ORDINARY RELATIONSHIPS

A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF EMOTIONS, REFLEXIVITY AND CULTURE

JULIE BROWNLIE

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN STUDIES IN FAMILY AND INTIMATE LIFE

Palgrave Macmillan Studies in Family and Intimate Life

Series Editors: **David Morgan**, University of Manchester, UK; **Lynn Jamieson**, University of Edinburgh, UK; and **Graham Allan**, Keele University, UK

Titles include:

Graham Allan, Graham Crow and Sheila Hawker
STEPFAMILIES

Harriet Becher
FAMILY PRACTICES IN SOUTH ASIAN MUSLIM FAMILIES
Parenting in a Multi-Faith Britain

Elisa Rose Birch, Anh T. Le and Paul W. Miller
HOUSEHOLD DIVISIONS OF LABOUR
Teamwork, Gender and Time

Julie Brownlie
ORDINARY RELATIONSHIPS
A Sociological Study of Emotions, Reflexivity and Culture

Ann Buchanan and Anna Rotkirch
FERTILITY RATES AND POPULATION DECLINE
No Time for Children?

Deborah Chambers
SOCIAL MEDIA AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS
Online Intimacies and Networked Friendship

Robbie Duschinsky and Leon Antonio Rocha (*editors*)
FOUCAULT, THE FAMILY AND POLITICS

Jacqui Gabb
RESEARCHING INTIMACY IN FAMILIES

Dimitra Hartas
PARENTING, FAMILY POLICY AND CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING IN AN UNEQUAL SOCIETY
A New Culture War for Parents

Stephen Hicks
LESBIAN, GAY AND QUEER PARENTING
Families, Intimacies, Genealogies

Clare Holdsworth
FAMILY AND INTIMATE MOBILITIES

Janet Holland and Rosalind Edwards (*editors*)
UNDERSTANDING FAMILIES OVER TIME
Research and Policy

Mary Holmes
DISTANCE RELATIONSHIPS
Intimacy and Emotions Amongst Academics and their Partners in Dual-Locations

Rachel Hurdley
HOME, MATERIALITY, MEMORY AND BELONGING
Keeping Culture

Peter Jackson (*editor*)
CHANGING FAMILIES, CHANGING FOOD

Riitta Jallinoja and Eric Widmer (*editors*)
FAMILIES AND KINSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE
Rules and Practices of Relatedness

Lynn Jamieson and Roona Simpson
LIVING ALONE
Globalization, Identity and Belonging

Lynn Jamieson, Ruth Lewis and Roona Simpson (*editors*)
RESEARCHING FAMILIES AND RELATIONSHIPS
Reflections on Process

Carmen Lau Clayton
BRITISH CHINESE FAMILIES
Parenting, Relationships and Childhoods

David Morgan
RETHINKING FAMILY PRACTICES

Petra Nordqvist and Carol Smart
RELATIVE STRANGERS
Family Life, Genes and Donor Conception

Eriikka Oinonen
FAMILIES IN CONVERGING EUROPE
A Comparison of Forms, Structures and Ideals

Róisín Ryan-Flood
LESBIAN MOTHERHOOD
Gender, Families and Sexual Citizenship

Sally Sales
ADOPTION, FAMILY AND THE PARADOX OF ORIGINS
A Foucauldian History

Tam Sanger
TRANS PEOPLE'S PARTNERSHIPS
Towards an Ethics of Intimacy

Tam Sanger and Yvette Taylor (*editors*)
MAPPING INTIMACIES
Relations, Exchanges, Affects

Elizabeth B. Silva
TECHNOLOGY, CULTURE, FAMILY
Influences on Home Life

Lisa Smyth
THE DEMANDS OF MOTHERHOOD
Agents, Roles and Recognitions

Vilna Bashi Treitler (*editor*)
RACE IN TRANSNATIONAL AND TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION

Katherine Twamley
LOVE, MARRIAGE AND INTIMACY AMONG GUJARATI INDIANS
A Suitable Match

Harry Blatterer
EVERYDAY FRIENDSHIPS
Intimacy and Freedom in a Complex World

Palgrave Macmillan Studies in Family and Intimate Life
Series Standing Order ISBN 978–0–230–51748–6 hardback
978–0–230–24924–0 paperback
(*outside North America only***)**

You can receive future titles in this series as they are published by placing a standing order. Please contact your bookseller or, in case of difficulty, write to us at the address below with your name and address, the title of the series and the ISBN quoted above.

Customer Services Department, Macmillan Distribution Ltd, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS, England

Ordinary Relationships

A Sociological Study of Emotions, Reflexivity and Culture

Julie Brownlie
Senior Lecturer in Sociology, University of Edinburgh, UK

palgrave
macmillan

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2014 978-0-230-34660-4

First published 2014 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-1-349-34481-9 ISBN 978-1-137-31876-3 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9781137318763

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Contents

Tables and Figures

Tables

Figures

Series Editors' Preface

The remit of the *Palgrave Macmillan Studies in Family and Intimate Life* series is to publish major texts, monographs and edited collections focusing broadly on the sociological exploration of intimate relationships and family organization. As editors we think such a series is timely. Expectations, commitments and practices have changed significantly in intimate relationship and family life in recent decades. This is very apparent in patterns of family formation and dissolution, demonstrated by trends in cohabitation, marriage and divorce. Changes in household living patterns over the last 20 years have also been marked, with more people living alone, adult children living longer in the parental home and more 'non-family' households being formed. Furthermore, there have been important shifts in the ways people construct intimate relationships. There are few comfortable certainties about the best ways of being a family man or woman, with once conventional gender roles no longer being widely accepted. The normative connection between sexual relationships and marriage or marriage-like relationships is also less powerful than it once was. Not only is greater sexual experimentation accepted, but it is now accepted at an earlier age. Moreover, heterosexuality is no longer the only mode of sexual relationship given legitimacy. In Britain as elsewhere, gay male and lesbian partnerships are now socially and legally endorsed to a degree hardly imaginable in the mid-twentieth century. Increases in lone-parent families, the rapid growth of different types of step-family, the destigmatization of births outside marriage and the rise in couples 'living apart together' all provide further examples of the ways that 'being a couple', 'being a parent' and 'being a family' have diversified in recent years.

The fact that change in family life and intimate relationships has been so pervasive has resulted in renewed research interest from sociologists and other scholars. Increasing amounts of public funding have been directed to family research in recent years, in terms of both individual projects and the creation of family research centres of different hues. This research activity has been accompanied by the publication of some very important and influential books exploring different aspects of shifting family experience, in Britain and elsewhere. The *Palgrave Macmillan Studies in Family and Intimate Life* series hopes to add to this

list of influential research-based texts, thereby contributing to existing knowledge and informing current debates. Our main audience consists of academics and advanced students, though we intend that the books in the series will be accessible to a more general readership who wish to understand better the changing nature of contemporary family life and personal relationships.

We see the remit of the series as wide. The concept of 'family and intimate life' is to be interpreted in a broad fashion. While the focus of the series is clearly sociological, we take family and intimacy as being inclusive rather than exclusive. The series covers a range of topics concerned with family practices and experiences, including, for example, partnership; marriage; parenting; domestic arrangements; kinship; demographic change; intergenerational ties; life course transitions; stepfamilies; gay and lesbian relationships; lone-parent households; and also non-familial intimate relationships such as friendships. We also wish to foster comparative research as well as research on under-studied populations. The series includes different forms of book. Most are theoretical or empirical monographs on particular substantive topics, though some may also have a strong methodological focus. In addition, we see edited collections as also falling within the series' remit, as well as translations of significant publications in other languages. Finally, we intend that the series has an international appeal, in terms of both topics covered and authorship. Our goal is for the series to provide a forum for family sociologists conducting research in various societies, and not solely in Britain.

Graham Allan, Lynn Jamieson and David Morgan

Acknowledgements

Raymond Williams pointed out that ordinary relationships are under-recognized in everyday life and the same is true of writing books. I had a *lot* of help – extant and otherwise – in writing this one. Thank you to my colleagues at the University of Stirling, where I started writing it, and to colleagues at the University of Edinburgh, where I finished – particularly to Graham Crow and Lynn Jamieson for reading an earlier draft and for taking the time to sit me down and talk me through it. Thanks, too, to Bill Munro, Steve Kemp and Leonidas Tsilipakos for getting me unstuck on reflexivity. Thank you, also, to the Economic and Social Research Council for funding the research on which the book is based, to colleagues at NatCen Social Research and ScotCen Social Research from whom I learned a great deal in carrying out the Someone To Talk To Study and to all the participants in that project, whose ways of making their way emotionally are what the book is about. Thanks also to friends who kept asking what was happening with the book when decency might have suggested they should stop; to Alex for reminding me what the trick is and to Sue Cook for knowing how to make a decision; to Ian and Ella Brownlie for being there; to Irene Anderson for the excellent editing, David Anderson for the indexing and to all four for much more beside. Lastly, thank you to Simon, Evie and Orla – Simon, for just about everything and to all three for keeping me on the road.

The book draws on some of my earlier articles. I would like to thank the publishers listed for allowing me to draw on this work: J. Brownlie (2011) ' "Being There": Multidimensionality, Reflexivity and the Study of Emotional Lives' *The British Journal of Sociology* 62(3):462–481, published by Wiley; S. Anderson and J. Brownlie (2011) 'Build It and They Will Come? Understanding Public Views of "Emotions Talk" and the Talking Therapies' *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling* 39(1): 53–66, published by Taylor and Francis; J. Brownlie (2010) ' "Not Going There": Limits to the Professionalisation of Our Emotional Lives' *Sociology of Health and Illness* 33(1):130–144, published by Wiley; J. Brownlie (2009) 'Age of Grief in a Time of Talk' *Sociological Research Online*, 14, http://www.socresonline.org.uk/14/5/22.html, managed by a consortium of the University of Surrey, the University of Stirling, the British Sociological Association and Sage Publications Ltd.

Introduction: The Death of Ordinary Relationships?

The book's title comes from Raymond Williams' (1979) observation that 'many people are brought through quite profound disorders by the actual development of ordinary relationships' (1979, p.184). For Williams, 'the principle that you can only be brought through emotional crisis by a professional' is an 'extraordinary characteristic notion of bourgeois-bureaucratic society'. The potential of 'ordinary relationships' is much debated in the current neoliberal climate, but the shifting balance in formal and informal relationships has long been core to sociology and its attempts to understand the nature of sociability and intimacy (Misztal, 2005). A dominant concern, from Rieff (1966) and Lasch (1979; 1984) to Rose (1990), Illouz (2007; 2008) and Hochschild (2012) has been with the professionalization of our emotional lives. Ordinary relationships are positioned here as something we have lost, to be mourned; yet their nature, *what* we are assumed to have lost, is not seriously engaged with. This book questions whether such mourning is justified – whether the death of ordinary relationships has actually occurred – and sets out to be explicit about the exact nature of the ordinary.

My interest in the ordinary, then, is not just in looking at relationships which are 'non-professional' but in investigating closely ways of being, doing and feeling which are unobtrusive and which do not demand attention; ways which might be thought of as not 'high maintenance'. Despite being told by theorists and popular commentators alike that we live in a time defined by the drama or punctum of disclosure, these less attention-grabbing ways of being remain, in fact, hugely significant to how it is we make our way emotionally.

In short, then, this book is about sociological and lay accounts of contemporary emotional lives, and about the gap between the two. I argue

that it is a gap which has emerged because, as sociologists, we have paid insufficient attention to the ordinary relationships in which our emotional lives are embedded; and because we have failed to ask questions about the significance (or not) of talk, both within those relationships and, to borrow from Margaret Archer (2007), in how we 'make our way' emotionally in the world.

The idea for the book grew out of a project – the Someone To Talk To (STTT) study – that had its origins in a policy agenda around the role of talk-based therapies and a set of sociological narratives which have, for many years, emphasized the significance of the therapeutic, emotional disclosure, vulnerability and the attendant risks to our sense of self, privacy and the nature of informal relations. Though the project began with a story about whom we talk to about our emotional lives, it became as much a story about the emotional significance of our *not* talking. In what follows I set out to make sense of this change of emphasis.

Addressing the perceived gap between how we theorize and how we actually live our emotional lives, the book does not claim to offer a new singular theoretical framework or theorist – conveniently underengaged with to date – that could close this gap and make sense of the many dimensions, and loose ends, of ordinary relationships. To have done so would undermine the project's original *raison d'etre*, namely to question the usefulness of unidimensional approaches to understanding the relationship between cultural change and emotional relationships. The book raises questions about such all-encompassing claims, specifically those relating to the impact of the therapeutic, or shifts in modes of reflexivity – claims which, despite their extensiveness, have often been based on very limited empirical work. Those writing about the therapeutic, for example, have tended to present an *en bloc* picture of how this culture is experienced, while accounts of reflexivity often proffer a universalistic framing of the cognitive and emotional processes through which we engage with the social world. Crucially, both have avoided serious engagement with sociological work on personal relationships. A key argument of the book is that we miss a great deal about ordinary relationships by assuming that we can read off, in an undifferentiated way, people's practices from discursive shifts in emotion culture.

In what follows I am critical of some current sociological work on emotions, culture and reflexivity but also acknowledge that it is through engagement with it that the importance of how we manage expectations, the non-verbal, being there and what we *do* has surfaced. Some of these dimensions were vexing sociologists long before there was a

sociology of emotions. Durkheim (1984), for instance, alerted us to the relationship between our expectations and happiness, which is the concern of Chapter 8; and Simmel (1950) to why we value the hidden, a question returned to in Chapter 7. It is to those who have written about the unspoken, the background, the fleeting, the private, as well as the persistent facets of our emotional lives that I have turned to make sense of ordinary relationships. They include theorists from different traditions and disciplines, such as Simmel (1950), Tilly (1984), Williams (1979) and Solomon (2002), and also novelists like Eliot (1986) or Miller (2010). I have sought, too, to engage seriously with those who are seeking to conceptualize *contemporary* emotional lives: sociologists such as Illouz (2008), Misztal (2011) and Archer (2007) – but also contemporary novelists, like Burnside (2006). Such breadth of engagement is necessary because ordinary relationships – longed for, remembered and lived – are the business of us all.

What links these different insights, and gives this book direction, however, is a concern to respond to Tilly's call to take seriously relationships as they are lived in 'our own time' (Tilly, 1984, p.14). For Tilly, the 'reckoning of relationships' (1984, p.27) involves placing relationships, rather than individual mental events, at the centre of social life. At the same time, he calls for an uncoupling of 'being historical' and 'being grand' – arguing that a 'concrete, historical program of inquiry' could not only be 'in our time' but might also be 'small-scale' (1984, p.14). More than this, he argues that to understand the macro history, we need to get the micro history right. For Tilly, the relationships within which we are enmeshed are core to this 'link between personal experience and the flow of history' (1984, p.64). These two interrelated themes – the need to consider relationships and to link personal narratives to bigger processes and structures in our time – lie at the heart of this book. It is a deeply sociological exercise but one which explores the brim, as Goffman (1974) puts it, between sociological and other disciplinary framings of emotional lives, specifically their understanding of emotional legacies.

As I engage with both quantitative and qualitative data in the book, it might seem strange to conjure up the spirit of Tilly (1984, p.118), who expressed both doubts about surveys (reflected in his observation that at best they do not *always* lie) and concerns about what he called the 'standard stories' told in interviews about social change where all action is understood to be a result of our deliberations. At the same time, Tilly did not think explanations for action in individual stories which focus on societal or cultural determination provided good answers. He wanted

to know *how* these social processes interact with individual experiences and why people go along with stories they have doubts about.

This link between the micro and the macro is complicated. Given that large-scale or collective processes can be indirect, unintended and not always accessible through our situated accounts, we need to find a way to take seriously micro stories without assuming that the macro can be straightforwardly scaled up from them. Nevertheless, one of the jumping-off points for the book is that, in relation to emotional lives, too much recent sociological work has taken as read the impact of macro social changes on 'how things have turned out', and not focused enough on the interplay with the micro, on 'how it happens' (Stanley, 2013, p.59).

In this respect – and in its aversion to 'being grand' – the book adopts a different orientation from much contemporary theorizing about emotional lives. Savage (2009) argues that epochalist claims – those which suggest we now live in a society different from earlier social orders – are often at the heart of accounts of social change (particularly in Britain) and that such claims, with their old/new structure, are instantiated or built into social science. Yet we know, from a great deal of empirical work on social change, that continuity and change are not mutually exclusive. Drawing on contemporary accounts of relationships only, this book cannot offer an alternative, equally grand, account of how little has, in fact, changed in terms of our emotional lives – that is another project – but there is plenty throughout the book that hints at continuities in emotional styles and fault lines. 'Breathless' epochal claims (Rose, 2007a, p.252) are being challenged here, then, not from the position of comparing past and present accounts, but from the start point that these claims fail to speak to *contemporary* emotional lives. Do we recognize our lives in these accounts? Do they speak to some lives more than others?

To engage with these questions, the book draws on the STTT research project and, by mining theoretical work on culture, reflexivity and emotions, seeks also to move beyond it. In other words, the book is not simply the book of the Study. Its arguments are shaped by the fact that the research was conducted in the UK and, for the most part, draws on Euro-North American sociology – though its theoretical assertions, for example about the nature of intimacy and reflexivity, are based on the need to rethink 'western' emphases, including the cultural preoccupation with the significance of talk. It engages in conversations with a wide range of theorists, moves between methodological approaches and works with different types of reflexivity. All of this – and the changes in register involved – made it interesting and,

occasionally, challenging to write; and perhaps now to read. Such challenges reflect the key aim of the book – the need for academic work to engage seriously with the complexity and multidimensionality of our emotional lives.

The structure of the book

There are three parts to the book. In the first part, I engage with current theoretical and methodological stories about our emotional lives. In the second, I bring an empirical scrutiny to some of the specific theoretical epochal claims that have been made about the role of talking and listening in our emotional lives. In the third, I move beyond those to tell some new or so far neglected stories about the extant, the background, the unspoken, privacy and what it is we actually *do*, other than talk, to make our way emotionally.

In Chapter 1, I outline some dominant theoretical stories about emotion culture. While these intertwine with other stories about the changing nature of personal relationships which have been much debated elsewhere (Jamieson, 1998; Giddens, 1991, 1992; Bauman, 2003), for the most part my focus is on arguments which suggest there has been a fundamental shift towards emotional disclosure and a professionalization of our emotional lives. I argue that what is missing in these claims, as with work on emotion culture more broadly, is an adequate engagement with how we *use* culture and how it, in turn, uses us, with reflexivity and with the nature of emotions. In doing so, I aim to show the importance of foregrounding relationships. In Chapter 2, I go on to explore some of the methodological challenges of researching emotional lives – challenges which cannot be disentangled from the conceptual stories of the first chapter.

Part II outlines empirical data which point to the stubbornness of particular patterns in our emotional lives and to the stratification of our emotional resources, both in terms of who is talking and to whom, and in relation to the use of medication in the face of emotional difficulties. Chapter 3 acknowledges the different dimensions that make up the therapeutic ethos but concentrates on presenting intersectional data on beliefs about emotions talk, in order to redress the claimed *en bloc* change towards emotional disclosure conceptualized in Part I. Chapter 4, on the other hand, looks at practices of 'being heard': *who* it is that listens, how this changes over the life course and what the relationship is between formal and informal talk-based support[1] and medication use. Both these chapters make clear the importance of acknowledging these older, persistent stories while constructing the new.

The final part of the book is about emergent stories, or stories which to date have been neglected in theoretical and empirical accounts. The first chapter in Part III (Chapter 5) presents empirical data on the practice of *being there* for others – practices which are, for the most part, not talk-based. Chapter 6, as part of a broader examination of the nature of reflexivity, develops this non-talk based emphasis by looking at what people actually *do,* other than talk, to manage their emotional lives in the everyday. I am not suggesting here that talk is not an act (Austin, 1962; Mills, 1940) but arguing that other forms of action also need to be examined.

Chapter 7, too, takes issue with the emphasis on openness in epochal stories, and focuses on the work we do to maintain the 'second world', the world made up of what we do not talk about. Finally, Chapter 8 challenges the emphasis placed on vulnerability in dominant stories about our emotional lives and, concomitantly, the assumed need to express this vulnerability, exploring instead why we might choose *not* to talk about vulnerability in a culture, and indeed in a research study, where permission is given to do just that. The main focus of this part of the book is on ordinary stories from different generations about ways of getting through, or by, emotionally. These stories are emergent, but not in the sense that they are about how new technologies or 'globalization' are reconfiguring personal relationships; they may be shaped by such social transformations, but they are not primarily about them. Rather they are emergent in so far as they feature in people's accounts of making sense of their emotional lives, not in sociological translations of these lives. Their absence in the latter might, then, tell us more about what turns the heads of those within academia than what is relevant to those making their way emotionally outside it.

Part I

1

What We Talk about When We Talk about Emotion Culture: The Role of Culture, Reflexivity and Emotions

In this chapter I start by sketching some existing work on emotion culture, with therapeutic culture presented as a specific case. In doing so, I make two main arguments. The first is that despite bringing together the words 'emotion' and 'culture', sociological accounts of emotion culture are often curiously underengaged with the actual nature of culture and emotions or with the role of reflexivity. The second is that the claims made about such cultures, while usually sweeping, often rest on discursive shifts; and that 'experiences' of these shifts tend to be highly selective. Through developing these arguments, my aim is to highlight dimensions currently underconceptualized and underresearched in accounts of emotion culture. As well as the multifaceted nature of culture, reflexivities and emotions, these also include the significance of the non-narratable, the non-verbal and, relatedly, the importance of 'doing'. As shown later in the book, the last of these, what we 'do', as well as how we are 'there' for others, matters, not just because it shifts the focus away from talk but because it describes emotional practices that are meaningful in, and of, themselves. A unifying, but again underrecognized, thread running through these dimensions is the significance of relationships.

Culture

Emotion culture

Thoits (2004) writes that 'emotion culture' concerns 'beliefs about the nature, causes, distributions, values, dynamics of emotions in general as well as of specific feelings, such as love, anger, and jealousy' (2004,

p.362). These beliefs, she suggests, constitute a 'folk knowledge passed down from one generation to the next' and, in Anglo-American societies, include, amongst others, that women are more emotional than men, that the intensity of emotions passes with time, that uncontrollable emotions are undesirable among most groups other than the very young and that a failure to follow emotional norms is a sign of mental distress. Others that can be added to this list, and which have their roots in the therapeutic ethos, include the ideas – engaged with empirically later in the book – that it is 'good to talk' about emotions, and that one's emotional life is shaped by childhood.

Work on the shifting nature of emotion culture has a long history within sociology, particularly in North America (Riesman, Glaser and Denney, 2001; Mestrovic, 1997; Wouters, 2007; Stearns, 2004; Stearns and Stearns, 1986). However, as we will also see in relation to work specifically focused on therapeutic culture, the assumed cultural shifts that underlie this work have not always been examined in a representative or differentiated way. In Elliott and Lemert's (2006) study of 'New Individualism', for example, the empirical element is focused on a select number of 'hyper-globalists' and their confessional therapeutic practices in a digital age. Here, the explanation for the lack of focus on 'the poor' is that in the mediated world, the emotional lives of the relatively privileged are more visible (2006, p.11). Similarly, in Hochschild's (2012) recent exploration of the outsourcing of personal activities, a broad analysis of cultural change is offered but, while there is an endnote which refers to a survey, there are few details about it and her central claim that we are increasingly outsourcing aspects of our personal lives to professionals again rests only on a few case studies.

