this aspect of their identity to be especially important for the role they would be undertaking, although, another possibility is that all of the servants who contributed to the corpus were white and English. In this situation, unless stated otherwise, the implicit assumption could be made that they were part of the majority national, racial, and ethnic group present on the estate. Amongst the words and phrases with the lowest frequency rates within this sub-category of the master's corpus, were those which referred to servants of English origin. The low frequency rates of these descriptive terms contrast greatly to the higher rates associated with terms used in relation to servants of other nationalities. It seems as though the concept of 'foreignness' may have been used by employers as a distinguishing marker and, in comparison, English servants belong to an 'unmarked category'. This supports the theory that all domestic employees were assumed to be English unless stated otherwise.

In conclusion, although in some instances within this corpus, certain national or racial groups were explicitly labelled as more or less ideal employees based on this aspect of their identity, this was not true for the majority of servants mentioned. Nevertheless, many of those who were described as foreign, or as belonging to a particular race or ethnicity, seem to have been styled in this manner in an effort to distinguish them from the rest of the estate community. Although not as overt as the former, this distinction still served to reinforce differences between certain groups of people living and working on the estate.

Another word which enjoyed especially high frequency rates within masters' corpus was the adjective 'poor'. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, 'poor' is derived from the French 'pover', and it was originally used in 1150 in order to describe those in need, lacking

means and afflicted by poverty.²⁶¹ However, when examining the KWIC concordance lines for this word, it becomes apparent that within this corpus it was only once used in direct reference to financial insolvency. This usage actually occurred within a letter found in the senior servants' corpus, written to the 9th Duke of Devonshire by J.P. Cockerell, Agent for the Chatsworth Estate. Within the text, Cockerell asked the Duke whether the traditional 'bread and beef dole' should be given out to estate employees at Christmas. He stated: 'I grant that it may be an extravagance, but on the other hand, there will be a great many poor people who will have to do without meat this Christmas, as they will not be able to afford to buy it.'²⁶² Cockerell's letter suggested that certain employees deserved the Duke's sympathy, and by extension his benevolence, because of their penury.

Whilst other uses of the word 'poor' within the source material did not make explicit references to financial concerns, the employees described in this manner are still depicted as being deserving of sympathy. According to the *OED*, the first recorded use of the word 'poor' in order to describe an individual who provokes sympathy and compassion in others was in the year 1300.²⁶³ In this instance, we can see the effects of 'semantic bleaching'. This is a process whereby a word is extensively used in a specific, subjective context. The word subsequently becomes divorced from its original meaning and evolves into an expression of the speaker's attitude. Nonetheless, perhaps within the corpora, reference to economic status was implicit when using the adjective 'poor'. The servants who were described in this way would have been financially dependent on their masters, and in turn, employers would have had a 'duty of care' towards their employees. This is a concept which will be explored in more detail later on within

²⁶¹ 'poor, adj. and n.1', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2017.

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/147749?rskey=zVLg2y&result=2> [accessed March 27, 2017].

²⁶² DC, S10 10,037, Letter from J.P. Cockerell to Victor Cavendish.

²⁶³ poor, adj. and n.1', *OED Online*.

the third chapter of this thesis. However, it is necessary to mention this aspect of master-servant relations briefly with regards to the adjective ‘poor’, as, when the word ‘poor’ was used within the corpus, it appears to have signalled that sympathy was deserved, and this in turn, brought into play the notions of paternalism and benevolence. Consequently, it seems that the ‘ideal servant’ was one who had demonstrated that he was deserving of his master’s sympathy/benevolence. Yet, the use of this adjective within the source material is also indicative of how the Cavendish family saw themselves in relation to the notion of the ‘ideal master’. In using the word ‘poor’, they were signalling their care for their subordinates. As was noted within the introduction to this study, the two models were intrinsically linked. An example of how a good servant, deserving of sympathy, could call into action a master’s sense of duty and benevolence, can be found in the following letter written by the Countess of Ellesmere to Duchess Evelyn about an elderly governess she was seeking to replace with a younger teacher:

Alice is only 11 years old I thought it wd. really be cruel not to have someone younger... [but] I am very sorry for poor Miss Walton as I fear she has very little money & nowhere (at present) to go... we have decided nothing yet- I have told Miss Walton/ she need not worry or hurry away the end of July if nothing turns up.²⁶⁴

Whilst significantly more references were made to the status and background of a servant within the masters’ corpus, the words with the highest occurring frequencies overall in this semantic category were found in the lower- and senior-ranking servants’ corpora. They related to the relationship/familial status of male servants. The word ‘married’ enjoyed a frequency rate of 12, and ‘wife’, a frequency rate of 10. It is difficult to ascertain exactly why the marital status of an individual is mentioned so frequently within the source material. Unpublished

²⁶⁴ DC, DF33/8, Letter from Violet Egerton, Countess of Ellesmere, to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, Re. Governesses, 03.04.1935.

research, undertaken by PhD candidate Lauren Butler into the Chatsworth estate community during the nineteenth century, shows how, over the course of the period, the ratio of married to unmarried male tenants living in the estate villages increased.²⁶⁵ Drawing upon census material and estate terriers, Butler's research also indicates that married male tenants tended to remain living and working on the estate for longer. Perhaps, in referencing marital status, individuals were alluding to concepts such as long service, stability and reliability.

It is easier to ascertain why references to other, male, familial relations occurred so highly within the corpora, as the words 'brother', 'family', 'father' all appeared five times within the corpus. The previous chapter of this thesis considered how often men from one family would enter the same profession, such as gardening, or working in the building yard. The words 'brother' and 'father' were both used within the senior- and lower-ranking servants' corpora to imply suitability for service by virtue of an individual's familial connection. For example, in a character reference written for a gardener, Chief Agent to the Duke of Devonshire, Roland Burke claimed: 'Bond comes of a particularly good gardening family. I believe his father was an exceptionally good man'.²⁶⁶ In another letter, written by a man applying for the post of House Steward, the applicant stated 'Pardon the liberty I am taking in writing to you. I have heard through my brother who is butler to W. Ormsly Gore Esqr. That you are in want of a house steward for the Duke of Devonshire.'²⁶⁷ Conversely, the word 'papa' was used in a letter written by a senior servant to differentiate a son applying for a post in the agent's office at Chatsworth from his seemingly unideal father: 'David Fullerton is a very nice lad, no trace of papa & he hates the sight of him!'²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ Lauren Butler, 'Power at the Power House: Agency, Authority and Power at Chatsworth 1811-1877' (unpublished thesis draft, 2019).

²⁶⁶ DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 4/140, letter 4, 1930.

²⁶⁷ DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 108/1, letter 21, 1921.

²⁶⁸ DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, [Uncatalogued] Letter from M. Ed. Kirk to U. R. Burke, [Undated].

In conclusion, within this corpus, not only did members of the employing classes place much more emphasis upon the status and background of employees than either senior- or lower-ranking servants, but they also had different opinions on which were the most important factors at play. In some instances, masters preferred servants of particular national, ethnic or racial background, although for the most part, they used these aspects of an employee's identity to differentiate them from the rest of the workforce. Looking at how the word 'poor' occurs within the masters' corpus, the most important factor which could suggest an individual's suitability for service was someone who had somehow demonstrated that he was deserving of his master's sympathy/benevolence. Senior and lower-ranking servants had a very different concept of how the status and background of an individual could correspond with the concept of the 'ideal' servant. They placed importance upon an employee's familial relationships. Married male servants were favoured, perhaps because their marital status indicated long-service, reliability and stability. Also favoured were male servants whose relations had undertaken similar positions and performed well, as this suggested that perhaps their relations would also prove to be 'ideal' servants.

3.4 Semantic Category 2: Physical Characteristics

With the aid of *Antconc*, I was able to identify forty-four different words and phrases, appearing in one-hundred and thirty-seven concordance lines within the corpora, which referred to the physical characteristics of a servant. Like the semantic category corresponding to background and status, the key linguistic elements which determined assignment to this particular category could be demarcated even further. The 'keywords' and phrases contained within the concordance lines can be classified as belonging to one of three sub-categories, namely:

appearance; strength and prowess; and health and well-being. Figure 3.2 shows the apparent schema of how a servant’s physical characteristics are discussed within the corpus.

Figure 3.2: Schema for the conceptualisation of a servant’s physical characteristics

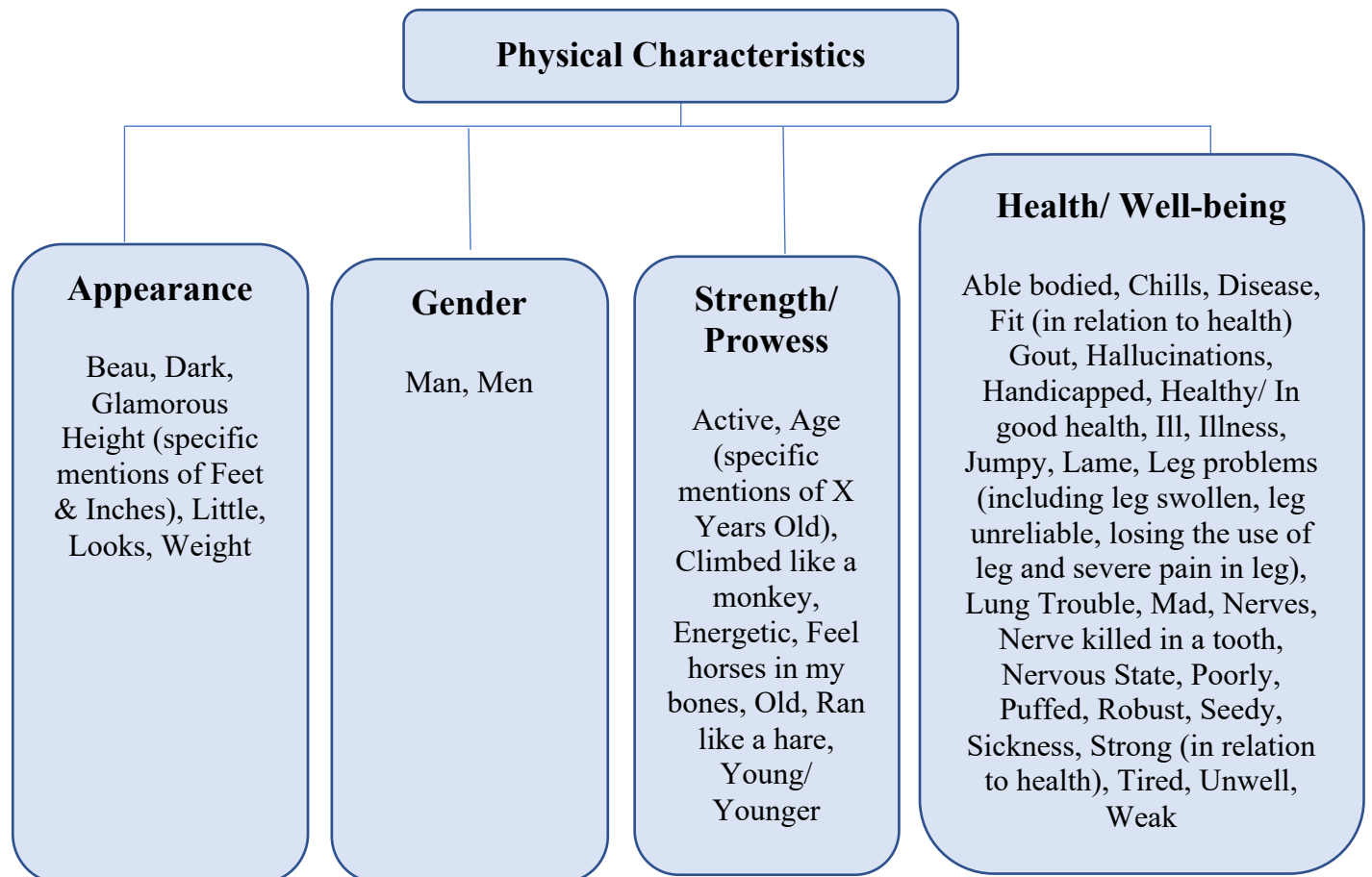


Table 3.3: Quantitative Overview for the Semantic Category relating to Physical Characteristics

Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Appearance	Beau	1	1	0	0
Appearance	Dark	1	0	0	1
Appearance	Glamorous	1	1	0	0
Appearance	Height* (specific mentions of Feet & Inches)	15	2	2	11
Appearance	Little	5	5	0	0
Appearance	Looks	4	3	1	0
Appearance	Weight	2	1	1	0
Gender	Man	10	0	10	0
Gender	Men	6	0	5	1
Strength/ Prowess	Active	3	1	0	2
Strength/ Prowess	Age* (specific mentions of years/yrs)	24	0	7	17
Strength/ Prowess	Climbed like a monkey	1	1	0	0
Strength/ Prowess	Energetic	1	1	0	0
Strength/ Prowess	Feel horses in my bones	1	0	0	1
Strength/ Prowess	Ran like a hare	1	1	0	0

Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Strength/ Prowess	Young/Younger	5	1	4	0
Strength/ Prowess	Old/Older	8	6	1	1
Health/ Well-being	Able bodied	1	0	1	0
Health/ Well-being	Chills	1	1	0	0
Health/ Well-being	Disease	1	0	0	1
Health/ Well-being	Fit	2	0	2	0
Health/ Well-being	Gout	2	2	0	0
Health/ Well-being	Hallucinations	1	1	0	0
Health/ Well-being	Handicapped	1	0	0	1
Health/ Well-being	Healthy/In Good Health	2	0	1	1
Health/ Well-being	Ill	5	4	1	0
Health/ Well-being	Illness	4	0	3	1
Health/ Well-being	Jumpy	1	1	0	0
Health/ Well-being	Lame	1	1	0	0
Health/ Well-being	Leg Problems	3	1	0	2
Health/ Well-being	Lung Trouble	1	0	1	0
Health/ Well-being	Mad	2	2	0	0
Health/ Well-being	Nerves	2	2	0	0
Health/ Well-being	Nerves killed in a tooth	1	1	0	0

Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Health/ Well-being	Nervous Breakdown/ In a Nervous State	2	1	1	0
Health/ Well-being	Poorly	1	0	0	1
Health/ Well-being	Puffed (breathing)	1	1	0	0
Health/ Well-being	Robust	1	1	0	0
Health/ Well-being	Seedy	2	2	0	0
Health/ Well-being	Sick/Sickness	2	0	0	2
Health/ Well-being	Strong	5	0	3	2
Health/ Well-being	Tired	1	1	0	0
Health/ Well-being	Unwell	1	0	1	0
Health/ Well-being	Weak	1	1	0	0
	Totals	137	47	45	45

Table 3.3 gives a quantitative overview of the semantic category, stating the frequency of word/phrase use within the one-hundred and thirty-seven concordance lines. The words highlighted in bold have the first and second highest frequencies of use for the entire category. The total frequency of word use for this semantic category is displayed (in red) at the bottom of the table.

Unlike the data relating to the previous semantic category, the figures displayed within table 3.3 seem to indicate more parity between the views of employers, senior servants and domestic workers. Of the one hundred and thirty-seven references to physical characteristics found within corpus, forty-seven were made by members of the employing classes, forty-five by senior servants, and forty-five by the employees. However, as in the previous semantic category, for the most part, there existed a clear difference between the specific attributes and identifying factors focused on within each of the three corpora. Additionally, where there was agreement between the three parties, there was dissimilarity in the manner in which they discuss physical characteristics. Whilst references made by servants tended to be extremely specific, those made by members of the employing classes were vaguer and more impressionistic. The references made by senior servants acting on behalf of the employing classes seemed to strike a balance between the two. This group made explicit statements in relation to certain attributes whilst being more descriptive in reference to others. It is the disparity between the three corpuses which will provide the main focus for this section of the study.

Seventeen references were made to age within the servant's corpus. This constituted the highest occurring frequency rate overall for this semantic category. All of these references were found within job applications and, in all cases, applicants expressly stated how many years old they

were. For example, within an application for the position of House Steward, candidate Arthur Bright noted: ‘Sir. I have very good references & thoroughly understand the working of a large establishment, age 36 years.’²⁶⁹ It seems that alongside experience, potential employees felt age to be a key factor contributing to their suitability for a particular role.

It appears that employers too felt that age was connected to the concept of the ‘ideal’ servant. In a letter to her husband, the 9th Duke of Devonshire, Duchess Evelyn wrote: ‘F. Drung is ill & old & tired & wants to retire as soon as he can get George back. Of course G can’t be head agent over the others yet, but he thinks he could take on the whole job in a few years.’²⁷⁰ The language used by the Duchess here suggests that Drung’s old age (in conjunction with his ill health) makes him unsuitable for the role of Head Agent. Conversely, another candidate, named George, was deemed too young for the position, although Evelyn Cavendish did note that he felt could assume the role in ‘a few years’. Another way of reading this statement is to consider that it was not just George’s young age which was in question, but his levels of experience. In this regard, we can identify similarities between the letter written by Duchess Evelyn and that written by Arthur Bright in application for the post of House Steward. Bright listed his age alongside information regarding his previous professional experience, which could imply a connection between the two. As this study has already argued, all aspects of a servant’s identity operated in unison, rather than autonomously, to affect the degree to which a domestic employee could be considered ‘(un)ideal’. As factors which both relate to temporal matters, ‘age’ and ‘experience’ could be perceived to have a symbiotic connection, and indeed, for both masters and servants, it seems that age was considered to be an indication of prior experience. This was certainly an important factor when considering an individual’s suitability for a

²⁶⁹ DC, Z7 11238, Letter from Arthur Bright to Mr Manners-Sutton, 1911.

²⁷⁰ DC, S2 9840 Letter from Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 06.01.1919.

particular role, and the fourth section of this study will explore in more detail how skill-set and experience corresponded to the notion of the '(un)ideal' servant.

The above examples suggest that there were some similarities between the ways in which masters and servants understood age in relation to suitability for service. Nevertheless, these examples are also good indications of the contrasting manners in which both groups discussed physical attributes. Whilst candidates for domestic situations expressly stated their age in years, members of the employing classes instead made use of adjectives such as 'old' and 'young'. Individuals such as the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, who, prior to the First World War employed 305 individuals on their Chatsworth Estate alone, were unlikely to know the exact ages of all of their staff.²⁷¹ However, the more descriptive approach adopted by members of the employing classes appears to have been motivated by other reasons in addition to vagueness and equivocation. In the previously quoted letter written by the Duchess of Devonshire, it is possible to observe the age of an employee being linked not only to their experience, but also to their physical ability to carry out a job. F. Drung is adversely described as being 'ill & *old* & tired'.²⁷² A further example of the word 'old' being used in this manner can be found in another letter written by the Duchess to her husband shortly after the close of the First World War. The previous chapter of this study investigated the impact of the conflict on the Gardens department at Chatsworth. It drew attention to the fact that, with a great number of men leaving their posts to enlist in the war, the shortfall in labour was made up by retired former gardeners who were considerably older than the pre-war staff. In the note written to her husband, Duchess Evelyn discussed these events, describing these men as 'employees who were too old to go to

²⁷¹ DC, FM/4 List of Agents, Officials and Others, 1912.

²⁷² DC, S2 9840, Letter from Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire.

the war'.²⁷³ Being deemed physically unfit for active service by virtue of their mature age would have already cast aspersions on the health and physical prowess of these employees. However, the negative connotations attached to old age were even more apparent later on within the letter, when the Duchess discussed the low performance levels of these individuals, and intimated that they are no longer in a position to 'earn' their wages: 'I had just heard from Mr. C that the garden still costs you £2,000 net because you were keeping on these old men at 24/- instead of pensioning them.'²⁷⁴ 'If you pensioned all these men', she advises, 'it would certainly be cheaper.'²⁷⁵ At this time, the Cavendish estates were in a very precarious financial position as a direct consequence of the war, and the Duke was negotiating the sale of his London residence, Devonshire house. Thus, the wages paid out to employees, and their performance levels, were considered to be especially important factors. Health and physical prowess could clearly affect performance levels, and old age was seen to be an indication of infirmity.

In both of the aforementioned examples taken from the masters' corpus, the word 'old' used in connection with domestic employees appears to carry solely negative connotations. Nevertheless, there are examples of other more positive uses of the adjective. One example, which appeared in a letter written by the 9th Duke of Devonshire to Duchess Evelyn, referred to the death of Mr. Manners Sutton, who held the dual role of Comptroller and Private Secretary to the Duke. Victor Cavendish lamented it is really dreadful about poor *old* Sutton.'²⁷⁶ One possible reading of the use of 'old' here, is that it was meant to signify 'late'. According to the *OED*, the word 'old' has been used in this manner since the year 1150. Yet, whilst we can

²⁷³ DC, S2 9845 Letter from Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 28.01.1919.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ DC, D4 1969, Letter from Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, 07.03.1916.

surmise from this extract that the recently departed Sutton was elderly and in an ill-state of health, it should be noted that no misgivings were expressed about his suitability for the role he occupied. Rather, the use of the word ‘poor’ alongside ‘old’ appears to suggest that the Duke felt compassion for Sutton, which was based upon a degree of affection and a level of familiarity. More evidence supporting this interpretation of the Duke’s use of language can be found later on in the letter. Victor Cavendish declared: ‘We shall all miss him very much. He had quite got to be one of the family.’²⁷⁷ Rather than being used to express the fact that Sutton has departed, it seems that in this letter ‘old’ is being used to signify affection. According to the *OED*, the first recorded use of the word ‘old’ in order to articulate fondness or familiarity was in 1616, when it appeared in William Shakespeare’s *Taming of The Shrew* (‘What happie gale Blowes you to Padua heere, from old Verona?’)²⁷⁸ Once again, we are able to observe the effects of ‘semantic bleaching’, the process by which the original meaning of a word becomes distorted due to incorrect usage.

The manner in which the age of an employee was discussed in the senior servants’ corpus strikes a balance between the two other corpora. In 7 instances, the age of a servant was exactly stated in years. These statements were all found within character references, written by Roland Burke and other senior servants on behalf of lower-ranking servants. The chief agent at Chatsworth was in charge of the estate office which held the employment records of each individual living and working on the estate. As such, Roland Burke would have had this information to hand, and he would have been in a better position to discuss such details with prospective employers than either the Duke or Duchess. Yet, it is interesting that he should

²⁷⁷ DC, D4 1969, Letter from Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, 07.03.1916.

²⁷⁸ "old, adj.", *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2017, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/130955> [accessed April 19, 2017].

have adopted such a similar style to the lower-ranking employees in their job applications. Perhaps, by repeating their exact age in a character reference, Burke was attempting to corroborate the information they had imparted.

In other documents, Burke discussed the age of employees in a more impressionistic manner, using words like ‘young’ and ‘old’. Such language can be found in less official letters written either to other senior servants or to members of the employing classes. For example, in a letter to Duchess Evelyn, Burke wrote about the staffing situation at Bolton Abbey, another property owned by the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire in which the Duke’s cousin was residing at the time. He described the domestic arrangement in the following manner: ‘At Bolton there is Mrs Young [the housekeeper] and 2 young girls – as it was not necessary to send any further housemaid for Francis Egerton & his bride.’²⁷⁹

Regardless of the manner in which they described the age of a domestic servant, evidently the senior servants featured within this corpus also felt like this was a significant aspect of an employee’s identity, and that it had an effect on the degree to which he/she could be considered an ‘ideal’ servant. Yet, the multiple techniques used to discuss the age of domestic workers within this ‘communicative snapshot’ proves the necessity of conducting a close reading of the source material, and of paying attention to the framework of CDA. Depending on the situation, the maturity of an individual could be seen to contribute to their perceived suitability for service. In other scenarios, old age could be regarded as an indication of poor performance levels. In relation to Burke and the other senior servants, the kind of language utilised in order to describe the age of a lower-ranking servant could also provide information as to the identity they held within the Chatsworth estate community. It seems that when describing age, senior

²⁷⁹ DC, U. R. Burke’s Chief Agent’s Papers, 108/1, letter 1, 1921.

servants mirrored either the kind of language used by their correspondents, or the kind of language found within the documents they were following up on, such as the job applications he was supporting. The fourth chapter of this thesis will explore such techniques in greater detail. It will investigate how Roland Burke and another senior servant, Elsie Saunders constructed their letters in order to perform the role of ‘mediator’ between different members of the Chatsworth estate community.

The set of words with the second largest frequency rates for this semantic category were those which refer to height. Although such discussions were not prevalent in the senior servants’ corpus, both masters and lower-ranking servants seem to have considered height to be an important factor. Yet, once again, it is possible to observe a clear difference in the language used between the two corpora. Lower-ranking servants explicitly declared their height in feet and inches, whereas members of the employing classes used adjectives such as ‘little’ to discuss such notions. Like the statements made about their age, disclosures made by domestic employees about their height appeared exclusively within job applications. Immediately after listing his professional experience and his age, the next statement made by Arthur Bright in his application for the post of House Steward relates to his stature. The letter read: ‘I have very good references & thoroughly understand the working of a large establishment age 36 years. Height 5ft 11in.’²⁸⁰ There has been some work conducted by scholars into the importance placed upon the physical appearance of a domestic employee, and in particular, their height, by employers during the first half of the twentieth century. For example, in *Life Below Stairs in the Twentieth Century*, Pamela Horn argued that employers wanted male servants to look prestigious when dressed up in livery, and that this was one reason for which special attention

²⁸⁰ DC, Z7 11238, Letter from Arthur Bright, 07.12.1910.

was paid to the height of a candidate.²⁸¹ Support for this statement can be found within the published memoirs of Butler Eric Horne, who explained that he could ‘never hope to attain the very top of the tree’ and serve as a Butler within a high profile establishment because he was ‘three inches short of six feet’.²⁸² It seems that even amongst female employees, stature was also considered an important factor in the ‘ideal’ servant. On an application submitted for the role House Keeper at Compton Place, the Sussex household owned by the 9th Duke of Devonshire, Duchess Evelyn’s Private Secretary Elsie Saunders annotated the word ‘height’.²⁸³ Kate Perry, the applicant, had not originally mentioned her height. Presumably, the annotation was made either because the Duchess wanted to ascertain the stature of the candidate, or because Elsie Saunders assumed that this detail was important. The letter sent by Saunders in response to this application has not been preserved within the archives, but we can infer that she did question Kate Perry about her height, because in the applicant’s second letter Perry expressly states: ‘Height 5ft 8in’.²⁸⁴ In *Life Below Stairs*, Pamela Horn detailed the struggles of a girl who was unable to rise above the position of House-Parlourmaid because she wasn’t tall enough for the ceremonial duties which the role entailed.²⁸⁵

It is apparent that, in relation to domestic servants, a tall stature was considered desirable by employers. This explains why applicants listed their height alongside their other attributes. However, when turning attention to the adjective ‘little’, which frequently appears within the masters’ corpus, it is evident that rather than being used in a negative manner, i.e. as a contrast to the tall stature which was generally preferred, the concept of ‘height’ is being used in quite a different way. Within documents produced by members of the Cavendish family, ‘little’ often

²⁸¹ Horn, *Life Below Stairs*, p.7.

²⁸² Ibid; see also E. Horne, *What the Butler Winked At*, (Yardley, Pennsylvania, 2011) p.221.

²⁸³ DC, DF 15/3/2/3/3, Letter from Kate Perry to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, 23.06.1911.

²⁸⁴ DC, Ibid; Letter from Kate Perry to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, 04.07.1911.

²⁸⁵ Horn, *Life Below Stairs*, p.7.

co-occurred with the word ‘poor’, and it is usually employed by masters when expressing paternalistic concerns. For example, in a letter concerning a Cook who was anxious about difficulties in obtaining character reference, Duchess Evelyn stated ‘the poor little man is rather upset’.²⁸⁶ In this sense, ‘little’ seemed to signify the inferior status of the cook, and it is apparent that the Duchess felt some sympathy towards him. According to the *OED*, ‘little’ can be used as an adjective in order to describe someone ‘not having wealth, status, or influence; undistinguished and ordinary, poor’, and even more significantly, it can be used to refer to subordinate status of people employed by private individuals.²⁸⁷ Examples given for the latter definition refer to tradespeople (‘Ethel’s Chinese silk had been made up hastily by an obliging little dressmaker’), yet, it is evident that ‘little’ could also be employed in this manner when referring to domestic workers.²⁸⁸ This is yet another example of ‘semantic bleaching’. When taking these definitions into account, it seems unsurprising that ‘poor’ and ‘little’ should frequently co-occur together. As in the previous semantic category, the use of language within the master’s corpus appears to suggest that the ‘ideal’ servant was one of an inferior status who, consequently, inspired feelings of sympathy and benevolence. As both ‘poor’ and ‘little’ were employed in a manner which implies paternalistic concerns on the part of the employer, we can see even more evidence that an investigation into the concept of the ideal servant can also reveal details about how members of the employing classes saw themselves.

According to the *OED*, the word ‘little’ can also be used to describe someone who is small, unassuming, and ‘humble’; in other words, an individual who is aware of their own inferiority.²⁸⁹ In another letter, which constituted a reference for a former Head House Maid

²⁸⁶ DC, C17 1716 Letter from Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Mr. Manners Sutton, Comptroller and Private Secretary to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 27.05.1910.

²⁸⁷ "little, adj., pron., and n., and adv.", *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2017, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/109250?rskey=6gDKsH&result=1> [accessed April 20, 2017].

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

applying for the post of House Keeper to the Duchess of Devonshire, an acquaintance of the Cavendish family, Lady Digby, declared that the applicant is ‘a nice quiet little woman.’²⁹⁰ The fact that ‘little’ co-occurred with adjectives ‘nice’ and ‘quiet’ within this sentence suggests that Lady Digby was drawing on this sense of meaning. This definition implies that being of an inferior socio-economic class was not enough to inspire the sympathy and benevolence of employers. Rather, the ‘ideal’ servant should also act in a manner befitting their subordinate status.

3.5 Semantic Category 3: Behavioural Traits and Personality

A search completed with the aid of *Antconc* identified eighty-six different words and phrases in reference to the behavioural traits and personality of servants which appeared in one-hundred and sixty-one concordance lines in the corpora. This category is far easier to divide into sub-categories than the other three semantic groups, as the concordances lend themselves to being split into two groups: a list of words and phrases used to describe negative qualities and a list of words and phrases used to describe positive qualities. Figure 3.3 demonstrates how the behavioural traits and personalities of servants were discussed within the overall corpus.

²⁹⁰ DC, DF 15/3/2/3/3, Letter from Beryl Digby to Duchess Evelyn, 24.06.1911.

Figure 3.3: Schema for the conceptualisation of a servant's behavioural traits and personality

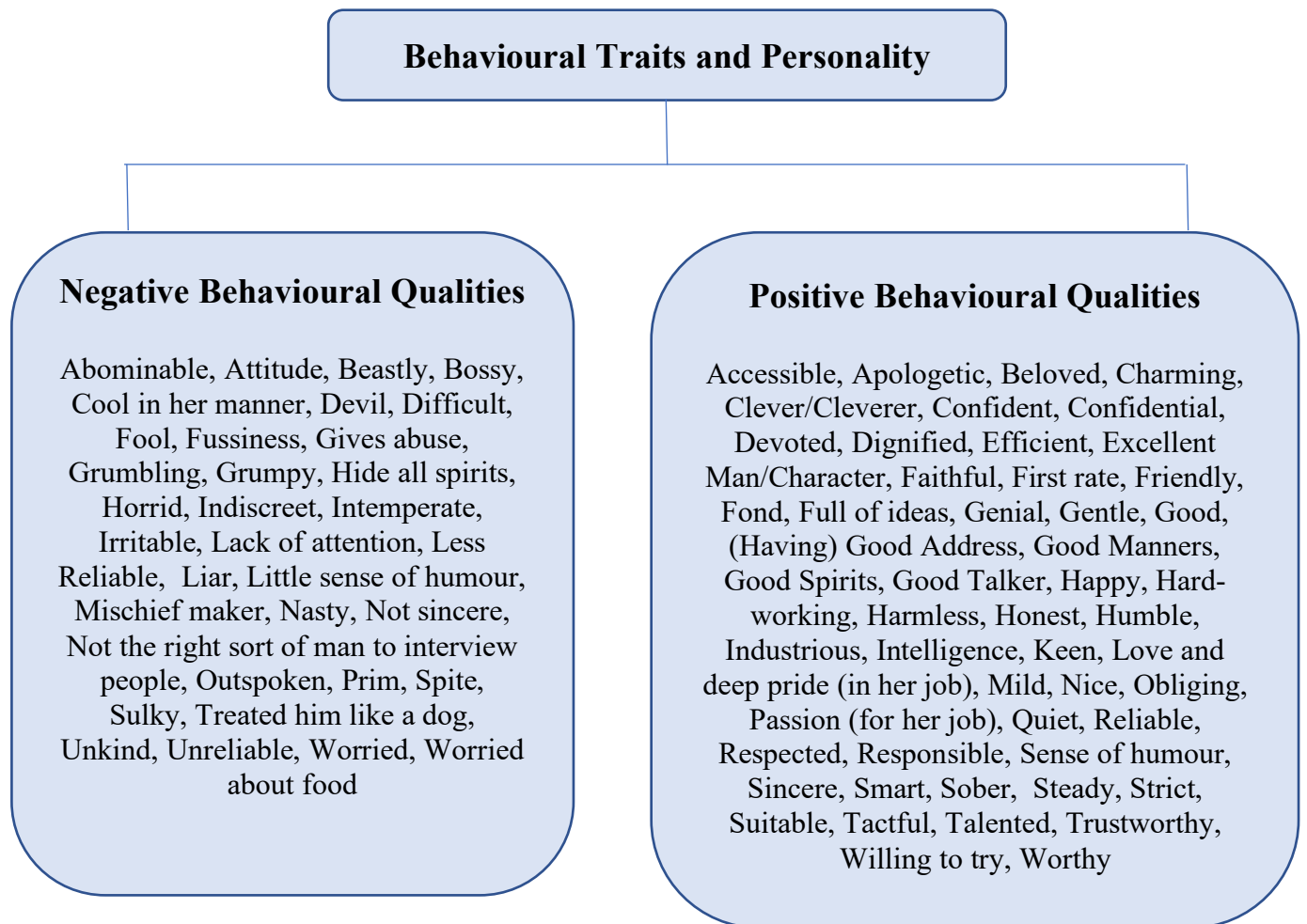


Table 3.4: Quantitative Overview for the Semantic Category relating to Behavioural Traits and Personality

Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Negative Traits	Abominable	1	0	1	0
Negative Traits	Attitude	1	0	1	0
Negative Traits	Beastly	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Bossy	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Cool in her manner	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Devil	2	0	1	1
Negative Traits	Difficult	2	1	1	0
Negative Traits	Fool	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Fussiness	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Gives abuse	1	0	1	0
Negative Traits	Grumbling	2	2	0	0
Negative Traits	Grumpy	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Hide all spirits	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Horrid	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Indiscreet	1	0	0	1
Negative Traits	Intemperate	1	0	1	0

Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Negative Traits	Irritable	1	0	0	1
Negative Traits	Lack of attention	1	0	0	1
Negative Traits	Less reliable	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Little sense of humour	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Mischief maker	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Nasty	2	2	0	0
Negative Traits	Not sincere	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Not the right sort of man to interview people	1	0	1	0
Negative Traits	Outspoken	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Prim	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Spite	1	0	0	1
Negative Traits	Sulky	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Treated him like a dog	3	0	0	3
Negative Traits	Unkind	2	2	0	0
Negative Traits	Unreliable	1	1	0	0
Negative Traits	Worried	1	0	1	0
Negative Traits	Worried about food	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Accessible	1	0	1	0

Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Positive Traits	Apologetic	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Beloved	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Charming	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Clever/Cleverer	2	1	1	0
Positive Traits	Confident	1	0	0	1
Positive Traits	Confidential	1	0	1	0
Positive Traits	Devoted	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Dignified	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Efficient	2	0	1	1
Positive Traits	Excellent man/character	2	0	2	0
Positive Traits	Exceptional	1	0	1	0
Positive Traits	Faithful	1	0	1	0
Positive Traits	First rate	4	0	4	0
Positive Traits	Friendly	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Fond	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Full of ideas	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Genial	1	0	1	0
Positive Traits	Gentle	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Good	12	2	10	0

Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Positive Traits	(Having) Good Address	1	0	1	0
Positive Traits	Good Manners	1	0	1	0
Positive Traits	Good Spirits	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Good Talker	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Happy	2	2	0	0
Positive Traits	Hard-working	9	2	7	0
Positive Traits	Harmless	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Honest	9	1	8	0
Positive Traits	Humble	1	0	0	1
Positive Traits	Industrious	1	0	1	0
Positive Traits	Intelligence	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Keen	2	0	2	0
Positive Traits	Love and deep pride (in her job)	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Mild	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Nice* (including nicest)	12	7	5	0
Positive Traits	Obliging	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Passion (for her job)	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Quiet	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Reliable	4	3	1	0

Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Positive Traits	Respected	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Responsible	1	0	1	0
Positive Traits	Sense of humour	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Sincere	2	2	0	0
Positive Traits	Smart	1	0	0	1
Positive Traits	Sober	7	1	6	0
Positive Traits	Steady	2	0	2	0
Positive Traits	Strict	2	2	0	0
Positive Traits	Suitable	2	0	2	0
Positive Traits	Tactful	3	2	1	0
Positive Traits	Talented	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Trustworthy	8	0	7	1
Positive Traits	Willing to try	1	1	0	0
Positive Traits	Worthy	1	0	0	1
	Totals	160	70	76	14

Table 3.4 gives a quantitative overview of the semantic category, stating the frequency of word/phrase use within the one-hundred and sixty-one concordance lines identified. The words highlighted in bold have the first and second highest frequencies of use for the entire category. The total frequency of word use for this semantic category is displayed at the bottom of the table. From these figures, it can be observed that this is the semantic category with the most disparity between the three corpora, with only fourteen references to behavioural traits found within the lower-ranking servants' corpus as opposed to seventy-one words and phrases found in the masters' corpus, and seventy-six found in the senior-servants corpus.

One of the two most popular terms from this semantic category was the word 'nice', with an overall frequency rate of 12. Although it was not found at all in the lower-ranking servants' corpus, it seems that there was some similarity in the degree to which this personality trait was valued by both the masters and the senior servants, as it appeared seven times in the corpus relating to the former group, and five times in the corpus relating to the latter group.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, the adjective 'nice' was used in a variety of ways during the first half of the twentieth century. In the first instance, it was perhaps most frequently used to indicate that a person was 'pleasant in manner, agreeable, good-natured; attractive.' The following illustration of this usage is given by the *OED*: 'The directress is a very nice french [sic] woman.'²⁹¹ There are numerous instances of the word 'nice' being used in this manner within the corpora. This study has already considered a letter written by Lady Digby in reference to the previous semantic category, in which she described a prospective housekeeper as 'a nice quiet little woman'.²⁹² Another example from the masters' corpus can

²⁹¹ K. Mansfield, 1920, quoted in "nice, adj. and adv." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, July 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/126732, [Accessed 3 December 2018].

²⁹² DC, DF 15/3/2/3/3, Letter from Beryl Digby to Duchess Evelyn, 24.06.1911.

be found in a letter written by Lord Richard Cavendish to his brother, the 9th Duke of Devonshire,: ‘I believe my man Sugge Farr is going to you. He is a very nice man, I think you would like him.’²⁹³ In their letters to members of the employing classes, senior servants like Roland Burke also drew attention to servants exhibiting traits such as being ‘agreeable’ and ‘pleasant in manner’. For instance, in a reference he provided for a foreman gardener, Burke wrote: ‘he is a particularly nice man to do with, and everybody likes him here’.²⁹⁴ Once again, we can see that in their role as mediators, senior servants picked up on the qualities which were considered to be important by their correspondents, and emulated the kind of language they used in order to refer to such traits.

Whilst it is clear from the corpus that importance was placed upon ‘agreeable’ and ‘pleasant’ behaviour, according to the *OED*, the word ‘nice’ was also used in another manner during the first half of the twentieth century: to describe someone who was ‘respectable, virtuous, decent’ and ‘precise or particular in matters of reputation or conduct; scrupulous, punctilious’.²⁹⁵ One example given is taken from A. Bridge’s *Illyrian Spring*, published in 1935: ‘He came of nice people, in the peculiar sense in which the English use the word nice—meaning thereby, not that a family is necessarily either amiable or amusing, but merely that it possesses a certain degree of good breeding.’²⁹⁶

As one of the richest and most high-profile noble families in the country, the Cavendishes performed on a very public stage. They were expected to be scrupulous and comport

²⁹³ DC, DD/35 Lord Richard Cavendish to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 20.06.1921.

²⁹⁴ DC, U. R. Burke’s Chief Agent’s Papers, 4/140, series of letters regarding the position of head gardener at Woburn, Letter 4, 1930.

²⁹⁵ “nice, adj. and adv.” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, July 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/126732, [Accessed 3 December 2018].

²⁹⁶ A. Bridge, *Illyrian Spring*, 1935 quoted in “nice, adj. and adv.” *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, July 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/126732, Accessed 3 December 2018.

themselves according to a strict code of conduct. In another letter quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Victor Cavendish's cousin, Blanche Egerton, wrote to the Chatsworth librarian with instructions to censor bundles of correspondence. Likely, this was because the letters in question did not conform to the ideals of good breeding she and other members of the Cavendish family were expected to live by.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the manner in which servants comported themselves was considered to be an indication of their employers' own comportment and breeding. In her 1892 pamphlet entitled *The Servant Question*, social commentator Lady Jeune encapsulated this idea by stating: "A good master makes a good servant" is an old but a very true saying, and one we may all take to heart, and try to act on.'²⁹⁷ Accordingly, there was an established precedent for members of the employing classes to insist on hiring only servants of 'good breeding' who were 'respectable, virtuous and decent'.

Within the corpus, there are a few examples of the word 'nice' being used to express such ideas. Of these, the most prominent is a letter which was written in 1919, by Duchess Evelyn to her husband, the 9th Duke of Devonshire. She informed him: 'I have today seen Lettington – who seems a very nice boy...He is only just 20 or going to be, but looks older and seems such a gentleman.'²⁹⁸

The other most popular trait found in relation to this semantic category was 'good', which also had twelve references. Two of these references appeared within the masters' corpus and ten in the senior-servants' corpus. Like the word 'nice', within the corpora the term 'good' appears

²⁹⁷ Lady Jeune, 'The Servant Question', p.73.

²⁹⁸ DC S2 9840, Letter from Duchess Evelyn to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke, 06.01.1919.

to have also been used to alternately signify either ‘agreeableness’, or ‘respectability’ and ‘superior breeding’. A good illustration of the first usage was found in the senior-servants’ corpus, in a character reference written by Roland Burke to the Horticultural Association of the County of Cornwall. He described the applicant in question, a head gardener named Frank Jennings as ‘a very pleasant man to work with, having good address’.²⁹⁹ Independent of this, another particularly useful example of the second usage of the term ‘good’ was found within the corpora. It was discovered in a letter which was written by 1st Baron Brassey of Apethorpe in which he described his ideal servant to the Duke of Devonshire’s chief agent, Roland Burke. He explained: ‘As I am a good deal away from home, I want someone I can thoroughly depend upon and of sufficiently good class to be able to take responsibility and see everything is going on as it should.’³⁰⁰

The fact that both of the terms most frequently referenced within this semantic category were used in an identical manner, to alternately suggest either that an individual was ‘agreeable’ or that he/she was ‘respectable’ and of ‘good breeding’, indicates just how much importance masters, and, in turn, senior servants placed upon these qualities in the first half of the twentieth century.

The third most referenced trait within the corpora is ‘honest’. However, whilst the Cavendish family undoubtedly wanted to hire staff who were truthful, according to the *OED*, the word honest had a slightly different meaning in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century. It was also used to describe a pattern of behaviour which was ‘respectable’ and was ‘held in good

²⁹⁹ DC, U. R. Burke’s Chief Agent’s Papers, 4/10 series of letters regarding the dismissal of Frank Jennings as head gardener at Chatsworth, Letter 2, 1920.

³⁰⁰ DC, U. R. Burke’s Chief Agent’s Papers, 4/5, Series of letters regarding the position of clerk of works, Letter 4, 1919.

esteem'. For example, former Chatsworth gardener George Marples wrote to Roland Burke in 1927, stating: 'I have no sentimental qualms in the matter [of my future employment], providing I am earning an honest living.'³⁰¹ The usage of the word 'honest' in this manner provides even more evidence that, in relation to domestic employees, qualities such as 'respectability' were associated with the concept of the 'ideal servant'.

Searching the corpora with the aid of *Antconc* indicates that the words 'nice', 'good' and 'honest' were frequently utilised in conjunction with a number of other terms, including 'hardworking', 'sober', 'steady' and 'trustworthy'. By examining the words and phrases which frequently collocate with these popular terms, it is possible to build up a more complete picture of the behavioural traits and personality of the 'ideal servant'.

The data relating to this semantic category not only indicates which traits and qualities were most associated with the 'ideal servant', but it also highlights what kind of behaviour was most likely to be considered 'unideal'. Unsurprisingly, the behaviours which were portrayed as highly negative within the corpus, were those which were the polar opposite to the desirable traits. They were represented by words and phrases like 'unkind', 'un/less reliable' and treating people 'like dogs'. An example of this kind of language can be found in a letter written by land agent J.P. Cockerell to the 9th Duke of Devonshire, in which the former described one of the estate office employees whom he had recently had cause to dismiss:

The climax arrived one afternoon, when I rang the telephone and received no answer for some considerable time, and when at last he did answer, I was received with a volume of most abominable abuse, and he stated that I "had treated him like a dog." Those were his very words, so I told him he had better come and see me at the office next morning. He came at 9:30 and the man was quite beside himself with rage, and

³⁰¹ DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 4/2, series of letters regarding head gardeners Marples and Weston, Letter 13, 29.03.1927.

stated that everybody treated him badly and always had done. Again he used the expression several times that ever since he had been at Chatsworth, he had been “treated like a dog”, and that the place never agreed with him... In consequence of his behaviour, I considered it my duty to give him notice to leave.³⁰²

It is apparent how the kind of behaviour which led to the dismissal of this employee, including being ‘beside himself with rage’, and hurling ‘abominable abuse’ at his superior, stood in stark contrast to the type of behaviour prized within the estate community. Yet, the claims made by the office employee suggest that others working on the estate were also exhibiting ‘unideal’ qualities. In this assessment, the employee included senior members of staff like Cockerell, who had apparently ‘treated him like a dog’. Such assertions imply that, not only were ‘good masters’ considered necessary in order to make good servants, but also, that the behavior of the establishment’s managerial employees was felt to be extremely important. It was up to senior-servants like Cockerell and Burke to keep the peace on the estate. If they failed to do so, regardless of the validity of such statements, aspersions could be cast against their own character, both by the masters who employed them, and the lower-ranking servants beneath them in the hierarchy.

As table 3.4 shows, the words and phrases used to describe negative personality traits or conduct within the corpora all have particularly low frequency rates. Nevertheless, this data does not necessarily suggest that such behavior did not take place on the Chatsworth estate. Rather, it seems more plausible that conduct of this manner was perceived to be so undesirable, and that it reflected so badly upon the entire estate community, that it was only referenced in certain confidential documents. Moreover, any confidential documents containing salacious

³⁰² DC, S10 10,037 Letter from J.P. Cockerell, Land Agent, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 31.10.1917.

details were unlikely to have been preserved within the Cavendish archives. Instead, the decision was probably taken to either censor/destroy them, or to prevent access to them, just like with Blanche Egerton 's more controversial letters.³⁰³

In conclusion, whilst few lower-ranking employees considered personality traits or behaviour to hold any significance in relation to the concept of the 'ideal servant', both masters and senior-ranking employees placed great importance on these aspects of an individual's identity. For individuals from these groups, the most desirable servant was perceived to be someone who acted in an 'agreeable' manner, who was 'respectable', 'reliable', and who had 'good breeding'. Personality traits which were also highly valued include being 'hardworking', 'sober', 'steady' and 'trustworthy'. Through exhibiting such behaviour, lower-ranking servants would reflect well upon their superordinates, including their managers, senior-ranking servants like the land agent, and their masters. Conversely, the 'unideal servant' was associated with negative behaviour, such as flying into a 'rage', hurling 'abuse' at others, and treating other people 'like dogs'. Such conduct would cast aspersions on the rest of the household, and thus, it was dealt with swiftly and in a highly confidential manner.

3.6 Semantic Category 4: Skill-Set and Experience

Antconc identified four-hundred and forty-eight concordance lines which fell within the final semantic category of this study, that relating to the skill-set and experience of a servant. Therefore, this category is the most dominant within this particular corpus. The key linguistic elements of the concordance lines seem to correspond directly to either the skill-set of a servant (i.e. their professional qualities), or their previous experience (i.e. how many years they have

³⁰³ DC, CH12/1/32, Letter from Blanche Egerton to Mr Thompson, 03.02.1942.

worked in a particular household, or the job positions they have held). The two concepts are necessarily linked. However, different grammatical constructions, words, and phrases are associated with each. As such, it is possible to divide this category into two sub-categories. Figure 3.4 shows the apparent schema of how a servant's skill-set and experience are discussed within the corpus.

Figure 3.4: Schema for the conceptualisation of a servant's physical characteristics



Table 3.5: Quantitative Overview for the Semantic Category relating to Skill-Set and Experience

Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Skill Set	A good flower grower	1	1	0	0
Skill Set	Able to drive car	1	1	0	0
Skill Set	Able to take charge	1	0	1	0
Skill Set	Able to take responsibility	1	1	0	0
Skill Set	Can blister a horse	2	1	1	0
Skill Set	Is Capable/has Capabilities	7	2	5	0
Skill Set	Capacity for handling labour	1	1	0	0
Skill Set	Careful in her work	1	1	0	0
Skill Set	Competent	3	1	2	0
Skill Set	Could give satisfaction	3	0	2	1
Skill Set	Could leave in charge	1	0	1	0
Skill Set	Could manage the duties	1	0	0	1
Skill Set	Don't quite understand their job	1	1	0	0
Skill Set	First rate knowledge of greenhouse work	2	0	2	0
Skill Set	First rate organiser	1	0	1	0
Skill Set	Good disciplinarian	1	1	0	0

Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Skill Set	Good gardener	1	0	1	0
Skill Set	Good inside foreman	1	0	1	0
Skill Set	Good manager of men	3	0	3	0
Skill Set	Keep horses in good health	1	1	0	0
Skill Set	Knowledge	23	2	17	4
Skill Set	Knows about motors	2	0	1	1
Skill Set	Understands guns	1	1	0	0
Skill Set	Punctuality	1	1	0	0
Skill Set	Schooling horses	2	2	0	0
Skill Set	Successful gardener	1	0	0	1
Skill Set	The tastiest man for the shrubs	1	1	0	0
Skill Set	Thoroughly capable	1	0	1	0
Skill Set	Thoroughly competent	1	0	1	0
Skill Set	Thoroughly knows his work	1	0	1	0
Skill Set	Thoroughly understand the working of a large estate	1	0	0	1
Education	Attended building construction classes	1	0	0	1
Education	Examination/Examinations	4	0	0	4
Education	Five years apprenticeship	1	0	0	1

Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Education	Gained certificates	1	0	0	1
Education	Pupil	2	0	0	2
Education	Qualified	4	0	2	2
Experience	A man who knows the country and the children	1	1	0	0
Experience	Act/acted as (*x* position)	2	0	1	1
Experience	Agent	7	3	0	4
Experience	Assistant Clerk of Works	2	0	1	1
Experience	Assisting in the office	1	0	0	1
Experience	Before	5	1	1	3
Experience	Butler	17	1	2	14
Experience	Career	2	0	0	2
Experience	Charwomen	1	0	1	0
Experience	Engaged	2	1	1	0
Experience	Enough experience	2	1	1	0
Experience	Experience in dealing with men	1	0	0	1
Experience	Experience in land agency	1	0	0	1
Experience	Experience in town and country entertaining	1	0	0	1
Experience	Experience of hunting clothes	1	1	0	0

Experience	Experience of market gardening work	1	0	1	0
Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Experience	Experience to take over a very big garden	1	0	1	0
Experience	Experienced	3	1	2	0
Experience	Footman	10	0	1	9
Experience	Foreman	4	0	4	0
Experience	Frequently had the entire charge of 2 or 3 pupils	1	1	0	0
Experience	Full experience in all branches (of gardening)	1	0	1	0
Experience	Gardener	6	0	4	2
Experience	Get more experience	1	0	0	1
Experience	Glass houses/Green houses	7	0	7	0
Experience	Good experience	1	0	0	1
Experience	Good references/testimonials	3	0	1	2
Experience	Got a commission (during First World War)	1	0	0	1
Experience	Governess	2	2	0	0
Experience	Groom of chambers	5	0	1	4
Experience	Had/In Charge of	10	2	6	2

Experience	Had the management of all the household accounts	2	0	0	2
Experience	Head (coachman, gardener, housemaid)	20	3	12	5
Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Experience	Home farm management experience	1	0	0	1
Experience	Horticultural Advisor	3	0	3	0
Experience	Housekeeper	4	1	1	2
Experience	Housemaid	5	0	3	2
Experience	In army (during First World War)	2	0	0	2
Experience	Know the house well	2	0	0	2
Experience	(Experience of) Large establishments/places	9	0	4	5
Experience	Lecturer to the Local War Agricultural Committee	2	0	2	0
Experience	Left on own account/accord	3	0	1	2
Experience	Lived at/with	9	0	0	9
Experience	Luncheons, weddings, garden parties, dinners & balls	1	0	0	1
Experience	Maid	3	1	0	2
Experience	Military/War Service	3	0	1	2
Experience	Our former chef	1	1	0	0

Experience	Position	7	1	6	0
Experience	Post	7	1	5	1
Experience	Previous/Previously	20	0	4	16
Experience	Profession	1	0	1	0
Sub-Category	Word or Phrase	Overall Frequency	Frequency Master's Corpus	Frequency Senior Servants' Corpus	Frequency Servants' Corpus
Experience	To be responsible for	3	2	1	0
Experience	Stud Groom	2	2	0	0
Experience	Temporarily held position	3	0	1	2
Experience	Title of former employer (Countess, Duke, Duchess, Earl, His/Her Grace, Hon., Lord, Lady, Major, Marquise, Prince, Sir, Viscount, Esq.)	60	2	15	43
Experience	Under Butler	5	0	2	3
Experience	Voluntarily joining the army (during First World War)	2	0	0	2
Experience	Worked under *x*	3	0	1	2
Experience	*X* amount of Years* experience (also includes length of service)	76	3	20	53
Experience	*X* number of men under him	4	1	3	0
	Totals	448	52	166	230

Table 3.5 gives a quantitative overview of the semantic category, stating the frequency of word/phrase use within the four-hundred and forty-eight concordance lines. The words highlighted in bold had the first, second and third highest frequencies of use for the entire category. Yet, whilst this semantic category represented the most dominant overall within this ‘communicative snapshot’, it did not represent the most dominant category for one particular corpus. From the data contained within the table, it is apparent that, whereas the previous semantic category found significantly fewer references in the lower-ranking servants’ corpus than either of the other two corpora, this semantic category found significantly fewer references in the masters’ corpus. Only fifty-two entries in the table pertained to the masters’ corpus in comparison to one hundred and sixty-six entries for the senior-servants’ corpus, and two hundred and thirty entries for the lower-ranking servants. Nevertheless, although there were significantly fewer references to skill-set and experience found within the masters’ corpus, as this investigation will attempt to prove, it does not necessarily follow that they placed little importance on these factors.

The phrases with the highest frequency rates, not only within this category, but within the entire study, related to the length of a servant’s previous experience. Phrases referencing this concept were found in seventy-six concordance lines. Of these concordance lines, fifty-three were found in the lower-ranking servants’ corpus, twenty were found in the senior servants’ corpus, and only three were found in the masters’ corpus. The reason for the especially high frequency rates within the lower-ranking servants’ corpus is that this phrase was repeated multiple times by them in the job application letters they wrote. As in a twenty-first century curriculum vitae, the letters of application constructed by domestic employees of the first half of the twentieth century focused predominantly on relevant previous experience. A good example of this can

be found in a document produced by George Meacham in order to support his application for the post of House Steward to the 9th Duke of Devonshire:

I have always been used to large establishments 5 years Butler + Groom of Chambers the Earl + Countess of Ellesmere + 6 1/2 years House Steward Earl + Countess Spencer. 1 year Earl [illegible] of Talton + the Duchess of Buckingham - 1 year J. G. A. Baird Esq. who will speak for me.³⁰⁴

From this passage, it is apparent that, not only did prospective employees consider length of experience to be an important factor in relation to the 'ideal servant', but also the names and titles of the previous employers they'd gained this experience with were significant. The second highest frequency rate for this semantic category was found to be references to the title of a servant's previous employer. Within the corpus, there were sixty such references. Forty-three were found in the lower-ranking servants' corpus, fifteen in the senior-ranking servants' corpus, and two found in the masters' corpus.

The tendency of lower-ranking servants to include the titles and names of previous employers in letters of application is indicative of the particular methods for recruiting domestic staff which existed in the first half of the twentieth century. Servant registries existed in large towns and cities, and there is evidence that the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire made use of the services of one London registry office, Campbell, Herne & Co, in 1921, to help recruit a new set of domestic staff ahead of their return to England from Canada after an absence of over four years.³⁰⁵ Nevertheless, they predominantly hired servants who they had heard about from family members and friends through word of mouth. This seems to have been common practice amongst the members of the employing classes who inhabited the Duke and Duchess of

³⁰⁴ DC, Z7 11236 Letter from George Meacham to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 14.02.1911.

³⁰⁵ DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 108/1, series of letters relating to the recruitment of staff upon the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire's return from Canada, Letter from Campbell, Herne & Co's Agency to Roland Burke, Chief Agent, 20.05.1921.

Devonshire's social circle. For example, the letter quoted at the beginning of this chapter was written by a Buckingham Palace official in order to ask the Duchess of Devonshire specifically if she could recommend a 'good Housekeeper'. Other examples include the following letter written by Lady Burton to Duchess Evelyn in 1909:

My dear Duchess,

In case you want to write to our former Chef - he is with Prince Victor Duleep Singh on a job - at 40 Avenue de Trocadéro Paris - but is open for an engagement, somebody told my sister you were parting with your chef - I can thoroughly recommend Dupuis in every way.³⁰⁶

In lieu of being recommended directly, a servant could list their previous employers and call upon them to provide character references, such as the ones written by Roland Burke which this study has already examined. This would serve to support their application, especially if one or more of their former employers inhabited the same social circle as their prospective employer, and/or if their former employer was considered to be particularly high-profile, for instance if they held the title of Duke, Duchess, or Earl. Once again, it is possible to observe similarities between these documents and modern, twenty-first century methods of applying for a job, where applicants typically list the previous places of employment and the names of referees.

In conclusion, whilst words and phrases relating to this semantic category had especially low frequency rates within the masters' corpus, it does not necessarily follow that members of the employing classes placed little importance upon the previous experience of a prospective domestic worker. Rather, a more nuanced reading of the data suggests that knowledge of previous employers was highly valued. However, the data-set also shows that, due to the nature

³⁰⁶ DC, C17 1698, Letter from Lady Burton to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, 25.11.1909.

of correspondence exchanged in relation to job applications, an applicant would write in more detailed terms about their previous employment history than any potential employer, or senior-servant acting on their behalf, interrogating them for this information.

The notion that previous experience working for high profile individuals, such as Dukes or Earls, somehow contributed to the degree to which an employee could be considered ‘ideal’, appears to have extended beyond the domestic service sector. An example of this can be found in the following extract from a letter written by former head gardener, George Marples, to Roland Burke, chief agent to the Duke of Devonshire:

If I may I would like to take advantage of your kind offer when I left you re His Grace giving me a personal letter & a character. I am not unmindful of what His Grace has done for me. But there is a report in the neighbourhood that the present tenant at the Post Office is likely to leave. Do you think it would influence the Postmaster at the G.P.O. if I had a letter from His Grace[?]³⁰⁷

In this quote, Marples exhibited a belief that a personal letter and a character reference from the Duke of Devonshire could lend weight to his application for the role of tenant at the Post Office. This was despite the fact that his previous work as a head gardener was in no way related to this new role. Unfortunately, the archives contain no evidence as to the outcome of this application, so it is impossible to ascertain whether Marples’ assumptions on this matter were fully founded.

The third most referenced term within this semantic category was ‘knowledge’. This quality appeared twenty-three times overall. In most instances where it was found, ‘knowledge’ was being used in order to discuss a servant’s familiarity with a specific kind of field. This usage

³⁰⁷ DC, U. R. Burke’s Chief Agent’s Papers, 4/2, series of letters regarding head gardeners Marples and Weston, Letter 22, 28.12.1924.

of the word is defined in the following manner by the *OED*: ‘Chiefly with *of*. The fact or condition of having acquired a practical understanding or command of, or competence or skill in, a particular subject, language, etc., esp. through instruction, study, or practice.’³⁰⁸

One example of the term ‘knowledge’ being employed in this manner can be found in a letter written by Roland Burke to Mrs M. Napier Clavering, landlady of Axwell Park. Burke was writing on behalf of Duchess Evelyn in order to request information on an applicant who had formerly worked at Axwell Park. He explained: ‘The Duchess of Devonshire particularly requires a man who is thoroughly up in greenhouse work, especially fruit, carnations, etc. He must also have a thorough knowledge of pleasure grounds, herbaceous borders etc.’³⁰⁹

Another example of this use of the word ‘knowledge’ was found in a letter written by the Duke of Devonshire’s former Coachman to Roland Burke, when discussing his future career prospects: ‘I got a slight knowledge for cars some years ago, but I have not done anything in that line since I left Chatsworth.’³¹⁰

The fact that there were many concordance lines in which the term ‘knowledge’ was used in this manner indicates that a great deal of significance was placed upon the professional skills of a domestic servant during the first half of the twentieth century. The majority of references to ‘knowledge’ within the corpora were found within the senior servants’ corpus, where it appeared seventeen times. In comparison, it appeared four times in the lower-ranking servants’ corpus, and two times in the masters’ corpus. This was primarily due to the fact that

³⁰⁸ "knowledge, n.", *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, December 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/104170. [Accessed 8 December 2018].

³⁰⁹ DC, U. R. Burke’s Chief Agent’s Papers, 4/2, series of letters regarding head gardeners Marples and Weston, Letter 6, 25.09.1924.

³¹⁰ DC, U. R. Burke’s Chief Agent’s Papers, 4/19, series of letters regarding head coachman R. Clarke, Letter 2.

Chatsworth's senior servants often acted as emissaries on behalf of the duke and duchess. Typically, those who oversaw the running of the estate, like the chief agent, wrote on to a potential employee's previous master in the duke's stead in order to gain specific assurances that the individual in question was up to the new job. Likewise, they would respond to specific queries raised by other potential employers and senior servants regarding applicants who had previously served at Chatsworth. Thus, it is evident that masters also placed great importance upon an employee's specific knowledge and skills. Moreover, because particular skills were desired by both employers and the senior servants' acting on their behalf, this made them equally important for domestic workers. Those possessing certain knowledge and skills, such as experience with cars, were able to apply for better jobs and move up the professional ladder. In her 1892 pamphlet, *The Servant Question*, Lady Jeune summarised this phenomenon as follows: 'We see...constantly the beneficial effects of the severe training [some domestic servants] have undergone, for some of the best and most competent servants are those who through "great tribulation" have risen out of the dismal position of the "odd man" and the "Cinderella".'³¹¹

In conclusion, although this semantic category is that with the lowest frequency rates associated with the masters' corpus, it does not necessarily follow that they placed little importance upon the skill set or previous experience of their domestic workers. Rather, these frequency rates reflect the nature in which the application process was organised upon the Chatsworth estate. This application process saw lower-ranking servants list their previous employment history for the information of prospective employers. The ideal servant was someone who had spent a number of years moving up the professional ladder, working within the households of the titled aristocracy. The application process also required senior-servants to act on behalf of their

³¹¹ Lady Jeune, 'The Servant Question', p.69.

employers and interrogate applicants as to their skill-set and knowledge. In this instance, the ideal servant was also someone who held the specific knowledge needed in order to fulfil the position in question.

3.7 Conclusion: Who Was the ‘(Un)Ideal Servant’?

This final section of the investigation considers the most dominant qualities used in association with domestic employees, in order to determine who was the ‘(un)ideal servant’. It focuses, in turn, on each of the three distinct authorial groups: the masters, the senior servants, and the lower-ranking servants. Tables 3.6, 3.7, and 3.8 show the frequency rates of the principal qualities (the first and second most recurrent from each semantic category) associated with servants according to employers, senior- and lower-ranking employees respectively, whilst figures 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7 display this data as schemas of the ‘(un)ideal servant’ according to each group. From this data, some conclusions are drawn as to each group’s understanding of the ‘ideal servant’.

Following on from this, the final section of this study links the dominant perceptions of each authorial group back to the overall research question of this thesis, considering how notions of the ‘ideal servant’ can help us to better understand how the Chatsworth estate functioned as a community.

Table 3.6: Frequency rates of the principal qualities associated with the ‘(un)ideal servant’ as mentioned within letters written by members of the Cavendish family, and their friends and acquaintances who were also members of the employing classes

Category	Sub-Category	Word/Phrase	Frequency
Status and Background	Class Status	Poor	7
	Nationality/Ethnicity	French	6
Physical Characteristics	Health and Well-being	Old	6
	Appearance	Little	5
Behavioural Traits and Personality	Positive	Nice	7
	Positive	Reliable	3
Skill-set and Experience	Experience	Length of experience	3
	Experience	Head in Job Title (i.e. Coachman, Gardener, Housemaid)	3
	Experience	Job title – Agent	3

Figure 3.5: Schema for the conceptualisation of the '(Un)Ideal Servant' according to the most dominant qualities mentioned within letters written by members of the Cavendish family, and their friends and acquaintances who were also members of the employing classes. (The darkest squares represent the most frequently mentioned categories and qualities.)

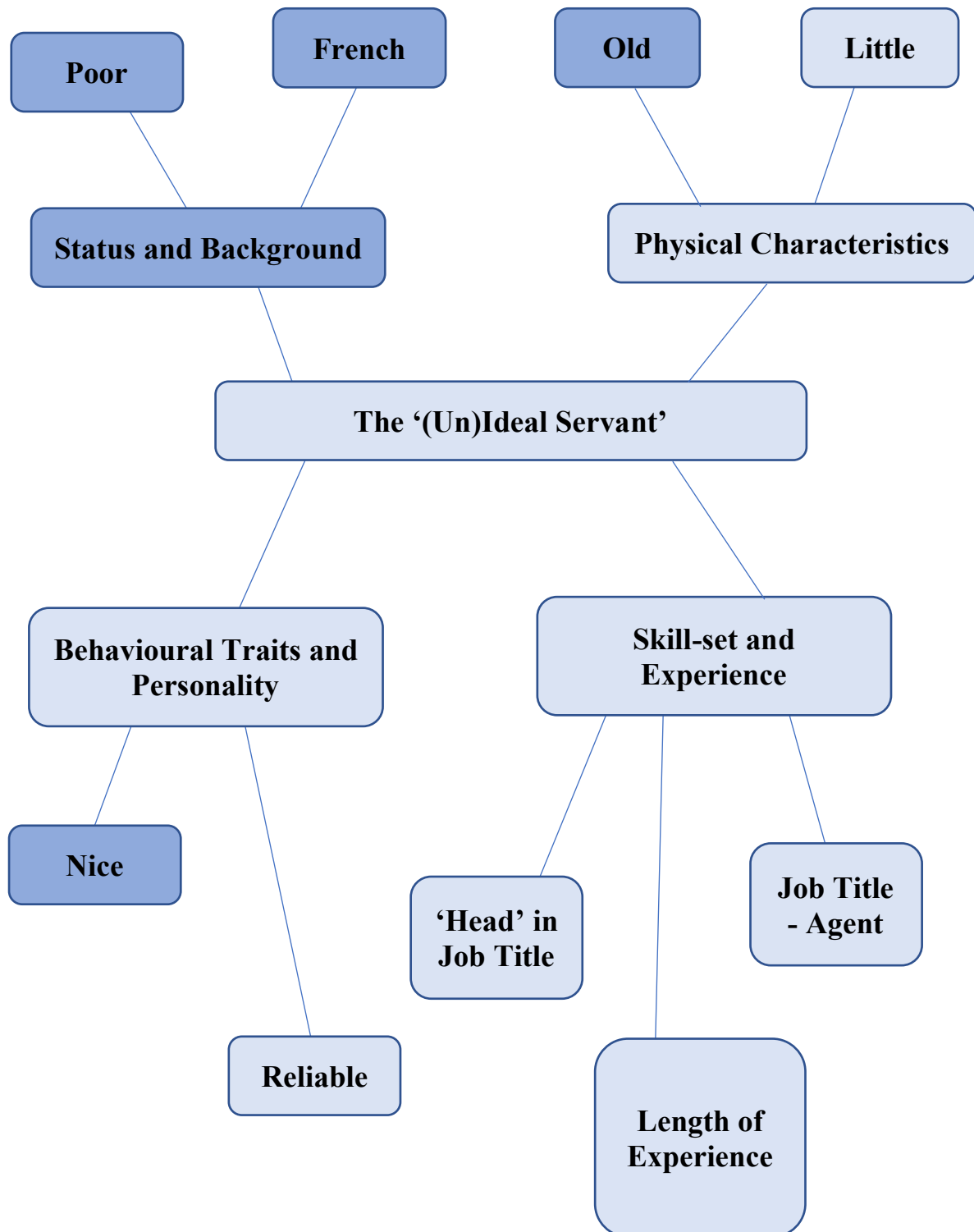


Table 3.7: Frequency rates of the principal qualities associated with the ‘(un)ideal servant’ as mentioned within letters written by senior servants

Category	Sub-Category	Word/Phrase	Frequency
Status and Background	Relationship Status	Married	6
	Relationship Status	Wife	4
	Relationship Status	Family	4
Physical Characteristics	Gender	Man	10
	Health/ Well-being	Age* (including age, old, years, young)	7
Personality Traits and Behaviour	Positive	Good	10
	Positive	Honest	8
Skill-set and Experience	Experience	Length of experience	20
	Skill-set	Knowledge	17

Figure 3.6: Schema for the conceptualisation of the ‘(Un)Ideal Servant’ according to the most dominant qualities mentioned within letters written by senior servants employed by the Cavendish family and other members of the employing classes. (The darkest squares represent the most frequently mentioned categories and qualities.)

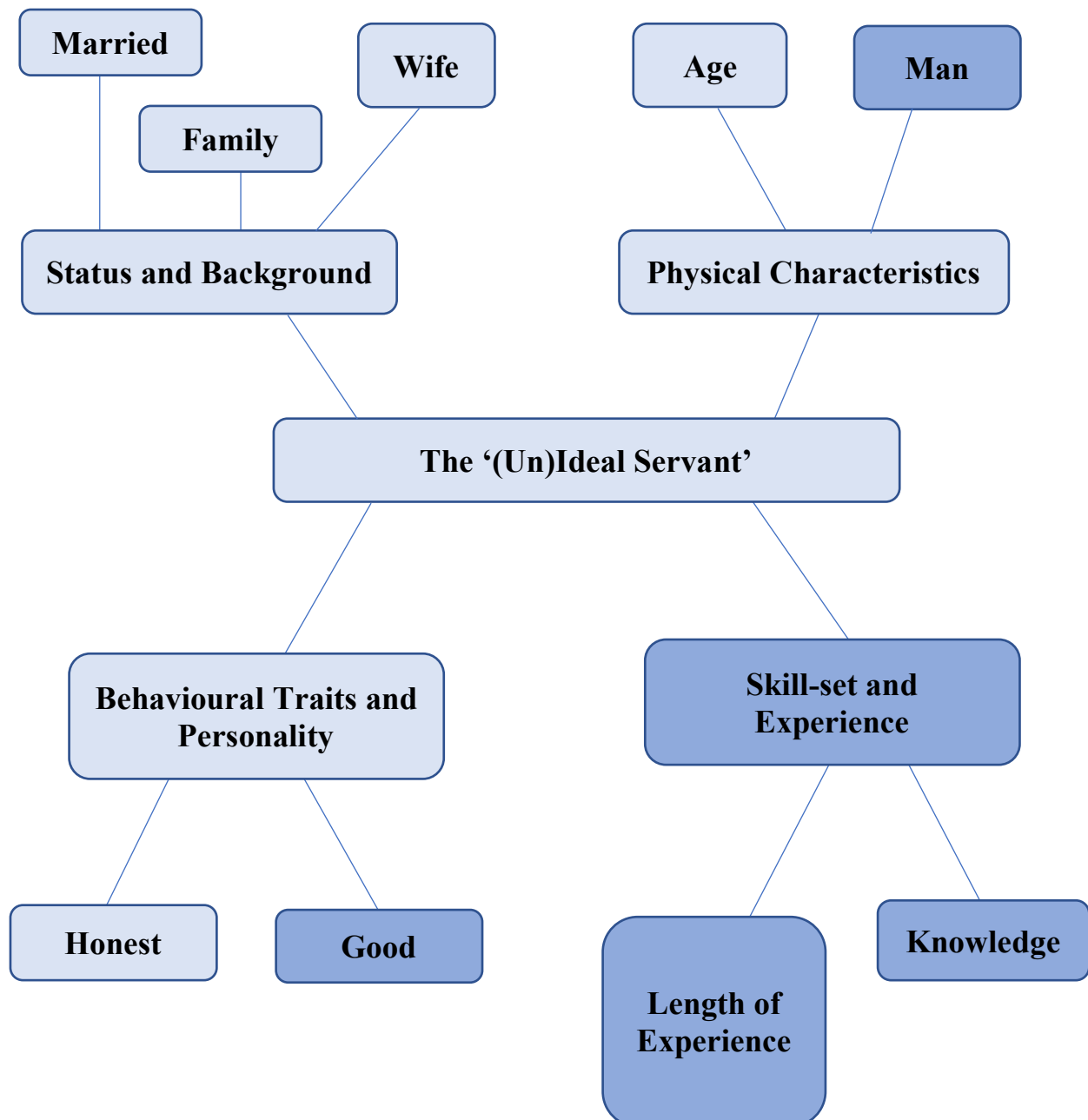
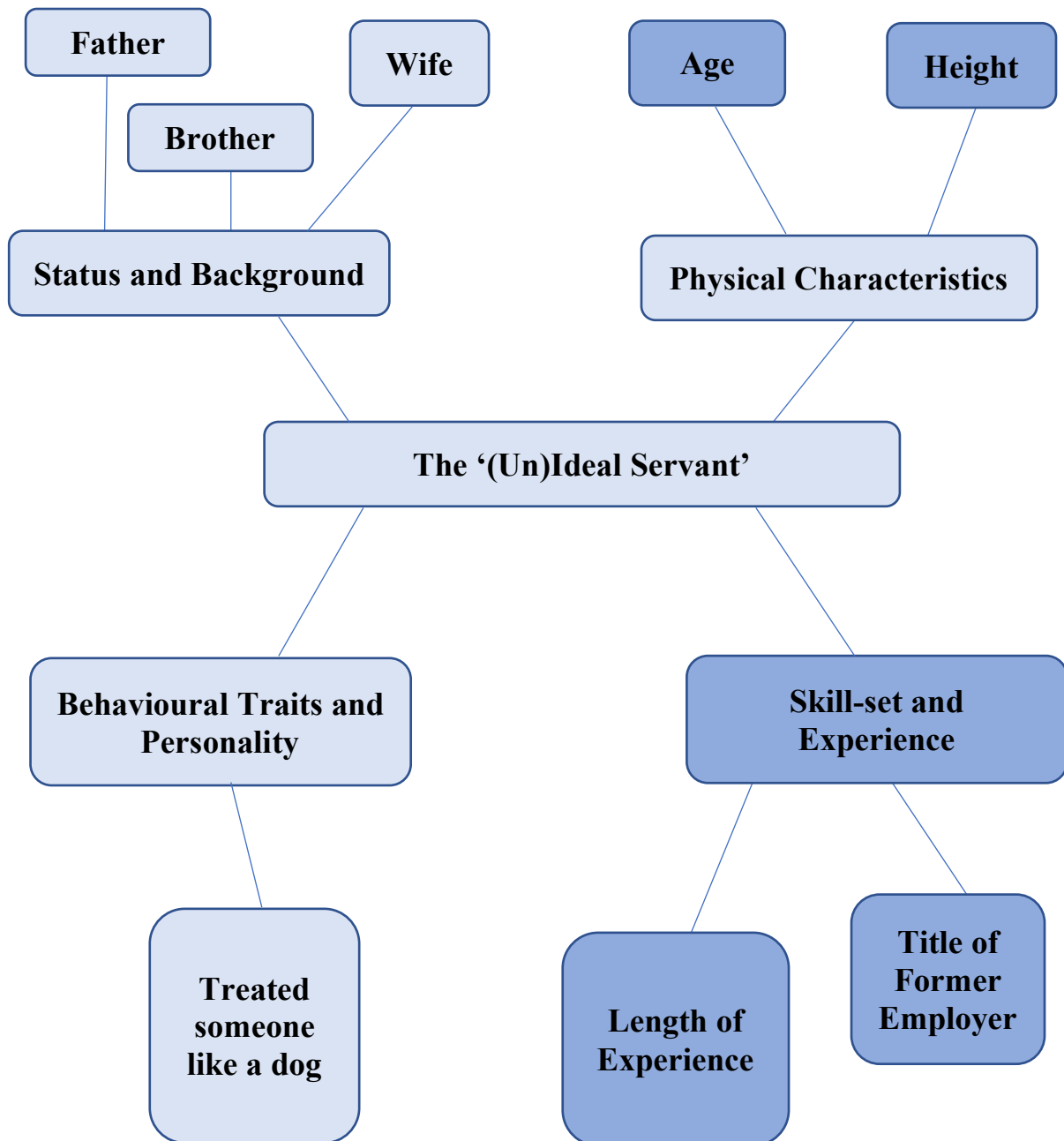


Table 3.8: Frequency rates of the principal qualities associated with the ‘(un)ideal servant’ as mentioned within letters written by lower-ranking servants

Category	Sub-Category	Word/Phrase	Frequency
Status and Background	Relationship Status	Wife	6
	Relationship Status	Father	4
	Relationship Status	Brother	4
Physical Characteristics	Health/ Well-being	Age* (including age, old, years, young)	17
	Appearance	Height	11
Personality Traits and Behaviour	Negative	Treated someone like a dog	3
Skill-set and Experience	Experience	Length of experience	53
	Experience	Title of former employer (Countess, Duke, Duchess, Earl, His/Her Grace, Hon., Lord, Lady, Major, Marquise, Prince, Sir, Viscount, Esq.)	43

Figure 3.7: Schema for the conceptualisation of the ‘(Un)Ideal Servant’ according to the most dominant qualities mentioned within letters written by lower-ranking servants seeking employment with members of the Cavendish family, or those already employed by them.

(The darkest squares represent the most frequently mentioned categories and qualities.)