The empirical basis of emotion culture, therefore, is not always fully developed, though work in this area is potentially conceptually rich. Despite Illouz's (2007) suggestion that the sociology of culture has tended to ignore emotions, some of its most significant concepts, including Raymond Williams' 'structure of feeling' (1979), have been concerned exactly with how culture is experienced emotionally. For Williams the structure of feeling relates to the lived emotional experience of a culture – the relationship between individuals and social formations which are not necessarily formally recorded (Harding and Pribram, 2009). These are the experiences, perceptions and values which exert an influence on the social and the cultural *now*, not in the past. Accessing these structures means engaging with dimensions of social life which sociology has arguably struggled with 'the ensemble of cultural imaginings, affective experiences, animated objects, marginal voices,

narrative densities, and eccentric traces of power's presence' (Gordon, 2008, p.25).

For some commentators, such as Harding and Pribram (2009), for instance, Williams' concept of structure of feeling is not linked strongly or directly enough to power relations. The relationship between structural and cultural change, however, is key to how theorists think about shifts in emotion culture (Cancian, 1987) and, as we will see, culture more generally. Structural patterns shape culture but, at the same time, these patterns and institutions also grow out of cultural changes and, without longitudinal work, as Thoits (2004) argues, it is difficult to unpack their interplay. Often, she suggests, culture lags behind structural changes, so that what we think we should do lags behind what we actually do. In Part II of the book we find in relation to emotions talk that, while we accept the cultural premise that it is good to talk about emotions, in practice we often choose not actually to do so. This particular gap, as we will see in Part II, resonates with Hochschild's (2004) recognition of the disjunction between cultural shifts and what she calls 'old feelings' that remain structured by our (gendered) biographies.

Emotional socialization – how we learn about emotion culture and how this in turn shapes what we do – plays a part in how these social structures are reproduced. While families, in whatever form, remain key to how culture in general is produced (Langellier and Peterson, 2004), we still know relatively little about how as adults we continue to learn about, embed or resist cultural knowledge about emotions in our everyday life.

One of the most significant concepts for thinking through how this happens has been that of *emotion norms*, most notably Hochschild's (1983; 2004) work on feeling and expression rules. Work on the norms of emotion culture, on their construction and regulatory impact, highlights how they create not only social solidarities but also socio-emotional inequalities or economies of gratitude (Clark, 1997; 2004). The nature of such inequalities is beginning to be explored by those interested in emotional capital (Cahill, 1999), including those who have investigated how economic value comes to be extracted from emotions at a cultural level through the therapy industry, talk shows, self-help literature, women's magazines and reality television (Skeggs, Thumim and Wood, 2008; Illouz, 2008).

Whether concerned with the interactional or the broader socio-cultural level, there is no reason why this focus on capital needs to mean that we downplay the relational. For Nowotny (1981, p.148), who coined the term, 'emotional capital' is relational in three core ways: we

pass emotional resources on to those we care about; these resources are themselves relational, that is, they involve skills and knowledge which are to do with relationships; and resources are built up through families and other relationships over time. As Lynch and Lyons (2008) observed, emotional support is intrinsic to our capacity to activate emotional and nurturing capital in the first place.

The conceptualizations outlined above, which arise out of work on emotion culture, are engaged with directly or indirectly in the rest of the book but I want now to turn to a form of emotion culture that has dominated recent sociological writing.

Therapeutic culture

Coined by Rieff in 1966 as the 'triumph of the therapeutic', the therapeutic turn has since been conceptualized in various, not always complementary ways, including, as Nolan (1998) notes, in terms of the psychological society, the culture of narcissism and the fall of public man. In the last ten years or so, there has been a particular re-engagement with these themes: both in North America through historical documentation of the rise of the therapeutic (Moskowitz, 2001) and the influence of Freud (Illouz, 2007), and also through an exploration of the role of self-help and of the therapeutic in popular culture (Shattuc, 1997; Hochschild, 2003) in relation to the state (Nolan, 1998) and in the context of international development (Pupavac, 2005). There have been similar developments in the UK (Furedi, 2004) and in Australia (Wright, 2011). What these different authors mean by 'therapeutic' or 'therapy' culture varies, but some of the following features appear in most social scientific accounts:

- a focus on the self
- an emotivist ethic where emotions are understood to determine our actions and to act as 'a form of moral referencing and self-understanding' (Nolan, 1998, p.7), so that their expression becomes a prerequisite for mental health or wellbeing
- the emergence of a new therapeutic elite and a concomitant disengagement from informal relationships of support
- the pathologization of human behaviour and an increased tendency to see oneself as victim of an abused past or environment
- a reduction of belief in the inevitability of suffering
- an understanding of therapeutic discourse as a formal expert knowledge system, but also a diffuse cultural system (Illouz, 2007) which shapes ordinary everyday practices across educational organizations, child-rearing, welfare and justice.

The more this culture is written about in academic and popular spheres the more reified it becomes, so that it now appears to be unquestioned in sociological accounts of other issues (see, for example, Misztal's (2011) recent account of vulnerability). Berlant (2004, p.11) suggests that a culturally dominant culture is one seen as 'common sense', and sociological accounts have come to understand the therapeutic in these terms. Despite sociologists increasingly taking on board Castoriadis' (1987, p.3) argument that there is no privileged 'point of view outside history or society' (McLeod and Thomson, 2009; Smart, 2007), those writing about the therapeutic often end up adopting what Nancy Fraser (2007) has called an externalist approach. Here theory is invoked to condemn reality while the impact of this reality for the sociologist is sidestepped. From such commentaries on the therapeutic, academics alone emerge as immune from therapeutic governance.

Sennett (2012) writes that all social critique risks drawing a cartoon, and those who write about the therapeutic have not always avoided that danger. Most accounts are dichotomous, either valorizing the role of therapeutic experts in helping us develop projects of self (Giddens, 1991) or bemoaning the regulatory aspects of this professionalization of our emotional lives (Crossley; 1998; Rose, 1990). More recent accounts follow a similar path, choosing to accentuate either the insidious, disempowering and depoliticizing nature of the therapeutic (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009) or the ways the therapeutic has meant a revaluing of the emotional sphere (Elliott and Lemert, 2006).

But there are also calls for more nuanced readings (Wright, 2011) which echo older debates about disclosure in popular culture having the potential to be both empowering *and* regulatory (Shattuc, 1997). Berlant's work (2008, p.xi) is relevant to some of these discussions, particularly her writing on 'intimate publics'. These, she argues, engender insider recognition but ultimately may be devalued for being, in Fraser's (2007) sense of the term, 'weak publics'. For Berlant, what takes place in these spaces is better understood as the 'unfinished business of sentimentality', where the concern is to adjust to or improvise upon the world as it is.

Certainly, as we shall see later in the book, lay accounts are more diverse, complex and nuanced than these discourses allow, suggesting that we need to nudge understandings of current 'emotionology' (Stearns and Stearns, 1985) beyond this 'common sense' of the therapeutic, towards an understanding that is both differentiated and embedded in lived experience. This grounded approach calls for, and will help create, a more nuanced conceptualization, including *how* we engage with a therapeutic sensibility beyond the role of the therapeutic professions.

Current theorizing does not facilitate such detailed analysis. Furedi's (2004) framing, for instance, is cosmic in scope: the therapeutic ethos, he suggests, has become a 'cultural force' (p.17). Culture 'encompasses a set of beliefs about the meaning of life and offers a vocabulary through which we can make sense of an individual's relationship to society' (2004, p.22). Therapeutic culture, he suggests, defines human nature as vulnerable and sees people's emotional states as the essence of their identity. But while he distinguishes between a culture of therapeutics and the practice of therapy as a technique, much of the 'evidence' presented for the rise of a therapeutic culture involves quantifying the provision of counselling, and our assumed reliance on professionals is key to his argument about the rise of vulnerability.

Nolan (1998, p.2), too, refers to the therapeutic culture as a 'unifying cosmology', a 'set of symbols and codes' which transcends ethnic, class and age differences and which 'determines the boundaries of moral life'. Yet bets are still hedged: Nolan (1998, p.7), while pointing out that we live in an emotivist culture, adds: 'This is not to say all Americans or even a majority of Americans appeal primarily to their emotions to determine how they should function within society. But it is to say that social conditions increasingly militate against other forms of moral referencing and self-understanding.' Furedi (2004), likewise, acknowledges that we all face competing cultural claims. To this extent, he appears to pick up on Lichterman's (1992) note of caution, that self-help culture is *thin* both in the sense that we engage with it ambivalently – neither completely resisting nor adapting to it – and to the extent it interacts with other cultures. Furedi still concludes, however, that the therapeutic is 'arguably the most important signifier of meaning for the everyday life of the individual' (2004, p.22).

One of the most important theorists writing about therapeutic culture, Illouz (2008), following Swidler (2001), opts for a pragmatic approach to understanding culture. By this she means a focus on people's meanings and strategies though, as she acknowledges, it is when these strategies start to resonate and become institutionalized that cultures persist.

Illouz is interested in exploring this intertwining of knowledge and culture because, she argues, the therapeutic has broad cultural legitimacy. This is a legitimacy, she suggests, that has led to a cultural shift within the intimate sphere, away from notions of obligation, sacrifice and reciprocity, towards self-revelation and an increasing intellectualization of emotional lives that is not only stratified but stratifying. Specifically, she argues, the emotional styles of different classes are

increasingly divergent, while those of men and women are increasingly blurred. Although relying on selective, limited empirical data, in *Saving the Modern Soul* Illouz concludes that our emotional lives have become subject to reflexive monitoring, especially for the middle classes and, as such, the 'emotional faultlines' (2008, p.150) in our society now have much less to do with gender than with class. Reflexive skills are less present in working-class lives, she posits, because working-class jobs do not demand them; middle-class culture, by contrast, is characterized by intense introspection.

At the same time as claiming that there has been a general shift to 'emotional androgyny' (2008, p.236), Illouz suggests that the shift towards reflexivity is more pronounced for working-class women than men, leaving them without a 'clear common language through which to organise their private selves and to articulate a common project for two different biographies' (2008, p.234). This is why, she suggests, working-class couples complain more than their middle-class counterparts of silence, difficulty in communication and less-than-satisfying relationships. These claims are challenged in Part II of the book when we look in more detail at the classed and gendered basis of our engagement with emotions talk.

The dominant theme of cultural pervasiveness in the above accounts has, then, methodological implications which are not followed through. Much of this work on therapeutic culture relies on the analysis of discursive shifts and/or highly selective interviews, including with those involved in some way with 'therapeutic' services. Despite her interest in diffuse cultural systems, this is also true of Illouz's (2008) *Saving the Modern Soul*. In fact few authors who claim to be interested in cultural pervasiveness appear to have studied practices and beliefs across the general population. While the aggregate cannot be straightforwardly equated with the collective experience of the cultural, claims of a marked wholesale change in 'cultural scripts', such as that from stoicism to vulnerability (Furedi, 2007), ultimately remain unconvincing because of a lack of empirical research that is representative of the general population. An empirical challenge to these arguments, particularly to claims about the wholesale cultural legitimacy of emotional disclosure and shifts in the nature of the intimate sphere, is offered in Parts II and III.

The above discussion suggests that those writing about culture in relation to the 'therapeutic turn' need to engage with the methodological implications of their arguments and offer more on the relationship between broad discursive shifts and actual practices. Swidler wrote in

2001 that debates about how we use culture were 'raging'. If anything, these debates – conceptual and methodological – have intensified since; yet they have not been seriously considered in work on emotion culture including the therapeutic.

The work that culture does

In this section, I focus in some detail on one of these debates: that between Swidler's pragmatic and Vaisey's dual-process approach or, in their framing, how our use of culture is akin to using a toolkit or riding on the back of an elephant.

I do this as a way of teasing out the relationship between the habitual and the reflexive – a relationship which is key to how we use culture and, therefore, to how we make our way emotionally. As noted earlier, Swidler's (2001) approach to understanding culture is a pragmatic one; she is interested in the work that culture does. In *Talk of Love*, she describes a shift, since Geertz (1973), away from seeing culture as an entire way of life – what you would need to know to become a member of society – to seeing it as 'publicly available symbolic forms through which people experience and express meaning' (2001, p.12). These forms include beliefs, ceremonies, gossip, stories and clichés and they, crucially, do not form a unified system. As noted above, those writing about therapeutic culture, including Illouz (2008), who draws on Swidler's (2001) earlier work, have also focused on culture as a set of beliefs or codes, as well as on culture as constituted through institutions and practices. Many of these writers, however, as argued earlier, also emphasize the therapeutic's universal legitimizing properties. Swidler's interest in how we deal with competing systems of beliefs, and the level of commitment with which we engage with different cultural dimensions, is, therefore, less developed in these writings. It is a gap that needs to be addressed not just because in the age of social media any cosmology is vulnerable, but because of the pejorative associations still attached to the therapeutic.

In practice, as Swidler (2001, p.15) notes, we spend much of our time 'dismissing, criticising or filtering the culture with which we come in contact'. This resonates with Billig's (1997) observation that discourses tend to speak to each other through disavowal: affirmed in the moment they are denied. In a lovely analogy, Swidler (2001) suggests we are like bats: knowing where we are by bouncing our ideas off cultural alternatives. Asking people what they believe in, then, only takes us so far, given we can be touched by a culture we are not aware of or which we ultimately reject. In other words, it is only when culture is not

completely fused with experience that it is visible; the rest of the time it appears as 'just real life' (2001, p.19).

We need, then, to know not just the content of culture, but the 'seriousness' with which we engage with its values and norms, an engagement which is likely to shift across biographical and historical time. Gordon's (1990) insight that we do not always deeply internalize norms but instead use them to excuse or rationalize our actions is relevant here. In other words, we need to ask if, and in what ways, it matters that emotion norm-following is 'authentic', habitual or cynical. Swidler (2001) suggests cultural conceptions can vary in their explicitness: in settled times, like Berlant's (2004) 'common sense', they are less explicit; in unsettled times, they are more akin to competing ideologies. I will argue in Part II that commitment to such (mutable) conceptions varies not just across time but also across social groups.

Swidler's work is also helpful in thinking about how, in drawing on culture, we are ourselves constituted or 'used by' it. In this respect she is critical of both the Weberian notion of ideas shaping our motives and the Parsonian emphasis on values. The focus in the 'pragmatic' or 'toolkit' approach is on the *means*; on how our strategies of action shape our goals, not vice versa. 'Culture is organised less by what goes on inside people's heads as they analyse their experience than by the external contexts with which they have to deal' (Swidler, 2001, p.111). Faced with a problem such as how to keep a marriage together, North Americans reach, Swidler suggests, for solutions such as using experts, figuring things out for themselves or looking to the Christian worldview. We tend to have similar problems that drive us again and again to the same sort of solutions and to the codes, contexts and institutions which shape these solutions. Although Swidler does not engage with the possibility, presumably these strategies need not be as talk-based as her examples suggest. Later in this book, we hear how people describe 'getting through' in a UK context. Here there is a focus on being pragmatic, on relationships and on forms of action other than talk. Crucially these accounts also point to considerable variation in the seriousness with which *different* social groups engage with *different* cultural beliefs about our emotional lives.

Reviewing where North American debates on culture have got to, Vaisey (2009) concludes that, if the dominant choice is now between Swidler's toolkit perspective and what he calls the 'seamless web' model, then most sociologists would sign up to the former. This toolkit approach has become part of the sociological zeitgeist, he suggests, because years of research have made clear that we tend to hold more

than one cultural point of view, and that what we believe does not always shape our actions. Nevertheless, the toolkit model has itself become subject to critical engagement, most of it directed at the question: *why* do people use the culture they do? For Swidler, the key question is how differently organized cultural elements are brought to bear to help people cue or frame the sort of situation they are in. For Vaisey (2008b), on the other hand, it is about understanding why people react to the same cues differently and answering this question involves engaging with the 'dual-process model' (Vaisey, 2009).

From drawing on the toolkit to riding the elephant

Drawing on the cognitive sciences, but also resonating with a growing interest in the tacit, affective, intuitive and embodied across the social sciences (Wetherell, 2012; Thrift, 2008), the dual-process approach is concerned with how people's judgements and actions can be shaped in ways they are not (fully) aware of (Vaisey, 2008a). The distinction between practical and discursive consciousness allows a shift in metaphor, from using a toolkit to being 'riders on the back of an elephant' (Vaisey, 2009). Here the rider represents our discursive, conscious self that can reason, but is not always in charge, and the elephant, the level of practical consciousness, that is in control (Vaisey, 2009).

For Vaisey, this is not a reductionist understanding but rather the way 'that society gets into beings' (2009, p.1684). For those within the cognitive sciences (Lizardo, 2006) the talk is of schemas, cognitive structures and of 'largely unconscious networks of neural associations that facilitate perception, interpretation and action' (Vaisey, 2009, p.1686).

As we see in the next two sections, however, for sociologists working on the nature of reflexivity and emotions these tacit processes need not be framed in terms of either the neural or the unconscious. Vaisey (2009), for instance, argues that a focus on practical consciousness does not mean that the interactional level of analysis is not also important. This builds on existing views that we carry knowledge between interactions (Joas, 1996; 2000). The dual-process model can also be used 'to think through how "settled" and "unsettled" times' (Vaisey, 2009, p.1707) link to different forms of processing, given that, as Swidler (2001) suggests, 'internalized' cultural understandings might come to matter more, or at least become more visible, when our 'practical' routines are disrupted.

Swidler (2008), in response to Vaisey's critiques, has argued that while we do have toolkits or repertoires, these are not lightly adopted, but rather tend to consist of what we are, in any case, good at and what

we know. There are some points where the two perspectives do, almost, meet. Like Vaisey (2009), Swidler (2008) suggests that people rely on 'moral intuitions', which are neither values nor skills, and both Vaisey and Swidler are engaged with the implication of these for our sense of 'self'.

Swidler (2008), while cautious of using the word 'identity' to denote the link between culture and action, seems, nonetheless, to be moving towards understanding the self as important to that link. For Vaisey (2009), drawing on Swidler (2001), 'if we understand "identity" as having an unconscious component (our intuitions about "the kind of people we are") and a conscious component (our discursive "identity projects"), then we can see how identities can be thought of—without contradiction—both as motives and as "cultural tools" that we can "pick up and put down" (Swidler 2001, p. 24)' (Vaisey, 2009, p.1679).

Swidler's and Vaisey's primary concerns, however, remain distinct. As we have seen, Swidler's (2008) preferred focus is on culturally organized codes, contexts and institutions – 'dead culture' – rather than on better information about what goes on in people's heads (Jepperson and Swidler, 1994, p.362). This is because individual strategies cannot be understood without understanding this 'infrastructure of constitutive rules' (op. cit., p.364). For this reason, for some commentators, cultural practices cannot simply be reduced to – or seen in – practices of emotions talk or, as noted earlier, in the role of therapeutic professionals in our emotional lives. The argument that these dimensions nevertheless play *a* part in our understanding of contemporary emotion culture shapes Chapters 3 and 4.

This prioritization of infrastructure, of 'dead culture', has dominated writing about the therapeutic with the consequence that it can appear to happen behind the backs or over the heads of those involved. While, for some writers, the risk is that we *under*estimate the extent of 'ghostly' practices (Bennett, 2007), others seek to know more about the mechanisms of these practices; in the case of therapeutic culture, for instance, *how* a moral value such as 'express yourself', explains (or not), to use Vaisey's (2008a) term, an 'upstream action'.

In a UK context, North American debates such as those between Swidler and Vaisey resonate with those about reflexivity and habitus, most notably through Archer's (2007) argument about the increasing relevance of reflexivity and the declining relevance of socialization since the 1980s. For Archer (2010) there can be no 'shotgun wedding' between habitus and reflexivity, since she sees their relative significance as an empirical issue; for her critics there is much to be gained from close

investigation of the relationship between the two – a debate I return to in the next section. Similarly, in the study of emotions, an understanding of the multilayered nature of emotions means working with both the habitual and sedimented aspects of emotions and their more discursive aspects (Wetherell, 2012). This multichannel approach resonates with developments in other disciplines which have moved away from understanding consciousness as a single stream towards seeing it as polyphonous. Rather than one narrative of perception, such perspectives suggest there are, in fact, multiple 'drafts' of consciousness which can surface at any one time (Dennett, 1991).

While there are no straightforward answers, the above work does at least engage with the relationship between experience and cultural repertoire and seeks to work out the methodological implications arising from it. Vaisey, for instance, building on his dual-process critique, suggests that what sounds like inarticulacy in interviews might be better understood as part of how we all struggle to put into words our intuitions or practical consciousness (Vaisey, 2009, p.1698). Interviews, he suggests, might not be ideal for getting at how people make judgements; fixed-response survey questions which rely on practical consciousness, that is on what feels or sounds right, might offer more.[1] While many sociologists, particularly in the context of emotional lives, view surveys as, at best, 'a necessary evil, a mass-scale substitute for the deep insight of an interview' (Vaisey, 2009, p 1705). They may contribute usefully to inquiry about how meanings shape action.

By focusing on what is meant by 'culture' in research on emotional lives, a number of key dimensions have been highlighted. They include the relationship between the structural and cultural and possible lags between cultural change and behaviours, the nature of emotional socialization and the role of habitual practices. What concepts can help us understand these? Swidler's strategies of action? Vaisey's dual-process? Both offer something important in terms of understanding our use of culture in specific socioeconomic and interactional contexts at particular points in time. In practice, we need concepts which allow us to make sense of the interplay between all these levels, keeping in mind that concepts that are individualized will miss the relational and collective dimensions of our emotional practices (Collins, 2004).

Integral to this call for a more explicit conceptual understanding of what it is we talk about when we talk about 'culture' in relation to our emotional lives, is the argument that we need our conceptualizations to be rooted in a nuanced, differentiated empirical analysis. Despite Illouz's (2008) claims that class and gender are key variables in the use

of culture, there has been little investigation of how our use of therapeutic resources is socially differentiated (though see Bennett et al.'s 2009 work on the consumption of self-help literature in the UK). Most research, as we have seen, has been concerned with broad therapeutic codes and institutions and where use has been a focus, it has mainly been a concern with consumers of therapeutic services or texts/products (Woodiwiss, 2009). There has been very little interest in starting from people's everyday beliefs and practices in making our way emotionally and the place (or not) therapeutic resources actually play.

Starting with these everyday questions means addressing how, in Swidler's (2001) words, we research 'the seriousness' with which we engage with culture. And this, as I suggested above, is particularly relevant in relation to therapeutic culture since much talk in the UK remains sceptical. We will see in Part II, for instance, that the idea that it is 'good to talk' is prevalent, apparently acting like one of Swidler's codes, but we need to understand more about the (variable) work this precept does. Conceptually the case might have been made for a therapeutic ethos, but, in practice, we need to be clear about who is engaging with which cultural aspects and when. In terms of the 'when' question, the literature seems to suggest we are particularly open to cultural influence at unsettled or transition times, though this perhaps puts too much emphasis on the unusual rather than the everyday, and the ways in which culture has most impact when we are not aware of it (Ginsburg, 1989, p.138). The question of who is engaging with which aspects of the (therapeutic) cultural code will be explored in more depth in Parts II and III.

Judging from the above, a close investigation of how we use culture and vice versa in the context of our emotional lives might raise more questions than answers. However, to the extent that the therapeutic is being identified, along with political liberalism, as one of the most significant cultural shifts of our time (Illouz, 2008), the raising of these questions is long overdue.