As tables 3.6, 3.7, 3.8 and figures 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, demonstrate, there was no singular concept of the '(un)ideal servant' shared by the entire Chatsworth community. Rather, by seeking influence from the discipline of linguistics, this social history study has been able to illustrate the great degree to which an individual's understanding and interpretation of community membership was determined by their own social status and role within this same community. The study has also illustrated the importance of taking into account the intended audience of the source in question, which affected the communication strategies adopted by those seeking membership. Such observations have helped the study to better understand community relations through, across and between social strata. Consideration of these factors will, therefore, also play a central role throughout the rest of this thesis.

Only two qualities enjoyed significantly high frequency rates within all three corpora. These qualities were 'age' and 'length of experience'. A couple of other qualities enjoyed high frequency rates within two of the three corpora. In the first instance, the 'familial relations' of a servant were considered to be particularly important by both senior- and lower-ranking employees. When discussing marital status, it seems individuals from both groups were alluding to concepts such as long service, stability and reliability. In addition, the words 'brother' and 'father' were both used within the senior- and lower-ranking servants corpora to imply suitability for service by virtue of an individual's familial connection. Similarly, the 'height' of a servant was referenced many times within both the masters' and the lower-ranking servants' corpus. However, here there was a noticeable difference in the manner in which the quality was discussed. Masters were more impressionistic, using adjectives such as 'little', whereas servants were more explicit, and listed their height in feet and inches. It was found that, when using the term little, masters were actually indicating that they desired servants who inspired feelings of sympathy and benevolence, rather than those who were small in stature.

In all other cases, the dominant attributes associated with the '(un)ideal servant' differed across the three corpora. This is particularly noticeable for the semantic category relating to 'behavioural traits and personality', for which each authorial group focused on different qualities. Masters considered the ideal employee to be 'nice' and 'reliable', senior-servants conceptualised the perfect domestic worker to be 'good' and 'honest', and lower-ranking servants thought that the unideal worker would exhibit unkindness and treat people 'like dogs'. In addition, there also existed differences between which semantic categories were considered to be the most important/dominant in relation to the concept of the ideal servant. According to the frequency rates, both senior- and lower-ranking servants considered the 'skill-set and experience' of an employee to be the most dominant factor, whereas the masters felt 'status and background' to be the most important.

An investigation into these differences has shed light on the application process which governed recruitment at the Chatsworth estate community during the first half of the twentieth century. The corpus indicates that masters were only minimally involved in the application process unless they were seeking to employ an individual for a particularly high-ranking position. Even in this scenario, they limited their contribution, and, when discussing an employee's suitability for service, their input was chiefly personal and impressionistic. Rather, the application process saw senior-servants acting on behalf of their employers. They interrogated applicants on more precise issues than the masters, such as their specific skill-set and knowledge, and moreover, they provided evidence of these attributes when writing character references in support of employees. These references were then sent on to new and prospective employers. Meanwhile, lower-ranking servants who were applying for a position sought to portray themselves as desirable employees, by drawing upon their personal and

professional connections, by emphasising attributes which they knew were highly sought after, such as a tall stature, and by listing their entire previous employment history. The first chapter of this thesis, ‘Investigating the Chatsworth Estate Community: A Demographic Study’ answered the question: ‘who made up the community at Chatsworth between 1908 and 1950?’ Thus, it helped to shed some light on the second constituent part of a community, as determined by Shepard and Withington. This aspect of community concerned membership: the people who part of it, were not part of it, did not want to be part of it, and were excluded from being part of it.³¹² By concentrating on evidence relating to staff recruitment and dismissals, and by drawing attention to understandings and interpretations of community membership, this study has gone further and has determined more information regarding this second constituent part of a community. In the first instance, the investigation has answered the question ‘how did an individual gain employment at Chatsworth and, thereby, become a member of this estate community?’ In addition to this, the chapter has provided evidence of the kind of traits which could cause an individual to become excluded from the estate community.

Beyond this, in undertaking an examination into some of the specific social codes, norms and practices associated with recruitment, and by linking these strategies to the social status of both text producers and their intended audience, this chapter has also provided evidence of the first constituent part of a community, as defined by Shepard and Withington: the institutional arrangements, practices and roles that structured it.³¹³ In this manner, the study has also taken the first step towards answering the overall research question of this thesis, namely: ‘how can we best understand the history of Chatsworth, not from the perspective of a single social group, but in relation to the whole community who lived, worked and interacted with its boundaries?’

³¹² Shepard & Withington (Eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place and Rhetoric*, p.12.

³¹³ Ibid.

Above all, the investigation has shown how this community was structured around notions of class, power and hierarchy. Like this chapter, the two following it are also each comprised of a case study which, through an investigation of social norms and practices, focuses on the role played by a distinct section of the estate community. The third chapter of the thesis examines the role played by the Cavendish family within the Chatsworth community, and the final chapter investigates that played by senior-servants. Whilst, from a structural point of view, it appears most expedient to focus on the different members of the estate community separately in this manner, this study has argued that notions of the '(un)ideal' lower-ranking servant are intrinsically linked to notions of the '(un)ideal' senior servant and the '(un)ideal' master. Consequently, similar threads connect all three case studies. In the third chapter of this thesis, building upon ideas which were introduced within this study, the themes of benevolence and paternalism provide the core focus. In the final chapter, drawing upon concepts which were also highlighted in this investigation, the themes of mediation and arbitration are explored. The three case studies operate in concert, enabling this thesis to show how the asymmetrical relations which connected the three groups were interpreted, negotiated and structured. In accordance with Sennett and Cobb's theory that class was a system which limited social freedom, they also demonstrate the various ways in which an individual's social status and class background at turns encouraged, moderated, and prevented certain behaviours.³¹⁴ In shedding light on these practices, this study, and the two following it, demonstrate how the Chatsworth estate functioned as a social organism in the period 1908-1950.

³¹⁴ Sennett & Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, p.28.

Duty, Dependence and Denarii:

**An Examination into Philanthropic Gifts & Payments Given to Servants by Members of
the Cavendish Family 1908-1950**

4.1 Introduction

You say I shall be retiring soon: you do not know how I long to be free & independent sometimes. People who have enough money to live on do not realise what they have to be thankful for. When one watches the lives of these girls whose only anxiety is whether the frost will prevent them hunting & if it does go off motoring to some other amusement, one wonders sometimes. However I am lucky in having work to do, & nice people to live with.³¹⁵

The above extract comes from a letter written in February 1933 by sixty-four-year-old Edith Walton, a governess previously employed by the Cavendish family. In it, she describes her financial insecurities to a former colleague. There seem to be inconsistencies within this passage, for although Edith begins by lamenting her own fiscal anxieties in contrast to the economic assurance enjoyed by her employers, she ends the piece by recognising the positive aspects of her situation: namely, that she was gainfully employed and had nice people to live with. Edith appears to have been aware that there were those within society in far worse situations than herself. The language utilised within this extract suggests that for Edith, the crux of the matter was not the fact that she was employed in service, but rather that her fiscal situation was limiting her life choices. Despite her wishes to retire, Edith recognised that if she chose to do so, she would not have ‘enough money to live on’.

³¹⁵ DC, DF 33/8/4/8, Letter written by Edith Walton, former governess, to Elsie Saunders, Private Secretary to Duchess Evelyn, 22.02.1933.

Just over a week after this letter was sent, Elsie Saunders, Edith Walton's correspondent and private secretary to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, wrote back to say:

I do wish I could do something to help you about your future plans. I feel sure that there are many of your former pupils who, when you want to retire, will like to join together to provide you with a small pension. Surely there are many who could and would gladly subscribe £10 a year, - I know the Duchess would for one...³¹⁶

When Edith Walton did retire, just over two years later, she was the recipient of an unofficial pension from the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, which her correspondent, Elsie Saunders, had arranged for her. Moreover, she had also been granted an annuity from the Governesses' Benevolent Institution (G.B.I.) – something which Elsie Saunders had campaigned for on the Duchess' behalf.³¹⁷

The kind of assistance provided to Edith Walton was not unique. Many similar gestures were made to other estate employees who found themselves in need, and in the main such acts of benevolence were arranged and overseen by Chatsworth's senior servants, who acted as emissaries for their employers. The correspondence exchanged between the different parties involved, through the medium of the senior servant, has ensured that these philanthropic gestures were captured in paper-trails. Therefore, within the archives of the Devonshire Collection, there exists a great deal of evidence relating to acts of benevolence.

This case study aims to be the first of its kind dedicated to understanding the role played by these philanthropic payments within a domestic setting. Hitherto, as both Laura Schwartz and Selina Todd have drawn attention to, socio-economic factors have largely been neglected

³¹⁶ DC, DF 33/8/4/11, letter written by Elsie Saunders, Private Secretary to Duchess Evelyn, to Edith Walton, former governess, 02.03.1933.

³¹⁷ DC, DF 33/8/4/16, Edith Walton, Governess to Duchess Evelyn Cavendish, 07.05.1935; & DF 33/8/4/20, Edith Walton, Governess to Duchess Evelyn Cavendish, 02.10.1935.

within discourse on domestic service.³¹⁸ Economic studies have been conducted by Jacob F. Field and Leonard Schwarz. Both focused on the wages earned by domestic employees, however, and referred only to gifts and charitable payments in order to emphasise the problematic nature of undertaking an examination into this area.³¹⁹ It is evident that, due to their intensely varied nature, these particular types of exchange do not lend themselves to a traditional, statistical form of economic analysis, such as those conducted by Field and Schwarz.

Recently within literary studies, Megan Benner Vasavada attempted an examination into literary representations of gift giving, within the context of nineteenth century practices of exchange.³²⁰ Her dissertation, *Novel Gifts: The Form and Function of Gift Exchange in Nineteenth-Century*, is perhaps the only example of academic scholarship which has attempted to ‘read’ into the practice of gift giving and philanthropy. *Novel Gifts* considered works by Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, and George Eliot, and traced both the reality, and literary portrayals of, developments in nineteenth-century gift culture. Vasaveda suggested that these kinds of informal exchanges were linked to concepts of identity and selfhood, and she drew upon theories of selfhood in order to argue that examples of gift giving within literature can tell scholars much about social norms, and how people saw themselves and others. A quantitative statistical analysis of gift exchange is not possible. However, Vasaveda’s work has demonstrated that a qualitative method of analysis can be effective when exploring such practices, and the impulses behind them. In order to examine such practices in relation to the

³¹⁸ Schwartz, ‘What we think is needed is a union of domestics such as the miners have’, p.175 & Todd, ‘Domestic service and class relations in Britain, 1900-1950’, p.191.

³¹⁹ For discussions on the difficulties faced by academics when considering informal economic practices, see Field, ‘Domestic service, gender, and wages in rural England’, pp.249-272; and Schwarz, ‘Custom, Wages and Workload in England During Industrialisation’, pp.156-157. Also, see W. T. Layton, ‘Changes in the Wages of Domestic Servants during Fifty Years’, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (Sep., 1908), pp. 515-524 for a primary source account on the difficulties of such an undertaking.

³²⁰ Benner Vasavada, *Novel Gifts*.

Chatsworth estate community, this case study has employed a linguistic-historical approach when analysing accounts of philanthropy. Textual sources have been set within their historical context, thereby allowing us to ‘read’ into the practice of charitable giving in a manner similar, yet distinct to, that offered by Vasaveda’s literary analysis. In undertaking this kind of an examination into the ‘culture’ of benevolence which existed within the Chatsworth community between 1908 and 1950, this study will therefore consider how drawing upon examples of philanthropy can help us to better understand the roles which different members of the estate community were expected to play, and the relationships which connected them to each other.

It appears as though there was an ulterior motive behind Edith Walton’s decision to discuss her financial troubles with Elsie Saunders. She would have known that, in her role as private secretary, Saunders lived and worked in close proximity to the Duchess of Devonshire. The extract quoted at the beginning of this introduction was part of a long letter written by Edith Walton. In this letter, she contextualised her economic situation, and, although the letter was addressed to Saunders, we can infer that, ultimately, she hoped news of her economic difficulties would reach her one-time masters. For instance, the inconsistencies between drawing attention to her struggles, and yet portraying her employment in a positive manner, suggests that she did not wish to offend members of the employing classes who may read her letter, and perhaps offer her some form of aid. Of course, it is impossible to know for certain what Edith Walton’s motivations for writing this letter were. Yet, by considering the limited welfare provisions which existed within British society at this time, and moreover, the emphasis which was placed upon private charity as a solution to welfare issues, it becomes apparent that employees like Miss Walton were often consigned to a position where they were economically dependent upon their social superiors. Prior to the Second World War, Britain’s

welfare provisions were rudimentary.³²¹ Consequently, Edith Walton could not have hoped to receive much in the way of official financial assistance. Much research into the origins of the ‘welfare state’ has emphasised the importance of the social reforms introduced by The Liberal Government between 1906 and 1914, and other policies which subsequently followed in the next couple of decades.³²² These initiatives were indeed remarkable in contrast with the *laissez-faire* attitude adopted by Victorian governments. Nonetheless, scholars including Pat Thane, Michael Sullivan, and Timothy T. Hellwig, have emphasised the numerous limitations to welfare policies such as the Old Age Pension Act of 1908 and the National Insurance Act of 1911.³²³ For example, pensions were only available to those over the age of seventy and were subject to strict means testing; unemployment and sickness pay was paltry and only lasted for a limited time; and working women, especially those who were married or widowed, were largely side-lined by official policy.³²⁴ In 1925, the *Widows, Orphans and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act* was passed. This piece of legislation laid the foundations for a basic flat-rate state pension. Nevertheless, the system was far from comprehensive, and the basic

³²¹ David Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660-1960* (London, 1965), p.596. Alex Hicks identified 1945 as the year of ‘welfare consolidation’ for the United Kingdom in A. Hicks, *Social Democracy and Welfare Capitalism* (New York, 1999); but Richard Titmuss noted that many British commentators saw 1948 as the date at which a complete ‘welfare state’ came into being in R. Titmuss, ‘The Social Division of Welfare: Some Reflections on the Search for Equity’ in *Essays on ‘The Welfare State’* (Boston, 1969).

³²² Such research includes Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform. English Social-Imperial thought 1895-1914* (London, 1960); B. B. Gilbert, *Evolution of national insurance in Great Britain : the origins of the welfare state* (London, 1966), G. R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency* (Oxford, 1971); D. Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State* (London, 1973); Pat Thane, ‘Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England’, *History Workshop*, No. 6 (Autumn, 1978) pp.29-51; Catherine Mills, ‘The Emergence of Statutory Hygiene Precautions in the British Mining Industries, 1890-1914’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (March, 2008), pp. 145-168.

³²³ Thane, ‘Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England’, pp.29-51; Michael Sullivan, *The Development of the British Welfare State* (Hemel Hempstead, 1996); and Timothy T. Hellwig, ‘The origins of Unemployment Insurance in Britain: A Cross-Class Alliance approach’, *Social Science History*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Spring, 2005) pp.107-136. For criticisms of earlier and later attempts at social reform, see Oliver MacDonagh, ‘The nineteenth-century revolution in government: a reappraisal’, *Historical Journal*, 1 (1958) pp.58-67; George Kitson Clark, *The Making of Victorian England* (London, 1962); A. Giddens, *The Third Way, The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Oxford, 2002).

³²⁴ Thane, ‘Women and the Poor Law’, pp.29-51; Michael Sullivan, *The Development of the British Welfare State* (London, 1996) & Timothy T. Hellwig, ‘The origins of Unemployment Insurance in Britain: A Cross-Class Alliance approach’, *Social Science History*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Spring, 2005) pp.107-136.

provisions guaranteed by the act were not enough to meet the subsistence needs of individuals like Edith Walton.³²⁵ Therefore, although these reforms reflected a move towards a more ‘collectivist culture’, charitable acts carried out by good Christian citizens were still generally regarded as the antidote to society’s problems.³²⁶ This was especially true within the domestic sphere, where it was felt that the head of the household had a paternalistic obligation to provide for all his dependents – kin and servants alike.³²⁷

As in the case of Edith Walton, labourers would no doubt have been keenly aware of the disparity between their own fiscal resources, and those of their employers. This would have been especially true in relation to domestic employment, where the contrast between the economic situations of servant and master would have been highlighted within the narrow confines of the domestic setting which they both shared. As waged domestic workers who were expected to live in the household of their master or mistress, not only were servants entirely dependent upon their masters for bed and board provisions, but they were also surrounded by objects of wealth which did not belong to them.³²⁸ In addition, their very presence allowed their employers a life of leisure which they themselves could only imagine. Although it is not portrayed as her principal grievance, the quoted excerpt demonstrates that Edith Walton certainly observed the differences between her own financial circumstances, and those of the

³²⁵ ‘Pension Trends, Chapter 1 Pensions Legislation: An Overview’, *Office for National Statistics*, 2005 Edition https://data.gov.uk/dataset/pension_trends/resource/0bb845c6-cfa4-403a-b67a-4076f4b7d449 [accessed on 11.08.2016].

³²⁶ The term ‘collectivist culture’ refers to a society in which members focus and act on group interests over individual interests, and the society in turn feels responsibility for the individual; this is the antithesis to an ‘individualist culture’. These terms were developed by Harry C. Traindis in *The Analysis of Subjective Culture* (New York, 1972) and *Individualism and Collectivism* (San Francisco, 1995); Thomas Adam, *Philanthropy, Patronage, and Civil Society* (Indiana, 2014) p.5 & Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660-1960*, p.596.

³²⁷ This tenet was based upon religious ideals. See “But if any provide not for his owne, & specially for those of his owne house, hee hath denied the faith, and is worse then an infidel.” *Bible*, Extract from 1 Timothy 5-8 from <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1-Timothy-5-8/> [accessed on 15.06.2016].

³²⁸ Definition of service taken from Steedman, *Labours lost*, pp.5-6.

families she served.³²⁹ Given all these factors, it would have been natural for Edith Walton to regard the Cavendish family as a source of assistance.

Just as the traditional reliance on private charity, rather than state provided welfare, consigned members of the working class to a position of dependence, it also forced a duty of care upon employers, as is exemplified by the case of Edith Walton.³³⁰ This obligation was considered to be separate, and in addition, to the formal financial arrangements which connected employers to their employees: such as wages paid for services rendered. Rather, the moral requirement to ‘provide for one’s own’ was to be met by voluntary contributions.³³¹ As a result, it is unsurprising that, once the Duchess had been made aware of Edith Walton’s situation, she resolved to offer her assistance. Nonetheless, although there were social expectations placed upon great landowners like the Dukes of Devonshire, there were no set rules and regulations governing the ideal of the ‘duty of care’.³³² In their study into *The Charity-Mongers of Modern Babylon: Bureaucracy, Scandal, and the Transformation of the Philanthropic Marketplace, c.1870 - 1912*, Sarah Roddy, Julie-Marie Strange and Bertrand Taithe drew attention to the fact that, in the absence of formal state regulation, the philanthropic marketplace of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century policed itself according to ‘shifting notions of “best” or

³²⁹ DC, DF 33/8/4/8, Letter from Edith Walton, Governess to Elsie Saunders, Private Secretary to Duchess Evelyn, 22/02/1933.

³³⁰ For examples of traditional reliance upon private acts of charity carried out by powerful individuals, see Mordechai Feingold, ‘Philanthropy, Pomp, and Patronage: Historical Reflections upon the Endowment of Culture’ in *Daedalus*, Vol. 116, No. 1, ‘Philanthropy, Patronage, Politics’ (Winter, 1987), pp.155-178; see Joel T. Rosenthal, *The Purchase of Paradise* (London, 1972), p.8, for an examination into the gifts given to the church and the poor by men of property in the Medieval Period; see W.K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England, 1480-1640* (London, 1959), for an examination into Tudor and Stuart concepts of philanthropy, and Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660-1960*, for reference to charitable acts throughout the Early Modern period and beyond.

³³¹ Term taken from the following religious tenet: “But if any provide not for his owne, & specially for those of his owne house, hee hath denied the faith, and is worse then an infidel.” *Bible*, Extract from 1 Timothy 5-8 from <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1-Timothy-5-8/> [accessed on 11.08.2016].

³³² See Mary Douglas, ‘Foreword’ in Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W. D. Halls (London, 1996), p.X, which discusses the lack of contractual rules governing gift exchange.

“virtuous” practice’.³³³ In a similar manner, individual benefactors, like the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, also carried out their charitable endeavours according to contemporary ideals of ‘best practice’, but were otherwise, free from restraint. Thus, the contributions through which employers intended to fulfil their obligation to ‘provide for their own’, could be extremely varied. With reference to the Cavendish family, forms of assistance provided include, but are by no means limited to, gifts; bequests; informal pensions; and annuities of varying amounts; and the provision of health care.³³⁴ Thus, although she may have anticipated some form of financial aid when writing her letter to Elsie Saunders, Edith Walton could not have known the degree of assistance she might receive. This ambiguity is, perhaps, why Saunders suggested the possibility of a ‘small pension’ of around £10 a year before she had followed up on the matter with the Duchess herself.³³⁵

The contours of Edith Walton’s story were apparent from a household account book, where, within the section pertaining to charitable expenditure, her name was recorded amongst a list of payees.³³⁶ Such account books were compiled by the estate office staff for the attention of Chatsworth’s chief agent, Roland Burke. Although the majority of sources utilised for this study are literary accounts of philanthropy, information recorded within account books and financial records proved, nonetheless, to be a useful starting point. Based upon the original reference, I investigated the archival collections for further documentation relating to Walton.

³³³ Sarah Roddy, Julie-Marie Strange, Bertrand Taithe, ‘The Charity-Mongers of Modern Babylon: Bureaucracy, Scandal, and the Transformation of the Philanthropic Marketplace, c.1870 – 1912’, *Journal of British Studies*, 54 (January, 2015), pp.118-137.

³³⁴ For example, DC, DF33/8/2, Elsie Saunders, private secretary, to Camille Ferré, former governess, Chatsworth, 28.09.1933, details a gift of money from the Cavendish family to a former employee; DC, DF33/8/3/1-8 The Letters of Fraulein von Bloem, 1935, relate to the provision of an informal pension; and DC, R13 9784, Letter from Mr Manners Sutton, private secretary, to the Superintendent St. George’s Hospital, London, 12.05.1915, pertains to the provision of healthcare to an employee of the Cavendish family.

³³⁵ DC, DF 33/8/4/11, Elsie Saunders, Private Secretary to Duchess Evelyn to Edith Walton, Governess, 02.03.1933.

³³⁶ DC, L/113/30, The Duke of Devonshire’s Charity Trust, 1938.

Thus, I found a series of uncatalogued letters exchanged between Walton and Saunders which revealed the narrative behind these payments. I then used this methodological approach in order to uncover other examples of philanthropic activity taking place on the estate between 1908 and 1950. I focused on other names recorded in account books under the heading of charitable expenditure and searched the archives for letters relating to these individuals, in an attempt to reveal the narrative behind the payments they received.

When conducting this examination, I noticed a pattern, whereby certain milestone events within an individual's life seemed to precipitate the giving of gifts and bequests: these events included weddings, retirements and deaths. I, therefore, widened the field of my investigation to include the correspondence of senior servants relating to such circumstances.

I did encounter some substantial challenges whilst researching the informal financial interactions taking place within the Chatsworth estate community during the first half of the twentieth century. Sometimes, I uncovered evidence of philanthropy in letters which were not recorded within the account books. Thus, whilst proving extremely valuable for kick-starting investigations into philanthropic payments, I found that the account books were not entirely reliable sources. In other cases, I encountered the opposite problem. In these instances, philanthropic gifts and payments had been recorded in the account books, but I could not find the correspondence relating to them, either because these letters had not been preserved, or because they remained hidden from view in the uncatalogued section of the archive. As was mentioned in the previous chapter of this thesis, currently only around sixty percent of the documents which make up the Devonshire Collection have been catalogued. This particular problem has forced me to consider the limitations of this study. It is possible that some important information relating to the philanthropic narratives explored within this chapter has

been missed out, either because it no longer exists, or because the documents holding this information remain uncatalogued. For example, I encountered a couple of letters relating to one particular philanthropic narrative within an uncatalogued bundle of letters of condolence on the death of William Cavendish, Lord Hartington, in 1944.³³⁷ I was examining these letters as part of a separate study, and had I not been doing so, I might never have been aware of their existence.

Due to these challenges, this study cannot profess to be a comprehensive account of philanthropy within the Chatsworth community, and there may be other examples of benevolence which remain uncovered. Yet, these obstacles are all associated with the informal nature of gift giving and charity, and as such, this chapter argues that no study of philanthropy can be entirely comprehensive. In order to try to navigate this concern, a large assortment of data relating to thirty-five cases of charitable giving was gathered. Although it would have been beyond the scope of the study to use all of this evidence, this examination has allowed for a basic understanding of the practice of philanthropy at Chatsworth between 1908 and 1950. Moreover, by uncovering this evidence, it has been possible to successfully catalogue hundreds of new documents for the Devonshire Collection.

Some of the philanthropic gestures discussed within this chapter, like those made out to Edith Walton, were granted after employees had approached senior servants for help in gaining financial assistance. Nevertheless, in most instances, the only qualitative evidence of philanthropy which could be found were the letters exchanged between members of the Cavendish family and their senior staff. These documents do not always detail whether this

³³⁷ DC, DF15/3/5/5 Letters of Condolence on the death of William Cavendish, Lord Hartington, Camille Ferré to Duchess Evelyn, from Paris, 17.02.1944 -18.02.1945.

assistance was requested, and they cannot tell us how these acts of benevolence were interpreted/received. Therefore, in order to avoid a top-down reading of domestic philanthropy, where possible, the documentary material used within this study is evidence which records both the giving of financial aid and its reception. As in the preceding chapters of this thesis, this examination adopts the approach of ‘history from the middle’, using the mediatory role undertaken by the senior servant in order to understand the history of Chatsworth between 1908 and 1950, not from the perspective of a single social group, but in relation to the whole community who lived, worked and interacted within its boundaries. Through this lens, the cases examined here provide insight into some of the social norms and inter-personal relationships which were the foundation of the Chatsworth community. Whilst this study will primarily examine philanthropic payments to servants which occurred between the accession of Victor Cavendish as 9th Duke of Devonshire in 1908, until the death of his son and heir, Edward Cavendish, in 1950, occasionally earlier examples of philanthropy will be utilised in order to demonstrate precedent.

In undertaking this examination, one of the most important distinctions to be made is the contrast between societal expectations and individual experiences of philanthropy. Consequently, this study is concerned with assessing how important the social norms, conventions, and opinions of the wider British society were to philanthropic practices taking place at Chatsworth. As this study has already noted, philanthropic payments appear to reflect the fact that domestic employees were economically dependent upon their employers. This concept, in relation to the themes of class and power, is explored further within the investigation. Additionally, the study considers whether servants were forced into a deferential position as a result of their dependence upon their masters, or alternatively, whether a ‘deferential demeanour’ could also be employed as a mask in order to guarantee preferential

treatment.³³⁸ As Harold Newby has argued, deference is performative and coded. Therefore, we cannot read examples of deference and dependence at face value.³³⁹ Through investigating this phenomenon, this chapter is able to engage with, and build upon the debates relating to deference and defiance outlined in the introduction to this thesis, which have formed the centre of studies conducted by scholars including Giles, Hegstrom, and Taylor.³⁴⁰

The ideal of the ‘duty of care’, owed by the Cavendish family to their employees, is also investigated within this study. The motives behind charitable giving can never be fully ascertained. Nevertheless, this study interrogates evidence of philanthropy in order to consider whether the Cavendish family engaged in such practices purely because, as Bronislaw Malinowsky has argued, they felt compelled to do so because of society’s expectations, or alternatively, whether they too might have been able to exploit the social practice of philanthropy to suit their own needs.³⁴¹ For example, philanthropic activities could be undertaken by an individual in order to justify their wealth and/or status in the eyes of the world, as well as those of God, by appearing to do their moral and religious duty.³⁴² Perhaps charitable payments could also be utilised by masters as a means to circumvent the need to pay

³³⁸ The idea of a deferential demeanour was developed by Newby in ‘The Deferential Dialect’, pp.139-164; Marcel Mauss and other scholars of gift exchange have argued that gift giving relegates the recipient to a subordinate position. Mauss, *The Gift*: p.3; Feingold, ‘Philanthropy, Pomp, and Patronage’, pp.160-165. Whilst this may be true, it does not necessarily follow that the subordinate party must act in a deferential manner, and Harold Newby has argued that deference could be employed as a mask.

³³⁹ Newby ‘The Deferential Dialect’, pp.139-164.

³⁴⁰ Giles, ‘Authority, Dependence and Power’, in Delap, Griffin & Wills (Eds), *The Politics of Domestic Authority*, p.211; Hegstrom, ‘Reminiscences of Below Stairs’, p.20; Taylor, *Women Domestic Servants 1919-1939*, p.13.

³⁴¹ Bronislaw Malinowsky, ‘Crime and Custom in Savage Society’, in Lewis A. Coser & Bernard Rosenber (Eds), *Sociological Theory: A Book of Readings* (5th Edition) (London, 1982) p.59. For discussions on whether individuals have power over their own decisions, or whether they are curtailed by society’s expectations, Foucault’s exploration of agency is particularly useful. See Robert M. Strozier, *Foucault, Subjectivity, and Identity: Historical Constructions of Subject and Self* (Detroit, 2002), pp.51-78. Some of Foucault’s own works that discuss agency are Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York, 1972) & Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley, 3 vols (New York, 1978-1986).

³⁴² Alan J. Kidd, ‘Philanthropy and the ‘Social History Paradigm’’, *Social History*, 21(2) (May, 1996) p.189.

their staff higher wages. Furthermore, philanthropy might have also been adopted as a strategy to encourage loyalty, and other desirable qualities amongst their members of staff.³⁴³ Whilst it is impossible to determine the exact impulses governing the giving and reception of gifts, it is clear that accounts of gift giving from both masters and servants were conforming to certain social ideals, and that, in some manner, these exchanges helped powerful individuals to ‘maintain their power.’³⁴⁴ Of chief interest to this study is the fact that these social performances were taking place.

Ultimately, the great variety in the philanthropic payments made by the Cavendish family to members of the Chatsworth community between 1908 and 1950 suggests that there were mixed and conflicting impulses at work. Unlike more formal financial interactions, those involving domestic gift giving were highly complex in nature, as they not only reflected societal norms, but also individual situations, personalities, and relationships from both upstairs and down. They suggest that, despite the outwardly formal appearance of master/servant relations, and the importance placed upon social norms, conventions and hierarchy, relationships between employers and employees could be experienced in a multitude of ways. This is the principal reason why an examination into such payments will be so beneficial for the field of domestic service.

The examination is split into three sections, each focusing upon a specific form of philanthropic exchange which took place within the Chatsworth community between 1908-1950. These are as follows: bequests intended as one-off demonstrations of reciprocation/thanks for good service; bequests pertaining to particular events which impacted upon the estate, such as

³⁴³ Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London, 2003), p.66.

³⁴⁴ Sennett & Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, p.28.

periods of festivity and war; and finally, philanthropic bequests relating to servants suffering from ill health and financial difficulties, like Edith Walton. Within each section, correspondence and accounts relating to these payments is analysed for evidence which may be able to answer the following questions: who were the benefactors and beneficiaries of these exchanges? What was given/received? Are any possible motivations indicated for these contributions, for example, is there any suggestion that the payment might be in reciprocation for hard work? Alternatively, did the recipient previously write to the Cavendish family for assistance? Or was the donation provoked by a certain event, such as an employee getting married or retiring? Following on from this, what was the reception/impact of these exchanges? Finally, and above all, this case study considers what these examples can tell us about the social norms, notions of power, and cross-class relationships which formed the foundation of the Chatsworth estate community.

4.2 An Analysis of Philanthropic Bequests which were Intended as Demonstrations of Gratitude for Services Rendered

Chatsworth was, in essence, a ‘Power House.’³⁴⁵ Its façade was intended to be a showcase of the wealth and power of the Cavendish family, yet this wealth and power was sustained by those who lived on and interacted with the Estate. It was the labour output of the local community (the tenants who worked the land and paid rents, and the servants and groundsmen who preserved the beautiful façade) which maintained Chatsworth House and supported the family which resided in it. On the surface, the practice of giving financial rewards to subordinates, in order to demonstrate gratitude for such hard work, appears to be altruistic. However, this case study shall adopt a critical outlook whilst interrogating evidence of these

³⁴⁵ Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, p.2.

payments, in order to consider the various impulses behind such behaviour.

According to the anthropological theory developed by Marcel Mauss in his seminal work, *The Gift*, the practice of gift giving is driven by obligation and reciprocity.³⁴⁶ In many instances, by giving financial rewards, the Upper Classes were *meeting* an obligation they owed to their subordinates for services rendered, an obligation which was not met by wages and market exchange alone. Jacob F. Field has argued that informal gifts and payments could significantly increase a servant's earning potential, and that, therefore, many depended upon such arrangements.³⁴⁷ Perhaps, in some ways, the practice of giving grants of money was a method through which landowners could circumvent the need to pay their employees higher wages. By appearing to be doing 'something extra' for their staff, employers may have been able to ensure that their staff remained financially dependent on them whilst also encouraging loyalty and hard work.

The custom of 'tipping' servants and staff dates back to the Early Modern period, and was often used in combination with docking wages as a 'carrot and stick' method for encouraging hard work, and penalising poor performance. Steve Hindle's study on Arbury Hall demonstrates how, between 1681 and 1685, Sir Richard Newdigate subscribed to this method: on the one hand, supplementing his male servants' basic wage by over 50 per cent, and his female servants' basic wage by around 40 per cent with tips and other miscellaneous payments; and on the other, issuing fines and forfeitures.³⁴⁸ The tradition continued well into the modern period, particularly in larger households. Fines were issued at Chatsworth by senior servants, such as the Usher of the Hall, to discourage acts of misconduct including: failing to stand up

³⁴⁶ Mauss, *The Gift*, p.3.

³⁴⁷ Field, 'Domestic service, gender, and wages', p.255.

³⁴⁸ Hindle, 'Below stairs at Arbury Hall', pp.81-84.

and drink the health of the Duke and Duchess before quenching one's own thirst, whether in the Servants' Hall, or at casual potations in the cellar; and failing to appear in a 'proper' state of dress i.e. not wearing livery when occasion called for it.³⁴⁹ On the other hand, financial rewards whether formal or informal, were felt to instil a sense of gratitude in the recipient, and encourage hard work and loyalty.³⁵⁰ In April 1919, Edward Cavendish, son and heir of the 9th Duke of Devonshire, wrote to his father regarding a rise in wages for certain members of staff, and commented 'I do not think that the increased cost will be anything like equal to the increased efficiency.'³⁵¹ It seems probable that 'tip-like' gifts and payments, such as the commission of £44 15s and 6 pence (d) earned by the shire horse stud groom on prizes won at horse shows in 1912; the skins of any deer killed which were the perquisite of game keeper Mr. McLauchlan; and the brace of pheasants offered each to the housekeeper, house steward and under butler in 1919; were likewise intended to encourage hard work.³⁵² If the rate of wages paid to domestic employees at Chatsworth had been especially high, these 'rewards' may not have achieved their desired effect as incentives for efficiency and good behaviour. Nonetheless, whilst they were certainly a welcome addition for employees, and acted as a paternalistic form of control, at Chatsworth at least, it does not seem as though such perquisites were intended as substitutes for sufficient wages.

The following report, compiled by the Eighth Duke of Devonshire's agent concerns Sidney Gasper, the Head Game Keeper at Chatsworth. It offers a comparison of Gasper's earning

³⁴⁹ DC, CH12/1/5 Letter to Francis Thompson, 01.07.1936.

³⁵⁰ Harold Newby describes how gift giving could often be utilised as a form of tension management within unequal societies in order to encourage deference and loyalty amongst one's subordinates, Howard Newby, 'The Deferential Dialect', p.150.

³⁵¹ DC, S3 9884, Letter from Edward Cavendish, Lord Hartington, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 10.04.1919.

³⁵² For evidence of the rate of commission earned by the shire horse stud groom, and the perquisites of game keeper Mr. McLauchlan, see DC, FM.4 List of Agents, Officials and Others 1912; for evidence of gifts of game, see DC, L/96/141, Chatsworth Estate Game List for Upper Servants 1919-1927.

potential at Chatsworth to that of his former position at Knowsley Hall, suggesting that, whilst such practices took place in other establishments, the Cavendish family did not traditionally substitute their employees' wages through the custom of giving tips or gifts:

Feb[ruar]y 20. 1897.

Gasper says, that Lord Stanley first asked him how he was situated at Chatsworth and he told his Lordship that it was very little better so far as money was concerned than the place he had at Knowsley, And Mr Victor came up [and] asked him the same thing. Gasper said that with vermin money, clothes, extra for night watching [etc] the place at Knowsley nearly reached the same money as Chatsworth and Gasper told them he thought he ought to have more money [and] they said they thought the same.³⁵³

The report suggests that Gasper admitted to earning slightly more money at Chatsworth than previously, when employed at Knowsley. It also draws attention to the fact that at his former place of employment, Gasper bolstered his earnings by taking on additional duties in order to receive informal gifts and payments. Thus, Gasper appears to have been in a better position at Chatsworth, as his salary was greater and he had less responsibilities.

Nevertheless, this extract seems to be quite contradictory in nature, as Gasper came to the conclusion that his income should be increased. He ostensibly found support for this proposition from Lord Stanley, his former employer, and Mr Victor (although the report is not specific, 'Mr Victor' could well be a reference to Victor Cavendish, who became the 9th Duke of Devonshire upon the death of his uncle). The report therefore raises an interesting question: why did Sidney Gasper expect more money from his position at Chatsworth? Perhaps he saw his engagement as Head Game Keeper to the Duke of Devonshire as more prestigious than his previous employment at Knowsley Hall and thus thought he deserved a significantly higher salary. The limited documentary evidence available makes it impossible to come to a definite

³⁵³ DC, L/94/182/10 Report Concerning Sidney Gasper, 20.02.1897.

conclusion. However, the archives do contain evidence of Sidney Gasper taking matters into his own hands and bolstering his income at Chatsworth by selling ‘spectator tickets’ to members of the public when a royal shooting party was taking place.³⁵⁴ This was not a customary practice and Gasper had not sought permission for this scheme. Once his entrepreneurship was discovered, he was dismissed.³⁵⁵ The previous chapter found that dishonesty was considered to be an undesirable quality in a domestic employee, but the actions of Sidney Gasper could also be seen as a challenge to the paternalistic authority of the Cavendish family. As Mauss discovered whilst conducting his anthropological study of gift-giving, the distribution of perquisites and philanthropic payments demonstrated an individual’s superordinate status within the community as well as their benevolence:

The great acts of generosity are not free from self-interest.... Between vassals and chiefs, between vassals and their henchmen, the hierarchy is established by means of these gifts. To give is to show one's superiority, to show that one is something more and higher, that one is magister. To accept without returning or repaying more is to face subordination, to become a client and subservient, to become minister.³⁵⁶

As such, by daring to find his own perquisites, Sidney Gasper had contested the authority of the Duke of Devonshire.

Domestic workers not only received ‘Tip-like’ gifts and payments from their own masters, but they also traditionally benefitted from the generosity of visitors and guests. This type of ‘tip’ was known as a ‘vail,’ and its practice within society was similarly widespread. However, historians such as Leonore Davidoff and Gillian Russell have portrayed this convention as more problematic for employers, because it allowed visitors and guests to assume a

³⁵⁴ DC, L/94/182/23 Letter Concerning Sidney Gasper, from Martin Gilson, Agent, [No Date]; and DC, L/94/182/28 Letter Concerning Sidney Gasper, 13.01.1905.

³⁵⁵ DC, L/94/182/27 Letter Concerning Sidney Gasper, from C. G. Hamilton to Martin Gilson, Agent, 14.01.1905.

³⁵⁶ Mauss, *The Gift* p.72.

superordinate position within the household.³⁵⁷ Davidoff in particular has argued that masters felt particularly threatened by the possibility of losing control over their own servants, whose loyalty might transfer to others offering them an alternate source of income.³⁵⁸ They pointed to an unsuccessful campaign to phase out the custom of giving ‘vails’ during the 1760s, which was ostensibly a result of these grievances, and argued that the struggle against ‘vails’ reveals the fact that masters regarded the deference and dependence of their servants to be reliant upon their own financial superiority.³⁵⁹

Although the staff at Chatsworth did receive tips and gifts from visitors and guests, there is no evidence to suggest that the Cavendish family felt threatened by such practices, or that they disapproved of them. Within a letter to his wife Evelyn, written in September 1914, Victor Cavendish noted that Mrs McCarthy, the housekeeper at their London residence, Devonshire House, had received a gift from a very distinguished visitor: ‘Queen Alexandra came here yesterday, but I was out. She gave Mrs McCarthy a brooch. Mrs M. is hugely pleased with it.’³⁶⁰ Nothing more about the incident is mentioned. The Duke’s comment that his housekeeper was ‘hugely pleased’ with her present does not imply that he, by contrast, was displeased. Rather, the fact that the Duke made a reference to the gift at all within a letter largely concerned with politics and the outbreak of the First World War is interesting. Evidently, he felt that the situation was noteworthy. The domestic employees of the Cavendish family often received gifts and payments from guests, yet this is the only example I have found of the practice being discussed amongst members of the family. Perhaps he was proud that his employee had found

³⁵⁷ Leonore Davidoff, ‘Mastered for Life: Servant and Wife in Victorian and Edwardian England’, *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Summer, 1974), pp.414-415; Gillian Russell, ‘“Keeping Place”: Servants, Theatre and Sociability in the mid-Eighteenth Century’, *The Eighteenth Century*, Vol.42, No.1 (2001), p.35.

³⁵⁸ Davidoff, ‘Mastered for Life’, pp.414-415.

³⁵⁹ Field, ‘Domestic service, gender, and wages’, pp.255-256; and Russell, ‘“Keeping Place”’p.35.

³⁶⁰ DC, D2 1874 The 9th Duke of Devonshire to Duchess Evelyn, 12.09.1914.

the favour of the dowager Queen, or maybe he was pleased for Mrs McCarthy. Whatever the reasoning behind the comment, Davidoff and Russell's assertions do not appear to apply here.

At Chatsworth, there were mechanisms in place for the distribution of 'vails'. Servants were expected to pool their 'tips' together, and this money would then be distributed according to rank: in 1906, the Housekeeper, Mrs Wilson, received ten percent of the 'house party money' collected which amounted to £20 16s 0d.³⁶¹ This had the effect of making the custom more equitable, although of course, high-ranking servants received a larger share of the spoils. On other occasions, senior-servants acted as 'middle men' by distributing 'vails' to lower-ranking workers in the place of guests and visitors. On 22nd May 1933, after hosting an event at Chatsworth, the assistant secretary to the Contemporary Art Society wrote the following letter to Elsie Saunders, private secretary to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire: 'Would you please add to your kindness by giving the 30/- enclosed to the 3 footmen who were kept busy on our behalf - if they don't expect it, as you say, then so much the better for them!'³⁶²

The above letter from the Contemporary Art Society secretary raises interesting points in relation to 'tipping' customs. For one, it demonstrates the kind of financial reward hard-working servants could hope to gain. However, it is the inclusion of the phrase 'if they don't expect it, then so much the better for them' which is of particular interest to this study. Is it credible to assume that the three footmen in question truly did not *expect* this 'tip'? Or rather, is it more likely that, through articulating this belief to the assistant secretary within an earlier letter, Saunders, was merely trying to be polite? As this case study has already established, the practice of 'tipping' staff was widespread. Perhaps servants could not 'bank on' such

³⁶¹ DC, FM/4 List of Agents, Officials and Others with their Salaries and Emoluments, Compiled by Mr Currey, agent, 31.12.1907.

³⁶² DC, BB 26/12510, Mr. H. S. Ede, Assistant Secretary, The Contemporary Art Society to Elsie Saunders, private secretary, 22.05.1933.

demonstrations of gratitude, but it does not necessarily follow that they didn't expect them. According to research undertaken within the field of historical pragmatics, Elsie Saunders' assurances could be interpreted as an example of 'negative politeness': a form of linguistic behaviour in which the author attempts to pay respect to the recipient's 'negative face' (in other words, an individual's wish to be unimpeded in their actions, rather than to be 'bossed around').³⁶³ This scenario seems credible. As a senior servant who occupied the role of mediator, Saunders often had to moderate her choice of language accordingly. In this situation, she was communicating with a social superior on behalf of her mistress, and as such, she would have adopted the language of politeness. By declaring to the assistant secretary that the footmen would not expect a 'tip', Saunders may have been leaving the decision up to the assistant secretary out of deference. Yet, it is also possible to read the sentence as an indicator of social norms. Despite the expectations they may have had, servants should not be seen to be anticipating 'tips'. In this case, the comment 'so much the better for them' could be considered to have moralistic dimensions, as a suggestion that the three footmen in question are 'better people' for not having any expectations. On the other hand, the comment can also be seen as a financial assessment of the situation: if the employees don't anticipate a 'tip' then they will be better surprised and pleased upon receiving one. During the early years of the twentieth century, it was widely recognised that a servant's earning potential was limited.³⁶⁴ It is feasible that this knowledge thereby created a moral obligation for such giving. It would certainly explain why guests and visitors engaged in this custom. This theory also seems analogous to the moral and religious duty of looking after one's subordinates, to which attention was drawn at the beginning of this study. Perhaps modern tipping culture is a custom related to this. It is

³⁶³ Jucker & Taavitsainen, 'For your courtesie', p.115.

³⁶⁴ In relation to domestic service, it is very likely that the low wages associated with the profession were common knowledge. The second objective of the Domestic Workers Union, as laid out in 1910, was to 'obtain better conditions for an overworked and often underpaid class of workers' as quoted in Schwartz, 'What we think is needed is a Union of Domestics', pp.186-8.

interesting to note that the practice of tipping is more pronounced in the United States of America, where there is no minimum wage.³⁶⁵

Whilst considering the gifts and payments given to estate staff, both by their employers and household guests, it becomes apparent that the tradition was both a financially meaningful method for encouraging hard-work and loyalty and a way to thank individuals for exhibiting these tendencies. The following extract is from a letter sent by Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, to his private secretary, Mr Manners Sutton. It demonstrates that the Duke felt a compulsion to show his gratitude through the giving of financial rewards, despite being under no *formal* obligation to do so. The letter, dated 27th January 1914, referred to the Duke's long-serving valet, Earl, who has handed in his notice. The Duke explained:

I thought of giving him a present but am rather doubtful on what amount. I must of course wait till he has definitely been appointed, but I suppose the examination is merely formal. Do you think £100 would be a right amount. He has been with me a long time and I shall have no liability for a pension.³⁶⁶

Within the extract, the Duke freely acknowledged the fact that, once Earl left him, he would have no *legal* liability for him. Yet, despite this fact, the Duke felt that he had some obligation to fulfil and that therefore he should do something for his valet. Within the letter, the Duke drew particular attention to the fact that Earl had been with him 'a long time'. This indicates that any gift given was motivated by a sense of duty, formed as a result of Earl's many years of good service. It is also important to highlight the fact that the Duke could not decide upon the amount appropriate for this financial gift. The significance placed upon value in relation to

³⁶⁵ For more information on the importance of tipping in low wage sectors, see J.S. Seiter, H. Weger, 'Does a customer by any other name tip the same?: The effect of forms of address and customers' age on gratuities given to food servers in the United States', *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol.43(8) (August, 2013), pp.1592-1598.

³⁶⁶ DC, C17 1804 The 9th Duke of Devonshire to Mr Manners-Sutton, 27.01.1914.

present giving was a theme common to all categories of philanthropic payments occurring within the Chatsworth community. In letters such as this, written to their secretaries regarding philanthropic payments, strict instructions were often included as to the amount of money to be spent, and when they were unsure as in this instance, members of the Cavendish family sought advice from their senior servants on the ‘appropriate’ value of such payments.³⁶⁷ When Mademoiselle Régnault, a governess formerly employed at Chatsworth, got married, the occasion of her wedding engaged the honour of the 9th Duke and Duchess. Accordingly, they determined to buy her a gift. However, they could not decide on the appropriate item. Their deliberations were recorded after they turned to their senior servants for assistance. The following extract is from a letter written by Elsie Saunders to Mr. Manners-Sutton:

The Duchess thought something about £6 or £7 would do, she suggests Bon Bon dishes, hot water jug or silver candlestick but she doesn't really mind what it is so long as it is likely to be useful and will travel to France easily.³⁶⁸

It appears from this statement that the Duchess of Devonshire believed that a gift to the value of £6 or £7 would fulfil her obligation to her former employee. Although the Devonshire Collection archives contain many other references to the appropriate amount of money to be spent on philanthropic gestures, they are similarly casual. It is, therefore, impossible to determine how members of the Cavendish family agreed upon a suitable amount of expenditure, or why certain individuals received more than others. Nonetheless, it seems as though it bore some correlation to the gratitude felt by the benefactor, and the sense of obligation or duty which they held as a result of this. Long-serving members of staff and hard-working individuals had done more to fulfil their own duty of service, and, therefore, had

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ DC, C17 1793, Elsie Saunders, private secretary to Duchess Evelyn to Mr. Manners-Sutton, private secretary to the 9th Duke of Devonshire, 29.03.1912.

engaged a greater sense of obligation in their employers. As a result, they received gifts and payments of a higher value. In this respect, financial rewards and other gifts were not given entirely altruistically. Yet, as this case study seeks to demonstrate, there were often numerous impulses behind the giving of gifts. There are many examples of philanthropy within the Chatsworth community, which clearly indicate a personal motivation alongside a broader sense of moral duty or the obligation to publicly perform a certain role. This shall be explored further within the following section of this chapter.

Another important aspect to consider in the case of Mademoiselle Régnault, was the stipulation that the present must be useful. We can, perhaps, take this as an indication that gifts and payments are a physical manifestation of the bonds connecting the benefactor and the beneficiary, a theme which has been explored by Mauss.³⁶⁹ A gift which was likely to be used more often, would not only demonstrate the fulfilment of an obligation, but also frequently serve to re-emphasise the bonds between the Duchess and Mademoiselle Régnault. Yet, although the Duchess wished to get Mademoiselle Régnault a useful present, the letter indicates that she did not know her former governess well, as she did not have a particular gift in mind. In fact, one of the Duchess' suggestions for a gift; a 'hot water jug', was later decided to be unsuitable by her secretary, Elsie Saunders, who was giving instructions for the purchase of the gift: 'Perhaps a hot water jug would not be so useful in France as they do not drink much tea.'³⁷⁰ Neither the Duchess, nor Miss Saunders could agree on whether or not Mademoiselle Régnault was a tea drinker and, as such, this example of gift giving provides evidence that the Cavendish family did not necessarily enjoy a close relationship with all of their employees. However, it also demonstrates how gifts and payments were intended to convey certain

³⁶⁹ Mauss, *The Gift* p.13.

³⁷⁰ DC, C17 1793, Letter from Elsie Saunders, 29.03.1912.

messages. Additionally, the letter demonstrates once more how far the ties of community could stretch. Once again, we see an example of gift exchange occurring between members of the Cavendish family and a former employee, with senior servants undertaking the role of emissary. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to trace the employment records of Mademoiselle Régnault, and therefore, the length of time between the governess leaving Chatsworth and receiving this gift cannot be determined. Nonetheless, it is still interesting that despite leaving the estate, Mademoiselle Régnault was still considered to be part of the Chatsworth community: she was still bound to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, Elsie Saunders, and Manners-Sutton, just as they were still connected to her.

4.3 Specific Scenarios which motivated Philanthropic Payments

Specific scenarios could often act as a catalyst for gift giving and philanthropy. In a manner very similar to the North American rituals which inspired Marcel Mauss' theories on gift exchange, scenarios such as periods of festivity, one-off celebrations, and even warfare all impacted upon the Chatsworth estate and resulted in the giving of the philanthropic payments.³⁷¹ Evidently, the sense of obligation created by such events could augment other pre-existing motivations for gift giving. Thus, focusing on these scenarios proves to be very useful for this study.

Of all the events which could precipitate philanthropic giving, Christmas was, perhaps, the most obvious. In the incomplete and unpublished memoirs of Lady Maud Baillie, eldest daughter of the 9th Duke of Devonshire, Christmas at Chatsworth was portrayed as a period of festivity for both the family and their staff. In one passage, Lady Maud described a symbolic

³⁷¹ Douglas, 'Foreword', in Mauss, *The Gift*, p.XIV.

exchange of gifts, which her mother, Evelyn Cavendish, distributed yearly to both the ‘house party’ and ‘the staff’ at the Christmas Tree. Yet, although the Duchess of Devonshire presided over the custom, Maud noted that the presents were actually sourced by Elsie Saunders: ‘My Mother had the most perfect Secretary... At Xmas, she [Elsie Saunders] was responsible for all the presents, which my mother duly distributed to the House Party and the Staff at the Xmas Tree.’³⁷²

This extract sheds some light upon the unique role occupied by Elsie Saunders within the Chatsworth estate community. She was not included with the house party, and nor was she classified as part of the staff. Instead, as the ‘perfect secretary’ she held a separate position somewhere between the two groups. Maud’s memoirs intimate that she was trusted a great deal, because the Duchess relied on her to select and choose presents, not only for Chatsworth’s estate workers and servants, but also for members of her own family. The second case study of this thesis’ final chapter examines Saunders’ role in great detail, and in that section, the ideas discussed here are developed further. In particular, the case study considers what it meant to be a ‘perfect’ secretary, and argues that a good sense of taste, and the ability to take responsibility for her mistress’ material possessions, were extremely important aspects of Elsie Saunders’ job.

Immediately following the above extract, whilst reminiscing about the traditional gift-giving ceremony which both the house party and the staff shared-in together, Maud recalled the presents which were received one particular year. She wrote: ‘One year we were all given Roller skates, which led to the most exciting games of hockey among the Statues in the

³⁷² DC, DF28/1/4, Unpublished Memoirs of Lady Maud Baillie (Cavendish), [Undated].

Orangery...'³⁷³ The language used by Lady Maud within this passage demonstrates how, despite the fact that they all took part in the Christmas festivities, certain distinctions still separated the various members of the estate community. It is evident that when Lady Maud used the pronoun 'we' in the extract above, she was referring to herself and her siblings. It is hard to imagine that the estate's employees received roller skates as gifts. Instead, evidence suggests that they received something more suitable and befitting of their station within Chatsworth's hierarchy. Although Lady Maud's memoirs hold no more information on how members of staff may have experienced Christmas at Chatsworth, by examining Household Vouchers for the month of December over successive years, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of the gifts given to servants by the Cavendish family at the Xmas Tree. The Vouchers for December 1909 relate to the first Christmas which the family celebrated at Chatsworth after Victor Cavendish succeeded his Uncle to become the 9th Duke of Devonshire and the many payments recorded under the heading 'Xmas Gifts and Allowances' demonstrate how important it was to continue the tradition of gift-giving under the new regime.³⁷⁴ By taking a closer look at these Household Vouchers, we can not only ascertain who the recipients of these presents were, but we can also determine their financial worth.

In 1909, the 9th Duke of Devonshire spent a total amount of £16 5s 0d on 'Xmas Gifts and Allowances' for the Chatsworth community, which, according to Maud, might include both family members and staff.³⁷⁵ *MeasuringWorth's* calculations for computing relative value indicates that this amount would now be worth somewhere in the region of £5,756.³⁷⁶ By

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ DC, Duke of Devonshire's Household Accounts, Vouchers for November 1909 – January 1910 [Uncatalogued].

³⁷⁵ DC, FM/15, Household Accounts: Yearly Abstract of Receipt, Expenditure and Balance Statements 1908-1917.

³⁷⁶ 'Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount, 1270 to Present', *MeasuringWorth*, 2016 www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/ [accessed on 05.07.2016].

focusing on individual household vouchers from this time, we can see that set payments of 10/- were made to each member of staff directly employed by the family.³⁷⁷ The uniform nature of these payments, regardless of a staff member's position within the estate hierarchy, is likely due to the fact that such gifts were publicly given, and the Cavendish family did not wish to suggest any favouritism. The vouchers also show that it was not just employees who received gifts and payments from the family. Payments of varying amounts were recorded alongside the names of many individuals who were connected to the estate, including grocers, postmen and even the driver of an Omnibus.³⁷⁸ The local needy also received Christmas presents, with a gift of ½ lb Tea and 1 lb Sugar being given to J. Pemberton, who was recorded as having worked for many years in the gardens at Hardwick, another estate owned by the Cavendish family.³⁷⁹ Similarly, the Sisters of the Poor, who were not directly connected to any of the Cavendish Family holdings but were situated near their London residence, Devonshire House, were the recipients of 2 Plum Puddings.³⁸⁰ Once again, through examining records relating to gift giving, it has been possible to distinguish certain philanthropic networks which hint at the depth and breadth of the Chatsworth estate community, a community which included not only current and former employees and tenants, but also a wide range of individuals who interacted with their various estates and holdings.

Despite the economic challenges increasingly faced by large estates during the course of the twentieth century, spending on Christmas gifts at Chatsworth increased. By 1916, the costs entered under the heading of 'Gifts and Allowances', had risen to £25 14s 10d.³⁸¹ Although inflation meant that the increase in expenditure from £16 5s 0d was not as high as it might at

³⁷⁷ DC, Duke of Devonshire's Household Accounts, Vouchers for November 1909 – January 1910 [Uncatalogued].

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ DC, FM/15, Household Accounts: Yearly Abstract 1908-1917.

first appear, there was nonetheless an escalation of spending – this amount would be worth close to £7,238 today.³⁸² This was, perhaps, the result of a growing need to maintain morale during the wartime years. Never was this more necessary than the Christmas of 1917. In 1916, the 9th Duke of Devonshire had been appointed Governor General of Canada, and he and his family had left England, leaving chief agent, Roland Burke, and land agent, J.P. Cockerell in charge of Chatsworth. By 1917, a succession of other wartime developments had impacted upon the estate, including the arrival of a group of Belgian refugees and the opening of a Royal Naval Convalescent Hospital within the Cavendish Institute (which housed the estate offices and a social club). Additionally, at this time, large numbers of domestic workers were leaving service in order to pursue war work, so a heavier workload fell upon those remaining.³⁸³ Cockerell recognised that, under these circumstances, it was more important than ever for the Cavendish family to demonstrate their good will and benevolence towards their employees. Towards the end of October, he wrote to the Duke to press the issue:

There is a matter I should like you to settle, and that is, whether the usual beef and bread dole should be given out this year at Christmas. I grant that it may be an extravagance, but on the other hand, there will be a great many poor people who will have to do without any meat this Christmas, as they will not be able to afford to buy it.³⁸⁴

It has not been possible to locate the Duke's response to this letter. However, we can infer that he took Cockerell's advice to heart, because he gave his land agent licence to throw a series of festivities for the estate community. Subsequently, Cockerell typed up a newsletter to send to the Duke and Duchess in Canada, which reported on the festivities which they had paid for,

³⁸² 'Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount, 1270 to Present', MeasuringWorth, 2016 www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/ [accessed on 05.07.2016].

³⁸³ Horn, *Life Below Stairs in the 20th Century*, p.12.

³⁸⁴ DC, S10 10,037, letter written by J.P. Cockerell to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 31.10.1917.

but were unable to attend, declaring that it had been ‘a Christmas time worthy to be remembered’:

It would have gladdened the hearts of Their Graces, the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, to have been at the Chatsworth Institute on the occasion of the Children’s Christmas Party this year – perhaps some ethereal joy-wave did reach them over the leagues of ocean!³⁸⁵

A morale boost was not only required for the members of the community who had remained at Chatsworth, but also for those serving at the front. Therefore, during the First World War, the Cavendish family also conceived of an appeal to send Christmas gifts, worth approximately 5s 6d each, to all Derbyshire soldiers.³⁸⁶

After the close of the war in 1918, the Cavendish family found it necessary to make certain economies. For example, they sold their London residence, Devonshire House. They also decided against regenerating the great conservatory, which had fallen into disrepair during the course of the war, and instead, they pulled the structure down. Yet, in spite of these economic decisions, the amount they spent on Christmas gifts and allowances continued to rise. By 1938, when Victor Cavendish died, and his son Edward became the 10th Duke of Devonshire, expenditure had reached an astonishing £137 10s 0d.³⁸⁷ This amount would be worth somewhere in the region of £21,300 today.³⁸⁸ There is no record of, or precedent for, the recipients making a return gesture and presenting the Cavendish family with reciprocal Christmas gifts. Again, we can assume that in the giving of Christmas presents, the Cavendish

³⁸⁵ DC, DF15/3/4/3, Christmas at Edensor, J.P. Cockerell to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, and Duchess Evelyn, 1917.

³⁸⁶ DC, T17 10,376, Lt. Col. Brooke Taylor, Copy of Report ‘Christmas Gifts to Derbyshire Forces at the Front’, 17.11.1915.

³⁸⁷ DC, L 113/30, Chatsworth Estates Company, List of Voluntary Payments Made During the Year Ended 31.03.1938.

³⁸⁸ ‘Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount, 1270 to Present’, MeasuringWorth, 2016 www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/ [accessed on 05.07.2016].

family were *meeting* an obligation they felt they owed to members of their community. It seems apparent that the Cavendish family met their legal obligations through wages, but the gifts, payments and other celebrations were about something extra: both a reward and an incentive for hard-work and good behaviour which suggests the highly personal nature of relations between masters and servants. It is difficult to explain why expenditure on Christmas presents continued to rise throughout the period in focus, especially when compared to the minimal increases made to servants' wages during this period, and the economic difficulties faced by the Devonshire Estate as a result of the First World War.³⁸⁹ Yet, as has already been alluded to, the appropriate amount of money to be spent on philanthropic payments was something which the Cavendish family paid particular attention to. It appears that it was part of their identity as particularly benevolent employers. Thus, it appears that they regarded increased expenditure on 'Christmas Gifts and Allowances' as a necessity. Perhaps, in an era of increasing opportunities for members of the working class, the Cavendish family were attempting to provide incentives for their employees to remain with them.

The First World War not only impacted upon the Chatsworth estate's Christmas expenditure, but it also created other philanthropic obligations for the Cavendish family. When war broke out in 1914, there was a pressure on Great Landowners to encourage their men to enlist. On 12th August 1914, less than a fortnight after hostilities began, *The Times*, called on those employing 'men in unproductive domestic occupations, both in and out of doors' to encourage them to join up:

There are a large number of footmen, valets, butlers and gardeners, whose services are more or less superfluous and can either be dispensed with or replaced by women without seriously hurting or incommoding anybody... The well-to-do classes are, as a whole, responding finely to the call...but many of them may not perhaps have realised

³⁸⁹ DC, FM/5, Servants Wages and Allowances 1925-1933.

yet how large a reserve of the national manhood is represented by those who serve their personal comforts and gratifications.³⁹⁰

As there was a long-established connection between the landed classes and the military, the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire felt that it was their national duty to ensure that any men from their estate who were able to serve, did so. On 10th September 1914, Duchess Evelyn wrote the following letter to her husband:

I went to Mrs. Hully and asked her if she knew that the husband had refused to go to the front and that his example had been followed by many others.

I told her that he could never hold up his head again in this county and that Captain Tavisham was travelling around the county looking for men to replace the Chatsworth shirkers. I also told her that Chatsworth would be despised by the whole country. She said it was all her fault. She had worried him not to go but that now she understood how wrong she had been. She promised to write tonight to tell him to volunteer.³⁹¹

This letter provides us with another meaningful insight into the relationships which existed within the Chatsworth community. It demonstrates that members of the Cavendish family truly did feel that they were performing their role as employers on a national stage. *The Times* article quoted above, held a poor view of employers who kept their domestic workers, rather than letting them join the war effort. In suggesting that ‘Chatsworth shirkers’ would encourage the whole country to despise the estate, it seems that the Duchess felt the weight of this argument and sensed that any transgressions on the part of her employees, would reflect badly upon her. Evidently, she also held the belief that such transgressions conflicted with an employee’s duty to loyally serve herself and the estate. As such, she felt justified in attempting to prevent any further damage being done to Chatsworth’s reputation, by encouraging these ‘shirkers’ to enlist. The Duke took a different approach in order to achieve the same outcome, assuming the

³⁹⁰ *The Times*, 12.08.1914 quoted in Horn, *Life Below Stairs in the 20th Century*, p.23.

³⁹¹ DC, M23 5273, Letter written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 10.09.1914.

position of ‘good cop’, to his wife’s role as ‘bad cop’. Instead of shaming individuals on the estate into enlisting, he offered to supplement military wages, making them up to an individual’s usual estate salary.³⁹² Although these payments were unquestionably helpful to their recipients, the Duke’s decision was clearly not solely motivated by altruistic intentions. His ‘duty of care’ to his subordinates, and his public role as an employer meant that some sort of gesture to those in service was probably required. However, as was made evident by the Duchess’s attempts to encourage enlistment, the primary motivation behind these payments may have been to ensure a particular outcome. Moreover, he was not the only member of the landed elite to offer financial incentives in order to boost recruitment figures. Pamela Horn has conducted research into the practices of the Duke of Rutland whose estate was close to Chatsworth, and who made similar payments to his domestic staff and his tenants in order to encourage enlistment.³⁹³

The Duke and Duchess’s combined efforts appear to have paid off. By January 1915, Chatsworth had the highest recruitment rate in Derbyshire, with 24% of all eligible men serving their country.³⁹⁴ This percentage was almost double that of the region with next highest rate of recruitment, Brimington, where 13.8% of all eligible men were engaged in active service.³⁹⁵ Surely this was not a coincidence. Rather, these figures suggest that gift giving, in combination with other factors, could motivate recipients to act in a certain way. After all, Mauss’ theory on gift giving centres around the theme of reciprocity.³⁹⁶ Did the Duke anticipate any other forms of reciprocity for these payments? The receipts delivered by the Chatsworth estate office and signed by the returning soldiers at the close of the war do suggest one thing:

³⁹² DC, FM/18, First World War Ledger of Men Called into Military Service at Chatsworth, 1914-1919.

³⁹³ Pamela Horn, *Country House Society: The Private Lives of England’s Upper Class after the First World War*, (Gloucestershire 2015) p.18.

³⁹⁴ Figures from DC, T17 10,347, County Roll of Honour – Totals Received to 31st January 1915.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁶ Douglas, foreword in Mauss, *The Gift*, p.XIV.

gratitude. Many of the receipts include messages of thanks from the beneficiaries. However, two contain a brief annotation written in the same hand quoting: ‘Not a word of thanks to Duke.’³⁹⁷ As the estate accounts were chiefly looked after by the Duke’s agent, it is very likely that these notes were made by Mr. Cockerell, the Chatsworth agent at this particular time, or one of the estate clerks acting on his behalf. Because the lack of gratitude has been drawn attention to, we can infer firstly, that this behaviour went against the grain, and secondly, that either Mr. Cockerell or one of his clerks frowned upon this behaviour. It is worth considering that any form of giving creates a debt, one which constrains the recipient to act deferentially towards their benefactor, even if the benefactor is reaping other rewards for his act of ‘generosity’.³⁹⁸ Clearly Mr. Cockerell and other senior servants were aware of the particular social norms which governed gift giving and acts of philanthropy within the Chatsworth community, Moreover, they felt it was their duty to oversee these philanthropic exchanges and ensure that they were met with the correct response. The receipts signed by other beneficiaries which include messages of gratitude, suggest that many other members of staff were also mindful of these social practices. Therefore, in declining to give their thanks, the two men in question were bucking social conventions and failing to acknowledge this debt. Nevertheless, it is worth considering that these two individuals may not have felt indebted to the Duke. As the money they had received was the difference between their military wages and their estate salary, they may well have believed that they had ‘earned’ it. By reading the exchange in this light, it is possible to see how easy it was for discord to emerge between two parties when a philanthropic gesture was too ambiguous.

³⁹⁷ DC, L96/138, Vouchers for First World War Payments, 1918 – 1919.

³⁹⁸ Kidd, ‘Philanthropy and the ‘Social History Paradigm’’, p.183.

4.4 An Examination of Philanthropic Payments to those Employees Suffering from Ill Health or Financial Difficulties

The final section of this case study shall consider gifts that were given to those suffering from ill health or financial difficulties. We have already caught a glimpse of this practice, both within the introduction of this case study in reference to Edith Walton, and also with reference to the Household Vouchers from December 1909.³⁹⁹ The bequests made to Edith Walton, J. Pemberton, and the Sisters of the Poor, are only a few examples of the many philanthropic gifts given by members of the Cavendish family to their subordinates. This section shall establish how the assistance of the Cavendish family could be induced, and what forms this assistance could take.

As this study has previously argued, philanthropic giving could be encouraged by an individual's desire to live up to a social ideal: for the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire such benevolence could serve to justify their wealth and status on a national stage by augmenting their reputation of being good employers. Moreover, this study has argued how gifts could serve to reward and encourage hard-work and loyalty amongst the recipients. Both of these factors have reinforced a cynical stance amongst academics such as Newby and Feingold: were the benefactors in question really behaving in an altruistic manner, or were they in fact, justifying their own status and cultivating feelings of loyalty and dependency amongst the recipients?⁴⁰⁰ Some scholars, such as Mordechai Feingold, have gone as far as to suggest that the practice of philanthropy was, by its nature, weighted to the advantage of the giver.⁴⁰¹ In *The*

³⁹⁹ DC, [Uncatalogued], Duke of Devonshire's Household Accounts, Vouchers for November 1909-January 1910.

⁴⁰⁰ Newby, 'The Deferential Dialect', p. 161. & Feingold, 'Philanthropy, Pomp, and Patronage', pp.164-165.

⁴⁰¹ Feingold, 'Philanthropy, Pomp, and Patronage', pp.164-165.

Gift, Mauss recognised the debt of gratitude a gift could incur. As a result, he declared that there could be no such thing as a ‘free gift’.⁴⁰² By offering their subordinates gifts and relief in this manner, the Cavendish family could go a long way towards meeting their ‘duty of care’. Certainly, as we have seen in the previous two sections of this investigation, this was something which would not only reflect well on them, but would also encourage feelings of deference and dependence in return. Nevertheless, as this case study has also attempted to emphasise, gift exchange was a highly personal form of interaction, and there were usually a combination of factors motivating such behaviour.

Within the Chatsworth community, there existed several official lines through which an individual could claim assistance. One such institution was the Devonshire Charities Trust. Although these organisations were predominately financed by the Cavendish family, there was also direct involvement from senior servants, who acted as Trustees. By analysing the accounts belonging to the Devonshire Charities Trust, we can establish the scenarios which resulted in assistance, and ascertain the form this assistance took. The records relating to the years 1912 to 1932 show that the majority of financial aid went to the younger members of the community, in the form of scholarships, and grants for apprenticeships and tools.⁴⁰³ The accounts contain no details of why these young people received assistance, so we can only infer that they came from low income backgrounds and thus, were deemed worthy to receive grants of money from the charity. Two siblings, George and Joan Maltby received money for an apprenticeship and a scholarship respectively.⁴⁰⁴ Their father, Mr. W. Maltby, was a carpenter and fought in the First World War.⁴⁰⁵ Perhaps, as a carpenter, Mr. Maltby’s earning potential was not high. Or

⁴⁰² Mauss, *The Gift*, p.3.

⁴⁰³ DC, L/93/2, The Devonshire Charities Account of the Local Trustees, 1912-1932.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ DC, DE/CH/6/3/26-31, National Insurance Records: Household, Fisheries, Lodge Porters, Nursing, 1914-1922.

perhaps, as a veteran, his case for financial assistance was deemed more worthy than others. It is impossible to know for certain.

By 1938, upon the death of the 9th Duke of Devonshire, there were efforts to consolidate all charitable institutions under one umbrella organisation; the Duke of Devonshire's Charity Trust (a distinct organisation to the Devonshire Charities Trust, and intended to be its successor). Like its predecessors, the Duke of Devonshire's Charity Trust kept records of its payments. Yet, the same problem emerges. Its accounts provide evidence that gardener C. Chester, received money for an X Ray and hospital fees amounting to £4 4s 0d in 1938.⁴⁰⁶ However, no details of C. Chester's injury, or his circumstances, are provided. It seems, therefore, to be unlikely that we will be able to find evidence for the particular motivations behind the payments given out to members of the estate through official lines. It is also unlikely that we will be able to determine whether members of the Cavendish Family were personally involved in the philanthropic decisions made by the Charity Trust, or if they instead passed on this responsibility, and allowed their senior servants to make the final judgements. In the hopes of achieving a more nuanced understanding of gift giving, this study shall focus instead on the more discrete and personal examples of philanthropy recorded within the Cavendish Archives.

Many examples of philanthropic activity occurring on the Chatsworth estate, whether indiscrete or not, related to illness or injury. There was precedent for this. In 1905 the aforementioned game keeper, Sidney Gasper, appears to have been injured whilst serving out his notice period, having been dismissed by Spencer Compton Cavendish, the 8th Duke of Devonshire, for, amongst other things, selling spectator tickets for a royal shooting party. In a

⁴⁰⁶ DC, L/113/30, Chatsworth Estates Company, Duke of Devonshire's Charity Trust & List of Voluntary Payments Made During the Year Ended 31/03/1938.

conversation between the 8th Duke's agent and his solicitor, the details of the accident and the liability of the Duke were discussed:

Is the Duke legally liable under the Employers liability act to compensate, of course if Gasper was injured in his service the Duke will compensate him apart from any question of legal liability but I sh[oul]d like to know the legal position [and] what under the Court[?] w[ou]ld be the compensation say for 4 months injury. I propose to have Gasper examined at once by a first-rate surgeon on behalf of His Grace.⁴⁰⁷

In the example above, it is possible to see that great importance was placed upon the principle of a Master's 'duty of care'. The letter suggests that, despite the fact that Gasper was due to leave the Duke's employ, Spencer Compton still felt a strong sense of moral obligation towards his game keeper. It is, of course, impossible to tell whether the 8th Duke really held such feelings. Perhaps he and his agent merely felt that, as one of the richest and most high-profile individuals in the country, the Duke should offer some sort of assistance to Gasper. In this manner, he could prove himself to be scrupulous in his role as an employer. Regardless, this assistance was not given without conditions. The Duke's agent stipulated that: 'His Grace would be willing to give £50 or £100 but he w[oul]d like to safeguard any compensation he may give against being spent on drink or used just to enable G. to idle.'⁴⁰⁸ Such decisions were made according to the Duke and the agent's discretion, and it would seem that, although social expectations forced them to show some kind of paternalistic care, they were able to choose their preferred form of assistance. It could even be argued that, by safeguarding against Gasper spending his compensation money on drink, the Duke was further upholding his 'duty of care'.

During the incumbencies of the 9th and 10th Dukes of Devonshire, there were many other instances of financial assistance being offered to those members of the estate suffering from ill

⁴⁰⁷ DC, L/94/182/17 Report Concerning Sidney Gasper, 07.04.1905.

⁴⁰⁸ DC, L/94/182/19 Report Concerning Sidney Gasper, 07.04.1905.

health and injury. In 1913, Duchess Evelyn wrote to her husband to inform him that her private secretary, Elsie Saunders, had been unwell for some time and was considering going to a Woman's Hospital: 'I have told her that I am sure you would pay for a nursing home if she preferred it.'⁴⁰⁹ In 1915, the Duchess once again offered her assistance to an infirm employee, this time instructing a secretary to write the following letter to the Superintendent of St. George's Hospital, London, in order to secure an appointment:

The bearer of this, Ruth Turner, is Nursery Maid to the Duchess of Devonshire. Her Grace would be greatly obliged if you could kindly arrange for her to be seen by the Ophthalmic Surgeon, who I understand will see out-patients this afternoon at 1.30 o'clock. The Duke of Devonshire is, as you are probably aware, a subscriber to St. George's Hospital.⁴¹⁰

This example is particularly interesting because the Duchess appears to be using the gratitude created by one act of benevolence as a means to lever another on the part of the hospital in question. This serves to further demonstrate that philanthropic activity encouraged gratitude and a need to reciprocate in some form.

The extent to which sickness and injury engaged the honour of powerful individuals to provide for, and look after, their own, can be seen in the following extract from a letter written by Queen Mary, whom Duchess Evelyn served as Mistress of the Robes. After discovering that the Duchess was unwell, the Queen quickly wrote to suggest that Evelyn see a particular physician, 'in whom the King & I have great confidence...I make this suggestion because I feel so deeply grieved that my dear "Mistress of the Robes" should be so suffering.'⁴¹¹ In this instance, it was

⁴⁰⁹ DC, L14 4916, letter written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 27.06.1913.

⁴¹⁰ DC, R13 9784, Mr Manners Sutton, private secretary, to the Superintendent St. George's Hospital, London, 12.05.1915.

⁴¹¹ DC, AA27 12,338 Letter from Queen Mary to Victor Cavendish, the 9th Duke of Devonshire, 06.05.1923.

Evelyn Cavendish who was occupying the subordinate position, and thus, she herself was offered assistance.

An important factor to consider when examining such instances of financial assistance, is the nature of the relationship which existed between the individuals involved. Certainly, the Duchess and Queen Mary enjoyed a close relationship. Her daughter, Lady Maud, recalls in her memoirs that the two had been friends since they were young ladies.⁴¹² Likewise, both Elsie Saunders and Ruth Turner appear to have been close to the Cavendish family. Earlier in this study, when examining the Christmas gifts exchanged within the Chatsworth community, we observed how Lady Maud referred to Elsie Saunders as ‘the most perfect secretary’ and recalled her being trusted with picking out the presents.⁴¹³ It could be considered that, in acting as an emissary for the Duke and Duchess in relation to their philanthropic gestures and gift-giving, Saunders had further engaged their obligation to provide for her. Yet, Elsie also enjoyed a positive personal relationship with the Cavendish family, as the following chapter shows. This was perhaps the main reason why the Duchess trusted her to undertake such responsibilities. Ruth Turner similarly enjoyed good relations with her employers. Relationships between children and the staff who looked after them could often become extremely intimate.⁴¹⁴ The letters written to her by the youngest son of the 9th Duke of Devonshire, after he had been sent away to school, stand testament to this.⁴¹⁵ All three of these positive relationships encouraged the good will of the superordinate party and resulted in assured assistance. On the other hand, although Sidney Gasper did receive assistance, there were questions asked and limitations imposed. It seems likely that this was because of the fact

⁴¹² DC, DF28/1/4, Unpublished Memoirs of Lady Maud Baillie (Cavendish), [Undated].

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ DC, M29 5484 letter written by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 06.10.1916.

⁴¹⁵ DC, R13 9780 Letter from Charles Cavendish to Ruth Turner, Nursery Maid, 09.05.1915.

that, in addition to his failings as game keeper, he did not enjoy a positive relationship with his employer.⁴¹⁶ This suggests that the type of relationship which existed between master and servant, could serve either to increase or decrease the ‘duty of care’ obligation, although the stipulation that Gasper spend his bequest on medicine, not drink, could be seen as another form of (paternalistic) care. Of course, it is only natural that there was a desire to do more for the individuals with whom the Cavendish family shared a positive relationship. Nonetheless, it is worth considering that such individuals had clearly done more to demonstrate their deference and loyalty to their masters, and thus had earned a more valuable return.