Reflexivity

Embedded in the above discussions about culture are claims about the nature of reflexivity. This is not surprising given that reflexivity does not transcend culture; in other words, culture is at the heart of self-formation, including any notion of a reflexive self (Adams, 2003; 2007; Heaphy, 2007). Yet sociological work on emotion culture, including therapeutic culture, has tended to run parallel to work on reflexivity within the discipline. Engaging explicitly with this work on reflexivity

can further deepen our understanding of the relationship between our emotional lives and larger cultural shifts.

Sociological work has drawn heavily on Giddens' (1991) specific use of the term, that is, with how people constantly revise their lives in response to new knowledge, but this work has been critically reviewed, including most recently by Burkitt (2012). Burkitt's call is for Giddens' understanding of reflexivity to be linked more clearly to *reflection*, to our everyday understandings of how we see self, others and the world. Here, however, I am going to focus in the main on Archer's work on reflexivity. This is not just because she is one of the few theorists who has sought to explore reflexive practices empirically, but because a critical engagement with her work helps to crystallize key arguments of this book about the role of relationships, emotions and 'doing' in reflexivity. To that extent, her work is a good jumping-off point for an engagement with other work on emotions and reflexivity.

Reflexivity is, for Archer, the mental ability, 'shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts and vice versa' (2007, p.4) but it is an ability that she also sees as historically shaped. She focuses on four types of 'reflexives'. First, 'communicative reflexives' whose internal conversation or microdialogues require completion and confirmation by others before they act. These are people, Archer suggests, who feel the need to maintain contact – usually face-to-face – with those from their natal context. Second, there are 'autonomous reflexives', who have self-contained internal conversations leading directly to action, and who prefer to seek out expert advice or independent information, for example from the web. This can be read as a lack of need for others or a desire for privacy, of protecting the self from the conventionality of 'similars and familiars'. Third, 'meta-reflexives' are morally orientated and reflexive about their own internal conversations and sceptical about the possibility for effective action in society. Finally, 'fractured reflexives' are understood as those whose internal conversations intensify their distress rather than lead to action.

Although not based on any detailed empirical findings, Archer (2007, p.318) claims 'some 70 per cent' of the population did practise communicative reflexivity in the mid-twentieth century. Her general thesis is that there has been a shift away from communicative reflexivity in the twenty-first century, because fewer of us have 'similars and familiars', people in whom we trust, and fewer of us live in the contextual continuity needed for this type of reflexivity to unfold. In her more recent work, Archer (2012) returns to her concern with

extended reflexivity and explores this through a longitudinal study of Warwick University students taking undergraduate degrees in sociology. She argues that a move away from relying on our similars and familiars towards more competitive conditions has meant a shift from communicative to autonomous reflexivity; and then, as the range of possibilities open to actors increases, there has been a further shift towards meta-reflexivity and this opening up also increases the chance of fractured reflexivity. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the nature of her university, social-science based sample, meta-reflexives are the group most represented in this study.

In *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation*, Archer (2003) acknowledged the limits of her empirical design; her more recent work has a longitudinal element, but the highly specific nature and small size of the sample still makes it dangerous to draw conclusions. While relationships are more to the fore in this study than in her earlier work, Archer is clear that these do not act as 'unchanging wallpaper' (2012, p.124) determining decision-making. Yet, the accounts she presents could be read as still too linear: for example, having divorced parents leading to independence; being critically detached from one's family leading to meta-reflexivity.

Archer discusses relational goods and evils, and how different modes of reflexivity emerge depending on their presence or absence. She links autonomous reflexivity, for instance, to the absence of relational goods, but not to the presence of relational evils. Again, however, these distinctions seem very – too? – ordered and, as such, do not speak to the tangled emotional legacies (goods *and* bads) through which, in practice, many, if not most of us, make sense of our family relationships over time. Similarly, Archer argues that mixed messages from family and friends can lead to impeded reflexivity, but again fails to recognize that managing such competing messages is, for many of us, part of our experience of having family and friends. So, too, in talking about trends towards seeing friends as the new family, Archer (2012, p.146) refers to the novelist Joanna Trollope but barely mentions sociological work on personal relationships, much of which has been concerned with the persistence of networks of support. She focuses instead on social isolation, citing in this context the rise of lone-occupant households and of social media, and their negative impact on communicative reflexivity. The under-thirties listening to music via earphones, she suggests, add to 'relational poverty', with music impacting on moods which those who are 'expressives' are more 'vulnerable' to (2012, p.309). Again, she makes little reference to empirical research, whether on solo living, the

use of social media in relation to personal relationships or the role of music in our emotional lives (DeNora, 2000; Jamieson, Wasoff and Simpson, 2009; Valentine, 2006; Baym, 2010; Miller, 2011; Jamieson, 2013) and hence stereotypical views on these practices are uncritically repeated.

Another area little engaged with is *how* reflexivity takes place. Archer suggests that communicative reflexives are preoccupied with 'the proximate'. By this she means those who are on the doorstep, who remain within the natal context. But it is not clear that, even if physical disembedding occurs, it necessarily involves emotional disembedding. Chapter 5 highlights the significance of knowing that people are 'there' for us, sometimes regardless of geographical closeness or even actual communication; a concept that raises questions both about whether or not communicative reflexivity needs contextual continuity and whether there is, in any case, too much emphasis here on talk.

In Part III, I look further at the 'how' of reflexivity and argue that Archer's framing – ironically, given its critical realist roots in the practical as well as social and natural worlds – does not allow enough for what it is we actually *do* when we are making our way (emotionally) through the world. Such a focus on doing was at the heart of *Being Human*, where Archer (2000) made clear that it is through what we do as practical and natural beings that we secure social meaning, not vice versa. This concern, however, does not seem to be carried into Archer's later work on reflexivity. When activities do emerge in this work, such as listening to music, these are, as we have seen, dismissed as blocking reflexivity and contributing to relational poverty.

Part III of the book also suggests that we need to have a greater sense of how reflexivity shifts across the life course and in relation to *who* is there for us at different points. Fractured reflexivity is described by Archer as the way in which 'having the barest life of the mind' (2003, p.169) affects our ability to control our lives. But is it poverty of inner talk that creates this lack of control, or vice versa? The question resonates with James Baldwin's observation that the inarticulateness of black boxer Sonny Liston was rooted in years of not being heard:

> And when I say inarticulate, I really do not mean to suggest that he does not know how to talk. He is inarticulate in the way we all are when more has happened to us than we know how to express; and inarticulate in a particularly Negro way – he has a long tale to tell which no one wants to hear.
>
> (Remnick, 1998, p.21)

It is true that Archer (2003) does make clear that she views being fractured as an outcome rather than a cause – in other words, she does not see it as a psychological predisposition. In fact, in *The Reflexive Imperative*, she reframes it as 'impeded reflexivity', where it is the absence of an 'other' that stops someone from becoming a communicative reflexive, leading to fracturedness.

Allowing for a life-course perspective challenges, then, the notion of fractured reflexives as a distinct category of actors, and reframes it as an experience which could emerge at any life stage. This links to a key difficulty with Archer's typology which I return to in Chapter 6: its failure to recognize that our relationships with others, whether real, imagined or remembered, are a hugely significant part of reflexivity.[2] Embedding reflexivity in everyday relationships helps explain *how* we learn to be reflexive. This links to the point made earlier about *how* it is we develop 'moral intuitions' or, in Swidler's (2001) terms, our cultural repertoire or toolkit. As Archer (2003) notes, to find out how our experiences over the life course shape reflexivity, we would need to rely on our learning, on our being reflexive about reflexivity. Understanding these cumulative processes is a theme I return to in Part III.

Linked to this issue of how we develop reflexivity is the question of whether we increasingly rely on emotions to shape our lives, and existing social-theoretical approaches to reflexivity are, as a result, too cognitive (Holmes, 2011). The theme of the emotionalization of reflexivity has been explored in different ways. Barbalet (1998, p.174), for instance, writes of a shift from the self as centre of consciousness, to the self as the centre of emotions. De Swaan (1990) describes a protoprofessionalization of society, with people increasingly encouraged to frame their problems in emotional terms: an 'intensification of discourses and expert knowledges centred around emotional expression and intimacy' (Lupton, 1998, p.6). Social scientific conceptualization of these shifts are in themselves, of course, part of these 'psychosocial phenomena' (Day-Sclater et al., 2009, p.25).

As I argue in Parts II and III, it is also important to hold on to the ways in which emotionalization of reflexivity is, in itself, patterned. Reflexive actors are located in class, gender, locality and kinship – a point developed when I look at who is talking about emotions and who they are talking to. In fact, a key dimension of sociological work on reflexivity in the last decade has been its stratified and stratifying nature, with writers such as Skeggs (2005) concerned with how 'self-making' requires resources and can be injurious (Adams, 2007) for those who do not have such resources, but also for those who do but have to face 'the emotional

costs of self-invention' (Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody, 2001, p.25). Reflexivity, then, has never been seen as an unequivocal good, carrying as it does risks associated with uneven distribution and self-regulation.

Another writer who, like Archer, focuses on microdialogues – the silent and invisible series of dialogues that we are all engaged in – as key to reflexivity is Burkitt (2012). For Burkitt (2010a, p.307) these are 'fantastical' dialogues because they are shaped by emotions, memories and imaginings – all of which mean, he suggests, that we are never fully present in our interactions with others. Echoing Vaisey's observation about what we carry with us into each interaction, Burkitt (2010a, p.319) sees each moment of interaction as containing 'a trace of something that is past, whether this is a body memory or habit being called into action, or a memory returning to conscious awareness: that is, one we can articulate to ourselves in words or images'. Reflexive consciousness involves accommodating these different voices. For Burkitt, emotions are embedded in what reflexivity *is* – an argument I develop in Chapter 6 – but his framing also allows for a concern with the non-narratable, whether to self or others. Burkitt (2010b), like Wetherell (2012), works with an understanding of the unconscious which is not psychoanalytic. He refers instead to 'dialogic unconscious': 'what we are unaware of is that which we do not communicate to ourselves or that which is not properly communicated in dialogue with others' (2010b, p.324).

Work conceptualizing this relationship between the spoken/unspoken and wider cultural narratives is diverse, ranging from Foucault's (1982) work on subjectivity to Charles Taylor's (1989) writing on interiority. Recent work on narrating the self (McNay, 2003; 2008; Adams, 2010; Frosh, 2007) has further developed our understanding of it. While for Taylor language is the route into personhood, and selves exist in 'webs of interlocution' (1989, p.36), for McNay (2008, p.210) the notion of a narrative identity runs the risk of privileging narrative. The risk here is not just that lives are reduced to the stories told about them (Plummer, 2001) but that the non-narrated are left unacknowledged.

To understand that which is not narrated, McNay (2003) suggests we need to understand practices of power and of silencing, such as those experienced by Sonny Liston (Baldwin, 2003) and that we can best do this by connecting phenomenological accounts to an analysis of those practices which shape the conversations we are allowed to have. A growing interest in the dialogical self within psychology (Blackman, 2005) points to a similar concern, albeit from a different disciplinary start point, that too much of our focus has been on the narratable and linguistic aspects of self-dialogue. Adams (2010) describes

the need to acknowledge the gestural ways in which we convey more than we intend, and through which others take in more of us than we realize (Phillips, 2002, p.202 cited in Adams, 2010, p.349; Burkitt, 2008, p.350). This relationship between emotions and their expression is at the heart of debates about reflexivity, yet the tendency in these debates is still for verbal expression to be prioritized. This is reflected, as we will see in Chapter 6, in Archer's claims that the articulate are our best subjects for researching reflexivity; and summed up in Nussbaum's (2001) claim that those who articulate emotions have a different emotional life.

These different dimensions of reflexivity play a key part in how we understand the relationship between culture and our emotional lives, and yet the writing on emotion culture outlined in the first section rarely speaks to this work or vice versa. In this chapter, I have traced how both bodies of work are grappling with similar themes: the multiple discourses we are engaged with; the role of relationships across biographical time; the non-narratable; the 'non-verbal'; and how our emotional ways of being are historically shaped and socially stratified. As these shared concerns, and work on both reflexive practices and accounts of culture, are also infused with (often deeply embedded) assumptions about emotions, I conclude this chapter by surfacing some of these and identifying aspects of sociological work on emotions that could be usefully engaged with in work on emotion culture.

Surfacing emotions

The first of these assumptions relates to the basic question of what emotions are. Despite Thoits' assessment that most sociologists now adopt a 'middle of the road' approach in relation to 'emotional hard wiring' (2004, p.362), long-running divides about the ontological nature of emotions persist. These include the distinction between cultural and structural aspects of emotions (Simon and Nath, 2004) and/or the relationship between their physiological and cognitive dimensions. Barbalet (1998), for example, makes the case for moving beyond a cultural perspective on emotions, which he sees as collapsing the social representation of emotions with what an emotion is, as ignoring emotions not recognized by the dominant prevailing culture; and, crucially, as failing to view emotions 'within the structural relations of power and status which elicit them' (1998, p.26). For Barbalet, the focus needs to be on how emotions are based in social structures. Socialization, as Gordon (1990, p.163) pointed out some time ago, is about not only induction

into an emotion culture but also adaptation to one's position in the social structure.

As we saw earlier, these ideas have been taken further in recent times by those interested in exploring emotions as a form of capital. This involves understanding emotions as a form of economic exchange but also reading the effects of the stratification of emotions as every bit as real as those arising from economic differentials (Turner, 2007). Those who experience negative emotional arousal are, Turner argues, disadvantaged compared to those who have a reservoir of positive emotional energy, not just because they have a reduced share of positive emotions, which are valuable in their own right, but because a legacy of negative emotions can limit options for gaining access to other resources. In Reay's (2004) terms, poverty saps emotional energy. We can expect, therefore, that whether or not there has been an emotionalization of reflexivity in general, members of different social groups will continue to have a varying share of emotional resources.

An alternative conceptualization of the relationship between emotions and reflexivity, one promoted, as we have seen, by Burkitt (2012), emphasizes that the former is *always* a part of the latter exactly because the future is unknown; in other words, our cognitions can only take us so far in making our way through the world. This is what Archer (2000) and Sayer (2010), for example, touch on when they write that emotions are commentaries on our concerns. This fits in with Archer's broader critical realist perspective where she argues that emotions emerge from our relationships with the natural, practical and social order. She also, in her earlier work, makes the link between emotions and reflexivity, arguing that it is through our 'inner conversations' that 'first order emotions' are reviewed and, as a result, shift to second-order emotions, creating 'the shoving power to achieve any ends at all' (2000, p.225). While it is not quite true, then, to suggest that emotions emerge in Archer's account only when talking about fractured reflexivity (Burkitt, 2012), it is the case that we do not gain enough of a sense of how Archer's later work on reflexivity types relates to emotions, nor how these are patterned across the population at different times. To paraphrase Mills (1940, p.913) we do not gain enough of a sense of how our 'vocabularies' of emotion are located in 'historic epochs and specified situations'.

A further missing dimension from most existing work on emotion culture is the recognition that emotions have their own temporality and mutability. As Barbalet (1998) puts it, we tend to have feelings about our feelings. This mutability of emotions is there in the movement Archer describes between first- and second-order emotions, but

is missing from much of the work looked at earlier on how cultural changes impact on our emotional lives. For example, the suggestion that the differences between men's and women's emotional experiences have winnowed potentially overlooks the way in which we hold and move between multiple emotions. Management of emotions can involve several transitions, some of which might be trickier for some than others. The move, for instance, from distress to anger, despite Illouz's (2008) claims of androgynization, might still be easier for men than women (Lively, 2008).

Another key development within the sociology of emotions that has been underengaged with by those writing about emotion culture is the investigation of the dispositional or habitual basis of emotions. This is reflected in a growing literature on affect or 'embodied sense making' (Wetherell, 2012) although the sociology of emotions has been engaged, in various guises, with the embodied nature of emotions for some decades. Barbalet (1998), for instance, drew on William James (1884) to argue that emotions register in our physical being and that it is this registering, rather than the thought about it – or the language used to explain it – which is the emotion (see, however, Goldie (2000) for a critique of this position). This focus on the embodied is important because, as Ahmed (2004) has argued, we live in the world as embodied beings, so emotions are best thought of as what we exist through, rather than what we have (Crossley, 1998).

As with Vaisey's interpretation of culture, Burkitt (2012), in thinking about emotions, splits practical from discursive consciousness. He points out, however, that from the perspective of habitus, emotions are neither purely dispositional nor discursive; they are generated in, and mediate the interactions between, embodied subjects and social structures. For Burkitt (1999), from infancy we form dispositions (means of emotional expression) which are, through relationships, shaped by class and other experiences. There is a concern here to view emotions as having a history (Ahmed, 2004; Nussbaum, 2001) and as being revealing about the past (Sayer, 2005), though always with the possibility of hysteresis, of emotions becoming out of time and place, and of 'new freedoms' (Bottero and Irwin, 2003), in the sense of new ways of being, emerging. This attention to emotional histories expands our focus beyond the conscious management of emotions and discourse to include the experience of 'riding the elephant' or, at least, those emotions which we are *less* aware of and which may remain unarticulated.

For some, these two foci – affect and discourse – are opposites, with affect linked to that which is beyond representation (Thrift, 2008),

and discourse linked to the deliberate and the 'known'. For Wetherell (2012), however, the two cannot be meaningfully separated. Affect, in her framing, has conscious and non-conscious parts, bodily and cognitive elements. Rather than as a mystical, uncanny force or sensation, affect is understood as ordinary and a part of our everyday practices. There will always be parts of what Wetherell calls our 'affective hinterland' (2012, p.129) which escape articulation but, like Burkitt (2010b), she queries whether our not being aware of certain processes necessitates a psychoanalytical understanding of the unconscious as a dynamic. She calls instead for an understanding of a 'personalised form of emotional habitus' (2012, p.139), one which is not about innate psychological or uncanny forces, but rather is steeped in 'relational histories made up of repeated interactions, narratives and habitual body routines' (2012, p.121). While Illouz (2008) sees emotions as the least reflexive form of capital, leading us back to established ways of being, for Wetherell (2012) they also have the potential to jolt us into 'new scenes' or, as noted above, 'new freedoms'.

For the most part in sociological accounts, it is this latter framing of emotions, that is, their disruptive nature, which has dominated. Following trends within popular culture (Denzin, 1990a), this has meant emphasizing the upheaval emotions cause in everyday life. Other disciplines have also been guilty of having their heads turned in this way. Warnock, (1962) for instance, in her preface to *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* suggested Sartre's theory of emotions holds better for distressing emotions such as anger or fear than more positive or agreeable ones. Yet emotions are not always disruptive and can also be a way of coping (Solomon, 2002). A focus on background emotions (Barbalet, 2011) such as feelings of security are, as we will see in Chapter 5, crucial to how we understand relationships that matter. Yet, as Barbalet (1998) points out, these emotions tend to be experienced below the threshold of awareness exactly because they are socially efficient. Hence the difficulty of putting into words what their 'thereness' involves. Nevertheless, if it is socially efficient, rather than disruptive, emotions that matter a lot of the time, a greater focus on the habitual dimensions of emotions is needed. Much of the work on emotion culture – including the therapeutic – despite professing to be all about emotions has failed to engage with the above debates, and has presented emotions as straightforwardly there to be managed. Yet, as in relation to culture and reflexivity, emotions are key to making sense of what goes on in our relationships.

This chapter set out to make explicit how we think about culture, reflexivity and emotions in our research on emotion culture. Three

pertinent facets have been highlighted as potentially significant to future work. First, we need to allow more for multiplicities: for there being competing cultural narratives; different inner conversations and dialogues; and a range of (mutating) emotions that make up our lives. Secondly, we need to recognize the significance of the non-verbal and the non-narrated: expressed in the sociology of culture through a concern with practical consciousness; in sociological work on reflexivity through an awareness of the intuitive and the limits of the narrated self; and in work on emotions through an emphasis on affect and the significance of socially efficient, though not necessarily verbally expressed, background emotions. Finally, and relatedly, we need to focus on what we do, as much as on what we say. Relationships embedded in the material reality of day-to-day life are integral to all three of these dimensions. I develop these arguments through Parts II and III of the book, and in the next chapter I examine some of their methodological implications.

2
About Distances[1]: Researching Emotional Lives

Arthur Miller, near the end of his life, wrote that he felt more drawn to writing stories than plays. Reading stories as a boy, he wanted to skip to the dialogue, to where, as he saw it, the author stopped getting in the way and the action began. As he got older, he became more interested in the things which 'register and weigh' (Miller, 2010, p.viii) – place, objects, memories, the mood of the moment, dimensions he felt he could best capture through stories. Storywriting, he concluded, allowed him to catch 'wonder by surprise' (p.ix). His argument, ultimately, was not one about authenticity. Stories do not bring us closer to the truth, there is no end to masks: 'the one we put down only leaves the one we have on' (Miller, 2010, p.x). Rather, his point is one that sociologists have long grappled with: the way that different methods or representations render particular stories at different distances.

Chapter 2 is about this: the way that as researchers we glean stories about people's emotional relationships and lives at different distances. In the last chapter I argued that we need to take a step back from broad claims about the impact of cultural shifts on our emotional lives to engage more explicitly with our understandings of culture, reflexivity and emotions. Specifically, I identified the importance of relationships, multiplicities, the non-narrated and the non-verbal, and what it is we do, as dimensions we need to take seriously. In this chapter, I explore the methodological implications of this engagement by drawing on the STTT study, the mixed-method research study introduced in Chapter 1. This was a UK-wide project[2] which ran between 2007 and 2010, and focused on people's beliefs and practices in relation to emotional support and, in particular, the significance or otherwise of talk in people's emotional lives. As such, it was necessarily a reflexive exercise: a study in which emotions and talk represented both topic and resource, substantive focus and method.

The study design is drawn on to illuminate some of the methodological implications arising from the discussion in Chapter 1, so I offer only a brief summary of its key features here (for more details, see Brownlie, 2011). The project had a quantitative component, aimed at mapping the patterning of views and experiences across the population, and a qualitative element to explore how people's beliefs and practices about emotional support are embedded in their life stories. It began with the research team itself carrying out memory work, while also conducting cognitive interviewing[3] in advance of the main fieldwork for the British Social Attitudes (BSA) Survey.[4] In-depth qualitative interviews were then carried out with a subset of the BSA sample, and researchers kept post-interview notes on these. Participants' post-interview accounts were accessed through follow-up telephone interviews with a subset of the qualitative sample.[5] The qualitative group was purposively selected to ensure diversity of demographic characteristics, beliefs and experiences. The interviews took place in participants' own homes, were semi-structured and lasted between one and two-and-a-half hours. They included textual materials such as mappings and timelines.[6] The qualitative data were transcribed and then coded using NVivo 7, a software package for storing, coding, searching and retrieving text.

These methods are not in themselves particularly innovative, but my concern here is less with the methods *per se* than with the methodological implications of how we conceptualize our emotional lives. In relation to reflexivity, this involves looking at its different types, engaging with ethical issues, and thinking about reflexivity as a classed and gendered resource. In relation to emotions, it means understanding more about the relationship between emotions and their expression, and between the said and the unsaid; the unremarkable; the half-there; the persistent dimensions of our emotional lives and the idea of interviews as emotional enactments. In relation to culture, it involves addressing not only *how* to access culture methodologically, but how methods are part of the culture we are investigating. To develop these themes, I move across different methods, and also allow for overlap between how we think methodologically about emotions, reflexivity and culture. I begin by looking at reflexivities in the context of doing research.