The impact of personal relations upon gift giving can also be seen in the following example of financial assistance, which draws on a series of letters exchanged between the Cavendish family and Mildred Tonge, who had served as governess for eleven years. Like the letters written by Edith Walton discussed earlier within this study, those written by Mildred Tonge seem to have been aimed at securing financial assistance. After leaving the Cavendish family’s employment in 1913, Mildred Tonge maintained close communication with her former employers. In 1917, when she decided to set up a private preparatory school in London, she immediately began to discuss these plans with the Duke and the Duchess. She signed off her correspondence by saying:

I have written all this, dear Duchess, quite frankly- remembering so many past kindnesses + all the interest you once shewed me. I hope you will not think I have presumed too much upon that kindness. As you told me yourself, not long ago, the day of the private governess is passing, and I feel I have come to a time in life when I might make a change which would enable me to be self-supporting to the end of my life.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁶ DC, L/94/182/21 Report Concerning Sidney Gasper, 07.04.1905.

⁴¹⁷ DC, P34 8300 (enclosure of 1/2 letter), Mildred Tonge to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, 1917.

Like Edith Walton, Mildred Tonge made no outright request for financial assistance. However, by using deferential language, and by drawing attention to a previous conversation she had shared with the Duchess regarding her financial insecurities, Mildred Tonge was able to introduce her desire for financial aid in a very palatable manner. In successive letters, as her eagerness to elicit some form of assistance grew, Mildred Tonge's use of language became less subtle:

Just now all schools are doing very well, as girls cannot go abroad.

I had the offer definitely made to me of my old school at Barnet, but as the home is old and would require a good deal of doing up, I declined it. I heard of another in the North of London which would have cost about £440 - and it was bringing in £500 a year. I am only telling you this as of course I never had the slightest intention of asking for any help which would have run to "some thousands"...

I do not think you quite realise that it is largely a question of age, health and strain combined which has made me feel I must make some changes at Christmas.⁴¹⁸

Within this extract, we can clearly see how Mildred Tonge's use of language not only drew attention to her own neediness, but moreover, provided a solution. Her letter implied that by allowing her to purchase a school, financial assistance would be guaranteed to improve her livelihood. Nonetheless, it is clear that she did not wish to force the matter too much. Thus, in her letter she downplayed the amount that she required. Perhaps Mildred Tonge feared that if she was seen to demand assistance, her request for aid would be rejected. In this instance, Mildred Tonge's assurances that she would never have expected aid which could run to 'some thousands', could be interpreted as another example of 'negative politeness.' By declaring to the Duchess that she did not expect a specific amount of money, she may have been effectively leaving the decision up to her, in the hopes of a positive outcome. It is also possible to read the sentence as an indicator of social norms. As this case study has already suggested, despite any

⁴¹⁸ DC, DF33/8/1/1, Letter from Mildred Tonge, governess, to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, 07.06.1917.

expectations they may have had, it was important that servants were not seen to be anticipating assistance from their benevolent employers. This could spoil the generosity of the action. On the other hand, the comment can also be seen as a financial assessment of the situation: perhaps Mildred Tonge was aware that her eleven years' worth of service to the Cavendish family was not enough to guarantee aid which could run to 'some thousands.' In spite of the positive relationship she clearly enjoyed with the family, her insistence that she would never dare to ask for such an amount, indicates not only her continued reliance upon the 'good will' of her former masters, but also that she has some idea of the size of payment she could hope to expect. Furthermore, this example once again demonstrates the importance placed upon the value of a gift.

Mildred Tonge's plans to open a private school took some time to finalise. However, by 1921 the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire had contributed £1000, and a school had been bought in Staines.⁴¹⁹ This is double the amount of £500 suggested by Mildred Tonge's previous letter, and today, would be worth around £33,600.⁴²⁰ Although this money was intended as an interest free loan, rather than a gift, it should nevertheless be regarded as a form of philanthropy rather than an example of market exchange. After all, although the agreement stipulated the return of the money in payments of at least £50 every 6 months, it was never intended to be a business investment, and the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire saw no financial reward from the scheme.⁴²¹ Rather, it is evident that they were motivated to grant this loan due to a combination of factors: they felt a sense of obligation and duty to Mildred Tonge because of their role in

⁴¹⁹ DC, DF33/8/1/7, Letter from Mildred Tonge, governess, to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, 17.03.1921; & DC, DF33/8/1/10 Letter from Alan Macpherson, Currey & Co to Elsie Saunders, private secretary, 03.10.1924.

⁴²⁰ *MeasuringWorth*, 'Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount, 1270 to Present', 2016 www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/ [accessed on 05.07.2016].

⁴²¹ DC, DF33/8/1/10 Letter from Alan Macpherson, 03.10.1924.

society as benevolent employers; and this obligation was perhaps heightened by a personal desire to help their former governess who had given them eleven years of good service, and was now professing to be in need. Mildred Tonge's letters demonstrate that she was aware of these motivating factors, and furthermore, they show how she was able to induce the Cavendish family's assistance: by making use of her positive relationship with them; and by drawing attention to her continued loyalty and her dependence.

This case study shall now return to the example of Edith Walton, who was introduced at the beginning of the piece. It was observed that through her letter-writing Edith Walton was not only able to secure an unofficial pension from the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, but also an annuity from the Governesses' Benevolent Institution (G.B.I.) – something which the Duchess had campaigned for on her behalf.⁴²² Edith expressed her gratitude to Duchess Evelyn in the following letter:

Miss Saunders has told me of the great kindness of yourself & the Duke, in allowing me a pension, I can only say "thank you" many, many times, for I cannot express what I feel to you... I have dreamt for many years of a possible house in my old age but I never hoped for such a nice one, or of being relieved of all anxiety - with deep thanks to yourself & the Duke.
Yours gratefully
E. M. Walton.⁴²³

Edith's deferential letter acknowledged the debt of gratitude she owed to the Cavendish family, and by doing so, it ensured that she would maintain the goodwill and support of her former employers. Indeed, her rapport with the Cavendish family was so great, that when the G.B.I. discovered that she was augmenting her annuity with a private allowance from her former

⁴²² DC, DF 33/8/4/16, Letter from Edith Walton, governess, to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, 07.05.1935; & DC, DF 33/8/4/20, Letter from Edith Walton, governess, to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, 02.10.1935.

⁴²³ DC, DF 33/8/4/20, Letter from Edith Walton, 02.10.1935.

masters (something that went against regulations), Elsie Saunders and the Chatsworth comptroller were given the licence to work together and come up with a scheme for ensuring that Edith would retain her pension. Elsie Saunders described the situation in the following letter:

My dear Miss Walton, The G.B.I have written (in confidence) to ask if the Duke's pension to you is one for life or only temporary. I know the wretches mean to dock your income so Mr Shimwell [the Comptroller] is replying that the pension is only for this year and will be discontinued. The money will be sent just the same or, if you think better, as Christmas and Easter presents, which you must not disclose on your returns. We could also send you a letter which you could show the G.B.I. if necessary. I do not feel we need mind if we can circumvent them as the Duchess and your pupils subscribed specially to the G.B.I. so that you should have a little extra pension. After all your years of work you ought now to have some degree of comfort with enough to afford someone to do your rough work in the house and look after you if at any time you are not well.⁴²⁴

Again, this is an interesting example of how the Duke and Duchess, and moreover, their senior servants, conceived of philanthropic activity. One act of benevolence was compared to another, in this instance the Duchess' subscription to the G.B.I., and her contributions to Edith Walton. The latter was determined to be more important, and Elsie Saunders declared that the Duke and Duchess were willing to 'cheat the system', ostensibly because they had already contributed to it. This not only suggests that philanthropic deeds were quantifiable, but that charitable giving could be extremely personal. The Cavendish family and their senior staff were prepared to go so far as lying to a charitable organisation about the gifts of money they were sending to Edith Walton, in order to protect her income. It is evident that in this scenario, their philanthropic activity was not an attempt to justify social position and maintain the deference and loyalty of their subordinates. Instead, it seems that such behaviour stemmed from a genuine desire to assist Edith Walton. This was made apparent in the final sentence of the extract, where Elsie

⁴²⁴ DC, DF 33/8/4/27, Letter from Elsie Saunders, private secretary to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Edith Walton, governess, 15.12.1935.

Saunders stated that Miss Walton deserves some degree of comfort after all her years of service. Doubtless, Edith Walton was not as needy as some of the other individuals within the Chatsworth community. The money she received was intended to be spent on additional help about the house, rather than to help her survive. Yet the fact that she continued to receive financial aid further validates the theory that amongst other factors, if an employee shared a positive relationship with their master, and, in this instance, with their master's emissary, it could serve to increase the degree of assistance they received. It also demonstrates the extent to which servants relied upon the good will of their employers, even after leaving service.

4.5 Conclusion

Between 1908 and 1950, a traditional reliance on private charity, rather than state provided welfare, consigned members of the working class to a position of dependence. Furthermore, it also forced a duty of care upon employers. As Sennett and Cobb explained, in this manner, class operated 'a system for limiting freedom.'⁴²⁵ This was the culture in which the philanthropic practices detailed within this study occurred. Yet there was far more to such interactions than a sense of duty or dependence. This case study has attempted to demonstrate how there were often mixed and conflicting impulses at work when it came to acts of benevolence from masters to their servants. It has been argued that the bequests made by the Cavendish family were not only driven by a personal and public sense of moral obligation and duty, although this was an important factor. Some motivations for giving were more self-centred than others, such as the Cavendish family's intention to maintain their power by justifying their social status; cultivating feelings of gratitude and loyalty amongst their subordinates; and by using gift giving to encourage hard work or boost recruitment figures.

⁴²⁵ Sennett & Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, p.28.

Yet, evidence found within the Cavendish archives has also shown other, more selfless motivations for the exchange of gifts. We have seen how positive relationships increased the likelihood of giving. In these circumstances, one of the chief impulses behind the giving of gifts was genuine concern, and a desire to help. This investigation has found that there was usually more than one factor motivating the exchange of gifts. Furthermore, this study has shown how certain scenarios, such as periods of celebration, or the outbreak of war, could add to these pre-existing motivations, and act as catalyst for gift exchange.

Unlike more formal financial interactions, those involving domestic gift giving were, thus, highly complex in nature, as they not only reflected societal norms in relation to power and social status, but also individual situations, personalities, and relationships from both upstairs and down. They suggest that, despite the outwardly formal appearance of master/servant relations, and the importance placed upon social norms and conventions, relationships between employers and employees could be experienced in a multitude of ways. By observing the Chatsworth community through the lens of philanthropy, this study has drawn on evidence of both positive relationships, such as that which existed between Edith Walton and the Cavendish family, and also of more strained relations, as in the example of Sidney Gasper. Moreover, this study has been able to draw attention to the wider social network in which these relationships were sustained. It has found that the Chatsworth community was far larger and more complex than might have initially been imagined, including not only current and former employees and tenants, but also a wide range of individuals who interacted with the various estates and their holdings. The bonds of this community could seemingly transcend both time and distance, as this case study has provided numerous examples of former employees, who had since moved abroad or taken up occupations in other households, and yet had managed to maintain communication with the Cavendish family. Based upon these findings, I suggest that Shepard

and Withington's understanding of community be reviewed. Whilst these scholars argued that a community was partially defined by geographical and temporal boundaries, I instead conclude that membership of a community was not confined to a particular space or time.⁴²⁶ Moreover, this case study has drawn attention to the fact that the community at Chatsworth was far from isolated. Rather, the social norms, conventions, and opinions of the wider British society often played an important role in relation to philanthropy. The Dukes of Devonshire played a notable role on the public stage, and their actions were often influenced or constricted by popular conventions. Therefore, although the issues discussed within this study refer to one particular estate, the power-dynamics in question were intrinsically linked to a broader culture of duty, dependence and denarii.

⁴²⁶ Shepard & Withington (Eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place and Rhetoric*, p.12.

To ‘Intrude Without Ever Seeming to Intrude’: Investigating the Role of the Senior Servant

5.1 Introduction to the Study

In the introduction to this thesis, and the subsequent demographic study of the Chatsworth estate community, different definitions and classifications of domestic service were considered. Especial attention was paid to Jessica Gerard’s model of four distinct categories of domestic servant, which has been recognised as an influential development within this field of research.⁴²⁷ Gerard argued that all country house servants could be defined in one of the following ways:

The life-cycle servant who eventually abandoned service for another occupation or marriage; the career servant who made service a lifetime occupation; the “distressed gentlewoman,” an impoverished single or widowed upper-or middle-class woman forced to earn a living; and the labourer, an un-skilled full- or part time worker.⁴²⁸

Nonetheless, whilst Gerard’s four categories certainly expanded upon previous definitions of service, this thesis has argued that not all domestic workers conform to Gerard’s model. The demographic study conducted earlier within this thesis drew attention to the wide variety of roles which could be included under the label of ‘service’. Skilled craftsmen employed within the building yards at Chatsworth were examined alongside those holding job titles more traditionally associated with domestic work, such as housemaids and gardeners. Moreover, this initial chapter found that the different branches of the Chatsworth estate workforce were

⁴²⁷ Gerard, *Country House Life*, p.162.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

organised around their own, specific, internal hierarchies. For example, the indoor domestic servants were organised according to rank, in a manner akin to a grade system. In contrast, the hierarchy found within the building yard was much less rigid, although differentiation was made between apprentices and the master craftsmen they laboured under. Thus, the study showed that authority, power and status could vary greatly even amongst individuals from the same class background.

This final chapter will build upon the foundations laid earlier within this thesis by focusing upon one more group of servants who did not conform to traditional definitions of domestic employment, but instead, occupied a unique position within the estate hierarchy. The category of servant under scrutiny within this case study is that of the senior-servant. By adopting this approach, this thesis has attempted to broaden pre-existing models and definitions of service put forth by historians including Gerard, and ultimately, to move beyond such forms of delineation. All departments fell under the jurisdiction of the estate office, which was headed by one such senior servant: the chief agent, Roland Burke. He answered only to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire. Thus, in undertaking this investigation, the chapter also seeks to better understand the power-dynamics which existed within the Chatsworth estate community. Focus is given to the following key research questions: Who was the senior-servant? What kinds of roles did they occupy within the Chatsworth estate community, and how can the correspondence of senior servants help us to better understand how Chatsworth functioned as a community? How were social relations at Chatsworth affected by some of the extreme events which characterised this period of history, such as the outbreak of the First and Second World Wars? How did the senior servants mediate between their subordinates and their superordinates during these circumstances? Finally, how was life at Chatsworth experienced when the usual rules governing social and professional relations broke down?

This group of servants was first considered in the introduction to this thesis, as it was the records compiled by Chatsworth's senior servants which allowed this investigation to observe the estate community through the vantage-point of 'history from the middle'. Subsequently, discussions of the role played by senior-ranking employees within the Chatsworth estate community have been of central importance to this thesis. In addition to the land agent, the private secretary was the other most notable example of a senior servant found at Chatsworth during the first half of the twentieth century. Together, the individuals occupying these roles acted as the main channels of communication through which the Duke and Duchess were connected to the rest of the community, and to society beyond the estate boundary. Consequently, they produced, received, and filed a great number of written records and, besides their upper-class landlords, they have typically left behind the largest paper-trails out of all those living and working in country estate communities like Chatsworth. Not only are the records of senior servants quite extensive, but also, due to the mediatory role undertaken by these individuals, such records are uniquely placed to help historians to understand how country estates functioned as social organisms. They help scholars to better understand the social hierarchy around which the estate community was organised. In addition, studying these documents can offer an alternative to the conventional top-down readings of the past found in many of the academic studies which have, hitherto, focused upon country estate communities. They provide access to the correspondence of lower-ranking servants, estate workers and tenants, which are unlikely to have been preserved elsewhere within the archives.

On this basis, the records of senior servants were extremely valuable to the '(un)ideal' servant case study, which formed the second chapter of this thesis. The source material utilised within that examination demonstrated the authority and power of some senior-servants, who took charge of the recruitment process on behalf of their employers. In that capacity, high-ranking

individuals interrogated applicants on issues such as their specific skill-set and knowledge, and in addition, they provided evidence of these attributes when writing character references in support of their subordinates. However, management of the recruitment process was just one of the professional responsibilities associated with the role of the senior-servant. More generally, these individuals acted as emissaries for the Cavendish family, corresponding and negotiating on their behalf with employees, tenants, and all others with business relating to the estate. This chapter will expand upon the discussions which took place in the '(un)ideal' servant study, by investigating the social and professional roles occupied by senior servants at Chatsworth, and by using this as a lens through which to better understand how the estate functioned as a community.

Due to the superordinate nature of their roles, senior servants like the land agent and the private secretary enjoyed a degree of power, authority and influence not available to lower-ranking domestic workers. This was especially the case if landowners were absent from the estate for prolonged periods of time. In such scenarios, senior servants could be expected to act as proxies for their masters.⁴²⁹ However, their powerful positions also came with certain responsibilities. In line with Sennett and Cobb's theories relating to class, it is evident that Chatsworth's senior servants were not only forced to act in a manner that maintained their power, but that they were also constrained by the fact they had to obey the commands of the family they served.⁴³⁰ They were, therefore, stuck between a rock and a hard place and were required to navigate between these two restrictions. As emissaries, and occasionally proxies, for their employers, senior servants were expected to act as figureheads within the estate community and could, thus, be blamed by their fellow colleagues for any hardship that befell them. Furthermore, in periods of

⁴²⁹ Beardmore, 'The Rural Estate through the Eyes of the Land Agent', p.19.

⁴³⁰ Sennett & Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, p.28.

crisis and conflict, the Duke and Duchess could hold them responsible for social, as well as economic difficulties, threatening the productivity of the estate. A great deal of their time was devoted to arbitrating, problem-solving and making peace between conflicting parties with vested interests in estate matters. They also had to see the estate through some of the extreme events characterising this period of history, such as the First and Second World Wars. Within the demographic study undertaken earlier within this thesis, I examined employment statistics in order to determine some of the quantitative ways in which the outbreak of the two world wars impacted upon the estate community. However, textual accounts contained within the files of the agent and the private secretary provide qualitative data relating to these events. In addition, such documents can highlight some of the individual personal and professional crises experienced by members of the Chatsworth estate community which are not reflected within macro-level trends.

By focusing on the section of the community whose professional obligations included managing and navigating the estate through exceptional circumstances of crisis and conflict, this study finds additional ways in which to complement work undertaken in previous chapters of this thesis. In both the second and the third chapters, focus was given to the ways in which various members of the Chatsworth estate community; from employer to employee, were expected to act within ideal circumstances. Nevertheless, these studies also highlighted the fact that, whilst certain behaviours may have been recognised as ideal within the community at Chatsworth, not all social interactions followed these conventions. For an ideal to exist, there must, necessarily, be an unideal counterpoint, to measure against. This examination, therefore, provides an opportunity to observe the lived experience of domestic service when the usual rules governing life within the Chatsworth estate community broke down and unideal scenarios became more commonplace.

Whilst the correspondence of senior servants can prove to be an extremely rich resource for social history investigations, until recently, few scholars had made use of the documentation in this manner. Instead, the function of the land agent was predominantly considered from an economic viewpoint. Nevertheless, in the last few years, academic interest has started to turn towards the role played by the land agent within country estate communities. This new development has resulted in the publication of a collected volume in 2016 entitled *The Land Agent in Britain*, co-edited by Carol Beardmore, Steven King, and Geoff Monks.⁴³¹ According to Beardmore, one of the reasons behind the emergence of this new historiographical trend, is that land agents' records are increasingly being recognised as an important but under-researched source for the study of rural communities. Beardmore's work in particular has shown that such records can act as a 'prism' through which it is possible to observe social relations within country estates, an argument which this thesis also makes.

The Land Agent in Britain comprises eight chapters. Each individual chapter focuses upon historical records pertaining to, or literary representations of a particular land agent, or a group of agents. Each chapter also concentrates upon a specific time period, spanning from the Anglo-Saxon era to the present day.⁴³² The book also keeps an eye on the future of land agency, and the agricultural sector in general, and discusses both the threats and opportunities posed by Brexit.⁴³³ Given the different source material and subject matter covered within each individual study, throughout the book slightly different methods of analysis are used, adopted from either the discipline of history or the discipline of English literature. Yet, all of the chapters within the volume are connected by an underlying theme of continuity within the role vs. change and development. The unified argument of the studies which comprise this edited volume, is that

⁴³¹ Carol Beardmore, Steven King & Geoff Monks (eds) *The Land Agent in Britain: Past, Present and Future* (Cambridge, 2016).

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Ibid, p.15.

land agents were of central importance, not only to the economic fortunes of rural estates, but also, to their societies. Whilst the volume covers a wide time-frame, the editors of *The Land Agent in Britain* agree that a great deal more research still needs to be undertaken in relation to the role of the land agent.⁴³⁴ By drawing upon archival material pertaining to land agency at Chatsworth, this chapter seeks to build upon the work of Beardmore, King, and Monks, whilst also developing the arguments relating to the themes of continuity, change, power and status which were set out earlier within this thesis.

The land owner's private secretary played a similarly central role in the country estate community and, like the land agent, this position has also been overlooked by scholars. Unlike the latter, no recent research has reversed this historiographical trend. One of the only studies to focus upon the position of the private secretary, undertaken by Vernon Bogdanor in 1995, concentrated entirely upon the role in relation to the British royal household.⁴³⁵ Numerous differences would have separated the work of a royal private secretary, and that of someone who served the aristocracy, gentry, and others who owned large tracts of land, during the first half of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, surely both employees would have been united by the fact that their chief concern was to act as the interface between a powerful employer and a wider community. Within *The Monarchy and the Constitution*, Bogdanor identified the following description of a royal private secretary put forward by Harold Laski in relation to Queen Victoria's secretary, Henry Ponsonby:

He must be at her [the sovereign's] beck and call; even the claims of family affection must be sacrificed to a mistress who brooks no rival to her power. He must know all that is going on; he must be ready to advise upon all. But he must never so advise that he seems to influence the decision taken by the Queen in terms of the premises of his

⁴³⁴ Ibid, pp.1-15.

⁴³⁵ Vernon Bogdanor, 'Chapter 8. The Sovereign's Private Secretary' in Vernon Bogdanor, *The Monarchy and the Constitution* (Oxford, 2003).

own thought. He is the confidant of all Ministers, but he must never leave the impression that he is anybody's man. He must intrude without ever seeming to intrude. He must learn how to deflect the lightning from others. He must be able to carry the burden of her mistakes. He must not know the meaning of fatigue...⁴³⁶

Based upon the archival material I have uncovered at Chatsworth, I argue in this chapter that many of the obligations expected of the sovereign's private secretary, as identified by Laski, would also have been expected of those working for large landowners. However, instead of acting as confidant to all ministers, the private secretary of a country landlord would have had to communicate with, and act as confidant to, all the tenants, farmers, and other employees of their master, without the suggestion of bias or preference. The secretary would not only have been required to settle disputes and negotiate terms between various members of the estate community, but they were also the bridge connecting their employer to the world beyond the estate. As the figure through which all communication to their employer passed, the secretary was effectively both the gatekeeper, and also the mouthpiece, of the country landlord. As such, they would have been required to navigate any difficulties arising as a result of mistakes made by their employer. Above all, in a similar fashion to the royal servant described by Laski, the private secretary of a country landlord would have been required to keep secrets for, and provide advice to, an individual who occupied a more powerful social position than themselves. Thus, any individual hired for this role would have needed to 'intrude without ever seeming to intrude.'

Given that such powerful individuals left behind great paper trails, the archives which form part of the Devonshire Collection at Chatsworth, Derbyshire, contain many files of correspondence relating to both land agents and private secretaries who worked for the estate

⁴³⁶ Harold Laski, 'The King's Secretary', *Fortnightly Review* (1942), pp.390–1 as quoted in Bogdanor, *The Monarchy and the Constitution*.

during the first half of the twentieth century. It would have been beyond the scope of this thesis to examine all of this material. Instead, it has been most expedient to focus upon two individuals in particular. These individuals have been selected for this study firstly, because they both served the Chatsworth estate for a particularly long period of time, secondly, because the majority of their records have been preserved within the Cavendish archives, and thirdly, because they have already featured prominently in the other investigations carried out by this thesis. Roland Burke was chief agent to the 9th Duke of Devonshire from 1908 to 1938. Elsie Saunders, acted as Private Secretary to Duchess Evelyn, wife of the 9th Duke of Devonshire, for the same duration, although she remained in contact with Evelyn Cavendish throughout her retirement, and continued to offer her services to the Duchess until her death in 1950. This chapter will, therefore, be comprised of two separate case studies which, together, will contribute to a greater understanding of social relations within the Chatsworth estate community during a forty-two year period.

Initially, both case studies will focus on a few examples of correspondence exchanged during times of peace and prosperity, in order to situate the role of the land agent and the private secretary of a country estate during 'typical' circumstances. Following this, as has been mentioned previously within this introduction, focus will be given to the correspondence exchanged and received by Burke and Saunders during periods of crisis and conflict, which will be analysed in order to determine the specific impact extreme circumstances had upon the manner in which the Chatsworth estate functioned as a community. In this manner, the thesis will engage with social history debates regarding the themes of continuity and change during the first half of the twentieth century. In the section relating to Roland Burke, consideration will be given to the impact of the First World War upon the estate community. In the case study relating to Elsie Saunders, focus will shift to the effects of the Second World War.

5.2 Methodological Approach

The analysis undertaken within this study pays especial attention to the linguistic theories of face-work and politeness. When considering the correspondence of both Roland Burke and Elsie Saunders, it is immediately evident that, as individuals who were responsible for communicating and negotiating with a variety of people, the majority of their time was devoted to managing ‘face’. Although face-work and politeness theories were discussed previously in the third chapter of this thesis, they were not introduced in a particularly substantial manner. Therefore, a brief explanation of these notions shall now be given.

At its core, the concept of face-work, as developed by Erving Goffman, is a way of *understanding* social relations and power dynamics. According to Goffman: ‘Each person, subculture, and society seems to have its own characteristic repertoire of face-saving practices. It is to this repertoire that people partly refer when they ask what a person or culture is “really” like.’⁴³⁷

In *English Historical Pragmatics*, Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen defined face-work in the following manner:

Face as a technical term was based on the everyday notion of face in such phrases as ‘save someone’s face’, ‘lose face’ or ‘maintain face’. Positive face consists of a person’s wish to be appreciated by others... Negative face consists of a person’s wish to be unimpeded in their actions.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁷ Goffman, ‘On Face-work’, pp.7-13.

⁴³⁸ Jucker & Taavitsainen, ‘For your courtesie’, p.115.

Politeness theory, as established in 1978 by Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson in their study *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*, built upon the concept of face-work. Their theory, which they refined in 1987, in the second edition of their book, made a distinction between positive and negative politeness.⁴³⁹ These two forms of politeness, they posited, were directly related to the concept of positive and negative face. According to Brown and Levinson's model, examples of positive politeness largely revolve around the strategy of giving of compliments.⁴⁴⁰ However, the same model suggests that two very different forms of negative politeness can be implemented as a linguistic strategy. The first is called 'non-imposition politeness' and it is associated with allowing the addressee to have a choice or option, thus, paying attention to an individual's wish not to be imposed upon.⁴⁴¹ A second type of negative politeness is called 'deference politeness', which implies the author's respect for the addressee. In their summary of politeness theory, Jucker and Taavitsainen list titles and honorifics as some examples of 'deference politeness'.⁴⁴²

By seeking inspiration from such studies, this chapter shall draw attention to different uses of positive and negative politeness occurring within correspondence. In addition, this study will consider correspondence which, not only fails to exhibit polite behaviour, but also goes as far as being deliberately impolite. As such, insults and accusations which passed between members of the Chatsworth estate community shall be identified and examined.

Finally, this study will attempt to distinguish between intentional and unintentional linguistic forms. In *English Historical Pragmatics*, Jucker and Tavitsainen warned that there was a third type of politeness which was overlooked by Brown and Levinson. This type of politeness, they

⁴³⁹ Ibid; Brown & Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*.

⁴⁴⁰ Brown & Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² Jucker & Taavitsainen, 'For your courtesie', p.116.

suggested, is behaviour that ‘is polite without being strategic’.⁴⁴³ They argued that this third type of politeness could be labelled ‘discernment politeness’ or ‘politic behaviour’. This study shall refer to linguistic features conforming to this category of politeness by the former label.

By taking inspiration from innovative linguistics studies relating to face-work and politeness, it is possible to identify, and better understand, the behavioural choices made by both Burke and Saunders, and by their correspondents. In turn, this provides a new opportunity to observe how cross-class social relations and power dynamics were established, maintained and negotiated within a country estate community.

In addition to a methodological approach which pays attention to the concepts of face-work and politeness, this study has been influenced by CDA. CDA also provided inspiration for the analysis undertaken within the second chapter of this thesis. In that study, I drew attention to the fact that CDA has been used by scholars of linguistics in order to locate discourses within a particular conception of society. In this chapter, I have found scholarship relating to CDA inspirational for similar reasons. In their 2006 study *Discourse and Identity*, linguistic scholars Bethan Benwell and Elizabeth Stokoe emphasised that CDA can help to uncover ‘societal power asymmetries [and] hierarchies.’⁴⁴⁴ They argued that, ultimately, ‘it [CDA] aims to identify how ‘discourses’ operate to sustain these hierarchies.’⁴⁴⁵ In order to maintain continuity, the investigative framework for CDA considered within this study shall be the same as that discussed earlier within this thesis. This model was developed by Teun van Dijk in 1991 and is comprised of three key focuses: ‘perspective’, ‘implicit meanings’, and ‘semantic strategies’. The first of these focuses considers what the linguistic features of a source can tell

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ Bethan Benwell & Elizabeth Stokoe, *Discourse and Identity* (Edinburgh, 2006), p.9.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

us about its perspective or point of view.⁴⁴⁶ The second aspect of this model considers that much of a document's meaning may remain unsaid or implicit. Van Dijk proposes different strategies for investigating the implicit meanings of a text, including: examining the implications of statements; analysing a text's presuppositions; and focusing on the seemingly irrelevant details contained within an account.⁴⁴⁷ Finally, van Dijk argues that it is important to consider the specific goals and motivations for employing certain semantic strategies within a text.⁴⁴⁸

This study recognises the fact that different societies can have distinct linguistic strategies for demonstrating politeness/impoliteness. In relation to the concept of face-work, Erving Goffman noted that:

The particular set of practices stressed by particular persons or groups seems to be drawn from a single logically coherent frame-work of possible practices. It is as if face, by its very nature, can be saved only in a certain number of ways, and as if each social grouping must make its selections from this single matrix of possible practices.⁴⁴⁹

Thus, this chapter does not claim that the forms of politeness/impoliteness highlighted within this investigation were the same as forms of politeness/impoliteness found in country estates elsewhere at this time. Rather, by paying attention to face-work and politeness theories, and by considering the methodological approach of CDA, this chapter aims to understand the norms and conventions governing social interactions at this particular estate, that is to say, the first and third constituent parts of a community as identified by Shepard and Withington: the practices associated with it, and the communicative acts which defined and constituted it.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁶ van Dijk, *Racism and the Press*, p.180.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid, pp.180-187.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid, pp.187-198.

⁴⁴⁹ Goffman, 'On Face-work', pp.7-13.

⁴⁵⁰ Shepard & Withington (Eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place and Rhetoric*, p.12.

This will enable us to better comprehend how Chatsworth functioned as a community. In addition, the study seeks to identify the specific impact the two world wars had upon social interactions and negotiations of power within the Chatsworth estate community. Finally, this chapter hopes to shed light on lived experiences at Chatsworth when the usual rules governing life and work within the estate community broke down. Yet, in achieving these aims, the study also hopes to be able to broaden our understanding of the kinds of social interactions which could occur within country estate communities. Moreover, by considering the concepts of face-work and politeness/impoliteness in relation to the correspondence of senior servants, this study intends to highlight the complex and challenging role occupied by such individuals within rural societies, thereby developing academic research into this particular area as well as illustrating the benefits of bringing linguistics inspired approaches to social history.

5.3 Case Study 1: The Role of the Land Agent

Roland Burke Esquire was chief agent to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, between 1908 and 1938. Although a specific job description for the role of chief agent does not exist within the archives, it is possible to piece together a definition from Burke's various obligations and responsibilities, as documented within his well-preserved files. From this evidence, it is clear that Burke was in overall charge of all the Devonshire estates, not just Chatsworth. He deferred only to the Duke and Duchess.

A great deal of Burke's time was devoted to overseeing and maintaining estate-owned property. This included caring for and developing estate owned farms to ensure high levels of productivity, and also making sure that tenant farmers looked after their holdings and paid their rents on time. In addition, Burke looked after the estate villages, where many of the estate

employees lived. He was responsible for repairs and renovations, he initiated new building schemes, and he even offered advice as to which employees should be granted an estate cottage to live in, and how this should be achieved with a limited housing supply. The following letter, written by Burke to Evelyn Cavendish, wife of the 9th Duke, is a particularly useful example, because it demonstrates Burke acting upon all three of these obligations whilst also showing the depth of his familiarity with various estate workers:

As you know I have been trying to straighten up the cottage question at Edensor. Houses have to be provided for

1. Shimwell. Presumably he he wishes to be married soon & houses must be provided
2. Harbottle. Successor to Robertson (from Bolton Abbey)
3. New Keeper Pilsley

The latter can be arranged by bringing from Pilsley a man called Fisher - who works for McLachlan - & putting him into the cottage next Waverley at old Kennels - I am arranging to put this in order ... I am also doing away with what has long been a great blot - Hanshaws slaughter house - This can be moved to Baslow where really the butcher business is... McLachlan will then be made a decent place.⁴⁵¹

The chief agent's files show that Burke also had overall responsibility for the Duke's own households. He kept an eye on his finances. His signature can be found within the Chatsworth Household Accounts Observations for 1919, and he had sole responsibility for the Duke of Devonshire's personal account.⁴⁵² Burke also looked after the physical state of the Duke's households and the possessions which furnished them. This letter, which dates from 1921, and was addressed to one of the Duke of Devonshire's solicitors, demonstrates Burke doing just this by taking responsibility for the Duke of Devonshire's plate:

⁴⁵¹ DC, BB26 12,504, Letter from Roland Burke, chief agent, to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, 13.06.1925.

⁴⁵² DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, [Uncatalogued], Chatsworth Household Accounts 1917-1921 Observations, Entry for 1919; DC, U. R. Burke's Chief Agent's Papers, 132, Duke of Devonshire's Personal Account CEC, 1922-1939.

We have now got the whole of the Plate back from Canada, and Crockett, who was butler in Canada, has been engaged in unpacking and putting it away in the safe at Chatsworth. It occurs to me that it would be a good opportunity to have the Devonshire House plate down from the Bank, and have it properly gone through and stored at Chatsworth. I may tell you that Crockett is not remaining in His Grace's service, but he will be willing to remain on to undertake this work. I know you have always told me that the Bank will be very glad to be rid of the plate.

We shall never be able to store any great quantity of plate at Carlton Gardens, therefore it seems to me that the main store of plate must be at Chatsworth, and it would be very much better to get it all together there, and it can be decided later what is ultimately to be kept in London at Carlton Gardens. Would it therefore be troubling you too much at the present time, to make the necessary arrangements to have all the plate sent down to Chatsworth at once. It should be addressed to the Duke at Chatsworth, Rowsley Station, and notification sent to me as to its being sent off and the probable time of arrival and so forth.⁴⁵³

The repeated use of personal pronouns within this letter, suggests that Burke felt himself, along with the Duke, to be one of the individuals who was responsible for the plate. He seems to be including himself with his employer when he states, '*we* have now got the whole of the plate back...' and '*we* shall never be able to store any great quantity of plate.' In fact, from the use of phrases such as 'it occurs to *me*' and 'it seems to *me*', it seems that Burke felt he had a great deal of autonomy over the storage and maintenance of the Duke's property, and that he could act in a unilateral manner. The final sentence of the extract above is extremely telling in this regard, because Burke asks Battcock to address the Plate to the Duke, but to notify *him* of the potential time of arrival. This choice of phrasing appears to indicate that Burke, in his role as chief agent, carried the Duke's authority, and that he could assume the role of his employer's proxy.

⁴⁵³ DC, CH12/1/12, Letter from U. R. Burke, chief agent, to Mr Battcock, Estate Office, Chatsworth, 19.08.1921.

Burke not only held responsibility for all of the Duke of Devonshire's property, but he was also nominally in charge of all of the employees and tenants living and working upon the ducal estates. It was in this regard especially, that Roland Burke was required to pay attention to face-work and politeness, for a great deal of his time was devoted to problem solving and mediating between different parties. Letters which have previously been quoted, have shown that Burke was acutely familiar with estate employees from all manner of backgrounds due to the fact that they often lived in tithe cottages situated within the estate villages. However, along with their home address, Burke ensured that he knew which departments the employees worked in, who their colleagues, friends, and rivals were, and what their family life was like. Other documentation contained within the chief agent's records demonstrates that Burke was also aware of the professional tasks carried out by various groups of estate employees and, moreover, how successful/unsuccessful certain individuals were at undertaking their roles.

It was Burke who, on behalf of his employers, was obliged to furnish former estate workers with references. For example, in 1922, Burke wrote a character testimonial for Reuben Clarke, who had served the Duke of Devonshire as Head Coachman until the First World War broke out in 1914.

To Mr. R. Clarke

I have received your letter of the 11th instant, and enclose you a testimonial which I hope will assist you in obtaining the post you are after

I have pleasure in testifying to the excellent character of R. Clarke who was in the Duke of Devonshire's employ for some years prior to the War as Head Coachman. Clarke gave every satisfaction, and always proved thoroughly honest, sober and trustworthy, and he can be strongly recommended for any responsible position.

Chief Agent to the Duke of Devonshire.⁴⁵⁴

Similarly, Mr. Burke could be called upon to reprimand or dismiss colleagues on the behalf of his employers. Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, noted in a letter relating to the appointment of a new housekeeper in 1911 that the candidate must understand she would be ‘under’ Mr. Burke.⁴⁵⁵

Finally, in addition to occupying a supervisory position, Roland Burke also provided pastoral care to the Duke of Devonshire’s employees and tenants on his master’s behalf. In this capacity, he was required to answer letters and petitions relating to nuisances and problems endured by members of the estate community, as well as arguments and disagreements.⁴⁵⁶ He was also heavily involved in organising and participating in estate celebrations and pass-times. For example, in 1924, he donated snooker balls to the estate ‘club’, The Cavendish Institute, which he was Vice President of.⁴⁵⁷ The Duke himself was President of the Institute. In times of sorrow, Burke was also required to play a prominent role. During his time at Chatsworth, he was called upon to oversee funeral arrangements for a deceased colleague.⁴⁵⁸ Upon the death of the 9th Duke, he sat in a pew in the second row of the church, immediately behind the Duke’s family and ‘personal’ servants; including his valet and chauffeur.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁴ DC, U. R. Burke’s Chief Agent’s Papers, 4/19, letter regarding head coachman R. Clarke, 16.02.1922.

⁴⁵⁵ DC, DF/15/3/2/3/3 Letter from Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire to Mr. Manners Sutton, comptroller and private secretary, [Undated, possibly 1911].

⁴⁵⁶ DC, U.R. Burke’s Chief Agents Papers, 109, Petitions and Nuisances, 1922-1928.

⁴⁵⁷ DC, DE/CH/7/1/5 Chatsworth Institute AGM, written by J.W. Hulley, 14.10.1924.

⁴⁵⁸ DC, D4 1970 Letter from Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, 08.03.1916.

⁴⁵⁹ DC, L/113/27, Funeral Arrangements of 9th Duke of Devonshire, 1938.

From examining the chief agent's files, it is, therefore, apparent that Roland Burke occupied a unique and authoritative position within the Chatsworth estate community. This was especially the case during the First World War, when Victor Cavendish was appointed governor general of Canada. Between 1916 and 1921, Victor was required to leave Chatsworth vacant whilst he took up his post in Ottawa. As this study has previously stated, land agents could wield great power and influence during the absence of their employer, and indeed, during the Duke's absence, Burke was given more authority over estate matters than ever before.⁴⁶⁰ However, due to the turbulent events of the war, he was also required to resolve a much greater number of conflicts and crises threatening the successful running of the estate; in terms of productivity and social harmony. As correspondence contained within the chief agent's files demonstrates, these critical situations challenged Burke's skills as a mediator and problem solver. It is for this reason, that this chapter will focus upon a case study of letters from this time period. However, there are numerous other reasons why the set of letters in question has been specifically chosen.

One of the crises which greatly threatened the productivity of the Chatsworth estate at this time concerned the gardens. Within the initial demographic survey of the estate community, this thesis showed how the outbreak of the First World War had a great impact upon the gardeners at Chatsworth. A significant proportion of those working within the department left the estate to either fight in the trenches or to contribute in some other way to the war effort, and the number of gardeners fell from 87, prior to the onset of hostilities, to just 29 in 1917. A case study relating to the gardens can provide qualitative data which will build upon the quantitative study undertaken earlier within this thesis.

⁴⁶⁰ Beardmore, *The Rural Estate through the Eyes of the Land Agent*, p.19.

There happens to be a collection of nine letters, found within Roland Burke's files, which can provide additional evidence of the disruptive nature of working within the gardens department at this time, and the ways in which Chatsworth's chief agent attempted to deal with certain difficulties. This series of letters, which totals some 2,540 words, is one of the most substantial collections of correspondence to be found within the chief agent's files. It provides richly descriptive literary testimonials, and primarily records Burke's personal and professional relationship with Chatsworth's head gardener at this time: Frank Jennings. Not only is this chain of correspondence one of the most extensive collections to be found within Roland Burke's records, it is also the one clear example of animosity and conflict between different groups of workers. Other letters hint at this kind of friction, but they do not contain much detail. Furthermore, this series of letters provides the opportunity to observe the impact of personal crises upon professional and social relationships at Chatsworth, as well as allowing for an investigation into the effects of extraneous crises, like war. Consequently, this collection of correspondence is uniquely suitable for analysis.

Rather than providing an overall synopsis of the collection prior to analysis, each letter will be examined individually and in the order in which they were written. This will allow the examination to consider the letters, and the developing events they refer to, in a similar manner to the way in which the individual parties involved may have interpreted them. Furthermore, it will help this study to avoid a teleological reading of events. Nevertheless, the individual letters will not be considered in an entirely unilateral manner. When relevant, details from the preceding correspondence will be drawn into the analysis of a letter, as will discussion which has taken place within preceding chapters of this thesis. In addition, relevant content contained within succeeding letters will be alluded to without going into detail. Finally, this study will be concluded with an analysis which takes into account the entire collection of 9 letters, and what

they can tell us about the position of the chief agent at Chatsworth and social and professional relations upon the estate.

The first letter contained within this collection appears to be a character reference written for Frank Jennings by W. H. Foster Pegg, the Vicar of one of Chatsworth's estate villages.⁴⁶¹ The letter is dated the 9th February 1920, and by this time, head gardener Frank Jennings had been living and working upon the estate for fourteen years. We can infer from this reference that Frank Jennings had felt under pressure as a result of the substantial changes which had taken place in the gardens during the course of the war. W. H. Foster Pegg makes it clear to the potential employer (this particular reference has no addressee, but we can conclude that the target audience of this character statement would be a potential employer) that, to his knowledge, Jennings has not been dismissed as a result of his inability to adapt to war-time conditions. Rather, Foster Pegg is of the opinion that stress caused by the war has forced Frank Jennings to reconsider his position at Chatsworth. Foster Pegg states that Jennings has applied directly to him for a testimonial, suggesting that the head gardener has been complicit in making the decision to leave his post, and that he is being proactive about finding a new career.

Whilst the textual content of W. H. Foster Pegg's reference provides some background information on the impact of the war upon Chatsworth's head gardener, perhaps more intriguing is the fact that a copy of this testimonial was sent to Mr. Burke, Chatsworth's chief agent. Whilst the target audience of this character reference may have been Jennings' potential employers, Roland Burke was clearly another individual with a vested interest in the contents of this statement. Such an act indicates that the chief agent had final say over some (if not all) references given on behalf of estate employees, and it also indicates that Foster Pegg was

⁴⁶¹ See Appendix Letter 1.

following the practice of ‘deference politeness’ by sending Mr. Burke a copy of the testimonial he had provided for Frank Jennings. This practice may have originally been established so that the chief agent could be kept informed on matters regarding staff turnover, but perhaps it was also an opportunity for Burke to make changes or raise objections to character references as and when necessary. If so, this practice can tell us a great deal about the relative power held by the chief agent in contrast to other senior members of the estate community.

Included with the copy of the character reference is a note from Foster Pegg to Mr. Burke. It reads: ‘I personally think that not much weight is attributed to what vicars say, I may be wrong.’⁴⁶² In stating this opinion, Foster Pegg is suggesting that it is somewhat unusual for a vicar to be asked to provide a character reference of this kind. This raises the question of why Frank Jennings approached W. H. Foster Pegg for a testimonial in the first place. It is much easier to surmise why Foster Pegg wrote a reference for Jennings, even though he considers that not much weight may be attributed to it. His inclusion of the phrase ‘I may be wrong’ does imply that Foster Pegg has allowed some room for error in his opinion. However, the phrase could also be understood as another example of politeness. By taking into account the contents of his reference, in which Foster Pegg admits to knowing Jennings for two years and states that he considers him to be honest and capable, it appears that the vicar of Edensor enjoyed a somewhat positive relationship with Chatsworth’s head gardener. This view is also supported by the fact that Jennings allegedly applied to the vicar for a reference directly. Clearly, Jennings felt that his relationship with Foster Pegg was good enough that he could expect to receive a favourable character reference. As such, it is likely that Foster Pegg would not have wanted to offend Jennings by withholding a character statement. Equally, he might not have wanted to

⁴⁶² U.R. Burke’s Chief Agents Papers, 4.10, Regarding Frank Jennings, Head Gardener, Reference provided by W. H. Foster-Pegg to U. R. Burke, 09.02.1920.

risk insulting Jennings by explicitly communicating the fact that his request for a character reference from a vicar was misguided. At first, this desire not to offend Jennings appears to be an example of ‘negative politeness’. However, when reflecting upon the fact that the recipient of this particular note is not the individual who requested a reference, but rather, another individual who may be in a position to provide a character statement on Jennings’ behalf (Roland Burke), it seems more likely that this is in fact an example of ‘discernment politeness’, politeness which is exhibited without the intention of being strategic.

The next document contained within the chief agent’s files is a character reference for Jennings which was written by Roland Burke himself.⁴⁶³ This testimony demonstrates that Burke was well aware of Jennings’ decision to leave his position as Chatsworth’s head gardener. Thus, it seems very likely that Foster Pegg’s correspondence with Burke was indeed intended as an opportunity for the chief agent to raise objections, or make changes to the reference the vicar had written for Jennings, thereby ensuring that it was in line with his own thoughts. As such, Foster Pegg’s actions can be interpreted as an example of ‘deference politeness’, and an indication of the extremely powerful position occupied by the chief agent within the estate hierarchy. Burke’s character reference was written on the same date as the testimonial provided by Foster Pegg, and it was addressed to the Derbyshire County Education Department in support for the post of horticultural instructor.

In comparison to Foster Pegg’s testimonial, Burke’s contains slightly more information regarding the circumstances behind Jennings’ decision. Nonetheless, it is written in a very similar manner to the other statement, further implying that Burke led the ‘strategy’ in relation to providing Jennings with a character reference. Both testimonials suggest that Jennings was

⁴⁶³ See Appendix Letter 2.

leaving his position of his own accord, and that this was because he was unhappy with organisational changes made to the gardens department as a result of the war. Nevertheless, neither statement implies that the usual social order governing life and work upon the estate had been drastically altered as a result of the war. It is only the slightly unusual circumstance of a vicar being asked to act as referee which indicates any break from normal protocol. On the 9th April 1920, Frank Jennings wrote to Burke in order to officially resign from his post.⁴⁶⁴ The letter, which forms the third in the collection, was short and succinct, and once again, gave no further indication as to why Jennings felt the need to resign or why he had approached Foster Pegg for a testimonial.

Yet, the remaining letters contained within this series of correspondence do suggest the reason for Jennings' unorthodox request for a character reference from his parish vicar. Moreover, they demonstrate the ways in which organisational changes relating to the war, in addition to other personal crises, had a tremendous impact upon social and professional relations at Chatsworth.

The fourth letter contained within the chain of correspondence was again written by Frank Jennings, but this time, the intended recipient was the Duke of Devonshire.⁴⁶⁵ It is dated 20th April 1920, ten days after he had written to Roland Burke in order to hand in his notice. There is a great deal of contrast between this letter and the previous one, both in terms of length and content. Contrary to the statements made by both W. H. Foster Pegg and Roland Burke in February, it is evident from this letter that Jennings did not decide to resign from position purely because of the organisational and professional challenges he encountered as a result of

⁴⁶⁴ See Appendix Letter 3.

⁴⁶⁵ See Appendix Letter 4.

the war. Rather, it seems that *social* difficulties Jennings endured during the conflict led to him underperforming at work, and that this was the motivation behind his resignation. The letter draws attention to the serious illness of his wife, and Jennings condemns several ‘specialist’ doctors for failing to recognise and treat his wife’s condition. Yet, within the letter, Jennings also blames the actions of his colleagues at Chatsworth for leading to his current ‘misery’. According to Jennings’ statement, there had been an extreme case of social unrest within the estate community and this led to malicious gossip being spread about Mrs. Jennings and her illness. This gossip besmirched her character and ruined the happiness of the entire Jennings family. In communicating such things to the Duke of Devonshire, Jennings seems to be using this letter as an opportunity to tell his side of the story: ‘I venture to lay a few facts before you in my own defence’.

However, the letter equally appears to be an attempt to discredit Roland Burke. As the only colleague mentioned by name within the letter, Roland Burke seems to bear the brunt of Frank Jennings’ ire. As has already been discussed, the chief agent was held accountable for both the financial and the social wellbeing of an estate. Nevertheless, Jennings’ letter makes it clear that Mr. Burke failed to ensure harmony within the estate community. Not only did he allow vicious gossip about certain members of the community to be spread, he also took part in these conversations. Jennings describes how Roland Burke approached him about the rumour and he notes that the agent was ‘cross’ because he believed the ‘lie’, and was ‘very hard’ on him. Jennings admits to being ‘indiscreet’ on numerous occasions, but claims that this was because he was ‘a broken man’ and tries to assure the Duke that such behaviour is behind him now. The way in which Jennings phrases this section of the letter suggests that all of his misdemeanours were directly related to the nasty rumours concerning his wife, and for this, Roland Burke must be held responsible. To this end, Jennings states that a ‘kind word’ would

have helped him to deal with his situation, and the context provided within the letter suggests that by this he means a 'kind word' from Mr. Burke. Jennings also mentions that he had 'no friends' to help him during this difficult time. This statement provides further evidence of a lack of cohesion within the estate community. Through writing this letter, it seems as though Jennings was trying to indicate to the Duke that social order at Chatsworth had broken down since he had departed for Canada and left Mr. Burke in sole charge. It is likely that Jennings feared Mr. Burke had spread the 'lie' about his wife being 'a brandy drinker' to the Duke and Duchess, and this was the impetus for writing to his employers in this manner. However, writing to the Duke in order to shift the blame onto Burke was potentially a naïve and short-sighted action. So far within this series of correspondence, it has been impossible to 'read' the voice of the Duke of Devonshire into the contents of any of the letters. This is because he has not been the author or recipient of any of the missives up until this point, and because he has not been mentioned directly. Nevertheless, the introduction to this case study demonstrated the level of trust the 9th Duke of Devonshire placed upon Roland Burke, and the fact that the latter's actions had the implicit backing of the Duke. The documents investigated within the introduction to this study also hinted at the existence of a close professional relationship between the pair. Thus, it seems unlikely that the Duke would have sided against Burke in this situation.

Whilst Jennings declares within this letter that he is severely unhappy with his experiences of life and work upon the Chatsworth estate, he nonetheless employs linguistic strategies within his correspondence which conform to standards of negative politeness as set out by Brown and Levinson. The opening paragraph of the letter includes phrases such as 'may it please Your Grace to excuse the liberty I am taking', 'I beg most respectfully to approach Your Graces', and 'I do not wish...to make any excuses or blame anyone wrongfully'. Specifically, these are

examples of ‘non imposition politeness’, and the use of such language is demonstrative of the author firmly positioning himself as a deferential and compliant individual in spite of his grievances. The letter contains numerous indications as to why Jennings chose to adopt this approach. In the opening paragraph, Jennings claims that his future ‘depends on your [the Duke’s] judgement’. Later on within the letter, he emphasises the fact that he has given the Duke and Duchess fourteen years of service, and he ends his correspondence with a request for a reference for his ‘past services’.

This appeal implies that Jennings doubted he would receive a fair testimonial from the Duke’s chief agent, and provides a reason for his unorthodox request for a reference from his vicar, W. H. Foster Pegg, some months earlier. The importance of receiving a favourable character reference from past employers was discussed previously within this thesis, in the chapter focusing upon the concept of the ‘ideal’ servant. Given the evidence discussed within that chapter, it can be concluded that Jennings would have been well aware of the need to obtain a good reference, should he subsequently wish to continue working within the service sector. Whilst this study has already drawn attention to evidence of a positive, if not entirely accurate, character statement written by Roland Burke for Frank Jennings on 9th February, Jennings may not have seen this reference or been aware of its contents. Given the disagreements alluded to within this letter, it would not have been irrational for Jennings to be concerned about the kind of reference he might be likely to receive from Roland Burke. Moreover, the material drawn upon for this investigation has already suggested that Mr Burke may have had the authority to query character references provided for estate employees which were not in line with his own view. The only member of the estate community who occupied a more powerful position than Mr. Burke was the Duke himself, and by April 1920, when Jennings decided to write to the

Duke of Devonshire, he appears to have given up on receiving a positive testimonial from anyone but his employer: ‘my future depends on *your* judgement’.

The fifth letter contained within Roland Burke’s files was also written by Frank Jennings.⁴⁶⁶ It is dated six days after the previous letter, and it sheds even more light upon his decision to leave Chatsworth and the social unrest alluded to earlier. It was addressed to Roland Burke himself and seems to be a response to a (missing) letter which Burke wrote directly to Jennings’ father after reading the comments the former head gardener had made about him to the Duke.

Jennings opens this letter by chastising Roland Burke for writing to his father, whom he either appears to be staying with following his decision to leave Chatsworth or has turned to for support. Jennings states that his father ‘much prefers me to manage my own affairs’ and claims to have told his father ‘everything, not sparing myself anything’. Yet, whilst censuring Burke for approaching his father, Jennings admits that his previous correspondence with the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, in which he attempted to discredit Chatsworth’s chief agent, was undertaken in the knowledge that Burke was ‘with them in London & would see it [the letter].’ Thus, he exhibits a degree of hypocrisy. In addition, as has already been stated, it is also an example of Jennings behaving in a potentially ignorant manner. Given the nature of the professional relationship which existed between the 9th Duke of Devonshire and his chief agent, it is unlikely that the land owner would have sided against Burke in this matter.

Jennings goes on to declare that he does not know what the chief agent has told his employers and that he does not care. Nevertheless, given the politeness strategies he adopted within his previous letter in order to secure a reference, it seems as though he does still place a great deal

⁴⁶⁶ See Appendix Letter 5.

of importance upon his employers' opinions of him. Thus, rather than an admission of Jennings' true feelings, these statements seem more likely to be an indication of his anger towards Burke.

Within the body of the letter, Jennings uses an array of emotive language in the form of metaphors and similes, in order to level charges against the chief agent for his behaviour: 'you took the first opportunity to kick a poor devil when he was down', 'you treated me like a dog' and 'My last 6 months at Chatsworth was hell'. He also poses a number of rhetorical questions which seem to be an attempt to get Roland Burke to reconsider his actions and see things from Jennings' point of view: 'don't you think you might have given me a chance?' Jennings goes some way towards explaining why he holds Burke primarily responsible for his difficulties. He frequently refers to the powerful position occupied by the chief agent within the estate hierarchy and lists the ways in which Burke abused/misused his power. Jennings makes the statement that 'my position was the laughing stock of some of those whose tongues had the licence & opportunities of talking to the powers at Chatsworth & who should have been above [it].' Initially, the former head gardener seems to be accusing the colleagues who spread rumours and laughed about him and his family within this sentence, those whose 'tongues had license'. Yet, in the second half of the statement, Jennings appears to turn his anger towards Burke, who was the most powerful employee at Chatsworth, and should, therefore, have been 'above' participating in such gossip. Moreover, Jennings chastises Burke for having 'the power to help me & be mercifull [sic]' but instead, treating him badly and 'never giving me a chance'. He declares 'You took my horse & trap away... you gave my men orders'. Towards the end of the letter, Jennings refers to the estate as Burke's 'district', a further indication of the authoritative position occupied by the chief agent at Chatsworth, and, thus, the reason for his accountability. Because of the ways in which Burke abused power in relation to this affair,

Jennings censures him as a man who has ‘failed in his profession’, namely the duty to ensure the social wellbeing of the estate and to act as arbiter between competing parties. If semantic strategies employed to strategically flatter and compliment others can be termed ‘positive politeness’, Jennings’ strategic decision to insult Burke in this manner could be seen as an example of ‘positive impoliteness’.

Whilst Burke bears the brunt of Jennings’ anger, he is not the only former colleague mentioned with accusatory tones within this letter. Jennings also gives the name of another individual from Chatsworth: ‘Marples’. From the way in which he introduces ‘Marples’, it appears that Jennings also holds him responsible for the problems he endured at Chatsworth. According to the account books for the Chatsworth gardens department, George Marples was a foreman who worked under Jennings.⁴⁶⁷ He was subsequently promoted to Head Gardener upon his predecessor’s departure in 1920.⁴⁶⁸ We can infer that this is the ‘Marples’ to which Jennings is referring, as he indicates that it was he who had originally put forward Marples’ name as a potential successor, and he was even happy to groom him for the role of head gardener. However, other references to Marples made within this letter imply that the relationship between the two turned sour. Immediately before mentioning Marples’ name for the first time, Jennings writes that only one of the men who worked under him would speak ill of him, thereby implying that his protégé turned against him. Directly following on from this, Jennings makes the claim that men he trusted whilst at Chatsworth, and in particular, those to whom he has been a best friend, ‘have been cutting my throat behind my back’. Later in the letter, Jennings refers to Marples and his wife in connection to the illness of his own spouse. Unfounded gossip surrounding Mrs. Jennings’ health was the main focus of his letter to the Duke of Devonshire,

⁴⁶⁷ DC, CH/14/7/1, List of Men Employed in Gardens Department, 1917.

⁴⁶⁸ DC, CH/14/7/2/5, Gardens Department Wage Books, 1919-1931.

and it appears that his chief grievances with Marples may be in relation to this affair: ‘you might ask Mrs. Marples if my wife’s illness was a fake when at her house & also Marples they saw her in some of her worst attacks.’

Jennings does appear to extend some gracious thoughts towards his former colleagues. He makes a statement that he hopes ‘their fate may be more merciful than mine’. Yet, once again, we may doubt Jennings’ sincerity. It seems, rather than being an honest account of his concern for Marples (and any other former colleagues who may have crossed him), this statement may be an example of ‘discernment politeness’ or ‘politic behaviour’. In this letter, Jennings seems to be burning most of his bridges in relation to his position at Chatsworth, and as such, there does not seem to be any strategic reason for him to adopt politic language. Another possible reason behind this statement could be that Jennings wanted to distinguish himself as a decent, caring, and loyal individual in contrast to his uncaring and disloyal former colleagues. This reading of the statement is supported by the phrase which appears subsequently within the letter: ‘I’ve learnt a very bitter lesson trust no man.’

Finally, Jennings uses this letter as an opportunity to draw attention to the difficulties he endured whilst running the gardens department during the First World War, and the various ways in which he succeeded during these changed circumstances. In the penultimate paragraph, Jennings emphasises all of the ‘extra work’ he undertook in London, how he cut costs, and how he begged flowers and other plants ‘that would have cost pounds’. In part, Jennings seems to be drawing upon these achievements as a way to illustrate, once again, how unfairly he has been treated. However, he also appears to be using his former success as leverage. Jennings closes the letter by stating that he hopes to settle all of his affairs in Edensor within the next few weeks. He then begs a ‘last favour’, requesting the services of another estate employee to

help him clean out the house he had lived in for fourteen years. He assures Burke that once this is done, he shall trouble him no more. Whilst one would ordinarily expect strategies of negative politeness to be adopted when making such an entreaty, given the accusatory manner in which Jennings has, hitherto, addressed Burke, it seems appropriate that he has chosen not to couch his request in politic language. Nevertheless, Jennings does close his letter with thanking Burke in anticipation, and signing it with the phrase 'I remain respectfully yours'. On the one hand, this could be interpreted as a solitary example of negative politeness, employed strategically to persuade Burke to acquiesce with this request. On the other hand, this could also be understood as an example of 'discernment politeness' or 'politic behaviour'. If this was the case, Jennings would not have been employing these phrases strategically, but rather, would have used them purely because it was the norm to sign off a letter in this manner.

The chief agent files of Roland Burke contain a response to Jennings' letter. Addressed to Jennings' father, whom Burke had allegedly written to previously, this reply is dated 27th April 1920.⁴⁶⁹ This was one day after Jennings had written his account of the events which led to him leaving Chatsworth, indicating that Roland Burke sat down to write a rebuttal soon after receiving the missive from Jennings. The language used by Burke within this letter is calm and measured in contrast to the angry and accusatory tone adopted by Jennings. This response indicates an ability to act in a conciliatory manner, which, in ordinary circumstances, would have made Burke well-suited to the negotiations and problem-solving which formed an integral part of his role. Burke acknowledges the former head gardener's rudeness in a very politic way, stating 'he has written me a letter the contents of which I very much regret', and refrains from going into further detail. Rather, Burke implies that he is concerned about Jennings, and expresses a hope that he will calm down and adopt a different attitude, otherwise he (Burke)

⁴⁶⁹ See Appendix Letter 6.

will not be able to provide help in the future, ‘which I have always been anxious to do’. Implicit within this statement is a request for Jennings’ father to talk to his son and pacify him.

In connection to this, Burke explains why he felt it best to approach Jennings’ father, rather than correspond with the former head gardener directly (something for which Jennings upbraided him within his last letter). The chief agent uses semantic strategies associated with negative politeness in order to explain that he understands Jennings Sr. is unable to meet with him and that he prefers his son to manage his own affairs: ‘I quite understand your position’. Nonetheless, Burke politely points out that he feels this to be the wrong approach, as it would have been in Jennings’ interest if his father had been able to meet. It is striking that both Frank Jennings and Roland Burke choose to write to other people to break the impasse/resolve this situation. We have seen how Frank Jennings turned to the Duke of Devonshire for assistance in the fourth letter of this collection, and now within the sixth letter, we observe Roland Burke approaching Mr Jennings. Both of these individuals represent a kind of patriarchal authority, and both Jennings’ and Burke’s overtures to them appear to be an attempt to ‘go over’ their opponent’s ‘head’ in order to secure a resolution.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this letter is the addendum subsequently written by Burke: ‘Decided not to send this letter’. This raises two questions. Firstly, why did Burke change his mind about sending this response to Jennings’ father? It is impossible to answer this question, but perhaps the most likely theory is that Burke felt that it may do more harm than good to acknowledge Jennings’ last letter and send a reply. After all, Jennings had previously censured Burke for writing to his father.⁴⁷⁰ Another possible theory is that Burke later changed his mind about helping Jennings. Nonetheless, another letter contained within Burke’s files,

⁴⁷⁰ See Appendix Letter 5.

written a few months later disproves this hypothesis. The second question is: why did Burke decide to file the letter once he had decided not to send it rather than throwing it away? Once more, it is impossible to conclude exactly why this occurred. Perhaps Burke did not deliberately decide to keep the letter, but instead filed it absentmindedly along with the other correspondence to Jennings, and it survived by chance. Alternately, perhaps Burke wanted to retain the letter so that he had proof of his intentions to help Jennings. All that can be determined for certain is that this study has been enriched as a result of the document's survival.

Almost three months after Burke received the previous letter from Jennings, he was approached by an individual working at the estate office of another country house; Albury Park, in Suffolk, in connection to the former head gardener of Chatsworth.⁴⁷¹ This letter is the seventh within the series. From its textual content, it is immediately evident that this letter was written as a request for a character reference for Frank Jennings. From studying both the information contained within the letter itself, and the address details, it seems that following his departure from Chatsworth, Jennings applied for the position of head gardener at another county estate. W. W. Rhoades, in his capacity within the estate office of this country estate, has written to Burke for more information regarding the reasons for Jennings' departure from his previous employment.

The questioning nature of Rhoades' letter suggests that Jennings was relatively vague in his application for the new post. Given the impolite tone of Jennings' last letter to Burke, and given that he seems to have previously entertained doubts as to whether he could expect a positive reference from his former colleague, it is unlikely that Jennings would have approached the chief agent to ask him to act as a referee. Instead, it is more feasible to consider that Rhoades

⁴⁷¹ See Appendix Letter 7.

may have contacted Burke in confidence with his concerns regarding Jennings. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that Rhoades marked his letter to Burke as 'private & confidential'. This demonstrates the degree to which individuals occupying the position of chief agent were usually considered to be those with the most knowledge about estate matters. As such, the relative power of the chief agent within the estate community is implied.

As was previously mentioned, within the collection, a letter written by Burke exists which demonstrates that his earlier offer to help Jennings was sincere. This letter was written on the 26th July 1920, and it reads as a response to the request for information sent by W. W. Rhoades.⁴⁷² This reference stands in distinct contrast to the earlier testimonial Burke provided for Jennings, which was written in February of the same year. Whilst the previous reference was relatively vague about the head gardener's departure from Chatsworth, this account appears to be slightly more forthright. This can be observed not only in the admission that Jennings was forced to resign, but also in the statement made by Burke where he acknowledges it to be his 'duty' to write 'quite frankly' about Jennings. Furthermore, Burke invites Rhoades to write again 'in confidence', stating that he would be 'most happy to answer anything further you may like to ask.'. These admissions also serve to indicate the superordinate position occupied by Roland Burke within the Chatsworth Estate community. He was powerful enough that he was able to persuade employees to resign from their post. Moreover, he acknowledges the fact that it is his duty to provide honest testimonials for the Chatsworth Estate employees. This implies his omniscience in matters relating to the estate and the staff who worked there.

Notwithstanding his apparent frankness, within this testimonial Burke does present the head gardener's case in a sympathetic light. He goes into great detail about the difficulties Jennings

⁴⁷² See Appendix Letter 8.

endured as a result of the war, when he lost all his able-bodied colleagues and, subsequently, found it very difficult to maintain the gardens. Although Burke claims that Jennings was never able to adapt to these conditions, he concedes that he had ‘a most difficult job to carry on’. The chief agent also makes a reference to Mrs Jennings’ debilitating illness. Within the correspondence of Frank Jennings, the stressful situation of his wife’s ill health was repeatedly portrayed by him as the factor which pushed him over the edge.⁴⁷³ In this letter, Roland Burke adopts the same approach, reasoning that Jennings’ failure to adapt to the pressures of the war was ‘greatly due, I think, to the serious illness of his Wife, who was frightfully ill for a very long time.’ The ill health of Jennings’ wife is also used by Burke as an explanation for the head gardener’s poor behaviour around the time of his departure. Burke states that Jennings became ‘somewhat intemperate’ for a time, yet, he stresses: ‘in my opinion, [this] was only temporary, during the time he was no doubt very much worried about his Wife and other matters.’

Burke’s choice of ‘intemperate’ as an adjective to describe Jennings’ behaviour is an interesting one, because in the early twentieth century, the word could have been used or interpreted in one of two ways. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ‘intemperate’ could have been used at this time to describe someone ‘without temperance or moderation’ in relation to their actions; behaviour that goes ‘beyond due bounds’ which is ‘immoderate, unbridled [or] violent.’⁴⁷⁴ However, the word could also have been used to convey ‘the immoderate use of intoxicating drink’.⁴⁷⁵ Burke’s use of this word seems to be in answer to Rhoades’ question in relation to whether Jennings could be described as ‘sober’. Once again, the uses of this adjective were twofold; to describe a particular type of conduct, or to suggest a

⁴⁷³ See Appendix letters 4 & 5.

⁴⁷⁴ "intemperate, adj.". *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, (January 2018), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/97425?rskey=g7cWgw&result=1&isAdvanced=false> [accessed February 25, 2018].

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

person's relationship with certain substances, in particular, alcohol.⁴⁷⁶ On the one hand, it seems likely that both Burke and Rhoades were making reference to the first definition. Jennings' correspondence to Burke dated 26th April 1920 certainly contains phrases which could be interpreted as 'immoderate', 'unbridled' and somewhat 'violent'. Furthermore, the content of both the letter dated 26th April, and the one written to the Duke of Devonshire on 20th April, does not seem to respect 'due' social 'bounds'. Jennings does adopt strategies of politeness within his letter to the Duke. Yet, the subject of his letter: the unhappiness he endured whilst employed upon the Duke's estate, is highly irregular. Consequently, Jennings could legitimately be described as someone 'without temperance or moderation' in relation to his actions. On the other hand, it also seems possible that both Burke and Rhoades were discussing Jennings' relationship with alcohol. It is not implausible to consider that, due to the stresses of his wife's illness and the problems he was enduring at work, Jennings may have turned to drink. In his letter dated 26th April, Jennings' mentions his 'lapse during the past 5 months'.⁴⁷⁷ According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in employing this term, Jennings was alluding to a 'falling from rectitude, a moral slip'. This sentiment could certainly be interpreted in relation to suffering from problems with alcohol.⁴⁷⁸ A problem with drink could explain some of Jennings' erratic behaviour. Also noteworthy is the fact that the gossip spread about Jennings wife was also related to the abuse of alcohol. She was accused of being a 'secret brandy drinker'.⁴⁷⁹ In reference to this, Jennings upbraided Burke in the following manner: 'I could have taken my own gruel like a man, but when you accused an innocent women & not only that a sick woman...that was low down.'⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁶ "sober, adj.". *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, January 2018, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/183706?rskey=rTS6WB&result=1> [accessed February 26, 2018].

⁴⁷⁷ See Appendix Letter 5.

⁴⁷⁸ "lapse, n.". *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, January 2018, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/105775?rskey=g6kUuG&result=1> [accessed February 26, 2018].

⁴⁷⁹ See Appendix Letter 5.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

There is evidence to support both definitions of ‘intemperate’ behaviour within the letters of Frank Jennings. Certainly, his admission to being ‘indiscreet’ could relate to either interpretation.⁴⁸¹ It is also impossible to precisely establish Burke and Rhoades’ meaning in relation to intemperance/sobriety. As has already been observed, Burke does not expand upon the use of ‘intemperate’ as an adjective, but rather, excuses Jennings’ behaviour as temporary and a reaction to his wife’s ill health. Burke must have known that the word ‘intemperate’ could be interpreted in a variety of ways. Thus, it appears likely that, either Burke was being deliberately vague, or that there was a certain kind of ‘code’ employed in relation to references of this kind, and that Burke was adhering to it without being explicit. In an earlier chapter within this thesis, relating to the concept of the ‘(un)ideal’ servant, it was established that, at this time, there did indeed exist a ‘code’ within character statements, and letters of application, which was widely used and understood by both masters and servants. This study has already noted that this reference seems positive and sympathetic for the most part. Burke assures Rhoades that he believes that if Jennings was given a ‘fresh start’, he could give ‘satisfaction’. Furthermore, he lists Jennings’ positive attributes, naming him a ‘first class’ gardener and reiterating the fact that he had been a good confidential servant for many years before the circumstances surrounding his departure. As such, perhaps, by being vague in his choice of adjectives, Burke was trying to be ‘frank’ in his communications to Rhoades whilst avoiding saying anything overtly negative about Frank Jennings. In this letter, we can observe Roland Burke trying to balance his duty to be honest with his duty of care towards a former employee who had been dependent upon him.

⁴⁸¹ See Appendix Letter 4.

In this letter, at last, we are also able to uncover the Duke's opinion in relation to this situation. The missive contains the statement 'the Duke agreed that he would be very much better away from here, although he was very sorry to lose him.' In this letter, the comment is used as an indication that Jennings has the Duke's sympathy, but we can also read it as an indication that Burke himself had the sympathies of Victor Cavendish in relation to his handling of the affair.

Whilst considering the meaning behind Burke's letter is undoubtedly useful for this study, possibly even more interesting, would be an examination into the manner in which it was received and understood by Mr. Rhoades. Unfortunately, the response from Mr. Rhoades, which forms the last letter within this collection, is rather brief and does not suggest much about his interpretation of the reference.⁴⁸²

This succinct letter does not indicate a great deal, except for the fact that Jennings has decided to accept 'an offer "outside private work" whatever that may mean'. This presumably means outside of the domestic service sector. The fact that Rhoades uses the term 'whatever that might mean' implies a degree of irritation as well as suggesting that some kind of shared understanding did exist between himself and Burke, and that there might have been a degree of parity between the two. Without further evidence, it is impossible to determine exactly why Jennings decided to abandon his application to work at Albury Park and a career in 'private work'. Perhaps he realised that Burke, as chief agent of the Chatsworth Estate, would be approached to provide a reference for any 'private' position he applied for. If so, given his previous mistrust of Burke and the circumstances of his departure, it seems in character for Jennings to pull out of the application and seek other work. Equally likely, is the possibility

⁴⁸² See Appendix Letter 9.

that after his experiences at Chatsworth, Jennings had second thoughts about working at a similar establishment.

Rhoades also conveys his annoyance about Jennings' change of heart by stating that he is sorry he wrote to Burke about him. This statement is another example of negative politeness; Rhoades is apologising for putting Burke out. Thus, as well as implying that he is annoyed that Jennings has wasted his time, Rhodes appears to be behaving deferentially towards Burke, whose time has also been wasted. As such, although Rhoades' response is short and to the point, it, nonetheless, implies the relative power of the chief agent, and it indicates the degree to which this was understood and respected within country estate communities. It once again hints at a shared vision connecting Rhoades and Burke.

5.4 Conclusion to Case Study 1

Together, this entire collection of nine letters helps to answer many of the key questions set out in the introduction to this chapter. In the first instance, they provide a great deal of information on how the extreme events of the First World War could impact upon social and professional relationships within estate communities like Chatsworth. After losing face due to his inability to successfully adapt to war-time conditions within the gardens department, as well as being the victim of gossip, Frank Jennings broke with the normal social and professional conventions governing life and work upon the Chatsworth estate. As this collection of letters shows, he became 'intemperate' and 'indiscreet' and made some 'mistakes'. In particular, the letter he wrote to Roland Burke on 26th April, and the preceding one, which he had written to the Duke of Devonshire on 20th April, show the extent to which he found it difficult to deal with the social and professional threats to his 'face' and how, in

turn, he decided to circumvent and flout the usual protocol governing the behaviour of an estate employee towards their superordinates.

This collection of letters not only demonstrates how crisis and conflict affected Frank Jennings, but they also illustrate the effect Jennings' unregulated behaviour had on other members of the estate community, allowing this study to explore how life at Chatsworth was experienced by a variety of individuals when the usual rules governing social and professional relations broke down. Some members of the estate community were forced to adopt roles different to the ones they had previously occupied. For example, Foster Pegg, the vicar, was called upon to provide a reference, something which he was not usually responsible for. In another example, George Marples was promoted from foreman to head gardener, in order to fill the space left behind by Frank Jennings. Roland Burke was not necessarily required to adopt a different role; as chief agent, he had always been required to act as a peacemaker and a problem solver in order to ensure the social and economic wellbeing of the estate. This was especially required during the Duke's absence, as during that time, he occupied the most powerful position within the estate hierarchy. However, Jennings' behaviour in turn threatened Burke's 'face' as the superordinate figure within the estate community. As such, he responded by employing certain problem-solving strategies which were available to him as chief agent. The strategies employed by Burke allow us to consider how senior servants were able to mediate between different members of the estate community when difficulties arose. His attempts to reinstate order included briefing the gardeners on Jennings' behalf, and, when this didn't resolve the situation, forcing Jennings to resign and communicating with the employee's father in order to gain some support from another authoritative figure whom Jennings might respect. In response to Burke's show of power, Jennings appears to have felt even more threatened, and in turn he attacked his supervisor's 'face' even further by attempting to turn the Duke against him. He portrayed

Burke as a land agent who had abused his powerful position and who had over-stepped the strict social boundaries which governed life within the community, by indulging in gossip and being too punitive.

Drawing upon the theory of face-work in order to examine this collection of letters has made it possible to identify individual behaviours within this scenario which were considered to be inappropriate and objectionable by other members of the estate community. It has also been possible to find, within these letters, a mirrored reflection of the ideal forms of behaviour during such times of crisis. Whilst Jennings 'failed to adapt' and became 'intemperate', an ideal response to the social and professional challenges he was facing would be to act 'sober' and to be flexible. We can infer that George Marples did exhibit these tendencies, and that was the reasoning behind his subsequent promotion to the position of head gardener. Moreover, whilst Jennings criticised Burke for being too punitive and for indulging in gossip, it seems like the ideal response from a chief agent dealing with these circumstances would, conversely, be the adoption of a remote and professional stance. Therefore, this study has illustrated some of the strict rules governing the behaviour of both superordinates and employees at Chatsworth, and thus it has helped us to better understand how Chatsworth was expected to function as a community.

Yet, Burke had the backing of the 9th Duke of Devonshire in this affair, and the penultimate letter within the series demonstrates that he was, after all, sympathetic to Jennings' situation. Whilst his actions may not have always represented the 'ideal' response, it is necessary to view them through the lens of a land agent's primary concern: facework. From his correspondence it is evident that Burke was, ultimately, attempting to navigate this situation in the best possible manner in order to save his own 'face', and that of the Duke of Devonshire. This could only be

achieved by protecting the reputation of the estate and its wider community. At the same time, it is possible to see that Burke was also doing what he thought was best in order to save the ‘face’ of Frank Jennings and protect him from the consequences of his own self-destructive actions.

5.5 Introduction to Case Study 2: The Role of the Private Secretary

Elsie Saunders was private secretary to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire. Like Roland Burke, she retained her position for thirty years, from 1908 to 1938. Following her retirement, Saunders kept in contact with her former employers. Interestingly, much of the correspondence exchanged between Elsie Saunders and Evelyn Cavendish, which can be found within the Cavendish Archives, dates from the period 1938-1950.

Like the role of chief agent, no specific job description appears within the Cavendish Archives for the position of the Duchess’ Private Secretary. However, once again, it is possible to piece together a definition of this particular role by examining documentary evidence of the various tasks undertaken by Elsie Saunders during her years working for the Cavendish family.

As is, perhaps, to be expected, sources held within the archives indicate that Saunders’ main duty was to correspond, on the Duchess’ behalf, with all individuals who had a vested interest in estate matters. In this way, Saunders acted as both an intermediary figure, and also as an official spokeswoman. The reason why this study claims Saunders was responsible for corresponding with *all* those who had *business* with the ducal estates, was because her contacts extended well beyond the estate boundaries. For example, in the third chapter of this thesis concerning gift giving, a letter was examined which was sent by Elsie, on the Duchess’ behalf,

to the secretary of the Contemporary Art Society regarding the use of Chatsworth for a private event.⁴⁸³ In this manner, Elsie Saunders acted as the bridge which connected her employer to the world beyond the estate.