Reflexivities

Sandelowski (2003, p.321) writes of mixed-methods potentially producing a crisis of representation, because the norms that allow research to

appeal to different 'interpretive communities' are so varied. Dissonant claims arising from mixed-methods can cause anxieties (Moran-Ellis et al., 2006), and these might help to explain the attention given to 'integration' in mixed-methods debate to date. Increasingly, though, it is recognized that a single research approach cannot always capture the richness of people's lives (Mason, 2006; Gabb, 2008). For this reason the STTT study drawn on in this book adopted a multidimensional approach to explore what it is that registers and weighs in people's emotional relationships. This complex approach meant we needed to think in terms of reflexivit*ies* – a dimension missing from some mixed-methods literature perhaps because of the latter's emphasis on integration and the mechanisms for achieving this (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). Our focus on reflexivities allows for the possibility of what Mason (2011) calls refraction: that the very act of combination can potentially shed unexpected light on what is being studied.

There are different versions of reflexivity within sociology, as Chapter 1 makes clear. For instance, emotional reflexivity – for research participants, how they use emotions to apprehend their social world; for researchers, how emotions shape research foci, relationships and analysis – is integral to, if not always conflatable with, both lay and methodological reflexivities. This is not just because of the blurring between emotions and cognition (Nussbaum, 2001) but because, as we saw in Chapter 1, emotions are – some would suggest increasingly – a part of everyday reflexivity *and* of our methods for researching these practices. However, specific accounts rarely work across these versions. Archer (2007), for example, concentrates on lay reflexive accounts, but devotes only a footnote to refer to research or methodological reflexivity, the casting of a critical eye on the research process itself and our relationship as researchers to the world we are researching.

Others have focused primarily on researcher reflexivity, emotional or otherwise, though there has been something of a backlash against this approach in recent years. Some fear that researcher self-narration – dismissed by Stanley and Temple (2008, p.278) as 'I went there, did this/that, they did/did not like me, it was hard', and by Bourdieu and Wacquant as the 'self-fascinated observation of the observers' (1992, p.72) – eclipses 'analytical reflexivity' and overshadows the reflexivity of research participants, to the extent that even in those theoretical accounts which otherwise emphasize the interactional nature of emotions, the emotional reflexivities of researchers and research participants are presented as somehow in competition (Holmes, 2010).

For those writing intersubjectively about research exploring the situated and negotiated nature of research encounters, such dichotomous approaches make little sense. The relationship between self and others (including between researcher and research participant), and the constitution of shared meaning, is at the core of intersubjectivity (Vysma and Tankink, 2007). Some have argued for the 'betweenness' (Bondi, 2005, p.442) created by researchers and researched to be explored through psychodynamic concepts, or that intersubjectivity involves the interiority of emotions (Holmes, 2010, p.43), but it is possible to work sociologically with intersubjectivity. In other words, it is possible to see mental spaces as actually 'carved out of intersubjective space' and for the emphasis to remain on the 'irreducible interworld of shared meaning' (Crossley, 1996, p.34; see also Turner, 2008). I return to this point later, when looking at how 'the private' is constituted in research. Intersubjectivity, then, is a conceptual reminder of the fluidity of the betweenness of researcher, the researched and the social world. Attempting to 'know' about this 'interworld' *and* the social conditions which shape it, however, remains difficult in practice. Some certainly argue that a focus on epistemic reflexivity has led to a decentring of the 'interworld' and the emotional reflexivity of both research participants and researchers (Gray, 2008).[7]

While most of the discussion so far has focused on qualitative research, reflexivities are also important in relation to survey research, not just in terms of researcher or interviewer positionality but also in thinking about the relationship between social scientific and lay knowledges – in the case of the STTT study, in relation to emotional support. Like many large surveys, the BSA survey undertook an extensive programme of cognitive testing and piloting. The usefulness of this is usually framed in technical terms – a means of 'question framing', and of closing down the conceptual ambiguity that can exist between lay and social scientific wording. While clearly playing that role in relation to the STTT study – there was, after all, a need to arrive at questions that 'worked' – the process was also a means of opening up ambiguities for further exploration or, to return to the mixed-methods dialogue, of working with alternative ways of understanding the world. 'Being there', for instance, surfaced as a theme in the cognitive interviews for the survey, as it had in the memory work. Research participants wanted to talk about people 'being there' for them in ways which were not necessarily about talk but about gaining comfort from simply knowing that people were in their lives. 'Being there' in this sense was subsequently

operationalized in the survey, through looking not just at those people whom they turned to *specifically* for emotional support but also those with whom they were in regular contact. While this did not tell us about the quality of such contacts it did point to the *potential* for this kind of background support – a theme which, as we will see in Chapter 5, emerged in the qualitative interviews too.

In the STTT study, categories such as 'counsellors' and 'therapists' and 'people who are trained to help' were also challenged by participants as this description of the emotional support offered by a domestic-violence support worker highlights: 'It was done in a lighter way than counselling, as if you have a problem with your head – it was "come for a chat and a coffee" '. Cognitive interviews also helped foreground the fuzzy boundaries that exist in 'real life' – for example, having friends who are also professionals 'trained to listen' – as opposed to the clean-cut social science variables of 'formal' and 'informal' support. While, as Jane Elliott (2005) notes, the electronic capturing of data makes it increasingly difficult to access these 'marginalia' or evidence of how questions have been revised, the long process of piloting and cognitive interviewing that surveys such as the BSA go through, and the researcher discussions and fieldworker debriefing about wording and phrasing, offer rich data in themselves as well as providing a 'reflexive bridge' between quantitative and qualitative research (Elliott, 2005, p.187).

Methodological and epistemological tensions did, however, arise in the STTT study and these reverberate throughout this book, speaking to Sandelowski's (2003) point that mixed-methods potentially produce a crisis of representation. So, for instance, while this chapter is critical of methodologies and theories which assume we know what we are feeling and that our emotions can be straightforwardly measured, there are references in Chapters 3 and 8 to subjective wellbeing scales that were part of the BSA module, and which start from just such assumptions.

Returning to the critiques of reflexivity in relation to qualitative research, some of these are less about the *degree* of focus on researchers' emotions and more about *how* their emotions are drawn on: after all, talk about emotions is in itself no guarantee of emotional reflexivity. Researchers' emotions can still be presented, even in so-called reflexive accounts, as a straightforward 'warrant' of having 'been there' (Edwards, 2007, p.377). Yet, as researchers, we need to be concerned not only with how to represent others' emotions but also our own, and to be aware of how, as we saw in Chapter 1, hierarchies can emerge around reflexivity claims (Adkins, 2002). We know that there are risks attached to reflexivity in research, not least because, as Carolyn Steedman (2000)

and others have convincingly argued, if telling and knowing the self is a classed resource then so, too, are the methods which rely on such practices. In other words, different ways of knowing and telling carry different values and, as such, we need to be wary as researchers of adopting hierarchical reflexivity techniques (Skeggs, 2004, p.129). This is a realization that some have reached through exploring the class, gendered and race dimensions of suffering: the inarticulacy that comes from the experience of not being heard (Back, 2007). In Chapter 1, I drew on James Baldwin's account of the black boxer, Sonny Liston, to highlight the *social* context of (fractured) reflexivity.

Skeggs (2004) has suggested that one response to such risks might be to go beyond reflexivity *as being*, in other words as a property of the researcher, to look at the practice of reflexivity within research teams. Allowing for methods which enable us to hear how research has been experienced by participants is another. Is it viewed as appropriating, anxiety-provoking, enlightening or, in the words of one STTT study participant, *relieving*? The possibility that it could be all these things speaks to the irregularity of reflexivity: it might reinforce existing power relations, but it might also challenge them. So, while we do need reminding that methods are not neutral, and that we need to keep an eye on how we get to tell our stories (Back, 2007), we *also* need reminding that there are risks in assuming only some of us can, or want to, narrate ourselves.

> Somebody has listened to me about how I came here, about India, about my life problems. I've been very happy to talk. First time in my life.
>
> (Telephone follow-up interview, Rahul)

For Skeggs (2000, p.29) there is also the specific danger that, by trading in the 'currency of distress', we encourage a focus on 'exceptional, personal, traumatic pain' rather than what has been called 'ordinary and ongoing' pain (Berlant, 2000, p.33) or the ordinariness of unhappiness (Smart, 2007; Breuer and Freud, 1895). One premise of this book is that the two are not as distinct as these authors might suggest – at least not if we consider the ways people have of making sense of their everyday lives. In other words, as will be explored in more depth in Parts II and III, people work hard to make ordinary the 'extra-ordinary'.

We also need to be aware of the extent to which it is not just *telling* that is a moral practice, but also listening: the private is interpersonally negotiated and protected by both researchers and participants (Mazanderani and Brown, 2010). It is in suspending intimacy,

as Moreno Figueroa (2008) has noted, that we come closest to the ethics of research, to our 'moral moments' (Frank, 2004). In the following extract, a research participant, when she is asked if her family has had any experience of counselling, actively changes the subject from her father's gambling to his smoking – both activities he is meant to refrain from.

P[8]: No. I haven't but my dad has, gambling or something, I don't know, I was never involved. I was young, so.
R: So what age were you?
P: Like sixteen maybe even older, I was at uni or if I was here I don't remember it ever happening so found out it has, so.
R: So did you not know at the time?
P: No. Again, things just pass me by.
[. . .]
R: And how did you feel when you found about it?
P: Just like WOW! It's the same with smoking. We'll go with smoking cause that's easier.

(Lisa)

In the post-interview notes, the researcher marks this point in the interview as a 'no-go' area and identifies the decision not to pursue as a moral one: 'I really just felt there was a big barrier and I really felt that I shouldn't go there and I think that was the right thing to do' (Researcher post-interview notes, Lisa).

The emotional work of research is clearly relational. Fraser and Puwar (2008) have written eloquently about the inseparability of researching intimacy and intimacy *in* research: the ways in which we stumble upon intimacies but also invent or construct them. This, as most researchers find out, is sometimes not in the formal space of the interview but in the transition out of it – for example, in the process of phoning for taxis or being offered lifts – 'somehow him driving me to the station felt more intimate than us sitting in his house talking' (Researcher post-interview notes, Matt). Not surprisingly, given how intimacy can be stretched across time as well as distance, emotional connections/memories are often felt after the research, and this is another reason to engage in methods which allow these traces to become part of the research account. In the following section, I explore what accounts of participant reflexivity about research look like. The issue of researcher reflexivity is returned to elsewhere in the chapter.

Emotional traces: Reflections on taking part in the research

From the STTT study it is clear that research interviews are sometimes experienced as a 'one-off' and as not resonating with the experience of emotions talk in other settings. As one young male participant in the STTT study put it, 'My friends don't ask them questions' (John). At the same time, however, there can still be continuity between the two realms. For example, for some young men in particular, the concern that talking about emotions might lead to events spiralling out of control was both a substantive theme and part of their later reflection on the interview.

> Bringing up emotions that I didn't necessarily want to be thinking about at the time. Not massively uncomfortable but just something that you can't really control.
>
> (Telephone follow-up interview, Liam)

For one young man this concern about maintaining emotional control meant that he chose to opt for an email interview, where his increased sense of control was mirrored in the lack of control then felt by the researcher.

> I was left feeling frustrated by this as I would like to have asked him lots more but his replies were closed and I didn't feel comfortable 'pushing' him without having met him and spent time with him on his life story. I felt in other words that I was asking questions 'cold'. It might have led him to be able to answer questions [...] but it left me not being able to ask the ones I wanted to.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Shaun)

For most research participants, however, the interview experience stood in stark contrast to their everyday lives where they would tend not to share 'everything' at the one sitting. This can give interviews a particular momentum: things are said that people did not plan to say or that they did not even know they felt.

> P: Because there are certain things you bottle up and you don't tell anyone and, em, even though I have friends and I share things with friends, I wouldn't say I, and I've got a sister. I wouldn't say I share everything with one person and actually I thought there are a lot of people in life who have a harder life than I've had and you know

had to go through more than I went through but going back over it, I thought 'gosh'. You know, I have been through, had quite an emotional, gone through emotional turmoil at different stages of my life. And at the time while you cope with it, you store it away in your memory and you don't want to go there, you know. I did cry. It did trigger off emotions that I hadn't realized were there.

R: Was that a difficult part of the interview?

P: Yes. Because I felt quiet embarrassed about it, you know. Quite embarrassed about the fact that it really had affected me and I hadn't realized that it had affected me that much.

R: Why did you find that embarrassing?

P: Because it is a complete stranger and I had never admitted it to anyone you know.

(Telephone follow-up interview, Dee)

The idea of 'admitting' feelings both to the researcher and to self, and of 'triggering' emotions, draws on an understanding of emotions as already there, as latent. Yet, at the same time, the conditions for sharing these emotions are created intersubjectively, depending, for instance, on a perception of the researchers as non-judgemental. Thinking about the relationship between the research interview and the wider world, this same participant later describes having got over 'a hurdle'; of being, after the interview, in a different emotional space, yet privacy boundaries are still enacted as she decides to tell little to those closest to her about the interview.

I said to my husband the person's been but didn't actually say how in-depth it was and I said to a friend that I'd been interviewed and that I found certain parts of it difficult and I'd got very emotional but I didn't actually say what I'd said.

(Telephone follow-up interview, Dee)

For some participants it is the very fact that the relationship with the researcher is *not* embedded in everyday life which means that it is not 'critical' in an emotional sense and does not, ultimately, have a 'bearing'.

R: Did it remind you of other times you have talked to people?

P: You get to know people, they get to know more about you. You start to, in stages, you reveal things about yourself, don't you? So in that sense it is similar.

R: So did it remind you of friends?
P: In a sense but at same time not as critical from my point of view. If you are talking about things that are difficult with your friends. Then, you know, they are your friends, these are people that you are hoping are in your life or you hope to be in your life and whatever you discuss with them may have a bearing on that. But the interview was obviously sort of a one-off occasion so similar [in terms of] what you are talking about but, as I say, not as critical to me.

(Telephone follow-up interview, Ellen)

For some, the follow-up interview – which provides the space to reflect on taking part in the research – is also a space to reinforce/re-enact their earlier performance.

P: To be honest, I can't remember what a lot of it was about anyway. It's not something important in me life; someone come down and have chat, so you're not going to remember it for years and years. She [researcher] wants to come down and talk to me, fair enough. Not a big moment in my life, so.
R: Did you use the timeline?
P: The what? Is that the silly circles? Like being back at school. Thought I'd left all that behind. It was a laugh.

(Telephone follow-up interview, John)

However, other participants can be left retrospectively feeling vulnerable about the encounter and what has been shared, particularly when the interview is structured round their life story.

> You can feel a bit insecure in what you are saying. I think I, as I was going through the interview, I was probably saying, 'I don't know if you are interested in this?' or I kept sort of saying that. I just wanted to keep to the point but it is quite difficult when you don't absolutely know what the point is, where it is coming from sort of thing.
>
> (Telephone follow-up interview, Ellen)

Some participants can feel torn between normalizing the emotions talk of the research interview – 'I've been on the giving and receiving end of those kinds of interviews throughout my career so it was second nature' (Joe) – and feeling the need to reinstate boundaries.

> You put your trust in someone like [researcher] coming to the door and promising you that everything will be confidential. Although anyone picking up transcript from that interview could work out.
>
> (Telephone follow-up interview, Joe)

So far I have explored reflexivities in relation to the research including what I have called emotional traces accessed through follow-up interviews. In the rest of this chapter I explore those themes which, I suggested earlier, are at the heart of how we research reflexively emotions and culture: emotions and their expression; the said and the unsaid; the unremarkable; the half-there; the persistent or stubborn dimensions of our emotional lives; and research as an emotional enactment and a part of emotion culture. These themes emerged out of the *doing* of the research and, like the conceptual work in Chapter 1, speak to the need to recognize the value of methods as process rather than a technical means to an end (Law, 2004).

Emotions and their expression

The complicated relationship between emotions and their expression is linked to the discussion in Chapter 1 about how we understand what emotions *are*; in other words, to the relationship between the physiological, cognitive, phenomenological and social-cultural aspects of emotions. This is a relationship which provokes extensive philosophical and sociological debate – debate made all the more complex by differing definitions of affect, feelings and emotions. For Burkitt (2002), emotions *are* their expression though, as he and others have noted, this expression may well be somatic rather than verbal. Understandings of the physical reality of the emoting self, as we saw in Chapter 1, vary. At one end of the spectrum, following William James (1884), are those who argue that bodily feeling always comes first; and others, such as Ahmed (2004), who suggest we should not analytically separate out emotions and affect, because to do so would risk cutting off emotions from the lived experience of having a body. At the other end of the spectrum are those, including Craib (1995), who argue that expressing emotions can be a way of hiding from, or avoiding experiencing, emotions.

These are themes which have been returned to more recently in philosophical work on emotions. Goldie (2000), for example, explores whether an action has to be subsequent to, and distinct from, the emotion to be called emotional expression. Or, as Solomon (2004, pp.26–27) asks, does saying 'I love you' in the heat of a moment differ from the

'I love you' the morning after? Does the latter have to be an *act* of love, not an expression of it? Could the whole history of loving acts not be an expression of love, even if some aspects of that history are more directly or verbally expressed than others?

It has also been suggested by Goldie (2000) that actions which have a means-end, instrumental character are different from emotional expressions which relate only to the emotion. But how, as Solomon (2004) points out, are we to make a call about when ulterior motives are at play? For Solomon (2004), emotional expressions *are* actions, and are part of (not just subsequent to) the emotion, although he acknowledges there might also be less voluntary aspects of emotional expression. He is thinking, for example, about acts such as blushing.

Having looked at some of the ways in which the complexity of the relationship between emotions and their expression has been conceptualized, my interest in this section is in the methodological implications of how we understand the expression of emotions: specifically, the ways that researchers and research participants tend to think about such expressions. As Burkitt (1997) pointed out, this is something that, as sociologists, we have not been very good at doing. He argues that, by rarely defining our object of study (emotions), we create a gap that everyday assumptions about emotions creep into – most commonly, as we have already seen in this chapter, the assumption that emotions are 'buried deep inside' and lying latent (Arendt, 1958). Indeed, the validity of emotions in participants' accounts is often located in their unexpected 'rising up', in their unpredictability and unruliness. Recently, there has been a re-emergence of interest in the ways researchers' emotions/stories/memories/ghosts seep into the accounts of those they are researching (Doucet, 2006). These emotions then come to be read as contingent, as welling up in surprising ways and, therefore, as authentic or valid (Doucet, 2008). While psychoanalytical approaches to research have focused on how emotions and memories are provoked or aroused, those who have adopted a memory-work approach take a different starting point. Here memories and emotions, including those of the researcher, are seen as constructed; and to arrive at their social nature it is argued that emotions need to be reappraised collectively (Haug, 1987). This is the approach that has been developed by researchers in memory work with research participants (Crawford et al., 1992; Mcleod and Thomson, 2009).

As already noted, a memory-work exercise was employed in the STTT project, though this took place only within the research team. Using the trigger word 'telephone', each member of the team wrote in the

third person about a memory linked to the theme of emotional support. All the researchers, without consultation, chose a telephone encounter where either the researcher or the person they were speaking to was upset and the issue of 'being there' (or not) as a supportive presence was to the fore. The aim was to *describe* a particular event, not provide an abstract account rounded off through interpretation. Haug (1987), for instance, cautions against the coherence that biographical accounts bring – reinterpreting the past in light of what we know has followed. In the STTT study, the stories were shared within the team with each member commenting on how others described their memories and emotions. Emotions here, then, were deliberately conjured up. An extract from one of these accounts is outlined below.

> When he picked up the phone it was X [...]. His heart sank [...]. She was crying. He asked her what was the matter, though if he was honest about it, he didn't really care. He was past caring [...]. He wasn't really trying. [...]. In fact he didn't want to talk to her at all [...]. He simply told her that he would talk to her when she was calmer. He meant sober too, but he didn't want to go there. All he wanted to do was end the conversation.
>
> (Researcher, memory-work exercise)

This collective approach to researchers' emotional reflexivity illuminates what 'being there' means conceptually. It emphasizes the charged, embodied and gendered nature of talk about 'being there' emotionally for others (or our failure or refusal to be), and how the spatial and temporal ways of talking about 'being there' includes clichéd phrases such as, in the extract above, being 'past caring' and '(not) going there'.

Memory work also gives researchers a sense of what we are asking participants to do, of how it *feels* to express emotions in a research setting, and reminds them of the layers of background narratives there are for any story people *choose* to tell or foreground. In the STTT study it also highlighted the possibility that others might feel, as the researchers in fact did, more at ease being asked what we 'remember', as opposed to what happened and how we felt about it. While this might be, as we saw in Chapter 1, a way of tapping into the practical consciousness, the memory exercise also showed the extent to which what we do remember tends to be that which is, in some ways, unresolved; and, therefore, this can mean that the unremarkable could get overlooked through an emphasis on the 'memorable'.

The STTT study's use of survey methods raises other issues around emotions and their expression. There is a tendency, noted in Chapter 1, for surveys to be seen as a necessary evil in relation to understanding emotions. Clark (1997, p.280), for instance, constructs emotions as complex internal states affecting, and being affected by, subtleties of interaction, micropolitics, and emotional rules and roles which 'militate' against survey research. In the STTT study, by contrast, the gaps between participant and researcher understandings of emotions and the way they are expressed were intended to be viewed as part of the data, not a reason for not doing a survey in the first place. There is, in other words, as noted earlier, much to be learned from the way in which survey data are constructed, via an accommodation or negotiation between these different understandings. This interplay between lay and social scientific knowledge can be seen in the research team's struggles with how best to describe emotions. Descriptors such as 'worried', 'stressed', 'depressed', 'down' or 'low' left some participants who took part in cognitive interviews wanting more nuanced framings: 'I want you to ask me what I do when I am not "feeling myself".'

Other qualitative methods from the STTT study provoked further interesting questions about emotions and their expression. In relation to interviews, some research participants described being able to talk exactly because they were not *feeling* the emotions. This was explained variously in terms of the 'way' of talking, the 'betweenness' or shared space between the researcher and the researched, or of how close they were in time to what they were describing. The act of telling stories to a researcher can also, as Craib (1995) notes above and as Frank (2007, p.389) has also suggested, do the work of *deferring*, of putting emotion at a distance. The fact that all participants chose to have long(ish) interviews, rather than two interviews, suggests, too, as touched on earlier in this chapter, that even for those who professed not to express their emotions in their everyday lives, the experience of the interview had a particular, out-of-time quality: talking was easier because it was not going to be repeated.

The qualitative interviews also enact the complicated relationship between remembering (and imagining) and emotions, that is, the ways in which emotions shape what we remember, and remembering shapes emotions (Svasek, 2005). We will return to this in the final chapter, but for now it is useful to distinguish between field and observational memories. The former, Goldie (2012, p.49) summarizes as being remembered from *inside* the events that took place, whereas observer memories are ones remembered from the outside. For some, remembering 'from

inside' is akin to re-experiencing (see Joe later in this chapter). But this is not true for everyone, as the following extract from Neil, talking about his sister who died when they were both children, illustrates:

> I mean I can sit and tell you that I love my sister and I miss her so much without turning into a crying wreck about it. I have got no problem with that at all you know. I, you know, I am not necessarily closing it off, I seem to be able to just talk about it, I have no problem with it at all so I don't mind talking the way that we are talking.
>
> (Neil)

As already noted, the 'betweenness' created by researchers and researched, that is the intersubjective space – the 'way of talking' between self and other – matters. But researchers' post-interview notes, reflecting the cultural tendency to think of emotions in terms of an upheaval or a disruption, often referred to interviews or participants as unemotional – 'at no point did she look emotional or show emotion in her voice' (Researcher post-interview notes, Ruth). I return to this point about the 'remarkability' of emotions later in this chapter.

As we saw in Chapter 1, for sociologists an interest in emotions and their expression has tended to focus on how feeling and expression rules shape emotions and our emotional relationships. The personal mappings used in the STTT study were particularly useful for exploring how such rules are named and, occasionally, bypassed. These were an adaptation of Spencer and Pahl's (2006) personal network mappings, and involved asking participants to position themselves at the centre of a number of concentric circles and to locate the people, things and activities which help them to 'get through', with the most important placed in the innermost circle.

In the extract below, the participant feels she needs to justify placing her husband in the furthest away circle, and her dogs and daughter in the inner circle.

> No, that's not fair. I suppose you should put him there but there won't be the same reaction from a man as there is from a daughter. At least not from my husband and you can tell the dogs everything and they will still wag their tail you know.
>
> (Janet)

In this second extract, a different participant who, in interview, referred repeatedly to 'the family', finally distinguishes between family members in his mapping.

P: Well mostly it's my family.
R: OK. Can you?
P: And I would put it, I get a lot of support from the three oldest. They would be in the inner circle and the youngest, she has got a mind of her own, she has had a lot of problems, I advise her on a lot of the problems [. . .]. And she is the one that is out here.

(Ian)

These debates about emotions and their expression, including their function and their relationality, are, unsurprisingly, linked to how we interpret narratives arising from interviews. In the STTT study, researchers worked with the idea of 'guided narratives'. Using timelines, people were encouraged to talk about their lives and, then, specifically about times in their lives which they felt they had had to 'get through'. As will be explored in Part III, the stories that participants told in response to these prompts shared different narrative qualities (Lawler, 2002), sometimes relating to a specific moment in the past, the past in general or to hypothetical incidents (Swidler, 2001).

Working across different methods such as timelines, personal mappings and follow-up telephone interviews allows dominant or master narratives to become visible through their repetition. In Bill's timeline, face-to-face interview and telephone interviews, for example, he used, word for word, the same expression ('the sweat of their brow and the load on their back') to refer to his father's experience of manual labour and his father's desire for him to have a different life. Other narratives built up across methods, while they may not share exactly the same words, often share a common sentiment.

Participants may also make sense of their emotional lives as *narrative performances* – performances of moral selves, with emotional expression (including the absence or presence of emotions talk) as a key dimension of this performance. Some of the analysis in this book (see Chapter 8) is based on close readings of transcripts, and listening to interview recordings not just for thematic content but for such dialogic or performative properties (Riessman, 2008). This involves looking at how the narrative performance is produced, both locally within the interview, and in relation to wider societal processes – as Riessman (2008) puts it, few of us now view interview accounts as either coming from the inner self or 'dropped from the sky' – but also involves looking, through follow-up interviews and post-interview accounts, at how these narratives are *received*. Interview accounts are, as Stanley (2013, p.69) puts it, 'meta-accounts' in that they are not of the moment that their content relates to. However, the fact that

they are told and heard during particular moments can, itself, be revelatory.

Exploring emotions and their expression across different methods such as those outlined above is a contingent process. In the STTT study, survey categories of 'more or less talkative about emotional issues' (categories arrived at through survey responses to questions about attitudes to talk about emotions) were used as a way of *roughly* segmenting the qualitative sample. They were not meant to deny the highly contextual nature of emotions talk, but were a way of ensuring that a broad spectrum of beliefs and practices were represented. Often researchers did not know in advance the category the person they were interviewing belonged to. But, as in everyday life, where character ascription is common (Goldie, 2000, p.160), researchers ended up using these rather crude categories to position research participants as the *type* of people who talk or do not talk about emotions – and these ascriptions, in turn, became a way for the researcher retrospectively to frame the experience of 'being there' in the qualitative interview.

> The interview didn't feel like it flowed particularly brilliantly. Very much I asked questions, he replied, didn't freely talk and expand on matters [...]. I was left curious as to whether he was a 'talky' or 'not talky' person.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Ali)

In the next extract, however, where a researcher had become aware of a participant's survey categorization as 'less talkative', she wonders whether talking or not about emotions can become an interactional outcome of the qualitative interview. In other words, could she get a 'non-talky' woman to talk?

> Was a little nervous knowing that I was going to talk to a 'non-talky' woman [...]. Interviewing a respondent who didn't talk made me think of the interview as more of a challenge. Would I be able to get her to talk etc?
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Amy)

The extent to which categorizing emotional relationships in research processes resonates with, and reproduces, the depersonalizing way we approach emotions in wider culture is a point returned to later in the chapter.

The said and the unsaid

How we understand emotions and their expression is clearly linked to how we make sense of what it is that is said, and what remains unsaid, in research. In Chapter 1, I touched on the epistemological question of how to understand what is, and is not, narrated (whether verbally or in other ways). But what does this mean methodologically? An interest in the significance of talk for people's emotional lives obviously means holding on to talk within methods – in part, because of the need to allow for the possibility that people may talk in research, often very fluently, about choosing *not* to talk elsewhere. But it is also because only by focusing on talk is it possible to explore its absence. As Habermas (2004) has it, 'only those who talk can be silent' and, to that extent, methods can be about understanding, rather than overcoming, silences. Sensory methodologies have a key role to play in surfacing how we understand our world in an embodied, not always verbal ways (Pink, 2009; Pink and Leder Mackley, 2012) and there is a growing interest in how we can research people's *practices* other than through words alone (Martens, Halkier and Pink, 2014). Yet, however faltering the telling, talk remains integral to how we create meanings outside and within research (even in the case of research which uses non-talk based methods). Talk remains, in other words, a key social practice worthy of investigation in its own right – even though, following Derrida (1981), language, for many, is a constant process of deferral and, as such, can never give us direct access to what we think or mean (Denzin, 1990b, p.202). Within the social sciences, attempts to conceptualize and research this indeterminacy have taken many forms, including developing theories and methods of the non-representational (Thrift, 2008), or looking to psychoanalysis – to the 'unthought known' (Bollas, 1987) – to make sense of what is not said. As we saw in Chapter 1, however, not everyone is convinced that we need to draw on the unconscious, or to philosophical accounts of the indeterminacy of language, to do this (Burkitt, 2010; Wetherell, 2012).

Other projects concerned with the limits of language have had more specific objectives. De Swaan (1990), for instance, distinguished between 'strivings' (which are not expressible because they are not feasible or actable upon) and the 'illegitimate' (which are not expressible because they are seen as not justifiable). This touches on the power relations raised in Chapter I and the idea that limits may not be set by the participant, or indeed by the nature of language or representation, but by others who have an interest in having talk, or a particular narrative,

silenced; in other words, by the inequalities of 'everyday emotional terrains' (Parr, Philo and Burns, 2005, p.98).

Intimating the theme of enactments, introduced later in this chapter, interview exchanges from the STTT study show how such silences can also be negotiated. In the following extract, a participant, Helen, is engaging with the issue of what can be feasibly said about a particular happening, and this is made possible through the dance-like negotiation between the researcher and Helen about what can be left unsaid. Goffman's (1961) observation that no exchange should reveal more truth than it can bear seems (painfully) true in this context. We can also understand from this particular exchange what Goldie (2012) means when he argues that the *act* of narration can be as, or more, revelatory than the narrative itself.

P: It was just a, it was a thing.
R: It happened.
P: Closed the door, and that's it.
R: Yeah.
P: Yeah. And not discussed.
R: It's never been discussed since whatever?
P: No.
R: And that works? That's.
P: Yeah [...]. Not to say that it doesn't, it doesn't, you know. Sometimes I think, 'Oh, I'd like to speak about that.'
R: Mmm.
P: Then I think, 'Well what's the point of opening raw,' you know? It would just be a raw wound again, you know?
R: Yeah.
P: And you don't know. With things that are going on in your life, you think, 'Well maybe it would be worse now to bring it up than it would have been, than it was, at the time.'
R: Yeah.
P: Yeah. Aha. But then you think, 'Well maybe you shouldn't carry that sort of thing all the, you know, for years and years.' Or maybe you should just say, 'Right. Well, you know, this needs to be, we need to bring this out in the open because it's, it's gone on, you know?'
R: Mmm.
P: You often, do people die with things that they've never got off their chest?

(Helen)

In Chapter 7, I argue that, contrary to academic claims about the emergence of a culture defined by disclosure, this emphasis on protecting the unsaid is not only a feature of research interviews but very much a part of our everyday practice.

The unremarkable

Whether focusing on the said or the unsaid, the narrated or the non-narrated, there is a tendency in research on emotional lives to end up concentrating on the eventful. Yet, as we saw in Chapter 1, non-disruptive emotions are also significant, not least because they often intimate, that is imply, the intimate (Faubion, 2001). Again, different methods offer different possibilities and limitations in terms of researching the unremarkable.

As suggested earlier, memory work highlights our tendency to remember that which is unresolved and, in the STTT study, this raised the possibility that more unremarkable forms of emotional support, the 'being there', could get overlooked if participants were encouraged to 'remember' specific instances of support. As a result, as we have seen, questions about low-level support were included in the survey. Personal support mappings, perhaps because of their spatiality, can also make visible the background, the 'just being there', as the researcher in the following extract puts it.

> Having not really mentioned friends very much she then talked about them in relation to [the] concentric ring and it reinforced that sense of them just being there.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Lisa)

The ordinary can also be deliberately accessed through everyday material objects and this is increasingly a focus of research on personal lives (Miller, 2008). Most researchers who interview in the home know that it is the biographically contingent – awards mounted on walls, photographs, inhalers – which nudge aside or supplement the work of the methods we bring to the interview such as timelines, concentric rings and photo stimuli. In a sense it is these biographical objects that help produce Chodorow's (1999) leaky studies, studies which reveal more than those involved intended. Sometimes, however, in research, the issue is less what is leaked than what we, as researchers, are open or willing to see/hear. In the following extract, the significance of reachability which is being played out in the interview, but not actually

'named' by either participant or researcher, could just as easily have gone unobserved.

> Sam asked if he could text his girlfriend to say he couldn't meet her [. . .]. The mobile phone sat next to him during the interview and he would sneak quick looks at it, sometimes picking it up to hold it. At the end of the interview, I asked if his girlfriend had texted back and he said '10 times'.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Sam)

This again is about the surfacing of the emotional habitus which was conceptualized in Chapter 1. For Turner (2007, p.58), our lack of awareness of *when* emotion is happening means that sociology needs to be more neurologically informed. Emotion, he suggests, might be detected subcortically long before a person recognizes feelings. While not having the definitive ring of the neural, the action of mapping researcher and participant reflexivity is an important part of understanding what is emotionally there – not least because it is this mapping or naming that is part of constituting the emotion. It is, however, possible, of course, that researcher and participant might hold different interpretations of what an emotion is (a point picked up in Chapter 8 when examining researcher and participant interpretive rights in relation to vulnerability). I return to this point later in this chapter when looking at different interpretations of 'being there'.

As Garfinkel (1967) reminds us, the naming or surfacing of emotion can in itself have emotional fallout. In the first extract below, the mapping exercise makes visible for the participant how her marital relationship is her only form of support; and, in the second extract, she makes clear her unease with this dependency. As discussed in the last chapter, emotions have their own dynamic; they shape what we express but are, in turn, also shaped by their expression.

Extract 1

R: And you were at the centre and you have made it clear that [husband] would be, well it almost sounds like in the centre with you?

P: I am not sure that there is much of an outside really.

(Ellen)

Extract 2

R: In terms of serious support I don't really look beyond my immediate family, and really it's mainly [husband]. Yeah, so yeah it's terrible really isn't it?

R: But is it? I don't know.
P: I need to network.

(Ellen)

The stubbornly persistent: The view from a Torquay window

Mrs. Richards: When I pay for a view, I expect to see something more interesting than *that*.
Basil: 'That' is Torquay, madam.
Mrs. Richards: Well, it's not good enough.
Basil: Well, may I ask what you were hoping to see out of a Torquay hotel bedroom window? Sydney Opera House, perhaps? The hanging gardens of Babylon? Herds of wildebeest sweeping majestically . . . .

(McCann, 2007, p.192)

The significance of the mundane is to be found not just in terms of what is ordinary in individual lives but what is persistent or stubborn *across* those lives. This means returning to the need, identified in Chapter 1, to research social patterns in our emotional relationships. Whatever their weaknesses in relation to some aspects of researching emotions, surveys can be especially useful in this regard as they offer insight into the patterned nature of who is 'there' emotionally for us. As researchers we may find the familiarity or persistence of some of these patterns wearisome, particularly in an academic or policy context where, as we have seen in Chapter 1, it is claims of epochal change which tend to turn heads. Like Mrs Richards, the disgruntled guest unhappy with the view from her room in Fawlty Towers, we want something 'more interesting' than what is persistently there.

The range of views on emotion culture in the UK is investigated in greater depth in Part II. It includes the persistent role women have in kin-keeping and the provision of emotional support across the life course, as well as the prevalence of medication-based as opposed to talk-based treatments for those from lower socioeconomic groups facing emotional difficulties. The survey data also allow us to identify unexpected patterns around the nature of close relationships; to spot, in Basil Fawlty's words, a few wildebeest. In the case of the STTT study this includes *not* talking – a subject I return to in more depth in Parts II and III.

For the most part, however, surveys allow us to look at the stratification of emotion culture. As we saw earlier, though, some believe

that the very complexity of meanings around emotional lives limits the usefulness of surveys in exploring how people are emotionally 'there' for others. These debates have progressed in recent times, particularly through the inclusion of an emotions module in the General Social Survey in the United States, but concerns remain about how best to contextualize quantitative findings regarding emotions (Simon and Nath, 2004). In terms of how we can best research emotion culture, Lazarsfeld and Menzel (1961), drawing on Durkheim, point out that the constant and uncritical use of the adjective 'shared' in discussing culture obscures the distinction between the collective and the aggregate. As in Chapter 1, the argument here is not that the dominant public culture, our collective cultural practices, can be simply read off the aggregate; that emotion culture is simply the sum of our practices and beliefs about emotional support gleaned from a survey. Therapeutic culture, for example, is, as we saw in Chapter 1, conceptualized as much more than this. This does not mean, however, that surveys on emotions talk and support cannot usefully *add* to our understanding of this broader culture. Surveys, after all, address multiple elements (and theoretical levels) of culture including public opinion, collective representations (what we think others think) and norms and, crucially, offer us a differentiated picture of these. Some authors, as we saw in Chapter 1, also argue that unlike the discursive deliberations of qualitative interviews, the rapid response required in surveys might allow for tapping into habitual, pre-reflexive practices.

In any case no survey, including the BSA, is going to be able to offer Haraway's (2004) view of 'everything from nowhere'. Yet, whatever the problems of collecting quantitative data on emotional relationships, doing so offers *a* view on such relationships, and on emotion culture, from a particular distance. As will be clear in Part II, the survey data for the STTT study add to our understanding of who is emotionally 'there' for us through an examination of the patterning of beliefs and practices about emotional support across the population (Anderson, Brownlie and Given, 2009). Thinking in terms of epistemic reflexivity (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), understanding such patterns allows us to question a particular form of sociological knowledge which has come to prominence (and dominance) and which was outlined in Chapter 1: the characterization of contemporary British society as one in which we are dependent on 'psy' professionals and knowledges, rather than on friends and family (Bauman, 2003); and in which we think of ourselves as emotionally vulnerable. Additionally, the differentiated data about emotional relationships from the survey help denaturalize 'therapeutic

culture', a concept which tends, as we also saw in the last chapter, to be presented as unitary.

The fleeting and the half-there

This focus on the mundane, the persistent and the patterned, however, does not mean that the half-expressed, the half-glimpsed or half-there that other methods allow us to access are any less significant or, indeed, less permanent in their impact. Methods for exploring our emotional lives have to be able to span emotional encounters so fleeting they could be easily missed: in Scheff's (1987) terms, 'shame/rage cycles' that pass in seconds and minutes, as well as emotional legacies, the things we carry across generations.

Most of the participants told stories in interviews which were about one-off exchanges or events that had never been forgotten or which will always be remembered. John Burnside (2006) captures something of the nature of such encounters in his memoir of his relationship with his father. He writes of a memory of seeing his father late one night in the garden, standing in the rain, alone and thinking himself unobserved. This sense of the lasting being held within the fleeting is heard in his observation that 'after all these years, this is the most permanent possession I have of him. More enduring than the watch he was wearing when he died' (Burnside, 2006, p.323). The significance of the half-there lies also in things said in passing, such as for the participant who said 'they didn't have IVF in those days' before changing the subject completely and not returning to it. What passes over a face during research interactions might be thought of in a similar way. These are examples of Adorno's fireworks: entities which appear empirically but, at the same time, are somehow liberated from the burden of the empirical because of their lack of duration (Adorno (1997) cited in Williams, 2004, p.105).

In the next section I use this experience, of seeing something pass over a face, to develop the theme of enactment. I have used the word 'enactment' here, not in the specific sense used by John Law (2004) – where the real is enacted through continual practices – but in the sense of exploring the ways in which what unfolds in the research interview can be a performance, or a particular rendition, of what we are researching. The very reason why Law chooses not to use 'performance', which he acknowledges is a near perfect synonymn for 'enactment' – that performance is linked to human conduct – is the same reason I use both terms interchangeably below.

Enactments

Below are the post-interview notes of a researcher and a research participant relating to the same incident. They show how 'attunement' is as fleeting in research as it is in everyday life (Layder, 2009). The first extract is from the transcript of the interview, and captures the moment when the participant's wife enters the kitchen where the interview is taking place. In the second, from the researcher's notes, the researcher makes sense of his awkwardness about the wife's entry in terms of her entry into the interview space but her exclusion from the study.

Extract 1, from transcript of interview with Will

P: We are recording.
Unknown: Oh are you?
R: No. That's alright, don't worry.

Extract from researcher's post-interview notes

> We sat in the kitchen and his partner came into the kitchen to check what was cooking. Again there was that awkwardness of talking about emotional issues that impacted on them both but one being excluded. He seemed to be feeling that too – something on his face when she came in to the kitchen.

The participant in his post-interview account below, on the other hand, states that the interview had 'nothing related' to his wife, but contrasted his feeling of being able to talk freely in a research interview where he did not know the female researcher with the 'personalized' feel of the interview once his wife appeared.

Extract from telephone follow-up interview with Will

P: The only thing that was difficult. It is a bit weird. We were doing the interview in my kitchen and my wife came in at one point and I found it really difficult to continue talking in front of her even though what we were talking about was nothing related to her. So I didn't find anything difficult it was just when we had an audience for a couple of minutes when my wife was doing something.
R: Why do you think you found it difficult when your wife came into the room?

P: I'm not too sure. I guess when I was being asked questions by [researcher] I felt I was in an academic kind of session and then when my wife walked in it suddenly became personalized. Obviously I don't know [researcher] and so I didn't have any problems answering the questions. It is just when my wife walked in, I felt I had to postpone until she left the room again.

All of this can be read as an enactment of intimacy through emotions talk – specifically the potentially illegitimate or discrediting feel of emotions talk with those who are strangers or with whom we are not close, in this case a researcher. This, however, covers only what is spoken of; what is unsaid might also be interesting. It includes, in this case, the possible association of emotional disclosure with sexual intimacy – an association that has greater resonance through the act of being walked in on. This research interaction resonates with another encounter described by the same participant, when he also engaged in emotions talk with a stranger, this time a stranger at a wedding, again in the absence of his wife.

> Last year, um, I went to a wedding with a friend from uni and [wife] didn't go because she had miscarried [...]. And my friends, close friends, kind of knew but I ended up for about three hours talking to this girl on the table next to me at the reception, who I had never met before and she was lovely. She was with her boyfriend [...]. She didn't seem to mind at all, I am sure she would have left if she did. And I didn't feel like I was um, like, I was getting on her nerves or anything, she seemed quite interested, and was asking stuff. And I just remember on the way home from the wedding thinking that was all a bit weird! And I have never seen her again and I never will [...]. I think maybe the fact I didn't know her maybe made it easy and she didn't know X [....]. It wasn't like I thought I consciously think I need to speak to someone about this. One minute we were just having a laugh and then the conversation just kind of evolved, and um, yeah I don't know why her especially when there were friends that I had known for, since I was eighteen, sort of on the same table. It was all a bit weird.
>
> (Will)

Here, again, is this ambivalent relationship between disclosure and intimacy, a theme already enacted, as we have just seen, in the interview

itself. It offers a particular view on talking to strangers, a view from a different distance to that offered by the survey where the story that emerged was about our reluctance to talk to one group of strangers, professionals trained to listen.

This issue of talking without 'comeback', often with someone with whom there is no ongoing relationship, is something that other participants – often, though not exclusively, men – said about the research interview. It can also mirror their experiences of negotiating closeness and intimacy outside of the interview. For Will this might help explain why, later in the interview, he says that the two key people he talked to about his partner's miscarriage were his partner and a stranger at a wedding. The implications of this are returned to in Chapters 3 and 5 when we look more closely at who it is that is 'there' for us and what this 'being there' means.

Thinking about research as a particular rendition of what we are researching, the interview becomes a form of participant observation, part of an ethnography of emotions talk with strangers. The follow-up telephone interviews with participants to find out about their experience of the interview often had a 'morning after the night before' feel about them. Mirroring the language of intimacy in other settings, participants, for example, worry about not having met the researchers' needs, of having given too much, of not having given enough, or of how what they have given compares with what others have given.

> I guess I would have liked to know if there were expectations of kind of answers you were looking for and how close my answers were to them.
>
> (Rose)

R: How did you feel afterwards?

P: Well, I suppose I go over things. Did I represent myself properly? Did I say things? Because you know, it was quite searching. You don't always have your ideas formulated and you are trying to think as you are going along and I was just trying to think, going over what I said and wondering if I'd said the right thing.

(Ellen)

> You've opened yourself up quite a lot, you know. It makes you wonder whether it was appropriate or not. I'm not worried, you know, I haven't got very much to hide but it makes you wonder 'Did I really say that?'
>
> (Ellen)

Much of what is going on in these interviews is an enactment of emotions talk with those with whom we are not familiar, and involves participants actively working out the boundaries between speaking to a researcher and to other professionals, such as GPs. In the following extract, part of this working through is questioning the authenticity of both.

P: Oh I have got the best GP here I have ever had. And he can get things out of me, secret, intimate problems that I would never tell anybody else [. . .]. He sits on the end of his chair and he looks at me the way you do and there is no way that you can keep anything back.
R: So you feel he is really interested?
P: Yes I think he is. At least if he is not he pretends he is.

(Janet)

Similarly, in the following extract, a young woman is working through the difference between telling her mother and telling the researcher about taking antidepressants, the impact such disclosure has on her and the expectations it creates in others. Part of the working through here seems to be accepting or challenging the lack of a duty of care on the part of the researcher.