It also seems that, in a similar manner to the role of the chief agent, the private secretary at Chatsworth was required to settle disputes and negotiate terms between various members of the estate community. Elsie Saunders must have been good at this aspect of her job, because years after she left Chatsworth, she was described in the following manner by Lady Maud (the eldest daughter of Duchess Evelyn):

My mother had the most perfect secretary, beloved by everyone, who remained with her for thirty years. She was very tactful and greatly respected by the servants. Everyone took her their problems and in her unique way she seemed to smooth out most difficulties.⁴⁸⁴

More proof of Saunders' natural abilities as a mediator and arbiter can be found within her own correspondence, and, particularly, within the letters she exchanged with other colleagues. Saunders' correspondence with one former co-worker, Edith Walton, was also examined within the earlier chapter of this thesis focused on gift giving, and in these letters, Elsie Saunders was seen to be giving advice and offering words of consolation.⁴⁸⁵

Elsie Saunders often travelled with the Duchess wherever she went, accompanying her mistress on both short and long trips. For example, she relocated to Ottawa whilst the 9th Duke held the

⁴⁸³ DC, BB 26/12510, Letter from Mr. H. S. Ede, Assistant Secretary, The Contemporary Art Society to Elsie Saunders, private secretary, 22.05.1933.

⁴⁸⁴ DC, DF28/1/4, Unpublished Memoirs Lady Maud Baillie (Cavendish), [Undated].

⁴⁸⁵ DC, DF15/3/5/9, Letters of Elsie Saunders, 1938-1953, DC, DF33/8/4, Letters of Edith Walton, 1925-1936.

post of Governor General of Canada, between 1916 and 1921.⁴⁸⁶ Whenever Evelyn Cavendish undertook a journey, Elsie appears to have been in charge of organising the Duchess' schedule and travel arrangements. She also was responsible for the Duchess' luggage, and in this respect, just like the chief agent, the duties of the private secretary also encompassed caring for her employers' material possessions. For example, the packing list for the relocation to Canada in 1916, contains a section marked as 'Her Grace's Private List'. This 'Private List' consists of a description of some of the Cavendish family's most prized possessions, including a goblet made from agate and a cigar box given to the Duke of Devonshire by the Prince of Wales.⁴⁸⁷ It seems likely that Elsie Saunders was heavily involved in putting together the 'Private List' for the Duchess, because the document refers the reader to a 'memo' created by Miss Saunders.⁴⁸⁸ The memo itself is, unfortunately, missing from the archives. Yet, it can be inferred that this memo was either a set of instructions or some further information regarding the safe-keeping of these particularly important possessions.

Saunders had previously undertaken a similar role, when she had been charged with arranging for the care and insurance of the Duchess' jewellery, during her mistress' 1911 trip to India for the Delhi Durbar.⁴⁸⁹ According to documents relating to this particular excursion, the Duchess had taken with her a 'large diamond coronet of 13 shell scrolls, with 13 lotus flowers between a band of double row & collets' which was worth £10,500 in 1911.⁴⁹⁰ A 'relative worth calculator' indicates that, today, the value of the coronet would be around £981,300.⁴⁹¹ The

⁴⁸⁶ DC, DF33/2/4-5 Letters from Elsie Saunders to George Esmond, Ottawa, Canada, 29.12.1917 & 06.10.1918.

⁴⁸⁷ DC, CH36/7/8, Contents of Chests Packed for Canada, September 1916.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ DC, DF15/2/5, Re Insurance of Jewellery going to Delhi Durbar, 1911.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁹¹ *MeasuringWorth*, 'Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount, 1270 to Present', 2016 www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/ [accessed on 05.07.2016].

fact that the Duchess of Devonshire charged her private secretary with arranging for the protection of this extremely precious possession, indicates that she was trusted a great deal.

In her role as private secretary, Elsie Saunders not only found herself responsible for her employer's material possessions, she also found herself the custodian of the Duchess of Devonshire's pets. A series of letters exchanged between Saunders and Denise K. Wren, an experienced breeder of budgerigars, shows Elsie Saunders arranging for the purchase and delivery of two mating pairs of birds on the Duchess' behalf.⁴⁹² When one of the female budgerigars got sick soon after her arrival at Chatsworth, it was Elsie Saunders who wrote to Denise Wren, for advice on how to nurse her back to health.⁴⁹³

As a servant of especially high status, and one who carried out a great many professional tasks for the Duchess of Devonshire, Elsie Saunders was often given spacious rooms near the family's quarters. At Chatsworth, she even had her own sitting room for entertaining.⁴⁹⁴ Her proximity to her employer, combined with the professional tasks she undertook for her, meant that Saunders became a close confidant of the Duchess of Devonshire, and she was often called upon for advice and services which extended beyond her professional remit. Like Laski's description of the royal secretary, it seems that at Chatsworth, Elsie Saunders was expected to be 'at her [employer's] beck and call', both during and outside of work hours.⁴⁹⁵ In particular, the Duchess relied upon Saunders' domestic expertise. This included acting as a 'sounding-board' when she wanted to discuss personal issues. For instance, when the 9th Duke was ill in

⁴⁹² DC, DF15/3/6/8/1-4 Re OXSHOTT Successional Nest Boxes, Budgerigar Cocks and Hens Ready for Nesting (or young stock) in all colours, Letters exchanged between Denise K. Wren and Elsie Saunders, 07.02.1935 - 19.03.1935.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ DC, U.R. Burke Chief Agent's Papers, 108/1/2, Re. Servants for the Duke & Duchess' return from Canada, Letter from U. R. Burke, 24.02.1921.

⁴⁹⁵ Laski, 'The King's Secretary', quoted in Bogdanor, *The Monarchy and the Constitution*.

January 1938, his wife wrote the following letter to her private secretary, who was herself convalescing, in order to express her concerns:

My dear El... The Duke has been awful today threw his medicine all over the place this morning and made a regular scene with the nurse - he did not get up till after luncheon and would not go out. Though he really seems rather stronger.⁴⁹⁶

By assisting the Dowager Duchess' with such concerns, Elsie Saunders was undertaking a kind of emotional labour distinct to that undertaken by Roland Burke. Whilst Burke primarily concerned himself with resolving problems and disputes threatening the management of the estate, Saunders occupied a more consultative position, providing her former employer with reassurances and advice on both personal and professional manners.

The Duchess also relied upon Saunders for her good sense of taste. In 1911, for example, whilst Elsie Saunders was on holiday, Duchess Evelyn wrote to her and asked her to pick out some flowers to go with a particular fitted lace gown which she wanted to take with her to India.⁴⁹⁷ As was seen in the previous chapter of this thesis, the Duchess also entrusted Elsie Saunders with picking out all of her Christmas presents: for members of staff, for family members and for friends.⁴⁹⁸ Such work was never undertaken by Roland Burke. Thus, it is evident that although the two individuals occupied similarly important, mediatory roles as senior servants, the expectations placed upon them were slightly different. The fact that Elsie Saunders alone was consulted for advice in relation to specific domestic matters, can be regarded as an indication of the gender norms which existed during the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries. In their study of George Eliot's 1871 novel, *Middlemarch*, Zhang and Zheng

⁴⁹⁶ DC, DF15/3/5/9/1 Letter from Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Elsie Saunders, private secretary, 05.01.1938.

⁴⁹⁷ DC, D11 2170 Letter from Elsie Saunders to Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, 14.11.1911.

⁴⁹⁸ DC, DF28/1/4, Unpublished Memoirs Lady Maud Baillie (Cavendish), [Undated].

identified the three principal qualities associated with ‘respectable’ women in the text. These were ‘feminine tenderness, tact, and domestic expertise.’⁴⁹⁹ It is apparent from the above examples, that Elsie Saunders was expected to draw upon all three of these attributes in her role as Private Secretary.

As has previously been stated, Elsie Saunders kept in contact with Duchess Evelyn and other members of the Cavendish family following her retirement in 1938, and the letters which exist for the period 1938-1950 show that she continued to provide her former mistress with advice on both professional and personal matters.⁵⁰⁰ This case study will draw upon 8 letters from this collection of correspondence. The letters date from January 1940 to February 1945, and together, they total 3,324 words.

There are a few reasons why these 8 documents have been selected for this particular study. The letters which Elsie Saunders wrote to Evelyn Cavendish during the period 1938 to 1950 offer the opportunity for an investigation which will dovetail nicely with the first examination conducted within this chapter. The previous case study, considering the role of the chief agent, focused upon Burke’s relationship with a subordinate, the head gardener Frank Jennings. In contrast with this, an analysis of the letters exchanged between Elsie Saunders and the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire between 1938 and 1950 offers the opportunity of examining a senior servant’s relationship with a superordinate. Moreover, whilst the previous study examined the impact of the First World War, both personally and professionally, in relation to certain members of the Chatsworth estate community, this study shall likewise investigate the effects of the Second World War.

⁴⁹⁹ L. Zhang and L. Zeng., ‘George Eliot’s Feminine Assertion in Middlemarch’, *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 7(7) (2017), p.540.

⁵⁰⁰ DC, DF33/15/3/5/9/7, Letter from Elsie Saunders, private secretary, to Evelyn Cavendish, Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, 27.06.1940.

In total, the Cavendish Archives contain 38 letters written by Elsie Saunders during this time period. It would have been beyond the scope of this thesis to conduct a study which considered the entire collection of correspondence. As such, 8 letters were selected to ensure that the sample size for this study was similar to that of the previous examination. Unfortunately, the collection of correspondence only contains letters written *by* Elsie Saunders *to* the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, and not the responses of her former mistress. Nevertheless, the 8 documents considered within this case study were chosen because they offer especially clear examples of Elsie Saunders offering both personal and professional advice to her former employer in relation to some of the crises caused/aggravated by the ongoing war. By making use of CDA and theories on face-work and politeness to analyse the advice given by Elsie Saunders within these letters, it should be possible to uncover some of the elements which would have been present within the Dowager Duchess' side of the correspondence. This will allow the study to consider the Dowager Duchess' 'voice' in spite of the absence of her correspondence. Whilst other letters from this time period demonstrate Elsie Saunders providing assistance of some kind to Evelyn Cavendish, or hint at the impact of the war upon life at Chatsworth, no other letters contain information relating to both of these situations. Consequently, this sample of correspondence is uniquely suitable for analysis.

Unlike the previous case study undertaken within this chapter, the contents of Elsie Saunders' letters will be organised and analysed thematically, according to what they can tell us about the role she occupied in the Chatsworth community. This is because, unlike Burke's letters, Saunders' correspondence does not form one long, continuous narrative. As such, they do not need to be examined as individual letters in the order in which they were written. The four themes considered are, in turn, Elsie Saunders' role as professional employee of the Duchess

of Devonshire, Saunders' role as the Duchess of Devonshire's personal confidant and sounding-board, Saunders' role as the Duchess of Devonshire's close friend and correspondent, and finally, Saunders' role as a gatekeeper for good taste within the community. The conclusion of this case study will return to the same format as in the former, with a summary which surmises what the entire collection of letters can tell us about both the position of the private secretary at Chatsworth and of social and professional relations upon the Chatsworth estate more generally. By drawing upon the concepts of face-work and politeness in order to carry out its analysis, this study will be able to demonstrate how a private secretary was able to 'intrude without ever seeming to intrude.'⁵⁰¹

5.6 Elsie Saunders' Role as Professional Employee of the Duchess of Devonshire

Much of the correspondence sent by Elsie Saunders to Evelyn Cavendish between 1938 and 1950 refers to her professional insights on matters of Chatsworth estate business. In some instances, her letters also indicate that she continued to undertake some work for her former mistress long after her retirement. Elsie Saunders' appreciation of the problems which the Chatsworth community, and, in particular, the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, experienced during this time period is so comprehensive, it appears as though she never left the Chatsworth estate.

Above all, Saunders maintained a good awareness of the estate's financial responsibilities throughout her retirement. One notable letter from the series of documents demonstrates this in relation to payments owed to 'F. Bloem'.⁵⁰² in order to fully understand the situation

⁵⁰¹ Laski, 'The King's Secretary', quoted in Bogdanor, *The Monarchy and the Constitution*.

⁵⁰² See Appendix Letter 10.

concerning 'F. Bloem' it is also necessary to draw upon other letters catalogued elsewhere within the archives, which can provide more background information.⁵⁰³ These pre-existing letters document the establishment of a private pension scheme in 1935 for the benefit of Fraulein von Bloem, a governess who worked for the Duchess between 1912 and 1914.⁵⁰⁴ Elsie Saunders was initially responsible for this pension scheme, but upon her retirement in 1938, she asked Miss Littleton, another former employer of Fraulein von Bloem, to take over management of the scheme.⁵⁰⁵

Elsie Saunders opened the specific letter contained within this series of documents with the statement: 'I think you will like to see the enclosed letter from Miss Littleton & the copy of F. Bloem's letter.'⁵⁰⁶ This sentence suggests Saunders felt the Dowager Duchess might have had some concerns relating to this matter, or that she was, at the very least, interested in the situation. Without the other half of this correspondence, it is impossible to ascertain exactly what the Dowager Duchess' concerns or interests were in relation to Bloem's pension. However, given the fact that Britain declared war on Germany a few months before this letter was written, and given that Fraulein von Bloem was a German national, it seems likely that her interest in the situation revolved around the impact of the war upon the pension scheme. On the one hand, it is possible that Evelyn Cavendish was worried that a state of war would make it difficult to send the pension money to Fraulein von Bloem. On the other hand, perhaps she was concerned about sending money to Fraulein von Bloem because of either the financial or patriotic implications of doing so.

⁵⁰³ DC, DF15/3/5/9/2, Letter from Fraulein von Bloem to Miss Cynthia, forwarded to Elsie Saunders, 13.12.1939; DC, DF33/8/3/1-26, Letters of Fraulein Katie von Bloem, Governess, 1935-1938.

⁵⁰⁴ DC, DF33/8/3/1-26, Letters of Fraulein Katie von Bloem, governess, 1935-1938.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶ See Appendix Letter 10.

What is evident from this extract, is that, despite having left her place of employment, Elsie Saunders was still being updated with information relating to the pension scheme she had previously set up. Whilst nominally, Saunders may have handed over the management of the scheme to Miss Littleton, it appears that she still felt a degree of responsibility for it. Elsie Saunders also seems to have felt certain obligations towards the Dowager Duchess in relation to Fraulein von Bloem's pension, as the letter shows she was at pains to reassure her former employer that she should not worry about the scheme. After she had informed her former employer of the letters she had enclosed, Elsie Saunders mentioned that the Dowager Duchess' son, 'Eddy', has taken over the payments, and she added that the money had not yet been withdrawn by 'F. Bloem'.⁵⁰⁷ Not only does this content suggest Elsie Saunders felt a continued sense of responsibility in relation to her past role, but it also implies that the Dowager Duchess felt a continued sense of reliance upon her ex-private secretary. Rather than a friendly letter exchanged between an individual who has been retired for a year and a half, and her former employer, this first section of the missive seems more like an example of a 'hand over document'.

After her attempts to allay the Dowager Duchess' concerns regarding Fraulein von Bloem, Elsie Saunders then turned her attention to the 'Colemans'. It has not been possible to uncover any further information relating to the Colemans in the Cavendish archives in order to contextualise this aspect of the correspondence. However, from the content of the letter, it seems that they were another family who were somehow connected to the estate, and who had also been offered a pension/stipend of some kind. In the letter, Elsie Saunders indicated that it was common knowledge that the Colemans had been forced to give up the lease of their current flat. She inferred that this was related to their landlady patronising a specific cause (perhaps

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

related to the war effort).⁵⁰⁸ It appears as though Elsie Saunders was continuing a conversation initiated by Evelyn Cavendish in a previous missive, because she offered her agreement to the Dowager Duchess' thoughts on this matter, stating 'I think your advice to the Colemans... is good.'⁵⁰⁹ Following this, the former private secretary went into detail about the Coleman's financial situation as she understood it, once again demonstrating the fact that, although she had retired, she was still keeping up to date with estate matters: 'I don't think the amount subscribed for his stipend was more than £450. It was to start with, but the Duke gave £50 - you gave £50 & now give £25. Lady Ward no longer subscribes & someone else died or gave up.'⁵¹⁰

That Elsie Saunders offered her agreement with the Dowager Duchess' suggestion, and then backed this up with some facts relating to this situation, is indicative of the fact that Evelyn Cavendish had turned to her former secretary for advice on this issue too. Moreover, we can infer that it was common practice for the Dowager Duchess to consult with Saunders in this manner, because the latter appears confident in judging the behaviour of her former employer.

The correspondence exchanged in relation to both F. Bloem and the Colemans demonstrates that, not only did Elsie Saunders maintain an awareness of the Chatsworth estate's various financial commitments throughout her retirement, but that she also kept abreast of changes made to the membership of the estate community. In one letter belonging to the collection, Saunders exhibited just how intricate her knowledge was of the community which lived and worked upon the Chatsworth estate.⁵¹¹ In the process, she also hinted at her own position within the social hierarchy at Chatsworth. The letter in question is quite lengthy. The subject matter

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ See Appendix Letter 14.

largely concerned a crisis regarding staff occupying positions of senior management at Chatsworth. The comments made by Elsie Saunders imply that both Evelyn Cavendish, and her daughter in law Moucher (the nickname used for Mary Cavendish, wife to the 10th Duke of Devonshire, by close friends and family members) were very concerned about the situation. It seems that both women wished to replace an employee named Jackson, who was working on the estate as a subagent, with another employee named Shimwell. However, there was evidently some anxiety relating to whether this could be achieved diplomatically, and, from Elsie Saunders' account, it appears as though Moucher was particularly nervous about this issue.

The detailed synopsis of the Shimwell 'problem' which is contained within this letter demonstrates that Elsie Saunders was intimately aware of both the hopes and concerns of Evelyn and Mary Cavendish, and moreover, that she understood the implications of replacing Jackson with Shimwell perhaps even better than her former employers:

Moucher is definitely worried about his position & I am sure wants it to be improved. I did suggest that S. might take Jackson's place but she felt that would be an intolerable position for him – Jackson being so easy going, is very popular. Shimwell, or anyone who replaced him, would have a stiff task but it would be particularly hard for Shimwell –

- He would appear to have pushed J. out
- Owing to his vigour & perhaps somewhat uncompromising manner, he is not very popular, except with men like Bond or Alsop & Maltby.
- He is fond of Mr Hartopp but he would get no backing from him.⁵¹²

In the above extract we can see evidence that Moucher, the new Duchess of Devonshire, also remained in communication with Elsie Saunders after her retirement. Like the Dowager Duchess, Moucher appears to have relied upon Saunders for advice. Through examining the section of her letter quoted above, it is immediately apparent why both women depended upon

⁵¹² Ibid.

the former private secretary to such a great extent. Evidently, Saunders had a huge amount of insight into the characteristics of, and the professional relationships which existed between, different members of the Estate community. She displayed even more awareness of the circumstances surrounding this particular estate crisis further into her letter:

I am very much afraid that as long as Mr Hartopp is agent, Jackson will remain & I never heard any suggestions that Clive might be put into Chatsworth but when the change does come Shimwell as Subagent or assistant Subagent would be admirable. Though Bolton would be better for he has always to live down at Chatsworth his humble origin – a despicable attitude of many country people.

As I see it there will be no vacancy for S. as long as Mr Hartopp is at Chatsworth for he likes & relies on Jackson & would not consent to a change – such a change would mean a tightening up in many ways – letters of complaint would go to the Estate office & to Eddy. There must be a vigorous agent behind a zealous Clerk of the works, when reforms have to be put through.

I just can't see a way out at Chatsworth as things are at present. It is deplorable that a man of such ability, who has served you so very very faithfully, should come to such a pass – that it is due to war conditions makes it no easier for, at such a time, efficiency, such as his, should be put to full use.⁵¹³

It is worth noting that, at the time of writing this letter, Elsie Saunders had been retired from her post for over four years. In the time period which had lapsed, Britain had entered a Second World War. This was a situation which had, as the above quote shows, created a new set of problems for the estate community, and for Shimwell in particular. Yet, despite Saunders' absence, her knowledge of the intricate details surrounding these problems appears to be so comprehensive, it is as though she had never left the Chatsworth estate. Saunders did not merely provide her former employer with a detailed review of the Shimwell 'problem' within this letter, she also provided the Dowager Duchess with some advice on the subject. Here, in this second half of the letter, Saunders adopted a position of authority as an 'expert' in the matter at hand:

⁵¹³ Ibid.

If you could have a calm talk with Moucher to find out if there was any hope of a future position for Shimwell it would be worth while for him to continue to mark time, in the knowledge that it would not be for long but if it is too indefinite I think he should be urged to cut adrift. He will be miserable but with so much influence & so many openings now, he ought to get a job which would interest & absorb him & then he would be happier. If it was in the Sheffield district he would be in touch with his Mother.

When I write to Moucher I will tell her that I think you have Shimwell's position a good deal on your mind & then perhaps she will bring up the subject.⁵¹⁴

Despite the fact that Evelyn Cavendish certainly occupied much higher-ranking social position within the Chatsworth estate community than the former private secretary, in this section of the letter, it appears though Elsie Saunders occupied the superordinate station. In the above quote, we witness Saunders suggesting that the Dowager Duchess have a conversation with her daughter-in-law, 'Moucher', about the problem. Saunders then goes even further, and describes how she herself will help to mitigate the situation: 'When I write to Moucher I will tell her...' Whilst not necessarily impolite, Elsie Saunders' choice of verbs in this sentence ; 'when' and 'will', implied that she was not going to await an answer from her former employer, but that she was prepared to proceed with this course of action regardless of Evelyn Cavendish's opinion. As such, this sentence demonstrates Elsie Saunders' powerful social agency. Given that she appears to have had a better awareness of the finer details surrounding this issue than either the Dowager or the current Duchess of Devonshire, this dynamic expression of social agency seems to have been justified. Another factor to note is that, in this letter, Elsie Saunders was leading discussions relating to the employment of the agents and sub-agents working for the Duke of Devonshire. The first case study within this chapter explored the dominant role occupied by the chief agent within the Chatsworth estate community. In that case study, the chief agent was observed mediating between members of the Cavendish family and lower-

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

ranking servants. However, no documentary evidence was found which demonstrated him mediating between his employers and other groups of senior servants, like the private secretary. As such, this letter suggests that at Chatsworth, Elsie Saunders occupied an even higher and more influential position than the land agents, even though she no longer occupied the role of private secretary.

Whilst this passage is evidence of her high-ranking social status, Saunders could not forget the fact that she was still her former employer's social inferior, regardless of her expertise in this particular matter. This can be seen in the fact that her initial suggestion to the Dowager Duchess followed a framework of politeness in the manner in which she used the conditional 'if' in conjunction with modal verb 'could': 'if you could have a calm talk with Moucher to find out if there was any hope...' According to linguistic scholars, Culpepper and Demmen, the use of conditional phrases and modal verbs when making a request is a linguistic phenomenon linked to strategies of negative politeness.⁵¹⁵ Through couching her advice in a manner associated with negative politeness, Elsie Saunders was likely attempting to preserve her former employer's face. In this particular scenario, it is possible to witness the Duchess of Devonshire's private secretary comporting herself in a similar manner to Laski's royal secretaries:

[S]he must know all that is going on; [s]he must be ready to advise upon all. But [s]he must never so advise that he seems to influence the decision taken by [her employer] in terms of the premises of [her] own thought.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁵ Jonathan Culpepper & Jane Demmen, 'Nineteenth-century English politeness: Negative politeness, conventional indirect requests and the rise of the individual self', *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, vol.12(1-2) (2011), p.51.

⁵¹⁶ Laski, 'The King's Secretary', quoted in Bogdanor, *The Monarchy and the Constitution*.

In another letter contained within the collection, Elsie Saunders also framed the advice she gave to the Dowager Duchess in an especially polite manner. Rather than referring to professional matters, however, this piece of correspondence was a response to some highly personal concerns Evelyn Cavendish had in regard to her relationship with her daughter, Lady Rachel. The contents of this letter are scrutinised in the following section of this study, which is concerned with Saunders' role as the Duchess of Devonshire's personal confidant and sounding-board. However, the valediction to the letter is pertinent to this section of the study because, despite the less professional tone of this letter, Elsie Saunders chose to sign off with the valediction 'Your devoted Ex sec EL.'⁵¹⁷ This is the only time within the entire series of letters that she referred to her vocation, and to her professional connections with the Cavendish family. It is intriguing that she chose to do so in a letter that, otherwise, reads as a piece of correspondence exchanged between close friends. Perhaps by drawing attention to her professional role in this manner, Elsie Saunders was able to provide advice and take the lead in certain situations without ever 'seeming to intrude'.⁵¹⁸

5.7 Saunders' role as the Duchess of Devonshire's personal confidant and sounding-board

The letter in which Evelyn Cavendish voiced concerns about her daughter, Lady Rachel, to her former private secretary has not been preserved. Nevertheless, it is possible to uncover some of the elements which would have been present within the Dowager Duchess' side of the correspondence by analysing the response given by Elsie Saunders.

⁵¹⁷ See Appendix Letter 16.

⁵¹⁸ Laski, 'The King's Secretary', quoted in Bogdanor, *The Monarchy and the Constitution*.

In her letter, Elsie wrote: 'I can't think that Rachel means to be unkind – she could hardly have been serious in saying she lived in terror as a child for she really had a most marvellous time.'⁵¹⁹ From this text, we can ascertain that Rachel had been complaining to her mother about her upbringing, and that, in turn, the Dowager had looked to Elsie Saunders for reassurance and advice, thereby treating her former employee as both a personal confidant and a sounding board. It is impossible to establish the veracity of the claim that Rachel had the 'most marvellous' childhood. However, Elsie Saunders' motivations for making such an assertion are easier to ascertain. It appears from her answer that she accepted her role as the Dowager Duchess's confidant and sounding-board, and, by claiming that Lady Rachel had experienced a wonderful childhood, Saunders most likely wanted to live up to these obligations by restoring her former employer's confidence. To this end, Saunders listed a few potential reasons for Rachel's 'unkind' behaviour. These explanations, if proven to be true, would have served to clear both parties from any suggestion of wrong-doing. This, therefore, was an attempt by Elsie Saunders to provide an answer which would protect the 'face' of both women, allowing them to be appreciated by polite society without being labelled as either a poor mother or an ungrateful daughter. In the first instance, she wrote: 'How strange it is that nearly everyone looks back to their youth & when recounting its details always picks up on something – such as wearing an unbecoming hat – to make fun of.'⁵²⁰ Later on in her response, Elsie Saunders considered: 'It is a difficult position when daughters return home after years away & perhaps she feels she has not much scope & gets unconsciously a bit bored. She is really such a darling.'⁵²¹

⁵¹⁹ See Appendix Letter 16.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ Ibid.

On top of the excuses provided for her behaviour, the conclusion that Lady Rachel was a ‘darling’, is particularly pertinent. Here, Elsie Saunders was making use of the linguistic strategy of paying compliments in order to demonstrate positive politeness, thus bolstering the lady’s face even further.

In addition to these explanations, Elsie Saunders also provided some reminiscences about Evelyn Cavendish’s daughters as young children. Such illustrations were most likely intended to support her earlier statement that Lady Rachel had enjoyed a wonderful childhood: ‘I am sure if challenged by someone outside the family they [Evelyn Cavendish’s children] would all declare how much they loved their life at Holker, at Lismore & at Bolton - & what children ever had more glorious times?’⁵²²

Doubtless in an attempt to relive some of the tension which Evelyn Cavendish might have been feeling, one of the reminiscences provided by Elsie Saunders was written in a more comical tone: ‘How Rachel used to tease Dorothy till she cried. I certainly never remember that she, herself, was ever put upon or scared!!’⁵²³ Elsie Saunders’ mock-astonishment, as indicated by the use of not one, but two exclamation marks, implied that she couldn’t take Rachel’s allegations seriously and that the Dowager Duchess shouldn’t either.

Within the collection of 8 letters, there are many other instances of Elsie Saunders performing the role of personal confidant and sounding-board to the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire. A number of the concerns and challenges which Saunders was responding to had developed as a result of the events of the Second World War. Therefore, this section of the case study is

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Ibid.

especially useful for answering two of the key research questions set out in the introduction. Namely, ‘how were social relations at Chatsworth affected by some of the extreme events which characterised this period of history, such as the outbreak of the First and Second World Wars?’ and, ‘how did the senior servants mediate between their subordinates and their superordinates during these circumstances?’

Amongst the most notable examples found in the collection is a detailed discussion on the subject of whether or not the Dowager Duchess’ grandchildren should be evacuated to Canada for the duration of the war. However, rather than merely providing her former employer with some reassurances or advice on the matter, in this letter Saunders went one step further and offered Evelyn Cavendish some of her own advice. Yet, the overall tone of this letter remains polite, and the language used by the former private secretary seems specifically calculated in order to ensure that she posed no threat to the Dowager Duchess’ face by either criticising her, or by causing any feelings of imposition.⁵²⁴ In the first place, Saunders offered validation for the concerns which, she assumed, were plaguing the Dowager Duchess: ‘I do indeed grieve to think how many extra worries have been added to you. The decision about the children is a crucial one & so perplexing to know what is for the best’.⁵²⁵

By identifying some of her former mistress’s anxieties, this section of Elsie Saunders’ letter allows the study to consider the Dowager Duchess’ ‘voice’ in spite of the absence of her half of the correspondence. The subject matter of this correspondence, which must have been raised by Evelyn Cavendish in a previous letter, implies that the Dowager Duchess believed she

⁵²⁴ See Appendix Letter 11.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

shared a deep *personal* bond with her former private secretary which extended well-beyond *professional* concerns.

Following on from this statement, Elsie Saunders admitted that she was keenly aware of the specific difficulties involved in the decision-making process, as she had been talking on the telephone to one of Evelyn's daughters, Dorothy; 'Poor Dorothy hadn't slept for nights, worrying about it.'⁵²⁶ Thus, we can infer from this extract that Elsie Saunders continued to undertake emotional labour for other members of the Cavendish family besides the Dowager Duchess well into retirement. This mirrors the professional work she continued to undertake for both her former mistress, and her daughter-in-law Moucher.

It was only after validating the concerns of both her previous employer, and her employer's daughter, that Elsie Saunders contributed her own thoughts on the matter, stating 'I feel Philippa & Timothy [Evelyn's grandchildren] would be all right'.⁵²⁷ However, the former private secretary refrained from giving her opinion on the matter in too forthright a manner. Instead, she tempered her thoughts with the following disclosure: '...but it is dreadfully difficult after 20 years absence to think of suitable people to help out with older children.'⁵²⁸ Here we can observe how, whilst stating her thoughts, Saunders also built in the room for her former mistress to propose an alternative arrangement if she preferred. This linguistic strategy is an example of 'non-imposition' negative politeness, and it is associated with allowing the addressee to have a choice or option, thus, paying attention to an individual's wish not to be imposed upon.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁶ Ibid.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Brown and Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*.

In her next letter, Elsie Saunders went one step further, and offered advice to the Dowager Duchess, this time on the matter of evacuating the child of her other daughter, Rachel: 'I wish Rachel could find a nearer spot than Winniepeg for Davina - Have you thought of Enid Owen at Montreal? She had 2 very nice girls.'⁵³⁰

In a similar manner to before, Elsie tempered her suggestion by couching it in language associated with the concept of negative politeness. The phrase 'have you thought of' can be seen as an indication that Elsie Saunders did not wish to appear to be patronising the Dowager Duchess, or to impose her advice on her former mister. By framing her suggestion as a question, Saunders instead provided Evelyn Cavendish with the opportunity to reject the advice or to disclose that she had already considered this course of action. Elsie Saunders also employed the tactic of negative politeness by following her suggestion with an expression of sympathy and understanding, something which goes even further towards protecting the Dowager Duchess' 'face'. She wrote: 'I, too, have wished you could have gone with the children but I see all your difficulties & it is wretched if you do not feel up to much & you simply could not get on without Webb.'⁵³¹

Elsie Saunders not only used these two letters as platforms through which to offer some sympathetic advice to her former mistress, but she also used them in order to propose some specific ways in which she herself could provide assistance to the Dowager Duchess. Thus, this letter clearly hints at the important position Elsie Saunders occupied within the Dowager Duchess' social network. Most notable is the section in which Elsie Saunders discussed the matter of a 'fund'. This was the provision which would presumably support the grandchildren

⁵³⁰ See Appendix Letter 12.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

should they be sent to Canada for the duration of the war. Here, Elsie can be observed going above and beyond any *professional* obligations she may have felt towards the Cavendish family by offering some specific forms of assistance. Firstly, She volunteered to contribute her own Victory Bonds to this pot of money; ‘I would love these to join the fund... it ought to be worth at least £100 by now I think.’⁵³² This study has already argued that Evelyn Cavendish must have felt she shared a deep personal bond with her former private secretary, which went above and beyond the professional. The great generosity displayed by Elsie Saunders within this section of the letter indicates that she reciprocated these feelings. Saunders followed up this overture with proposing a form of assistance more traditionally in line with her professional duties. She offered to write to a lady named Mary Angus ‘if it would help’.⁵³³ She explained that there were a few individuals acquainted with Angus who may be able to arrange for a loan. This more professional offer of help does not detract from the more intimate form of assistance proposed earlier. Rather, it merely points to the multifaceted nature of the relationship which the two women shared. Other examples of the personal obligations which connected Evelyn Cavendish and Elsie Saunders to each other are hinted at throughout the letter, for example, at the end of the missive Elsie Saunders expressed her gratitude to Evelyn Cavendish ‘for offering me a home if mine is destroyed.’⁵³⁴

Another letter in the collection sheds further light into how the deeply personal nature of the relationship which existed between the retired private secretary and her former employer, was affected by the extreme events of the Second World War.⁵³⁵ Whilst this missive is nowhere near as lengthy as some of the documents previously discussed, yet the contents are more profound. It was written in September 1944 in response to the death in combat of Evelyn

⁵³² See Appendix Letter 11.

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

⁵³⁵ See Appendix Letter 15.

Cavendish's grandson, Bill Hartington, the eldest child and heir of the 10th Duke of Devonshire. There is no hint of a professional connection between the two correspondents within this letter. Instead, the sympathetic and sorrowful phrases hint at a strong personal connection between Elsie Saunders and the Cavendish family: 'I was so very touched that, in all your shattering grief, you thought of sending me a message...As you know, your sorrows are my sorrows & my heart aches to think of you in such unhappiness.'⁵³⁶

Saunders followed these sentences with a discussion of the characters of late Billy and his younger brother, Andrew, now heir to the Dukedom of Devonshire. In this section of her letter, it is possible to truly appreciate just how well she knew the family she had diligently served for three and a half decades:

Billy had turned out so well – his was such a charming personality & with so much ability too, he would have gone far. It all seems too cruel.

I think Andrew has really a sterling character too, he will steady down & be worthy of the position he will occupy. I do pray daily for his safety.⁵³⁷

Saunders closed the letter by stating 'My thoughts are ever with you in so much sympathy' before signing off as 'Your devoted El.'⁵³⁸ This valediction stands in stark contrast to the manner in which Saunders signed off her letter concerning Lady Rachel's behaviour. In the other missive, she used the two additional words 'ex sec'. Therefore, in that context, the use of 'devoted' as a valediction by Elsie Saunders was linked to the professional obligation or loyalty she felt to her former employer. I argue that, by stating her professional title in such a manner, Saunders was most likely attempting to draw attention to the professional and social distance

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

which separated herself from the Duchess. In that way, she was perhaps better placed to provide advice and take the lead in certain situations without ever ‘seeming to intrude’ or to cause damage to the Dowager Duchess’s negative face.⁵³⁹ In contrast, by omitting her job title in her letter regarding Bill Hartington’s death, signing off instead as merely ‘your devoted El’, it seems as though Saunders’ connection to Evelyn Cavendish has transcended from being something which could be categorised as professional, to something personal. In fact, this letter contains no suggestion as to the nature of the relationship which connected the author to the addressee. Leaving aside the evidence found within other letters, and treating this document as a stand-alone piece, it appears as though this could be a missive exchanged between two close friends or family members in relation to their mutual grief. Saunders may have chosen to structure her letter in such a manner for fear that any hint of the professional relationship which connected her to the Cavendish family, may serve to cheapen her expressions of sympathy. This letter, therefore, serves as an illustration of how extreme events could impact upon the traditional rules which governed social relations between different members of the Chatsworth estate community.

The final piece of correspondence considered in this section of the case study sees Elsie Saunders offering advice to her former mistress in relation to her living arrangements.⁵⁴⁰ Written in February 1945, the discussion of living arrangements contained within this particular missive is particularly striking, because the issue seemingly revolves around where the Cavendish family themselves will be housed once the war is over. Elsie Saunders appears to recognise that it was an especially contentious issue, as she opened her correspondence by admitting ‘I have spent 2 nights thinking over your letter.’⁵⁴¹ From this statement, we can infer

⁵³⁹ Laski, ‘The King’s Secretary’, quoted in Bogdanor, *The Monarchy and the Constitution*.

⁵⁴⁰ See Appendix Letter 17.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*

that she was somewhat hesitant to provide her former employer with advice on this matter, even though it seems as though she had been asked for it directly. Nevertheless, she proceeded to weigh up some of the options available to the Cavendish family, starting with the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, Eddy and Moucher Cavendish, and the second born son Andrew and his wife Deborah (Debo). Elsie wrote that she agreed with the Dowager Duchess that:

if Eddy & Moucher return to Derbyshire you are too close to the centre of things at Edensor equally, I think that, if they go to a corner of Chatsworth, Andrew & Debo would be too near, that is, if it is to be an all the year round home -⁵⁴²

Yet, Elsie Saunders refrained from pinning her colours entirely to the mast. Instead, she finished this statement with the proviso ‘but this is their affair.’⁵⁴³

Saunders then turned her attention to the housing options available to Dowager Duchess, which formed the main issue under consideration throughout the rest of the document. As in her letter relating to the Shimwell situation, the former private secretary was able to demonstrate an intimate awareness of estate matters by providing a detailed synopsis of the matter as she understands it. She also employed sympathetic language in order to indicate her support for the Dowager Duchess:

I really hate the thought of Hardwick for you because of its loneliness & the fact that there are so few walks on the flat. If you did decide to go there London for the worst months of the winter would be essential. In any case, I do not think the move could be this summer (1) Isn't Hardwick packed with furniture? (2) Wouldn't domestic staff be impossible until the war is well over? [written in red] **unless your present one would go with you.** [end of red] with the £10 limit to the house renovations wouldn't it be impossible to get the pantry alteration done? (4) If Debo did go to Edensor wouldn't they want to wait till Andrew was out of the Army & had made some plan about his future career?⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

In her synopsis of the situation, Elsie Saunders picked up on the various options open to Evelyn Cavendish which, it can be inferred, were mentioned by the latter in the letter preceding this one. She made it clear that she viewed these choices in quite a negative light by explaining her numerous hesitations and concerns. However, it is only within the first sentence of this paragraph that Saunders explicitly declared the definite disadvantages of Hardwick as a potential home for the Dowager. In the rest of this section of the extract, she employed conditional phrases such as ‘if you did decide’, ‘I do not think the move could be this summer’, ‘wouldn’t domestic staff be impossible until the war is well over?’⁵⁴⁵ These phrases all served to bring attention to some of the ways in which Elsie Saunders perceives Hardwick to be unsuitable as a home for her former employer. Various problems and potential solutions are not only drawn attention to linguistically, but also stylistically, with certain words and phrases being underlined or written in a different colour. Yet, Saunders simultaneously tempered her response by suggesting some ways in which these issues could be mitigated. By using the conditional tense, and by framing some of the perceived issues as questions, Elsie Saunders allowed some room for error. This had the effect of making the letter less critical. In this manner, Saunders was ultimately able to leave the choice up to the Dowager Duchess and she gave her an opening to refute some of the problems mentioned. Hence, despite its overwhelmingly pessimistic outlook, it is possible to detect a negative politeness strategy embedded within this letter as a means to avoid damaging Evelyn Cavendish’s negative face.