P: I was just like, 'Oh, I'm just feeling a bit low, so I think I'm gonna go on them again.' [. . .] but that's as bad as I'll ever admit to. I find it quite easy to talk about, I quite obviously I'm not really gonna hold anything back, but I don't really know you. Once you've gone, I'm not gonna see you again. [. . .] you're doing it for a purpose. I'm not burdening you with.
R: Mmm.
P: You're not gonna go away and go, you know, spend the rest of the week, 'Oh, God. I think I need to help her,' you know? 'Maybe I should give her a ring' and this, that and the other.
R: Mmm. Mmm.
P: You know?
R: So.
P: It's not that I have difficulty talking about it full stop, but when it's with someone close, yeah. It's, er [. . .] it does feel quite, quite burdening, and it feels very [sigh], very weak, like, er, I'm asking for help.

(Sophie)

Researchers, too, are working out what obligations the enactment of emotions talk brings. In other words, as I have argued elsewhere, the 'being there' in interview is inextricably linked to ways of being there in the world outside of interview (Brownlie, 2011).

> When she made comments about herself and her 'failures', I felt a sense of needing to remind her of what she had achieved. I don't know if this was because I felt that my being there reminded her of what she had lost.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Ellen)

But enacting is not replication – it is not the complete denial of the difference between the research experience and the world out there, even if some participants reflect on how their interview performance proves the authenticity of what they were claiming takes place in the world outside ('see, I told you I was emotional'). Less consciously, participants, of course, also act in interview their 'real life' way of being; for example, participants who explain that they deal with life's problems by analysing them, and who then spend the whole of their interview deconstructing the questions posed to them, or those who describe not talking to anyone outside of their family about personal issues and who then say next to nothing in interview.

There is always more than one experience of 'being there' in the research. For this reason, and because as researchers we, too, abide by feeling and expression rules which lead us to construct our tellings of the research encounter in particular ways, embodied knowledge or knowledge gained through emotionality, although significant, can never be the only, or the purest, form of knowledge. As Goldie (2000) puts it, such emotionality points to what matters but it is not a 'final arbiter'.

This is illustrated in the following extracts from an interview between a female researcher and an older man, Joe. In the first extract, Joe is describing how he feels remembering an emotionally upsetting time. The second is from the researcher's post-interview notes of this exchange, and the last is from the telephone follow-up interview. The 'actuality' of the researcher's telling about 'being there' in this case is less about truth than about the other etymological meaning of 'actual', which Skeggs and Wood (2008) reminds us is about the temporal sense of 'now', about presentness: 'I am writing this while still feeling what I felt in the interview.' The *sense* of the research encounter – its 'tension and pleasure' (Fraser and Puwar, 2008, p.21) – is often written out of research; here it is part of the data.

The account of 'being there' in this case is clearly also embodied; the researcher can feel it in her 'bones and flesh' (Okely, 2007, p.77). But as is also clear from this exchange, the relationship between bodily feelings, memories and emotions is complex (Goldie, 2000). Unlike Neil, whom we met earlier in the chapter, who could recount feelings without re-experiencing them, for Joe and for the researcher too, memories allow access if not *exactly* to what was felt at the time, to something similar. Unlike those participants whose perspective comes from outside the original experience, here there is no 'ironic distance' (Goldie, 2012). As noted noted above, the participant describes feeling the same as at the time of the interview.

Extract from interview, Joe

> I was very, very mixed up. In fact, just talking about it I can feel a sort of tight band around the head, getting tensed up.

Extract from researcher post-interview notes, Joe

> I am writing this while still feeling what I felt in the interview. My heart is beating faster than usual and I feel drained. [...] Joe had become very tense and agitated [...] describing a band across his head [...]. He had locked the door into the flat [...] and the curtains in the room were drawn. I felt completely closed in by the room and by him. The tenser he became the more I felt trapped and I was aware of not concentrating on what he was saying but rather focusing on what not to say so that he did not become upset.

Extract from telephone follow-up interview with Joe

> Where I had to think back along the time line at one point, it just got too much and I had to, I remember filling up with tears and getting quite distraught so as I say we had a break.

The fluidity of 'being there', but also the difference between enactment and replication, is illustrated again in the following two extracts. In the first, the participant, Neil, is referring to the feeling of telling someone a lot of intimate things in one go or at one sitting, while, in the second, the researcher in her post-interview account remembers the participant as *equating* the content of the two disclosures: the one to his girlfriend and the one to the researcher. This memory is perhaps closer to what it

felt like to the researcher, closer to her embodied experience of being in the interview.

Extract from interview transcript, Neil

> Like I remember when Becky (partner) sort of asked me about things, and funnily enough *I ended up telling her quite a few things in one big bunch*, much like this interview (emphasis added).

Extract from post-interview notes, Neil

> He said about his current relationship – '*I told her everything I've just told you*' and I suppose that summed up the feel of the interview [. . .]. While with other interviews, I worked to form a connection, in this interview it was as if I was working to keep a distance (emphasis added).

This section has emphasized the mobility of emotions, the extent to which emotions circulate within research between participants, researchers and readers. It has also returned us to the fantastical element of self–other interactions discussed in Chapter 1, and the extent to which research relationships, like all relationships, are imagined ones: participants imagine us and, as researchers, we imagine them.

> P: You are lovely and you are nice to speak to and you are not what I thought you were going to be like.
> R: What did you imagine?
> P: I thought you were going to be somebody like the Victim Support people who couldn't relate to anybody other than somebody like them.
>
> (Janet)

> I had gone into this interview thinking it was a woman in a nursing home I was going to see. This was based on not much more than the fact that the address was just the name of a house and she sounded vulnerable/older when I spoke to her on the phone. When I found the house, it was clearly not a nursing home.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Janet)

As researchers we imagine what participants' lives are like and how they differ from ours – 'the respondent was living near to where I grew up. I kept thinking what a completely different life she was leading to the one I had here' (Lucy) – and how things will be after the interview is over, and we leave.

> It felt strange to leave her home knowing that I would never see her again and feeling that I wanted her life to improve but would never know if this happens.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Lee)

> I started to feel apprehensive about him (participant's husband) returning, in part because of her account of him as a bully.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Janet)

Research as a part of emotion culture

Earlier in this chapter the risk of researchers adopting the hierarchical reflexivity techniques of wider culture was noted. I want to conclude this chapter by returning to the ways in which our methods are a part of this broader culture. In the first extract below a researcher expresses frustration that the research method in question – the timeline – was one which the participant had previously used in his work in an insurance company and which he re-used in the research.

> I felt a sense of frustration that the first part of the interview was shaped by a timeline that had been written for work purposes – for a leadership skills course – but then I was struck by fact that the timeline he used for work had, as he put it, 'personal highs and lows' so there was this strange crossover between work and the very intimate, including their experience of a miscarriage.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Jason)

As we saw in Chapter 1, much of the conceptual work around shifts in emotion culture is concerned with the ways in which our intimate or personal lives are subject to rationalization: to being measured and managed and commodified. But, as the focus on the costs of reflexivity in both that chapter and this one makes clear, we also need to be attuned to the way our methods of researching lives could also be experienced as objectifying, as commodifying – for the participant, but as the extract below suggests, for the researcher too.

> I realize I now hand the incentive over at the start of the interview because I don't like the feeling I am left with of having paid to hear people talk about their personal lives. I know I am trying to put distance between the money and the conversation we have just had.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Rose)

Some participants, when faced with such methods, resist them exactly because of an unease at naming and fixing emotions; at how some methods override the indexical, fluid quality of emotions. In the following extract, Jill is describing her reaction to being asked to do a personal mapping.

P: It's really hard this.
[...]
R: Well that's all right. You don't need to do it at all [...]. What is it you find hard?
P: Putting, putting it down visually. Yeah. It's something to do with formalizing [...] feelings.
[...]
P: And it becomes impersonal when you put it on paper. And also I, I would, if I did force myself to complete it.
[...]
P: I would have missed things out, and I would.
R: And that would feel wrong?
P: Be anxious afterwards,
R: Yeah.
P: Because I hadn't put things in.

(Jill)

Yet, as I argued earlier, it is equally important not to underestimate the extent to which research interviews afford people the time and space to construct their own story, to catch, in Miller's (2010) words, 'wonder by surprise'. Bringing longings, emotions and memories into research, in a way which is not exploitative and appropriating, is difficult but necessary because ultimately, as Sayer has pointed out, what people care about cannot be reduced to discourse (Sayer, 2005, p.950). Emotions, as argued in Chapter 1, are a part of how we access what matters to us.

> Talking about those kind of emotions whether good or bad, up or down, on your own terms. Things that were important to you in the past you don't often get chance to talk about them in an environment where there is no comeback.
>
> (Will)

In this chapter I have taken the concerns of Chapter 1 – culture, reflexivity and emotions – and explored some of their methodological implications, through focusing on these dimensions in the STTT

study. I started with the idea that different methods offer us views from different distances on emotional relationships and moved on to explore themes that emerged out of working reflexively with methods, in other words through working with methods as process. Law and Urry (2004) have argued that existing methods deal poorly with the fleeting, the distributed, the multiple, the non-causal, the chaotic, the complex and emotional outbursts. While it is no doubt true that traditional approaches have their limitations, as this chapter has shown, existing methods *can* engage with many, if not all, of these dimensions. Any limits, then, are not necessarily inherent in the methods themselves, but in how we approach and combine them.

Working across different methods – that is, working at different distances – might allow us to better appreciate, if not entirely capture, the complexities of what passes between us emotionally, but it does so at a cost: not all the methods outlined here can be seamlessly aligned. Working across them can, therefore, bring on a sense of disorientation akin to adjusting the lens on a telescope. For instance, some of the different, and at times competing, understandings of emotions from Chapter 1 are evident here across methods, between researchers and participants, and across different researchers' accounts. Talking about emotions is not always the same thing as being (emotionally) reflexive; and methods construct emotions and their expression in ways which are not always easy to hold on to simultaneously. While the embodied/emotional knowledge of 'being there' is rich, it is not always a boost to our claims but sometimes serves most usefully as a reminder of the uncertainties or vulnerabilities that often get written out of research accounts.

Reflexivity is fickle in other ways too: it may lead to research reinforcing wider social processes, including the rationalization or commensuration of emotions, but it can also offer the possibility for participants to adjust the telescope on their own life and view it, often for the first time, from a different distance. It is also clear, particularly from data gathered *after* the interviews, to what extent research encounters, like the inner conversations and the relationships explored in Chapter 1, are also fantastical. In this chapter, we have also seen that it is not only what is said in research that is a form of cultural work, but that our methods, too, are a part of this work.

While recent work on the multidimensionality of emotional lives has encouraged us to look at the cultural and the imaginary, as well as at biography, memory and relationships (Smart, 2007), we still need to find ways of working better with, and across, what Tilly (1984) has

called macro and micro stories. It is important to read reflexively across qualitative data – guided narratives, post-interview notes and follow-up telephone interviews – while at the same time thinking about these in relation to the social conditions suggested by survey work. As the next chapter highlights, different temporalities are at work here: the quantitative data are cross-sectional, but in the qualitative accounts people describe emotional legacies across generations. Together, they contribute to an understanding of emotion culture which is embedded and differentiated rather than, like the theoretical accounts outlined in Chapter 1, glacier-like, carrying all, uniformly, in its path. We saw in the last chapter that most research on shifts in emotion culture has relied either on discourse analysis or on qualitative interviews (usually with users of some kind of therapeutic service) but, in fact, there can be no one method that reveals all the work that culture does.

Through critical engagement conceptually and methodologically with culture, emotions and reflexivity, the first part of this book has sought to lay the groundwork for how to think about, and research, our emotional lives. In Part II, I turn to empirical stories about our emotional lives which, despite the best efforts of the epochalists to persuade us otherwise, point to the persistence of certain stories. In Part III, I then develop alternative stories that might help us better understand emotional lives 'in our own time'.

Part II

3
‘It’s Good to Talk’ and Other Stories

Part I of the book looked at epochal claims that have been made about our emotional lives and explored what a more nuanced understanding of these lives might look like. Specifically, it called for a closer conceptual and methodological engagement with notions of culture, reflexivity and emotions. Part II continues this process by gauging empirically the nature of our emotional relationships in the context of emotional support and the role of talk within that.

Pervasiveness is implicit in the idea of ‘ethos’, defined as ‘the characteristic spirit of a culture, era or community as manifested in its attitudes and aspirations’ (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013a). We know, from Chapter 1, that formal therapeutic knowledge has become enmeshed with popular culture and, as such, the so-called therapeutic ethos cannot be limited to professional practices. In this chapter, I investigate that ethos and the significance that people assign to talk as a way of managing difficulties in their emotional lives.

As we saw in Chapter 1, those most critical of the rise of the therapeutic have tended to emphasize its insidiousness, and to read calls for a more nuanced analysis of the possibilities for resisting it as naïve. This takes us back to the externalist position discussed in that chapter and the ways in which this perspective leads to an underplaying of how we *all* – not just academics – have the potential to actively engage, resist or simply ignore aspects of the cultural, including the therapeutic. This is not to argue that we are *always* aware of how a culture or ethos acts upon us and, later in the book, I look at how therapeutic discourses (and their institutionalization) can leave people, even when they are connected to family and friends, feeling unsure of their emotional competency. There is, however, much we can learn from looking at the resources that people *are* aware of drawing on (or resisting) in their everyday lives.

So while the 'insidious' aspects of the therapeutic ethos do need to be researched, so too does one of its most dominant strands: the idea that our practices are shaped by an assumption that it is good to talk. Regardless of the hidden hand of the therapeutic, it would be hard to argue that our acceptance of the value of emoting is not core to this cultural shift. But do we actually invest and engage in the idea of emotions talk in the way this idiom suggests? Chapter 3 is primarily concerned with this question – with the patterning and nature of our beliefs in relation to emotions talk – though it also touches on other assumed dimensions of the therapeutic ethos such as our beliefs about 'deficient' families and childhoods (Illouz, 2008), our use of therapeutic language and our beliefs and practices about 'self-help'. In the next chapter, I go on to look at our actual *practices* in relation to emotions talk and at *whom* we talk to.

I start by mapping the quantitative parameters of emotions talk and, more briefly, our engagement with self-help texts and practices. I then use these as a springboard for an intersectional qualitative analysis of one of the most ambivalent groups in relation to emotions talk – namely men in their middle years. This is a lengthy undertaking as it seeks both to advance an understanding of emotional faultlines *and* to illustrate the potential benefits of a mixed-method approach involving different levels of analysis. First, though, I briefly consider what sociological stories about emotional styles and faultlines there currently are.

Revisiting emotional styles and faultlines

There are existing sociological stories that can help us think about the significance of emotions talk. The difficulty with some of them is not just that they share a tendency towards making universalistic claims, but that even when they do offer a more differentiated account, it is not always grounded in systematic research. One of the key epochal stories from Chapter 1 – the cultural shift towards emotional openness and expressiveness – is shaped, for Illouz (2007), by gender and class. Her thesis is that the emotional styles of different classes are increasingly divergent, while the styles of the two genders are increasingly blurred. Other research on gender differences in this area, however, tells a different story. Empirical work on help-seeking, for instance, points to the persistence of strong gendered differences, with women still more likely to verbalize their emotional distress and to seek help for emotional difficulties than men (Thoits, 1991; Cleary, 2012) though, as we see below, this does not, of course, mean that all women are emotionally open or

all men emotionally restricted (Canetto and Cleary, 2012; Emslie et al., 2007). Those looking at emotional expression in the everyday, rather than during times of emotional distress, also point to the stubbornness of gendered differences. Simon and Nath's (2004, p.1169) analysis of the 1996 US General Household Survey, for instance, suggests that contrary to popular cultural beliefs, women do *not* report more frequent emotional experiences than men in general, but that there are gendered differences in the frequency of reporting positive and negative emotions, with men reporting more positive feelings than women. These findings, Simon and Nath (2004, p.1169) point out, 'indicate that individuals' structural location and role involvements also affect their day-to-day emotions' – findings which resonate with the discussion in Chapter 1 about the stratifying nature of emotions.

Sociological work on personal relationships has also highlighted gendered differences in the division of labour within intimate relationships, including in relation to emotion work, (Jamieson, 1998; Duncombe and Marsden, 1998) and in research on friendship. It has been argued that, while talk is the substance of women's friendships (Johnson and Aries, 1983), men's friendships are more activity-based (Rubin, 1986): a difference O'Connor (1998) provocatively describes as between women's 'shared victimisation' (p.122) and men's 'inarticulate solidarity' (p.124). Cancian (1987), and others have argued that women's friendships appear more intimate only because the language of friendship has been feminized. Others, however, have cautioned against overplaying, as Pahl (2000, p.112) puts it, the gender and class card so that we end up assuming working-class men can speak only of 'pigeons and fishing'. These theorists point instead to variations in how *different* men and women understand and *do* intimacy: in other words, recognizing that not all women have intimate relationships, while some men do, and that we may be downplaying the extent to which 'doing' matters to both – a point developed in Part III. Walker (1994), on the other hand, points out that men and women, if asked about friendships in general, tend to produce culturally dominant stories about men achieving intimacy through doing and women through talk, but when they are asked about *individual* friendships this is often not the case. Moreover, she notes distinct class differences between men, and between women, so that some middle-class women may be less involved in talk with other women than working-class men are with their friends.

Overall, then, even this brief engagement with a small part of a much larger body of research on gendered and classed beliefs and practices about emotions talk suggests a complex picture and one which is

not straightforwardly about the detraditionalization of gender (Adkins, 2002). Recently, dimensions such as geographical mobility and cultural and family influences have also become part of our investigation of personal lives (Spencer and Pahl, 2006). There remains, however, a lack of engagement with age and generation in the analysis of emotions talk (Neilsen and Rudberg, 2000; Mcleod and Wright, 2009), though it is a dimension increasingly integral to the analysis of family relationships in general (Brannen, 2003). This is perhaps because of a tendency to think of changes in emotional styles as best captured by focusing on the practices and beliefs of the young, and this is true more generally of recent theoretical arguments about the rise of emotionalism and the therapeutic turn. When members of the older generation *are* drawn on, they tend to be considered discretely and/or as having a way of being (emotionally) in the world that is no longer relevant. In other words, there is little focus on the ways in which their practices and beliefs about emotions are part of the present, not just because this cohort's experiences are interesting in their own right (all the more so, given the size of the cohort) but because generations coexist (Mannheim, 1952) and shape each other's experiences.

This chapter draws on both quantitative and qualitative data to explore which of the above differentiated stories of change ring true. By looking at the ways that class and gender have varying impact, depending on cohort and generational effects, age and generation emerge as key, if till now largely unexamined variables in people's beliefs about emotions talk. In the process, a much more complex picture of emotional 'styles' and 'faultlines' begins to emerge than that suggested by Illouz (2008).

Beliefs about the value and significance of emotions talk

Those who believe that we are increasingly in thrall to emotionalism and the therapeutic in our everyday lives would – at first sight – find much to bolster their arguments in the findings of the British Social Attitudes survey module that formed part of the STTT study. Reflecting a broad consensus across the qualitative sample, that it is good to talk about emotions because it enables you to release pressure – the hydraulic model – the following table shows that a clear majority of those interviewed indicated that it was important to them to be able to talk about their feelings, and a similar proportion agreed that they found it easy to do so. Of equal importance, perhaps, the survey suggested that – regardless of actual changes in emotional sensibilities

and practice – there is a widespread *perception* that emotions are now discussed more freely than in the past. Around seven in ten agreed with the suggestion that people now spend more time talking about their feelings than in the past, while roughly half agreed that they had grown up in a household where people did not really do this. But there is also more than a hint of ambivalence in the third of participants who agreed that 'people spend too much time talking about their feelings – they should just get on with things' (Table 3.1).

It is also worth considering what happens if we begin to disaggregate such findings. Does an *en bloc* story of social change towards emotional expression remain convincing? Perhaps the most obvious way to start is by looking at beliefs about emotions talk by age, where we find a very clear division, in some respects, between the beliefs of those born

Table 3.1 General attitudes towards 'emotions talk' (% agreeing/disagreeing)

	Agree strongly	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Disagree strongly (%)**
I find it easy to talk about my feelings	13	43	20	21	3
People spend too much time talking about their feelings – they should just get on with things	4	31	26	35	5
I grew up in the sort of household where people didn't really talk about their feelings	9	40	14	32	5
People nowadays spend more time talking about their feelings than in the past	9	59	20	12	1
It's important to me to be able to talk about my feelings	12	56	18	12	1
Bases:2049–2092					

Notes: Row percentages. 'Don't know' responses excluded.
Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

roughly before the end of World War Two (WW2) and those in subsequent age groups. We might assume that those in the oldest age groups somehow lack the ability to talk about their feelings, having grown up in an era and in households in which emotional openness was not the norm. Interestingly, however, the statement 'I find it easy to talk about my feelings' is associated with relatively little variation by age – or at least not with a straightforward pattern. What is clear is that older people are markedly less likely to *want* to talk about their emotional lives: among those aged over 65 there is a sharp drop in the proportion agreeing that 'it's important to me to be able to talk about my feelings', and a corresponding increase in the proportion agreeing that 'people spend too much time talking about their feelings nowadays – they should just get on with things'. Some 59 per cent of those aged 75 and over, for example, agree with this view compared with only around three in ten of those aged under 65 (Table 3.2).

This may well be an indication that a widespread cultural commitment to emotional restraint is, quite literally, dying out in Britain. However, it would be a mistake to see this process of cultural change as straightforwardly unilinear or undifferentiated. The picture is, in fact, more complex, and different groups engage with – and resist – this type of emotionally expressive culture in a variety of ways, some of which may contain elements of contradiction.

As argued earlier, it is also worth bearing in mind that the beliefs and practices of the oldest age groups are no less contemporary than those of the young – indeed, as noted, given the size of this cohort, one might argue that the views of older people are in one sense increasingly, rather than decreasingly, significant. There may also be life-stage effects at work here: in other words, it is possible that those currently in middle age may become less positively oriented towards emotional openness as they enter older age. As Part III of the book suggests, it may also be that, as we age, our understanding of the nature of vulnerability – and, hence the need for talk – also changes. This interplay between generation and life stage is explored further through the qualitative data presented later in this chapter. Quantitatively we are constrained by having only a single cross-sectional sample, and by a lack of a point of comparison with earlier cohorts or longitudinal data for the current older generation.

While age (and generation) are faultlines in beliefs about emotional openness, they interact powerfully with another – namely gender. As might be expected from some of the work highlighted in the previous section, the STTT study found that *men in general* and *of all ages* exhibited very different attitudes from women to talking about their feelings.

Table 3.2 General attitudes towards 'emotions talk' by age group (% agreeing strongly/agreeing)

	18 to 24	**25 to 34**	**35 to 44**	**45 to 54**	**55 to 64**	**65 to 74**	**75+**
I find it easy to talk about my feelings	64	58	55	49	61	46	55
People spend too much time talking about their feelings – they should just get on with things	28	27	28	32	33	52	59
It's important to me to be able to talk about my feelings	66	77	70	70	70	59	58
Bases	137–141	302–307	422–428	323–327	334–339	288–299	239–249

Notes: 'Don't know' responses excluded.
Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

The following analysis explores the relationship between gender and age group by combining the results to three of the attitude statements – 'it's important to me to be able to talk about my feelings', 'I find it easy to talk about my feelings' and 'people spend too much time talking about their feelings' – into a summary scale that captures general orientations towards emotions talk. On the basis of their answers, participants were assigned to one of three groups: those who were most positive, those most negative and an intermediate group.

In most respects, the study provides little evidence to support the notion of androgynization or gender convergence in relation to emotions talk in Britain, with women remaining much more positively oriented towards such interactions (Figure 3.1). Interestingly, if there is evidence of convergence from age 45 onwards, it results from women being relatively more closed rather than men being more emotionally open.

In the youngest age group – those who have grown up entirely in an era allegedly characterized by emotional openness – the gap between the views and beliefs of men and women is at its widest. This finding perhaps again highlights the need to take account of life-stage as well as generational or cohort effects. In other words, younger men, unlike younger women, may not yet have formed the sorts of relationships that allow for emotions talk to develop. Either way, there is little sign that young men and young women are converging in their general orientations towards emotions talk.

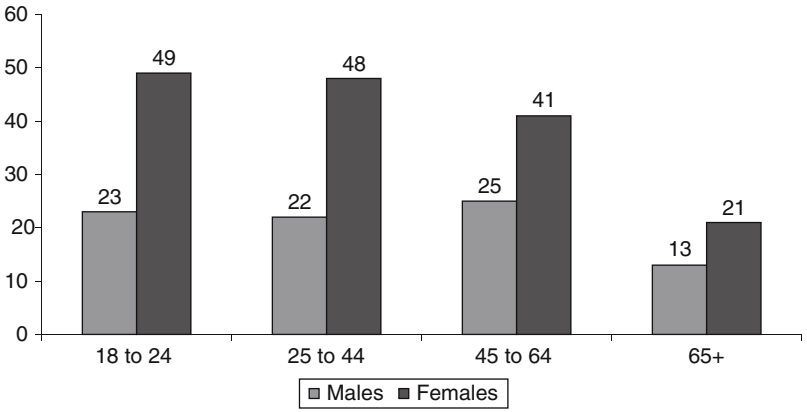

Figure 3.1 Orientations towards emotions talk: belonging to 'most positive' group by age group and gender (%)
Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

And what about social class, long assumed to be a key determinant of our emotional sensibilities? At the level of general orientations towards emotions talk, there is evidence of a social class effect, albeit one that does not cleave attitudes as strongly as that of age group or gender. The proportion of those from professional and managerial background in the 'most positive' group is 36 per cent, compared with 27 per cent of those from semi-routine and routine occupations. (The comparable figures for the 'least positive' group are 34 and 38 per cent.) As Figure 3.2 shows, there are also modest differences between the most and least affluent households, but again these are perhaps less pronounced than might be expected from stereotypes of middle-class emotional openness and working-class inarticulacy. The size of the dataset makes it difficult to drill down further to explore, for example, the position of middle-class and working-class men in their middle years, but the pattern across the sample as a whole suggests that for this life stage too, gender and age are more important than social class or household income.

So far, only one dimension of emotion culture has been tapped into – general orientation towards talk about emotions – but the survey also contained questions about attitudes towards formal therapeutic intervention and I now go on to look at these.

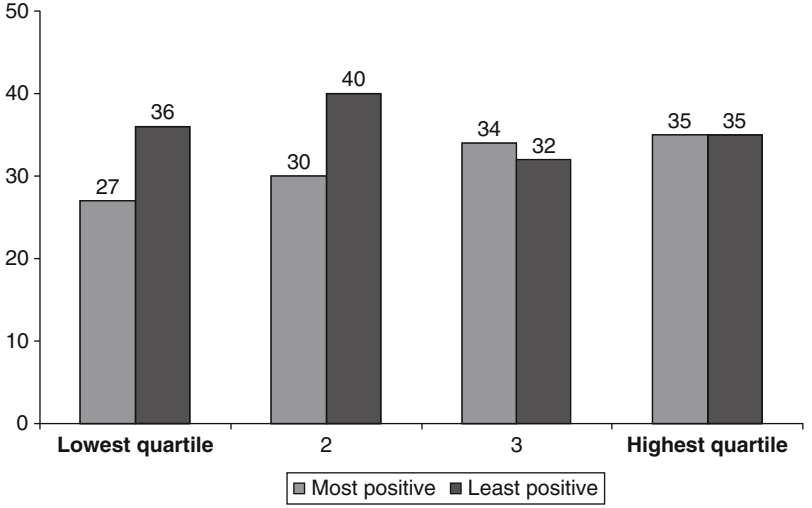

Figure 3.2 Orientations towards emotions talk: Belonging to 'most/least positive' group by household income (quartiles, %)
Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

Table 3.3 Attitudes towards therapy and counselling by gender (% agreeing strongly/agreeing)

	Male	Female	All
If I was feeling worried, stressed or down I'd feel comfortable talking to my GP about it	57	62	60
If I was feeling worried, stressed or down I'd feel comfortable talking to a therapist or counsellor about it	37	42	40
I'd know how to go about finding a counsellor or therapist if I needed to	48	57	53
Counselling or therapy is only for people with really serious problems	36	29	32
I don't really know anything about counselling or therapy	40	33	36
If I had seen a counsellor or therapist, I wouldn't want anyone to know about it	49	41	45
Bases:	733–768	927–958	1660–1726

Notes: 'Don't know' responses excluded.
Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

Here there are modest but still consistent differences in the responses of men and women in terms of knowledge of, and attitudes towards, therapy and counselling (Table 3.3).

In short, both the survey and the qualitative data suggest that men are slightly less likely to know about such therapeutic services and to be comfortable with the idea of using them. Specifically, men are more likely to think they can cope with problems themselves, are less convinced by the usefulness of counselling and emphasize needing to be helped and listened to by people who know them.

Across the qualitative sample, the dominant reason given by men and women for why they had not sought formal support was because they did not feel they needed to. This in part was because they felt they could sort out their problems themselves or with the help of informal networks.

> Well I just think I might not be as bad a case to speak to anyone really. [. . .] I've always been one o' these, 'well get *on* with it' type, sort o' thing.
>
> (Cath)

Relatedly, they saw all forms of 'formal' support – ranging from therapists to helplines – as being for people who face much more serious difficulties than they themselves do: 'you'd feel, "Well, is my problem big enough to talk to somebody like that?", you know' (Cath). Formal support was seen as being for those facing 'massive problems', for the 'desperate' – 'unless it's a proper, like I said, victim support, something like that, they'd been in a fire or an earthquake or something like that' (John). As a result, seeking counselling for lesser problems would leave some people feeling 'inadequate'. This might also interplay with a tendency, explored later in the book, to make ordinary our experiences: 'I don't need or want counselling. Um, I don't know I guess, it was a very sort of natural thing what had happened' (Will, talking about his partner's miscarriage).

Other reasons people gave for not wanting to speak to professionals included a strong perception still that speaking to a counselling professional was stigmatizing.

> Only the stigma part of it, of what other people might think. You don't go spreading the word that I am seeing a psychologist. You are not doing that because you know what people are like. You know a lot of people would look down on you.
>
> (Michael)

> Thousands and thousands of people do, although nobody would ever turn round and say, 'Oh I phoned the Samaritans. The Samaritans helped me,' you know?
>
> (Helen)

While, for some, the neutrality of professional help was what appealed to them, for many others, there was an uncomfortableness about speaking to a stranger – 'I'd rather speak to someone I had an emotional connection with' (Francis). The question of authenticity, of professionals truly being on their side and not just doing a job was important. While counsellors themselves may have 'faith' (Halmos, 1965) that the counselling relationship is of a moral, not just technical, kind, this is not a faith shared by those with little or no experience of the practice.

> It kind of lacks a bit of sincerity for me without a kind of personal input.
>
> (Jason)

> You don't really know them, do you? They are just there doing their job.
>
> (Martin)

> They might be able to give you some advice, but unless they know you as a person, you know, that's what I found going to Jane [friend]. Jane knows me as a person.
>
> (Helen)

Some older men in the sample, while also unlikely to seek formal support, seemed more distanced from these services and perhaps as a consequence were more comfortable in their acceptance of them: 'Well as far as I'm concerned, I've never wanted it, but I'm not against it – not by any means. Oh no.' (Hugh)

Age is, in fact, a key predictor of attitudes towards formal emotional support, although the nature of the relationship varies. Those over 65, like Hugh, are significantly *more* likely than other age groups to say that they would feel comfortable talking to their GP, but much *less* likely to feel comfortable with notions of therapy or counselling. Those in the youngest age group are least likely to feel comfortable with the idea of talking *either* to a GP or to a therapist or counsellor. And those in midlife are the group most likely to say they would feel comfortable talking to either type of professional. Again, then, it is likely that we are seeing both cohort and life-stage effects here – for example, the cohort effects of the post-war years mean that those in midlife are more comfortable than their predecessors with the notion of talk-based professional support, and more in need of such support than those in their twenties and thirties – a group that is also still wary of opening up to those beyond their immediate circle of friends and family. While the cross-sectional quantitative data cannot determine this, the qualitative data explored in more detail later in this chapter suggest that people, at least, perceive there to have been a cohort as well as life-stage effect.

Two further key predictors of attitudes towards professional support are social class and education. In short, those with higher levels of educational attainment, and from professional and managerial occupations, are significantly more likely to know more about counselling and therapy, and to be positively oriented towards it. Thus, 50 per cent of those with a degree agreed they would feel comfortable talking to a counsellor or therapist, compared with 35 per cent of those without; and conversely, 44 per cent of those from semi-routine and routine occupations agreed with the statement 'I don't really know anything about therapy or counselling', compared with just 28 per cent of those from

professional and managerial occupations. This lack of knowledge about therapeutic services, particularly by men from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, recurs across age groups. It appears, then, that social class and education do help to predict responses to therapeutic culture, but mainly to its formal or professional expression, and much less to the ordinary 'emotions talk' of everyday life.

Wider therapeutic practices and beliefs

My focus in this chapter is primarily on beliefs about emotions talk, but I also want to engage with other aspects of the therapeutic. While these are fairly crude measures, the BSA module for the STTT study also asked whether, in the last year, participants had 'read a book on how to feel better about yourself, or on how to cope with emotional difficulties such as family or relationship problems or bereavement', 'been to a self-help or support group of any kind' or 'used Internet groups and resources for people facing difficulties in their lives'. These resources are what Illouz (2007, p.19) suggests offer a 'vocabulary and a method of introspection' (see also Hochschild, 1999; McGee, 2005).

Some 14 per cent of those interviewed had read a self-help book of some kind, 4 per cent had attended a self-help group and 5 per cent had accessed some kind of Internet-based support. There was some variation across different subgroups. Women, for example, were more likely to have accessed such resources (17 per cent had read a self-help book, compared with 11 per cent of men), and those in the middle age groupings were more likely than either the youngest or oldest, to have done so. Nevertheless, there is little sign that these wider features of therapeutic culture were pervasive. Qualitative data on beliefs and practices around self-help, on- and offline, would seem to support this.[1] As with other recent studies of self-help consumption in UK, a lack of enthusiasm was expressed for self-help literature in the STTT study (see also Bennett et al., 2009, p.98; 104), particularly among men.

In the qualitative interviews for the STTT study, some middle-class participants claimed they were more likely to read novels than self-help books, and Taylor (2011, p.540) describes how the 'rich vocabulary of interiority' which has developed in alignment with the controlled, 'buffered' self, circulates through fiction. Women, in particular, also often sought out autobiographical reading to explore problems similar to those addressed in the self-help literature (see Bennett et al., 2009).

R: Have you ever read a self-help book?
P: No. I, I like books about true-life situations. [...] In fact the book I'm reading about just now is about a girl who was, her father, you

know, molested her as a child. And, er, I find, I like that kind o' book coz it's, I think it's how people cope with their emotions [. . .]

R: Do you find that you get something personally from reading?

P: I can relate, some of the things, you think, 'Oh, I could relate to that.'

(Helen)

Reflecting the quantitative findings above, the reading of self-help books was not presented as an *everyday* practice and an activity such as phoning a helpline was still positioned often as a 'desperate measure'. This is not to say that people were unaware of such practices and texts, but the *personal* relevance of such resources was often questioned: 'it's not my scene' (Lisa). The number of people accessing online support, as we saw above, was also relatively small though, of course, participants did use the web to search for all manner of information relating to mental wellbeing.

Um, when I felt really down and depressed it was like I put depression in the Google and it's like you get tons of different pages that come up. You just take your pick and you just flick through them so it's just things like that, it's like sometimes it is just a load of nonsense and you think why am I wasting my time? And sometimes it is quite helpful.

(Ruth)

Participants also described a great deal of mundane online interaction that they would not necessarily categorize as 'online support' but which is nevertheless emotionally sustaining – and this is true also of how people describe their use of texting.

Just through the chat, sending photographs backward and forward and silly things. You find silly jokes on the Internet, I will send them, 'this reminds me of you', you know, that type of thing? [. . .] I will just like text people stupid little things just to see what their response is. It's just silly things really that will calm me down so, that's just the way it is. [. . .] Because they always text back something really funny, that like makes me laugh and then it, like, sort of, like, relaxes me in a sense.

(Claire)

Some participants, however, were concerned about the quality of online self-help resources.

> You don't want to risk anything amateurish you see. It's quite nice to have, you know, if you go and get support, you go to a professional, they have got a plaque on their door. [...] Maybe I think I grew up in a time where we had respect for authority, and this sort of devolvement doesn't suit me where anybody can have their say. So uh, that's probably why I prefer to stick to the recognized old-fashioned ways I guess.
>
> (Ellen)

Indeed many of the concerns about online support are similar to those for face-to-face formal emotional support, albeit accentuated – namely questions about authenticity, but with an added layer of worry about trust and safety. Not surprisingly, those in their middle and older years, who are less involved with the Internet, expressed those concerns strongly.

> P: I'd rather talk to someone face-to-face than talk over a computer because, unless you know someone's situation for *definite*, what they write on there could be a big fairy tale. Some people like doing things like that, don't they? You know? Create a situation which hasn't happened, but they want it just to get a bit of sympathy off someone [...]. You know? Yeah. I'd rather talk to someone face-to-face and know exactly what I can see on their face; whether it's emotionally or whether it's, they're just kidding you, you know? [...] Whereas, online, it's just words on a computer. It's like texting. [...].I mean I've been to me GP before and he's referred me to a social group like or a counsellor. At least I know he's there if I want him, whereas these people on the other end of a computer aren't. You know? They could be miles away. They could be living in Kent, America, China.
>
> (Nick)

> P: The Internet I am not into at all.
> R: It's not your world, no?
> P: I don't like it, I mean I keep arguing with my son about this. 'I was speaking to this guy in Norway.' I said, 'You weren't speaking to anybody.' 'I was. I was speaking to someone.' 'You are not speaking to them.' [...] I said, 'For all you know this guy in Norway who is twenty-five, and working, that could be a woman of ninety. You don't know who you are talking to there.' I find the Internet just scares me kind of thing.
>
> (Jenny)

There are, of course, different ways of reading this 'thinness' of self-help culture, whether off or online. Lichterman (1992), decades ago, and in a North American context, argued that ambivalence is the primary lens through which people read such books. Negotiating self-help texts as both discourse and commodity, readers seek out 'nuggets' while at the same time they 'wink figuratively at themselves while reading' (1992, p.433), conscious that the simplicity of style is below their sense of their own cultural status. Warde's reflection (2011, p.342) that most of us would 'share with Bourdieu a suspicion that judgement about cultural items can conceal evaluations of the people who espouse them' is relevant here. It is, however, difficult to confirm empirically if such judgements are actually of another social group, not least because the evaluations being made are often within, rather than between, groups (Warde, 2011).

This distancing, as argued earlier, could also relate to the work we do to position ourselves as not vulnerable, as not being the sort of people who need help – a point I return to in Part III. Other than by those who read them as part of their professional work, for example as social workers, self-help books in the STTT study were often dismissed as 'toilet reading', 'boring' and for the 'gullible'. This takes us back to the argument discussed in Chapter 1, that in relation to the therapeutic we need to have a way of reading culture that acknowledges the extent of this sceptical engagement.

P: I have never bought a self-help book, I did buy my dad a stop smoking one. I think they are quite Americanized aren't they? 'Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus' and all that sort of stuff. Although one of my friends actually religiously buys these books but I don't think they ever help do they? No I think they are useless really. [. . .]
R: And why do you think your friend buys them then?
P: Because she is just a gullible, she is just mental. I don't know.
R: And does she read them?
P: She must, I don't know if she uses them as like maybe toilet reading or whatever I don't know! I can't imagine reading them, I just think they would be completely boring.

(Lisa)

We also need to be reflexive about the research process itself, given Shattuc's (1997) point about the sense research participants have that the social position of TV viewer and academic are rated differently.

Some middle-class professionals in Shattuc's (1997) study simply would not discuss talk shows with her; an expression, she suggested, of power through silencing. Lichterman (1992), too, noted that participants in his study of self-help reading interpreted both self-help books and his questions about them in the light of pre-existing social and cultural contexts. In Chapter 7 I explore the ways in which participants in the STTT study talk about such shows in a British context. Unsurprisingly perhaps, disclosure about personal lives in television or print media were an aspect of the diffuse therapeutic 'ethos' that participants were most aware of. While there was a sense for some that such confessional practices could serve a positive purpose, bringing emotional difficulties into the open for instance, most participants expressed deeply negative views about them.

Across the STTT study, both men and women refer to not talking to others because of their strong sense of what is 'private' (an argument developed in Chapter 7) and, as we have seen above in relation to professional support, because of their perception of their own resilience and their sense that their problems are not 'big enough'. These beliefs are considered further in Chapter 8 when I focus on vulnerability. We can see already, however, how such beliefs might sit uncomfortably with a key argument of those who write about the broader therapeutic ethos – namely that suffering has come to define the self, and that telling about this suffering has become a means of recovery; in other words, the argument that our need to talk is rooted in traumatic events and 'deficient' pasts (Illouz, 2008). The narrative about the legacies of childhood and the strong influence of parenting, especially mothering, is an extremely powerful one, and often surfaces even when people are not asked directly about their parents (Andrews, 2004). This was so for some of the participants in the STTT study who, as we will see, did understand their childhood experiences as shaping how they now tend to 'do emotions'. But not everyone, as Mills (1959) suggested, predating the sociology of childhood by some years, experiences the 'weight of childhood' in the same way: childhoods vary across time and societies (1959, p.162). Contra Illouz (2007), this 'weight' is not always understood negatively: people do also focus on how the challenging aspects of their upbringing have shaped their sense of resilience.

Stuck in the middle: Men in midlife

The quantitative analysis in the first section of this chapter has taken us so far in making sense of the patterning of beliefs across the population

as a whole and the persistence of emotional styles and faultlines. I want to apply a different lens now, and in doing so show how different methods and analytical approaches at different distances can add to our understanding of how emotion culture looks. My aim in this section is to carry out an intersectional qualitative analysis. Because it is not possible to do this in a meaningful way across the whole of the STTT study data, I have chosen, in what follows, to focus on the practices and beliefs about emotions talk of men in their middle years[2]; and to highlight their distinctiveness (or not) from other groups. Other groups might be more negative about emotions talk (younger men), or simply more distant from such practices (older men and women), but men in their middle years often display an interesting ambivalence in relation to beliefs and practices around emotions talk. This finds expression in a number of (overlapping) ways that can be illustrated through Mark's account below. First, there is the way that these men respond to cultural change in relation to emotions: on the one hand raising doubts about its benefits while, on the other, finding it difficult to openly question its worth.

Extract 1

P: Everybody seems to now have social workers and care workers and psychiatrists and this and that so it's always, my personal thought is that everybody's always unloading it on to somebody else and it's their, it's somebody's else's problem rather than dealing with things themselves.
R: You've got that feeling that it's become more common?
P: Yeah.
R: For?
P: For therapists and things. It's getting like America.
R: Yes.
P: Like, well, obviously not as bad but bad's the wrong word but.

(Mark)

Extract 2

P: Because it's seen probably as the correct, politically correct to share your feelings and so probably people like myself and that are kind of dinosaurs and not like sort of modern man and things like that [...].
R: Do you think that's the, that's the feeling [...], as if you're somehow left behind because that's what they're doing?
P: I think so. I don't think I'm being left behind – I'm quite happy to be the way I am. Sort of having to run and see somebody about

every time I sort of spill a cup of tea or something feels as though you've got run to a therapist or something but I'm quite happy to not be like that.

R: Yeah.

P: I'm not saying it's wrong but I'm happy not being like that.

(Mark)

Mark also illustrates how men in their middle years can distance themselves from their younger (less emotionally articulate) selves, describe talking about emotions as a good thing for their generation and for their children (extract 3) and yet, at the same time, position themselves as people who do not need to talk (extract 4).

Extract 3

R: You believe that it's best to be responsible and try and sort out your own [problems].

P: Yeah but then again I wouldn't want my kids to be like that.

R: No?

P: You tell me whether that's a contradiction but.

(Mark)

Extract 4

I just don't think I'm the sort of person, I couldn't, it's a sort of mental make-up. I don't think it would help me, I don't think I would. I couldnae see me sitting down to talk to somebody. How that's going to make a difference?

(Mark)

Some of the women who talk about male partners in their middle years similarly describe men who are not emotionally expressive but, reflecting the emotion work we know women do in their relationships (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993; 1998), they tend to frame this less as an active choice by their partners and more as a reflection of just who their partners *are*.

P: They can talk about *anything*, you know? If you ask, you know, if I'll say something's going on in his friend's life [...] and I'll say, 'Did you ask him how is he?' 'Er, no. We didn't actually, we didn't, we didn't get to that bit. We're more interested in the *football*.' And I'm, whereas, for me, I'd be straight in there going, 'How are you? Are you feeling better? Are you?' You know? Yeah. I think they're

> [women], yeah, bit more *caring* I suppose. A bit more thoughtful. And I don't think that he *means* not to be thoughtful, but he just, that's the way he is.
>
> (Annie)

Men in midlife are analytically interesting because of their ambivalence and, relatedly, because they are in the middle in terms of life-stage and generation. This means they are Janus-faced – looking to both past and future. While this temporal understanding of self, self as process (Jackson, 2010), is something we arguably all share, this group's life stage and generational position offers specific analytical opportunities in thinking comparatively across the sample as a whole. In what follows, then, I start by exploring the life stage and generational position of this group, relative to others in the study, before looking at how age and generation interact with gender and class both for this group and others. This is an artificial structure but it (just about) holds long enough to allow for a layered analysis to be built up. In reading it we need to remember, as Chapter 2 highlighted, that as researchers we also carry assumptions about who will be most able to talk to us about emotions in the interview and that this, as the following extracts remind us, shapes the data produced.

> I was aware that part of the reason I felt relaxed was that the respondent was a young female and my preconception was that she would probably be able to engage with the topic even if there would not be much on her timeline.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Lisa)

> The interview felt strange because I was aware that while I had often ended up talking to women my age whom I didn't know about personal life, this didn't tend to be true of men my age.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Neil)

Midlife as life stage

It is commonplace to relate beliefs about emotions talk to life stage. Some young people, for instance, describe not feeling the need to talk about emotions because of their relative inexperience: 'I am only twenty so there's not been that much that's happened to me so far' (Liam), while, at the other end of the spectrum the cumulation of life experiences can also lead to feelings that there is not a *need* to talk.