Saunders followed up this lengthy section with a couple of short observations relating to events which had already transpired and issues that, we can assume, were raised by the Dowager Duchess herself in a previous letter. Here she claimed that she did not agree that Evelyn

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

Cavendish was ‘too old’ to rent a house elsewhere, away from ‘the annoyances of a mismanaged estate’.⁵⁴⁶ Saunders also claims that she ‘shed no tears’ when one particular option available to the Dowager Duchess, an estate-owned house, was decided to be unviable.⁵⁴⁷ Elsie admits ‘I did not like the idea of it for you’.⁵⁴⁸ The kind of strong, emotive language used by Elsie Saunders throughout this letter appears to be markedly different to the kind of language we have seen her employ in her other letters. She appears more forthright in her opinions and it seems she felt at liberty to make observations which would definitely not have been available to other kinds of servants. The description of the estate as ‘mismanaged’, for example, would have carried with it many negative connotations, and would have raised the question of who was mismanaging the estate. Elsie did not make any indications as to who she perceived the culprit to be, but by failing to go into any further detail or to disclose who was doing the mismanaging, Saunders left the 10th Duke open to potential criticism. Perhaps she felt able to voice such disapproval because she was writing in defence of her former mistress. It is possible that she intended to use words of disapproval in order to demonstrate her loyalty to Evelyn Cavendish. It is also possible that Elsie Saunders re-appropriated the shocking description of a ‘mismanaged estate’ from a previous letter written to her by the Dowager Duchess herself. It is impossible to explore this theory further without having access to the other half of this correspondence. Nevertheless, it is very telling indeed that Elsie Saunders felt comfortable using this kind of critical language to her former employer, even if it took her two days to pluck up the courage to do so.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

5.8 Saunders' Role as the Duchess of Devonshire's Close Friend and Correspondent

Whilst some letters have shown that Elsie Saunders occupied a position which was senior enough to allow her to demonstrate her disapproval or grief over some of the more troubling issues affecting her former employer, overall the content examined so far in this case study has hinted that the relationship between Elsie Saunders and Evelyn Cavendish was a little one-sided. Although we saw evidence that the Dowager Duchess offered to provide Elsie Saunders a home if it was destroyed (presumably in an air raid), most of the correspondence revolved around the dowager's own concerns.⁵⁴⁹ As this study has argued, it is possible to 'read' the Dowager Duchess' side of the conversation from the material available. With Elsie Saunders dedicating the focus of many of her letters to the anxieties, concerns and ruminations, of Evelyn Cavendish, it seemed as though the Dowager Duchess was using her channel of communication with her former employee predominantly in order to get professional and personal advice and emotional support. Nevertheless, some of the letters contained within the collection show that Elsie Saunders and Evelyn Cavendish shared intimate thoughts and anxieties with one another in relation to contemporary events and concerns.

Notably, in one such missive, Saunders shared with her former employer her intimate reflections on the military defeat of France at the hands of Germany and Italy, something which had been finalised only two days prior to her writing, on 25th June 1940.⁵⁵⁰ She declared that this turn of events was 'a cruel blow' and evinced her opinions that the French were 'badly led' and that 'we shall do better without them'.⁵⁵¹ Saunders also discussed her thoughts and concerns regarding a potential German invasion of Britain 'horrible as it all will be no doubt

⁵⁴⁹ See Appendix Letter 11.

⁵⁵⁰ See Appendix Letter 12.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

for us, it will also be pretty grim for any Germans who have to do the invading', and she provided detailed accounts of two air raid warnings.⁵⁵² The fact that Elsie Saunders turned to her former employer with her own thoughts and concerns suggests that their relationship was, if not equal, then not overly disproportionate. The two women evidently shared a close personal bond.

Indeed, whilst in many of the letters previously examined, Elsie Saunders was the one who offered her assistance to the Dowager Duchess, in this letter, she requested help from her former employer. She asked the Dowager: 'I suppose you didn't know of anyone else going to Canada who would give an age to 2 children (boy at preparatory school, girl about 12) who are going to friends in Canada. The mother so longs to tack them on to someone.'⁵⁵³

This investigation previously considered how framing a suggestion as a question could serve to remove, or at least moderate, any threat to a person's negative face. Here, Elsie Saunders used a similar tactic in asking her former employer if she knew of any children traveling to Canada who could provide companionship to the children of one of her own friends. Saunders was even politic enough to couch this request with the presupposition that the answer will be a negative. Whilst this appeal was extremely polite and indicated that Elsie Saunders recognised the Duchess was her social superior, the fact that she was in a position to call on the Duchess for help and advice suggests a degree of parity in their relationship.

The interactions between master and servant demonstrated in this collection of letters appears at odds with the kinds of interactions between masters and servants which have previously been

⁵⁵² Ibid.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

explored within this thesis. Whilst Elsie Saunders lived with and worked for the Cavendish family over the course of three decades, the development of such a close personal relationship between employer and employee is, nevertheless, surprising. For example, we have seen how she referred to Duchess Mary Cavendish, the wife of the 10th Duke of Devonshire, as ‘Moucher’. The nickname ‘Moucher’, was an appellation only used by her family members and by close friends of the family.⁵⁵⁴ The fact that Elsie Saunders referred to Mary Cavendish by her nickname in a letter she had written to the lady’s own mother in law, implies that Saunders felt herself to be included in this social grouping. This study has already demonstrated the careful language choices made by Elsie Saunders when corresponding with the Dowager Duchess in order to avoid causing insult. As a result, it appears unlikely that she would have used Mary Cavendish’s nickname in this manner unless it had been suggested to her that it was permissible. By thus considering both Mary and Evelyn Cavendish’s ‘voices’ in spite of the absence of their correspondence, it seems likely that both individuals also included Elsie Saunders as part of this network of close friends and family members.

It is the argument of this study that the close bonds which formed between Elsie Saunders and the Cavendish family were due to the extraordinary position which the private secretary occupied within the Chatsworth estate community. Indeed, perhaps one of the reasons why Elsie Saunders felt at liberty to discuss matters with her former employer which would not ordinarily have been available to a domestic worker, was because neither she herself, nor the Dowager Duchess, regarded her as a domestic worker. In a letter contained in the collection of 8 letters, Elsie Saunders discussed domestic service from the point of view of an employer, not an employee. The piece of correspondence referred to Evelyn Cavendish’s manservant, Ilott, in it, Elsie Saunders gave her opinion that the Dowager Duchess couldn’t or shouldn’t live at

⁵⁵⁴ See Appendix Letter 14.

Hardwick without a manservant - ‘certainly a Duchess can’t answer her own front door bell!’⁵⁵⁵

– although she acknowledged that a manservant who was ‘less of a Butler’ than Ilott might be more suitable. Overall, she concluded:

Servants are now counting their hours on duty & will take time off constantly I have seen this happening so much lately, it is going to make things very difficult... Do keep Ilott on for as long as possible, to have someone you can depend on is worth a few drawbacks.⁵⁵⁶

Pamela Horn and Lucy Delap have both noted that whilst prior to 1914, domestic debates amongst the employing classes had revolved around the *quality* of servants, the disruptions of the First World War led to the added concern of the *quantity*, or the *scarcity*, of good servants.⁵⁵⁷ Thus, by espousing the concern that more servants than before were ‘counting their hours’ and ‘taking time off’, Elsie Saunders was making comments which indicated that she aligned herself with those who employed servants at this time.

As this case study has shown, many of the more intimate conversations which took place between Elsie Saunders and her former mistress within this collection of letters, were directly in reference to specific crises caused by the two military conflicts which defined the first half of the twentieth century. Therefore, this study argues that such extreme events served to break down the barriers between the Dowager Duchess and her private secretary even further. This can be observed most notably in a rather salacious joke which Elsie Saunders passed on to her former employer at the end of one of her letters. She wrote:

A woman went into a maternity hospital to have her fourth child there. The matron said to her “Well we’ll soon be having another chip off the old block” to which she replied “Well, no, I’m afraid this is a splinter from a Pole!”⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁵ See Appendix Letter 17.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Horn, *Life Below Stairs in the 20th Century*, p.12.

⁵⁵⁸ See Appendix Letter 17.

No examples of this kind of humour have been found in letters written by Elsie Saunders to her former employer prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. Most likely, the saucy implications of such a joke would have made it a taboo subject for an employee to raise with her mistress, no matter how senior that employee was. The fact that Saunders appears to have first heard the joke from a respectable source, the Dowager Duchess' own daughter, Lady Maud, surely served to make it more passable. However, it was most likely the circumstances in which the ladies found themselves which prompted Elsie Saunders to share the quip. The events of the war had caused the Dowager Duchess some serious concern. The rest of this particular letter focused upon the more limited number of living arrangements open to Evelyn Cavendish after the end of the conflict. By passing on this piece of war-time humour, Elsie Saunders found a way to break some of the tension surrounding this issue and provide a little light relief.

5.9 Saunders' Role as a Gatekeeper for Good Taste within the Community

When passing on a joke, such as the one quoted above, to the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, Elsie Saunders had to be sure that it would suit her former mistress's taste. If it had not been to the Dowager Duchess' liking, then, despite its respectable provenance and its use as a tool to provide some light relief from war time tensions, it would have fallen flat. Other sources found in the Cavendish archives suggest that such a quip was entirely in line with Evelyn Cavendish's taste in jokes. For example, in one document, an estate terrier which she herself put together in 1922, she noted in exclamation that one of the Chatsworth tenants 'Married 2nd wife because he had to!'⁵⁵⁹ In a letter which Evelyn had written to her husband, the 9th Duke of Devonshire,

⁵⁵⁹ DC, DE/CH/4/3/16, Estate Terrier of Beeley, Calton Lees, Calton Houses, Chatsworth, Edensor, Pilsey, Compiled by Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, August 1922.

in 1925, she humorously described the past exploits of her Uncle Claude, who, she claimed had led ‘rather a naughty’ life, ‘all according to the strange ethics of our class in his generation.’⁵⁶⁰

The introduction of this case study highlighted the fact that, throughout her employment, Elsie Saunders had often undertaken domestic tasks on the Duchess’ behalf which required her to develop a good sense of taste in line with her mistress’ own likes and dislikes. Through performing tasks such as buying the Christmas presents for the staff and estate workers, Elsie Saunders stepped into the Duchess’ own role of gatekeeper for good taste within the Chatsworth estate community. Such work was in line with the quality of ‘domestic expertise’ which was associated with all respectable women in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century.⁵⁶¹ Therefore, it is unsurprising that Elsie Saunders was aware of what jokes her former mistress was likely to find funny.

In the correspondence under scrutiny in this case study, which relates to the period after her retirement, there are numerous examples of Elsie Saunders continuing to perform the kinds of domestic tasks which required her to exercise good taste on the Dowager Duchess’ behalf. For example, in a letter written over four years after leaving the employment of the Cavendish family, she referred to some domestic tasks which she was still undertaking on the Dowager Duchess’ behalf, including getting her former employer’s watch repaired and sourcing some ‘little books’.⁵⁶² She then made the offer to look for more ‘little books’, this time containing ‘Bible stories’. She quoted the price of these books; “5/ 6”, but stressed that if Evelyn Cavendish did want her to get them, there was no need for her to send any money ‘until I have

⁵⁶⁰ DC, DD/165, Letter from Evelyn Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 26.01.1925.

⁵⁶¹ Zhang & Zeng., ‘George Eliot’s Feminine Assertion in *Middlemarch*’ P.540.

⁵⁶² See Appendix Letter 13.

got them all'.⁵⁶³ This suggestion can be seen as an indication that Saunders expected this task to keep her busy for a little while.

It is evident from her letters that Elsie Saunders had earned the Dowager Duchess' trust in these matters, and that, as such, she was able to go about her work with a degree of autonomy. Nonetheless, whilst Saunders may have occupied a senior position in the community which allowed her to step into the role of gatekeeper for good taste, she was always circumscribed by the Dowager Duchess' own likes and dislikes. One letter in particular demonstrates the degree to which Evelyn Cavendish insisted on having the final say when it came to matters of taste. It appears that the former private secretary did indeed secure some 'Bible stories' for Evelyn Cavendish, as she had previously offered to do. Yet, we can infer that the Dowager was less than impressed with them, as in her next letter, Elsie wrote 'I am much mortified to hear of the unsuitability of some of the little holy books I sent.' She followed up this statement with some excuses for her error in order to mitigate against her subsequent loss of face whilst still deferring to Evelyn Cavendish's judgement against the holy book:

The shop was very crowded & I was rather rushed for time so went by the advice of the assistant, but it was stupid of me to have had them posted direct. I ought to have brought them back to read & look over.⁵⁶⁴

Yet, regardless of the fact that Elsie Saunders clearly misjudged her former mistress' taste on this one occasion, the absence of admonishments or excuses in any other letters exchanged between the two implies that, in the vast majority of other situations, she exhibited what Evelyn Cavendish perceived to be good taste. This, and the evidence that the Dowager Duchess continued to rely on her former secretary to perform such tasks on her behalf even after her

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ See Appendix Letter 14.

retirement, indicates that Saunders was very good at this aspect of her job. In order to undertake this work to such a high a standard, she must have understood her employer extremely well.

5.10 Conclusion to Case Study Two

This case study has built upon the work of the former by providing a number of answers to the key research questions set out in the introduction to the chapter. One finding, which relates to the role played by senior servants like Elsie Saunders within country estate communities, comes from the fact that, even after she retired, Elsie Saunders was called upon by various members of the Cavendish family for advice, reassurance, and assistance in relation to both personal and professional matters. Thus, just like the role of royal secretary as described by Laski, it appears that the private secretary of a member of the landed class had to be at their employer's 'beck and call.'⁵⁶⁵ Consequently, the role of private secretary appears to have been more of a vocation than a traditional position of employment. In this instance, 'vocation' is understood to mean: 'a profession, way of life, course of action, etc., which a person feels that it is his or her duty or destiny to follow, or for which he or she feels particularly suited.'⁵⁶⁶

Another finding was the fact that Elsie Saunders was expected to transcend the gap which separated a professional employee from a personal advisor, confidant and even, a close friend. This, combined with the vocational aspect of the position, suggests that the personality of a senior servant was an extremely important factor in them gaining and then succeeding in their role. This argument was also made in Beardmore, King and Monks' edited volume *The Land Agent in Britain*.⁵⁶⁷ Also useful was the ability to pay especial attention to face-work and

⁵⁶⁵ Laski, 'The King's Secretary', quoted in Bogdanor, *The Monarchy and the Constitution*.

⁵⁶⁶ "vocation, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, December 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/224289, [Accessed 7 January 2019].

⁵⁶⁷ Beardmore, King & Monks (eds) *The Land Agent in Britain*, pp.1-2.

politeness, which allowed a senior servant like Elsie Saunders to adeptly negotiate the often nebulous role she occupied, without causing any offence to her superiors.

Beyond shedding more light on the role that private secretaries occupied at country estates like Chatsworth during the first half of the twentieth century, this case study has illuminated some of the social rules which governed life and work for other members of the estate community. For example, it has demonstrated how a few senior members of an estate community could act as gatekeepers of taste. These ideas would then trickle down to the other members of the estate through the gifts they received, the jokes they heard, and the holy books they read, thus becoming part of the social fabric of estate life. Like the previous chapter on gift giving, this case study has also drawn attention to the fact that membership of the Chatsworth estate community could transcend temporal and geographic boundaries, as Elsie Saunders retained her membership after retiring and relocating.

In particular, the correspondence examined in this case study has shown how the extreme events of the Second World War impacted upon certain members of the Chatsworth estate community, including various members of the Cavendish family, the land agency department, and, of course, Elsie Saunders herself. In the wake of these extreme events, Saunders found herself undertaking an increasing amount of 'emotional labour' as the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire consulted her for advice about both personal and professional estate matters, utilising her former employee as a kind of sounding-board. The detailed summaries provided by Elsie Saunders, as well as the advice she gave, allows us to comprehend how life at Chatsworth was experienced once traditions broke down or were abandoned.

5.11 The History of Chatsworth ‘From the Middle’: Overall Conclusions

The two separate case studies which, together, make up this chapter, both explore the Chatsworth estate through the lens of ‘history from the middle’. The Cavendish archives contain a wealth of material compiled by the senior servants living and working at Chatsworth during the first half of the twentieth century. Not only is such material bountiful, but, as this investigation has shown, it proves to be extremely useful in understanding how the Chatsworth estate functioned as a whole community throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Through the correspondence of the senior servants, whose jobs revolved around mediation, it has been possible to understand the power dynamics which existed at Chatsworth during this period. It has also allowed us to ascertain how these power dynamics were interpreted and experienced by a cross-section of the estate community, from the those occupying low ranking positions, to those at the very top of the social hierarchy. Moreover, this chapter has revealed some of the social norms and conventions at Chatsworth which governed relations between these individuals. Thus, from the correspondence of senior servants, this study has extrapolated data relating to the first and third constituent parts of a community, as identified by Shepard and Withington: the social practices associated with it, and the communicative acts which defined and constituted it.⁵⁶⁸

The decision to examine letters exchanged during two of the most extreme events characterising this period, the First and the Second World Wars, was taken in order to explore the impact of these events upon social and professional relations at Chatsworth. This investigation also enabled the study to engage with social history debates regarding the themes

⁵⁶⁸ Shepard & Withington (Eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place and Rhetoric*, p.12.

of change and continuity over the course of the first half of the twentieth century. The study found that the circumstances of war upset the usual rules governing life and work at Chatsworth. In some cases, such as the forced resignation of Frank Jennings, communication between different members of the community broke down and animosity between Jennings and his colleagues increased. In other cases, such as the proposed evacuation of the Cavendish grandchildren to Canada, the rate of communication between different members of the community increased, and Elsie Saunders found herself undertaking more emotional labour than before.

In an effort to understand more fully how senior servants like Roland Burke and Elsie Saunders attempted to navigate such challenging scenarios, throughout the study, attention was drawn to theories on face-work and politeness. The methodological framework of CDA as laid out by Teun van Dijk was also considered.⁵⁶⁹ This study does not claim that the forms of politeness/impoliteness uncovered within the correspondence of Chatsworth estate's senior employees were the same as forms of politeness/impoliteness used in country estates elsewhere at this time. Instead, the methodologic approaches were specifically employed to bring to light, and to help us to better understand, the specific impact two world wars had upon social interactions and negotiations of power within the Chatsworth estate community. Together, the two case studies have achieved this aim. For example, the study relating Frank Jennings showed how the former head gardener flouted the processes usually governing estate matters, in order to go over the head of his superior, Roland Burke. He wrote to the 9th Duke of Devonshire ostensibly to clear his own name, 'I venture to lay a few facts before you in my own defence', but he also used the opportunity to complain about his manager.⁵⁷⁰ Following

⁵⁶⁹ van Dijk, *Racism and the Press*, p.180.

⁵⁷⁰ See Appendix Letter 4.

on from the first study, the second half of this chapter considered how Elsie Saunders navigated her relationship with the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, when she faced the difficult position of providing expert advice without damaging her former employer's face. By considering the linguistic concepts of face-work and politeness/impoliteness in relation to the correspondence of senior servants, this study has been able to highlight the complex and challenging role occupied by such individuals within rural societies, thereby developing academic research conducted by scholars like Beardmore, King, and Monks, as well as illustrating the benefits of bringing linguistics inspired approaches to social history.⁵⁷¹

Yet, whilst this study has focused upon social relations upon one particular estate, it has, nevertheless, broadened the understanding of the kinds of social interactions which could occur within country estate communities more generally by highlighting the complex and challenging roles occupied by individuals like Burke and Saunders. In doing so, this chapter has expanded upon the four categories of domestic service put forth by Jessica Gerrard in *Country House Life*, whilst also building upon the recent research.⁵⁷² It has also demonstrated that, as a data-set which avoids the elite nature of a top-down approach, and gets around the problems posed by the lack of available documentation for a 'bottom-up' investigation, documents relating to senior servants can provide useful information for researchers conducting a social history investigation of an English country estate. Thus, this study provides an answer to the key research question of this thesis: how we can best understand the history of the country house, not from the perspective of a single social group, but in relation to the whole community who lived, worked and interacted within its boundaries?

⁵⁷¹ Beardmore, King & Monks (eds) *The Land Agent in Britain*.

⁵⁷² Gerard, *Country House Life*, p.162.

6. Thesis Conclusion

Through its examination of Chatsworth in the years 1908-1950, this thesis has reinterpreted the history of the English country estate. Whilst such landholdings have typically been considered from the point-of-view of the elites who owned them, and the labour associated with them has typically been understood from the perspective of those carrying out domestic service, this investigation has adopted a more holistic outlook. It considers both life and work at Chatsworth, not from the perspective of a single social group, but in relation to the whole community who interacted within its boundaries. In adopting this approach, the thesis has been able to act as a ‘bridge’ between two hitherto distinct avenues of historical research, providing alternative and more comprehensive narratives of both country life and domestic service. Additionally, this study has engaged with key debates from the wider discipline of social history. This includes discourse relating to the themes of continuity and change throughout the twentieth century, as well as that concerning class, social mobility and power.

In the first instance, by focusing on the experiences of Chatsworth’s employees as well as those of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, this thesis has challenged the notion that the years 1914-1945 witnessed the gradual disintegration of social norms and conventions traditionally associated with English country estates. Country house scholars including David Cannadine, Clive Aslet, F.M.L. Thompson and, most recently, Adrian Tinniswood, have all argued that the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 sowed the seeds for the destruction of this way of life.⁵⁷³ In *The Long Weekend: Life in the English Country House Between the Wars* (2016), Tinniswood described the period which followed as a transitional period and an ‘Indian

⁵⁷³ Aslet, *The Last Country Houses*; Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*; Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century*; Adrian Tinniswood, *The Long Weekend: Life in the English Country House Between the Wars* (London, 2016); & Worsley, ‘Beyond the Powerhouse’.

Summer' for the English country estate.⁵⁷⁴ Yet, this thesis has found evidence which contradicts this version of events. Both the Cavendish family and the senior servants they employed to manage the estate found themselves facing new challenges as a result of the conflict. However, neither they, nor the majority of other individuals who populated the Chatsworth estate during this period, conceived of themselves as living through an 'Indian Summer'. Rather, only a small minority of community members, such as Frank Jennings, the head gardener, were unable to readjust to the confusion wrought by the events of the First World War. For the most part, the demographic and literary evidence considered within this thesis has shown that the Chatsworth estate community was able to either resist, overcome, or adapt to the numerous threats it faced during this period of conflict. The conventional social hierarchy remained in place, and the norms and practices associated with this particular estate community endured. Moreover, once the war came to a close, life and work at Chatsworth continued along much the same lines as in earlier decades, demonstrating that the estate community was a resilient social organism with deep roots. It was only the events of a Second World War, and the demands of death duties, which irrevocably disrupted the traditional ways of life associated with the Chatsworth estate.

The findings discussed here are not only relevant to county house scholarship, but they also hold significance for the wider field of social history. They prove that, despite the economic, industrial, military and political challenges characterising the period, the first half of the twentieth century should not be considered an era of overwhelming social change. Rather, this thesis has drawn attention to many social continuities at Chatsworth relating to all six facets of community life as defined by Shepard and Withington, including: the institutional arrangements that gave it structure, the people who were and were not allowed to participate

⁵⁷⁴ Tinniswood, *The Long Weekend*, p.IX.

in it, the communicative acts which defined and constituted it, the geographical and temporal sites these acts were located in, and the rhetoric by which it was legitimated, represented and discussed.⁵⁷⁵

However, this thesis does not claim that the social continuities uncovered within this investigation could also be found across British society. Whilst community life at Chatsworth was influenced by prevailing understandings, such as paternalism and deference, in many other ways it was also distinct from wider society. In the letter he wrote to the northern universities, quoted in the introduction to this thesis, Edward Cavendish, 10th Duke of Devonshire explained that Chatsworth was important because it represented a particular ‘phase of social life’.⁵⁷⁶ This thesis has expanded upon the 10th Duke’s claims, suggesting that Chatsworth was unique because, whilst there were clear-cut hierarchal divisions elsewhere in society between those who were served and those who served them, country estates like Chatsworth operated as environments in which individuals from opposite ends of the social spectrum habitually interacted with one another. Social relations at Chatsworth were, therefore, organized around a complex hierarchical system, and were characterised by a messiness which would not have been found elsewhere. As such, this estate community cannot be considered representative of wider society. Yet, by focusing upon such a diverse and varied community, located within one of the most traditional settings in Britain: the country estate, social historians have a greater opportunity to observe relations through, across, and between social strata. This, in turn, enables scholars to identify certain social norms, and beyond this, to ascertain whether such conventions were able to endure the challenges of the twentieth century, or whether they were

⁵⁷⁵ Shepard & Withington (Eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place and Rhetoric*, p.12.

⁵⁷⁶ DC, CH12/4/4, Letter discussing the potential uses for Chatsworth After WW2, written by 10th Duke of Devonshire, 17.12.1945.

forced to transform. Ultimately, this makes communities such as Chatsworth ideal places for social historians to test out broader theories relating to community, identity, class and power, as well as social change and development. This thesis has illustrated this by showing how authority and status could vary greatly even amongst individuals from the same class background. In addition, it has developed Shepard and Withington's theory that a community was partially defined by geographical and temporal boundaries, by arguing that community networks could transcend time and space.

By focusing on the diverse nature of the Chatsworth estate community, this thesis has also been able to reassess nationally-observed patterns and trends relating to domestic service. I have shown that interpersonal relations between masters and servants did not always conform to a narrative of tension, a theme which overshadows studies conforming to a feminist, 'history from below', perspective on domestic service, such as those conducted by researchers including Pam Taylor, Leonore Davidoff, and Judy Giles. The dichotomy of 'deference vs defiance' which lies at the centre of Taylor, Davidoff, and Giles' research, can be understood as an attempt to 'rescue' domestic servants from oppression and anonymity.⁵⁷⁷ Yet, it has also served to simplify the complex inter-personal experiences surrounding domestic employment. By embracing a more nuanced and holistic approach, this study has found that there could exist a great degree of variance in the relationships which connected masters and servants, ranging from feelings of exasperation or mistrust to admiration, sympathy, and even affection. Additionally, it has found that the relations which existed between different groups of servants could be similarly diverse.

⁵⁷⁷ Steedman, *Labours Lost*, p.27.

Building upon this avenue of research, this study has emphasized the variety of roles the term ‘domestic service’ could encompass. I have expanded upon the traditionally restrictive definitions of a domestic servant as a: ‘waged domestic worker, predominantly of the female sex, expected to live in their employer’s household’ put forth by scholars like Carolyn Steedman.⁵⁷⁸ Instead, I have engaged with the broader definition of domestic service put forward by Jessica Gerrard, who argued that servants could actually belong to one of four distinct categories, and have gone even further by arguing against such forms of delineation. In the first chapter of this thesis, I made use of the substantial, yet patchy, quantitative data found in relation to the Chatsworth estate community. This data consisted of account books, employment ledgers, and national insurance records, all produced by the Chatsworth estate office for the attention of Chatsworth’s chief land agent, Roland Burke. The material was used in the first chapter of the thesis, ‘Investigating the Chatsworth Estate Community: A Demographic Study’, in order to ascertain who made up the Chatsworth community between 1908 and 1950. According to the strengths and limitations of this material, the chapter was comprised of four case studies. The first formed an overview of the entire estate population between 1908 and 1913, the years immediately following Victor Cavendish’s accession as 9th Duke of Devonshire. Following on from this, three case studies then considered three groups of estate workers in turn: the gardeners, the builders, and the indoor female servants.

Overall, the chapter was able to provide answers to key demographic questions about the Chatsworth estate community, including: ‘How many individuals were employed upon the estate at any one time and in what capacity?’, ‘How was the hierarchy of the estate community structured?’ and ‘What was the ratio of male to female employees?’ By addressing these queries, I concluded that individuals as diverse as skilled craftsmen, like builders or painters,

⁵⁷⁸ Definition of service taken from Steedman, *Labours lost*, pp.5-6.

and middle-class professionals, like the private secretary or the land agent, could all be considered servants. I also found that, within the setting of an English country estate, servants were predominately male rather than female. Many of the individuals considered within this study did not conform to any of the four categories laid out by Gerard. However, by drawing upon evidence pertaining to the Chatsworth estate, and by making use of legal definitions such as, C. B. Labatt's 1913 *Commentaries on the Law of Master and Servant*, this investigation found that the key element which distinguished service from other forms of employment was the social restrictions it placed upon the employee.⁵⁷⁹ These restrictions were placed upon the servant in accordance with the whims and expectations of their employers, and they were intrinsically linked to notions of power and class. Such social conventions were an integral part of the social framework underpinning the Chatsworth estate community.

In identifying this phenomenon, the first chapter of this thesis has made a significant contribution to scholarship concerning the practice of domestic service, as well as showing social historians more generally that community studies can provide evidence of important local distinctions and diversities not represented in studies based on national observations. Building upon this foundation, in the remaining three chapters of the thesis I have drawn upon textual accounts of life and work at Chatsworth in order to illuminate some of the specific social codes and practices associated with particular sections of the estate community. However, whilst each chapter is united in aim, they all differ in terms of methodological approach. Corpus linguistics software, CDA, and models of politeness theory and face-work all influenced the investigation in various capacities. This multifaceted approach was extremely advantageous, as it enabled the thesis to interrogate different kinds of qualitative source material found within the Devonshire Collection archives, much of which was previously

⁵⁷⁹ Labatt, *Commentaries on the Law of Master and Servant*, p.12.

thought by social historians to be of little value, in order to answer the key research question of the thesis: how can we best understand the history of Chatsworth, not from the perspective of a single social group, but in relation to the whole community who lived, worked and interacted within its boundaries?

In the second chapter, which focuses on the expectations placed upon lower-ranking estate employees, I posed the question: ‘Who or what made an ‘ideal’ servant?’ I interrogated job applications, letters of recommendation, and other textual accounts referencing good or bad service with the aid of the corpus linguistic software *Antconc*. I also took inspiration from Teun van Dijk’s model for CDA developed within his 1991 investigation, *Racism and the Press*.⁵⁸⁰ Within my investigation, I found that the answer to the above question differed according to social group. Members of the employing classes made notably subjective language choices when describing ‘good’ or ‘bad’ servants, and this exposed their chief requirement of a domestic employee: they wanted their workers to be likeable and to be trustworthy. Evidence to this effect supports the claim made in the first chapter of this thesis: that social conventions relating to power and class were an integral part of the social framework underpinning the Chatsworth estate community. This was also reinforced by the discovery that an individual’s job prospects were intrinsically linked to the interpersonal relations they shared with those of a superior social status. Servants recommended friends or family members for positions, others highlighted the ways in which they were connected to individuals employed in similar posts, and above all, they placed great emphasis upon the aristocratic titles of their former employers when applying for jobs. Meanwhile, senior servants and members of the employing classes recommended prospective employees to one another. In this manner, the second chapter of this thesis was able to expose the myriad social networks which connected the Chatsworth estate

⁵⁸⁰ van Dijk, *Racism and the Press*.

to other country establishments. This discovery helped to further expand the boundaries of who we could consider to have been a member of the Chatsworth community, and thus, it is of interest to social historians more broadly interested in the theme of community membership.

In the third chapter of the thesis, I drew upon accounts of philanthropy and benevolence in order to investigate some of the expectations, rules and social codes which regulated the behaviour of members of the Cavendish family in the period 1908-1950. Here, I found that the social expectations associated with domestic service actually operated both ways. Members of the Cavendish family had paternalistic obligations which were connected to the role they played within the estate community. Thus, demonstrations of philanthropy can be regarded as the means for justifying their superordinate status. Yet, once again, the chief discovery concerned the interpersonal relations connecting different members of the estate community to one another. I identified the fact that, in the period 1908-1950, individuals were most likely to receive philanthropic gifts and payments from the Cavendish family if they were liked. I also drew attention to evidence that recipients included individuals who had retired, or who had left the estate for new positions. Evidence to this effect further exemplifies the extent to which the social networks making up the Chatsworth estate community could stretch. It was based upon these findings that I suggested Shepard and Withington's understanding of community be reviewed.⁵⁸¹

The second and third chapters of this thesis predominantly drew on textual sources compiled by Chatsworth senior servants in order to closely examine the roles played by the highest and lowest members of the estate community. However, the final chapter of the thesis embraced

⁵⁸¹ Shepard & Withington (Eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place and Rhetoric*, p.12.

the outlook ‘history from the middle’ by focusing specifically on those who occupied the central social strata at Chatsworth. It would have been beyond the scope of this thesis to examine all of the material relating to the senior servants employed at Chatsworth in the period 1908-1950. Instead, I found it most expedient to focus upon two individuals in particular. Roland Burke was chief agent to the 9th Duke of Devonshire from 1908-1938. Elsie Saunders, acted as Private Secretary to Duchess Evelyn, wife of the 9th Duke of Devonshire, for the same duration, although she remained in contact with Evelyn Cavendish throughout her retirement, and continued to offer her services to the Duchess until her death in 1950. These two individuals were selected for examination because they both served the Chatsworth estate for a particularly long period of time, and because the majority of their records have been preserved within the Cavendish archives. By answering the key research questions: ‘who was the senior servant?’ and ‘what was their role within the Chatsworth estate community?’ this study built upon the arguments made in the first chapter of this thesis, which decried the traditionally restrictive definitions of domestic service found in previous scholarship. In doing so, it introduced the concept of ‘emotional labour’, which was distinct from other forms of work taking place on the estate. The emotional labour undertaken by Burke and Saunders relied heavily on their interpersonal skills. In my methodological approach, I once again sought inspiration from Teun van Dijk’s model for CDA. In addition, I paid attention to Brown and Levinson’s models for politeness theory, and Andreas H. Jucker and Irma Taavitsainen’s approach for investigating the concept of ‘face-work’ within literary accounts. By using these linguistic inspired approaches in order to understand the concept of ‘emotional labour’, I was able to provide a new lens through which to observe country estates in their function as communities.⁵⁸² I concluded that sources relating to senior servants are profoundly important

⁵⁸² van Dijk, *Racism and the Press*; Brown & Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*; Goffman, ‘On Face-work’, pp.7-13; & Jucker & Taavitsainen, ‘For your courtesie’, p.115.

to all social historians focusing on country estates or agrarian culture. In addition, I demonstrated how linguistics inspired approaches could help to shed light on the asymmetrical relations connecting different members of a given community, and moreover, I showed that such forms of analysis could enable social historians to determine how cross-class relationships were both understood and negotiated.

Initially, as I sought to understand how Chatsworth operated as a community in the period 1908-1950, I encountered a methodological problem. The private archives of country houses were created to preserve documents relating to members of the employing classes rather than their employees. Accordingly, the Devonshire Collection is abundant with documentation produced by members of the Cavendish family. Meanwhile, the voices of their labourers, tenants, and low-ranking servants are, unfortunately, much more difficult to find. The majority of information relating to these individuals is quantitative and can be found in their employment records. However, while this information can be used for demographic mapping to provide one level of insight, I found that the information contained within letters and memoirs is crucial for understanding the social norms and interpersonal relationships which made up the framework underpinning the estate community. The solution to my methodological dilemma was found in the extensive records which had once belonged to Chatsworth's senior employees, like those examined in the fourth chapter of this thesis. Besides their upper-class employers, these senior servants have left behind the largest paper-trails out of all those living and working on the Chatsworth estate. Furthermore, due to the mediatory role undertaken by such employees, the records of senior servants are uniquely placed to help historians to understand how estates such as Chatsworth functioned as communities. They offer access to the experiences of the lower-ranking individuals inhabiting the estate, which are unlikely to have been recorded elsewhere, whilst also providing a new vantage point from

which to observe the social and professional obligations placed upon the estate's upper-class landowners. By interrogating the wide variety of source material found within the records of Chatsworth's senior servants, and by augmenting this with individual letters written by members of the Cavendish family, and lower-ranking staff members, I have been able to write working people back into the history of the English country estate. In this manner, my thesis has forged a link between two hitherto distinct fields of scholarship: that concerned with the history of the country house, and that concerned with the practice of domestic service. Moreover, in its focus on relations between different members of Chatsworth's complex social hierarchy, my study is of significance to the wider field of social history. It provides evidence of a community which was not necessarily defined by geographical or temporal boundaries. Instead, it has shown that this particular community was characterised by a set of shared understandings relating to membership, behaviour, social status and power. I have located evidence of these ideals being 'legitimated, represented, discussed, used and turned into ideology' in documents such as letters, applications and references, and in this manner, I have illustrated the utility of local studies to social historians interested in the broader themes of community, class, and power.⁵⁸³ Above all, my thesis has also drawn attention to the fact that a community's ideals are not always met with positive reactions and co-operation by all of its members. Upon occasion, they also face negativity and are challenged.⁵⁸⁴ In this investigation, I have shown that, by considering the ways in which a community's traditional social norms and practices were challenged, and by cross-referencing these disputes with broader contemporary developments within society, it is possible for social historians to determine aspects of social continuity and aspects of social change across a particular period in time.

⁵⁸³ Shepard & Withington (Eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place and Rhetoric*, p.12.

⁵⁸⁴ Cavanaugh, 'Industrialising Communities', p.313.

The findings of the study have also proved useful to the world outside of academia. This thesis has come out of a collaborative doctoral award project co-supervised by the University of Sheffield and Chatsworth House. The intentions of this research project were to develop a new understanding of the entire community who made up Chatsworth in the period 1908-1950, and to bring this to light, not only within the context of an academic thesis, but also at Chatsworth, through public engagement activities and novel methods of interpretation. The social norms and interpersonal relations chronicled within this investigation have already been used for such enterprises in a number of ways, including serving as the subject for: blog posts appearing on the Chatsworth house website, public talks delivered both on site and to local history groups, and, most ambitiously, a pop-up exhibition entitled *House of Stories* which was held in the stable yard at Chatsworth on 13th June, 2018. For this exhibition, Chatsworth commissioned the design of some information panels based upon some of the stories I had uncovered as part of my research. I wrote the text for these panels, and they now form part of Chatsworth's collection. In this manner, I have been able to permanently re-insert the voices of some of the estate's historic staff back into the narrative of Chatsworth. The feedback from these ventures has been overwhelmingly positive, and in the future, the findings of this thesis can provide the inspiration for, and heavily inform, even more ambitious projects at Chatsworth, such as a full-scale exhibition or festival of events.

Yet, the findings of this investigation are also useful to country houses more generally. Hitherto, most of the domestic servant exhibitions which have taken place in country houses, have been confined to the former servant quarters. An example of this sort of interpretation can be seen at Ickworth House. Here, thanks to an HLF grant, the servant's rooms below stairs were re-developed, and living history days regularly take place. During these times the

basement is populated by the ‘ghosts’ of the servants who worked at the house in the 1930s.⁵⁸⁵ Yet, despite the innovative techniques used to bring these individuals to life, the stories told in relation to Ickworth’s servants seem somewhat disconnected from the rest of the house, its grounds, and moreover, from lives of the family who lived ‘upstairs’. It is hoped that, by focusing on the interpersonal relations and social norms which underpinned life and work upon the Chatsworth Estate this thesis will encourage country houses to move away from a narrative of ‘upstairs, downstairs’. In particular, it is hoped that the expansion of the definition of ‘servant’ in this thesis, to include the myriad of workers who populated the Chatsworth estate in the years 1908-1950, will inspire other country houses to tell a wider variety of stories, in a greater number of locations. Ultimately, this project proves the potential for utilising the material preserved within country house archives in order to better inform visitor routes, and to create exhibitions and experiences which, not only have a greater sense of historical ‘breadth’ and ‘depth’, but moreover, allow visitors to recognise their own role as part of the modern-day country house community.

⁵⁸⁵ ‘A Servant’s Life at Ickworth’, *National Trust*, <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ickworth/features/a-servants-life-at-ickworth> [accessed on 04.02.2018].