> Things happen to you, you face them and you get on with it, don't you? And I think nothing fazes you after a while, you know, you just sort of become, sort of think, 'Oh well, what's the worst that can happen there then?' Don't you? And just get on with it. So yeah, I think age is, to me anyway, you know, it frees you really of worry, you know, 'I'm still alive so', you know, that kind of attitude. Whereas when you're young you think, 'Oh my God, this is the end of the world for me, what will happen now?' You know? But it's not, is it? Because everything just carries on, doesn't it?
>
> (Roz)

For men and women entering their middle years, life stage is shaped by the demands of work, children and parents, and their own ageing. These demands, as we know from other research (Daatland, Veenstra and Lima, 2010; Kohli and Kunemund, 2005), tend to be experienced in a gendered way.

> P: Because me brother doesn't get it.
> P: So he's not involved.
> P: Well he looks, he's in at a weekend, but I mean he's just in and out. Does her [their mother's] shoppin' an' that. I go tomorrow, and I'm there sort o' with her all [...] the morning and [...].
> P: But as regards sort o' lookin' after her *emotionally* an' that, I mean sort of see to everything for her [...]. Or, if she needs anything, I've to arrange it. Not *him*. [...] And with him being younger, I mean he's at work, so if anything happens, it's me. [...] I mean it was difficult when things happened when I was at work, but it was always me that had to deal with it.
> R: Mmm.
> P: And he just seems to just sail through.
> R: Mmm. Mmm.
> P: Not worrying about anything.[...] he just doesn't seem to have the same worries.
>
> (Cath)

Research on subjective wellbeing has suggested that midlife is the time when we reach the bottom of the 'u-shaped' curve (Blanchflower and Oswald, 2008). Within the STTT study, we can see this in terms of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)[3] which showed that levels of emotional wellbeing were indeed lowest among

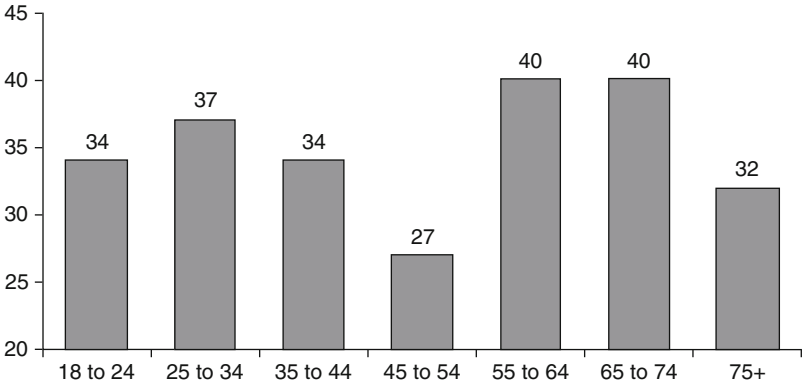

Figure 3.3 Belonging to group with highest level of subjective wellbeing (highest tertile WEMWBS score) by age group (%)
Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

those aged 45–64, and sloped upwards immediately either side of that age group (Figure 3.3). It is worth noting though that levels of subjective wellbeing are lower again in the youngest and oldest age group.

This might help to explain why, as we saw earlier, those in this middle age group were also the group most likely to be open to notions of therapy or counselling, though again there are gender differences here. As the following extract makes clear, however, the challenges of midlife are not necessarily framed negatively.

> I've been to about a dozen funerals in my life [...]. And then the hassle of a mortgage, the kids and long-term sickness, a serious illness. So I feel I've got much better sort of bank, emotional bank to draw on if I need to talk with someone. I can empathize more now certainly than at the age we were just talking about when my mum died. Much more of an emotional bank.
>
> (Paul)

Midlife is also a stage when, as this extract illustrates, many people are having or have had close emotional relationships and are aware that there are expectations to act within these relationships in particular ways. For men, as we will see later in this chapter, all of this combines to produce considerable ambivalence as, even in middle age, they are still less likely than women to *want* to engage in emotions talk.

Generational analysis

While conscious of Pilcher's (1994) point that when referring to generation we often mean cohort – that is, a population who experience the same significant event within a given time period – I have stuck with the term 'generation' here, given its widespread usage in social science as 'generation meaning cohort'. Mannheim's (1952) understanding of generation as a subjective condition has been conceptually important even if, empirically, it is not always easy to gauge 'cut-off points' or to identify what is to count as 'generational consciousness' (Pilcher, 1994, p.492). This broader work on generation and memories reminds us, as noted earlier, that different generations coexist and we need to be cognizant of their interaction. Moreover, historical events may be defining for generations other than those living through them, not just because of the coexistence of generations but because of the nature of emotional legacies. Williams' (1977, p.122) structure of feeling is helpful here, particularly the notion of a residual structure of feeling. He describes this as experiences, meanings or values which were formed in the past but are still 'live' and practised. He distinguishes between those aspects of the residual which are incorporated into the dominant order and those which are in some sense oppositional. Values that resist the dominant cultural message that it is 'good to talk' could be seen as residual. As Strangleman (2012) notes, those who mourn the past might, in doing so, be commenting on the ways of the present, but they might also be regretting the passing of values that have become residual. As we will see, in talking about emotional expression, for men in their middle years there is a sense of regret for what has passed but also a sense of new possibilities. In place of the usual theoretical emphasis on clean breaks in relation to social change (Gillies, 2003), we have a sense of tradition and reflexivity coexisting. The significance of the interplay of time past, present and future is picked up again in the final chapter.

In the analysis which follows, the entanglement of life stage, generation and other social variables such as class and gender is taken as read. Jason, a man in his late thirties, described feeling that he is facing 'the bad things that happen' later than his father's generation, who seemed in their twenties to 'have passed a lot of the things that kind of we were going through in our mid-thirties'. Men in their thirties, forties and fifties in the STTT sample, while invariably seeing themselves as more emotionally open than their fathers, and believing there to have been a welcome cultural shift towards being more emotionally expressive, did not see *themselves* as needing or wanting to talk. Sometimes this was framed, as with Mark, more in terms of their ability (or not) to

do so: 'It's easier in our generation to talk [...]. Well obviously not from my own personal point' (Mark).

Older men in the study, men in their sixties, seventies and eighties, seem much less challenged by these cultural changes than men in their thirties to fifties, no doubt, as argued above, because they feel more distant from them. Men in their middle years can, in Mannheim's (1952) terms, be seen as the 'intermediary' or 'buffer' generation (Pilcher, 1994, p.483) caught between traditional and progressive cohorts (Brownlie, 2012). Changes relating to the rise of the therapeutic are at the margins of older people's accounts, reflected, as we will see later in this chapter, in their language use. Hugh, a man in his eighties, for example, does not, as we saw earlier in the chapter, have any personal objection to counselling. He also, however, struggles to engage with its purpose and, in the extract below, comes to position people who need such help as those who 'just cannot live'.

R: And what do you think about people going for counselling, is that something that you've seen change throughout your lifetime? Are you more aware of things like that? [...].

P: I mean that's just a thing. I mean it's been underway for years now, but I don't think anybody ever knew anything about that. You only had your own family, and they used to talk about it and, but other than that, I don't think they ever thought about going away. I mean you read it [laughs], these people, you know, that just cannot live. They've got to go and speak to somebody to buck their ideas up, and one thing and another.

Hugh in his interview moves between the grand and unstable socio-geographical narrative of the global conflict of WW2 and a local narrative shaped by having passed all of his 80-odd years, other than those spent fighting in the war, living in the one town.

> One of my greatest friends [...], he was shot down over Holland. He was only 20. [...], who was a month or two younger than me, he was killed in Burma. He was in the Tank Corps [...]. He volunteered the same time as me for the Navy. He was shot up in the Channel. Killed. They got his body back on condition that they didn't open the lid, so he must have been in some state. He's buried in the churchyard up here, because I went and saw. Because when I came home from overseas, I went and visited the parents, you know?
>
> (Hugh)

Hugh does not read these experiences from the war years through the cultural lens of the present.

R: You said that people just had to deal with it, so?
P: That's right. You just had to deal with it. That's what I say, you see. You weren't sure when you were getting a letter. You weren't sure if somebody else has been killed. You see? You just had to ride over it. Yes. Oh aye. I mean it all depends on your make-up, you know? I mean you've got to be tough. You've got to pull past it. I mean you didn't look at it like that. I never thought I would get killed during the war. I never looked at it like that. And I was a gunner but you didn't think of that.

The gap between Hugh's narrative and the researcher's framing is captured in the frustration expressed in the latter's post-interview notes. Of course the participant's closing down, as we saw in Chapter 2, could be read in a number of ways other than as a lack of reflexivity but this interpretation does speak to the dominant link in our culture between reflexivity and the spoken word.

> He had been in the war and I felt that there must have been more there about how people coped with such adversity for so many years. Perhaps I was frustrated by his lack of reflexivity about it but it was nearly 70 years ago.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Hugh)

Conversely, Hugh, in the following extract, switches between suggesting that it is the researcher's life stage, her 'youth' (she was in her late thirties) which means she cannot grasp his way of being in the world, and there being a generational shift in expectations: young people *now* believe they should start at the 'top', whereas his generation at the same age 'started at the bottom and worked up'.

R: Some of the times that you've mentioned there sound to me like they might have been quite difficult.
P: Oh yes. Yes. Oh well I think most people have that, you know? I mean at my age, you're young yet [laughs]. You've got a different outlook. But when we started, we started at the bottom and worked up. Now the kids that get married [...] they start at the top. They want their own houses. They want cars. They want everything and it doesn't last.

The older generation may not frame their experience of the war through the current cultural scripts of emotionalism but WW2 also appears in the younger generations' narratives about emotions talk. Much has been written about the cross-generational effects of the Holocaust on Jewish families (Karpf, 1996) but the impact of WW2 and its aftermath on the emotional lives of other families is less explored. People's memories of their own childhood in the shadow of WW2, and also how they *imagine* the emotional lives of their parents and grandparents were shaped by the war, are present in accounts from the STTT study, often as an amalgam of representations from films and television and half-understood or half-remembered family anecdotes about how the war changed people.[4]

Looking more closely at this particular narrative in British emotion culture and how it plays out across the generations moves us beyond static notions of a universal blitz mentality which affected only the WW2 generation (Furedi, 2007). This is not just because this way of being is still present in the ageing population but also because stories about the war – the need to, as Hugh put it, 'pull past it' – carry on across the generations and rub up against the current injunction that it is 'good to talk'. Rose, for instance, was born just before WW2 and in the first extract below is remembering how, in the 1960s, her fellow office workers reacted to her announcement that her new husband needed to work away from home for six months. Amy, who is in her late teens, has a mother born five years after the war ended. Several generations apart from Rose, she too, draws on the war to understand the emotional reactions of those around her.

> And one or two of the girls in the office were married during the war, you know, and saying, 'Oh, gosh, I went without Fred for three years,' and 'I was without Fred for four years,' you know, and I thought, 'Oh, I bet she thinks I'm a whingey old thing,' you know.
>
> (Rose)

> Me mum and dad have tried their hardest, and they've worked their hardest to give us everything that they probably didn't have, because, like, my mum, well she was born just after the war, so they were still getting over the war.
>
> (Amy)

For men and women in their fifties and sixties, being brought up by fathers who had fought in the war shaped their experience of childhood and how they learned to deal with emotions.

R: Thinking back how would that have played out in your house growing up?

P: I don't think so much from action but more from stories because my, you know [. . .] my father was a POW and survived, had also served abroad and survived, and had been through a fair amount of trauma [. . .]. So I suppose rather than pick up any intimate detail, you know, you probably just learn some of the coping mechanisms from it. [. . .] Although I think I'm a damn sight more open and straightforward about things than he would have been but I suppose you do pick up some of the traits.

(Francis)

R: What would you say the main difference there was looking back when you were growing up? The way your mum and dad dealt with?

P: My mum and dad had been brought up to, in the old school, if you wish, that boys didn't cry [. . . .]. My own parents, um, very much stiff upper lip, men do not show emotions. They have to be strong for their family; it's a sign of weakness, if a guy cries or shows that he is upset. And bear in mind I was brought up in post-war UK where all the dads had just come back from fighting a horrific war and they have been brought up in the austere times of the twenties and thirties, and a man's job was to get out there and earn cash to put on the table to keep the family.

(Joe)

Women born during or after WW2 also talked about the impact of the war, though, often, their accounts focused more on their mothers.

My mum was a woman of that time. I used to say to her, 'Why didn't you leave him, mum?' you know, [. . .] and she'd say, 'Well where would I go, you know, where would I go?' [. . .]. I do think my dad was affected by the war. I really do. Because I once said to my mum, they got married in 1940 before he went away or anything like that, and I once said to my mum, 'Why did you marry him?' 'Because he was a different man then,' she said. Now I couldn't tell you whether he was or not because I wasn't there, was I? But that's what she said, so I think he was affected by, he was in Burma during the war, and I think they had a pretty bad time. [. . .] He was quite, he was quite physically. I was knocked about a lot when I was little, really knocked about a lot. [. . .] And yet prior to that I'd lived with my grandma and my mum and two of my mum's sisters, and everybody was at the war,

you know, everybody was gone, and it was lovely, until I was four it was lovely.

(Roz)

Another woman of a similar age, Liz, describes the impact on her mother of her father returning home having been away for the duration of the war: 'He went away for six years, and me mum said when he came back, it were like having to get to know another person again.'

Some of the men in earlier midlife in the sample, those in their thirties and forties whose parents grew up in post-war Britain, understand their fathers' stoicism as shaped by the emotional austerity of the post-war era.

P: My parents are both from London and I think they are quite, um, their mums were both kind of in the blitz and all this sort of East End of London thing and I think that influenced my parents. And I think the bits that I have got where I am similar to my parents has come very much from them both being Londoners and the sort of the age that they are at.

R: How would that sort of . . . ?

P: Because my dad is very much kind of, like I said before, stiff upper lip and you know bad things happen and you just have to get on with it. And I think just a couple of minutes ago I said something along those lines. I would like to think that I said it different to him but I think the meaning is the same. What we are both saying is that um, shit happens, basically and you have to try and get on with it as best you can. I think where I would then start to branch away from my dad's view is that I think everyone has got a threshold and if something is bothering you that much that you can't just get over it and move on well then, you know, it's good to know that there are other things out there to help you. But I have never got to that point – whereas my dad, counselling would never even cross his mind.

R: Because of that history of . . . ?

P: We got through the blitz yeah! And that's a bit of stereotype, I don't know if I have ever actually heard my dad say that but it's that kind of mentality that he has got.

(Will)

Will recognizes that he has never heard his father use the expression 'We got through the blitz' but it is the framing for how he reads his father's emotional reticence. For Paul, who is in his forties, the post-war era in

which his father grew up is a time he knows mainly through books and films.

> They came out of that sort of austere post-war generation. Hardship I guess. You read about the Fifties, you know, people didn't seem to be sitting round discussing their problems all the time. They'd bottle them up and then there were outbursts of, you know, when you are watching films there always seem to be outbursts of violence that resolve everything.
>
> (Paul)

But this is also how he reads his father's emotional style.

> That generation growing up in the Fifties, stoicism, just get on with it, you know. We never had to deal with anything, you know, we never had to deal with anything like that. And I think my father, they had always tried to protect us from the deaths of their parents, you know, they didn't take us to the funerals of their parents. So they'd always tried to protect us from the horrors of death [...]. Having an in-depth conversation, that wasn't really what our family was about.
>
> (Paul)

Neil, in his mid-thirties, also thinks about how he deals with emotions in relation to his father and grandfather: the former an alcoholic, the latter suffering mental health problems as a result of his involvement in WW2. He acknowledges that it is the shift in emotion culture that makes it 'easier to be my father's son now, for example, than [it would have been] thirty or forty years ago'. Like other men interviewed in this age group, he is, however, also ambivalent about the extent of this shift: 'I think sometimes it can rather counterproductively get to the stage where you are over-analysing things [...]. And people need to get to a certain stage where they want to help themselves.'

Some men and women in their middle years contrast their parents' restraint, born out of the war/post-war era, with what they see as the lack of constraint shown by younger people of their children's generation. The 'abundance' described in the first extract below is not just emotional, it is also material; and across both these extracts one gains a sense of this perspective that (emotional) boundaries have been eroded.

> I do look back and think how repressed things were. I mean it's not just about being encouraged to open up, it's just everything. Everything seems to be in abundance, you know that's my feeling

> of watching my daughter and her friends growing up, it's just this, this constant kind of consumerism and everything is flowing freely. I look back at my childhood and it just wasn't like that. And you were more contained.
>
> (Ellen)

> But I mean, I've got nothing against mobile phones and texting people but I know some horrendously un-, they are so unstable some of the young people because they can't do anything without their friends knowing about it, 'Oh, I must text them.' And they are on the phone all the time, which I mean, in our day you just had different departments of life, you had home life, going to school life because it was on the bus for nearly an hour, home, bus, school and church or whatever. And they were all different compartments, it isn't that you didn't contact, but they were different areas.
>
> (Jean)

At first reading, the language of the therapeutic appears woven into many of these accounts with references to psychoanalytical ideas of projection, denial, trauma and the unconscious. In other interviews, popularized versions of these ideas such as 'having baggage', 'issues', 'anger problems' or 'not going there' emerged. On a closer reading, however, it is clear that this language has not been universally adopted. In particular those born before or during WW2 – the group, as we have seen, most distant from the therapeutic – are least likely to use such terms. There are exceptions and these tend to be participants, like Christine, who have become exposed to different ways of talking about their emotional lives because of their educational background. There are not just generational differences in language use, however; those in the sample from other cultures and now living in the UK also did not use 'therapeutic' language or engage in emotions talk.

> It's because the culture [SE Asian country] requires, well, asks us, 'Do not show your face in front of the people.' You always need [to be] polite and behave which also reduced a lot of chance we'd learn about talking. So I would think [...] here, they encourage people to talk more.
>
> (Lucy)

As we have seen, even those most engaged in therapeutic language, young women, can display – like men in their middle

years – considerable cynicism about the shifts towards the therapeutic, calling to mind again Swidler's (2001) point about the seriousness with which we engage with different dimensions of culture.

Generational differences in beliefs (and emotional style), however, only partly explain the ambivalence of men in their middle years. I want now to widen our lens to view this ambivalence through gender and class, as well as generation.

Gender and class

Previous research, and the quantitative data in this chapter, signal that there are strong gender differences in orientations towards emotions talk. How do we make sense of this? Men in the STTT sample were primarily concerned about what they saw as the indeterminacy and ineffectiveness of emotions talk (Emslie et al., 2007), whether formal or informal, while women were more likely to talk about the impact on others of having to listen. Across different age groups and classes, men tended to see talking, because it does not constitute action, as less effective and perhaps, in fact, making matters worse: 'In my mind it's not achieving anything' (Mark); 'you can end up in some sort of downward spiral of discussing things to death' (Matt). Women, on the other hand, across all social groups, were more likely to draw on a 'not-burdening' discourse to justify not talking about their emotions to those they knew: the need to avoid adding to others' worries.

For men, then, the emphasis is more on the potential loss of control: on others getting involved and stories being passed around. Younger men, in particular, described not wanting to remember or go over things, and of retreating from talk at difficult times – 'just go to my bedroom and lie down' (Martin). In David's case this led him, during his adolescence, to stop talking completely: 'there was a section where I didn't speak to anyone for about four months. I just didn't. I mean not even a word I didn't, I just didn't. I don't know why, if that's got something to do with it [grandmother's death] or, I don't know what it is, I just didn't speak to anyone for months' (David).

These findings are consistent with Prendergast and Forrest's (1998, p.169) 'fear of fear', which describes how young men learn about containment, about what it means to be masculine. Some men, as we have seen, were particularly scathing about the cultural shift towards the therapeutic, and while they framed their unease in moral terms – that to 'offload' emotionally was to fail to take responsibility for one's actions – there was also an element of the risk of being perceived as weak. Men hold on to these concerns as they get older, but they are softened to an

extent by life-stage effects. Women's other-directedness – their concern about the impact on others of listening – is, on the other hand, sustained as they age. In combination with the beliefs about women as better listeners, this might explain why, as I argue in the next chapter, women remain the main providers of emotional support across the life course. Both life-stage effects, and the fact that older women do not wish to burden – 'lay things on' – the younger generation, interact with generational beliefs about 'not grumbling' to reduce differences between older men and women in this respect. This would seem to support the hypothesis emerging from the quantitative analysis, that gender differences in relation to emotions talk narrow in older age, and that generational effects apparently trump those of class and, to a lesser extent, gender.

For both men and women in the oldest age group, as we saw in both the quantitative and qualitative analysis, there is a generational distancing from the changes in emotion culture. There are interesting class, education and gender aspects to this. Christine, for instance, university educated and in her seventies, describes experiences similar to those of the other older women in the sample: being brought up in a time when emotions were not discussed and of having few choices in relation to marriage or work. Like most women born around the time of WW2, she felt very little control over life decisions and emphasizes a sense of tradition and the lack of emotional reflexivity that this brought in its wake.

> I had already met the man I was to marry, and um, he didn't live, he had a job at [...], and it was sort of understood that well, yes, we would work for a couple of years, and then get married. 'You will naturally join me.' Now I am looking back on it I think well why the hell didn't he start looking for a job somewhere near [where she worked]?
>
> (Christine)

Another woman, of a similar age but from a different education and socioeconomic background, echoed this sentiment.

> I think in those days you kind of drifted into things because it was the done thing. You went out with somebody and you got married to them. But we didn't know much about life really. And then, you know, you learn a bit more, don't you?
>
> (Roz)

In her later years, the opening up of emotional culture in Britain, gave Christine 'permission' to talk.

> If you had said 'emotional needs' when I was 15 I wouldn't have known what you were talking about. Nobody would have known what you were talking about, because the growth of psychology and the growth of certainly child rearing and everything has really radically changed [...]. And there is somehow permission to talk, even through television programmes, you know Eastenders, the Archers, you know.
>
> (Christine)

This view is facilitated, however, for Christine by her economic and educational capital which allowed her to divorce, live independently and to retrain later in life.

Staying with class, Seale and Charteris-Black (2008) in their study of illness narratives have argued that while self-revelation may be more prominent in women's than men's talk, women in lower socioeconomic groups were more orientated towards self-revelation than women in higher socioeconomic ones. They argue that this reflects a 'support group culture', an existing network of family and friends that the former group of women could call on. They suggest also that men from higher socioeconomic groupings are more self-revelatory than men from lower socioeconomic classes, and that their cultural capital allows them access to a wider repertoire of discourses about masculinity. Their conclusion, as a result, is similar to that of Illouz (2008): that the practices of men from lower socioeconomic groups are chiefly responsible for gendered differences. In the next chapter, I will challenge this argument by drawing on quantitative findings that caution against over-reading differences in the practices of men from different socioeconomic groups; but it is also challenged here through an analysis of the *beliefs* of men – an argument I tease out further below.

There is some evidence from the qualitative data that men, of all classes, in their middle years are more reflexive about gender than those in other age groups. They reflect on their younger selves, and sometimes claim emotional maturity through distancing themselves from what they see as male traits of their younger years.

> One of the things I was quite bad at when I was younger, and this didn't help with the relationships, was I had that whole horrible male trait of trying to find solutions for things. 'You have got a problem.

> OK well how can we fix that?' kind of thing. We could do this, and this, and this and that will fix it and that will be fine, and we can stop talking about it which is just not what people want to hear. Half the time they just want to mouth off, they just want to offload a little bit and just feel better for having talked about it.
>
> (Joe)

As Illouz (2007) and Seale and Charteris-Black (2008) point out, emotions talk can become a form of capital and for some men this shift comes about as a direct result of engaging with therapeutic culture.

R: But that experience that you had of training and learning about counselling has that then, have you used that?
P: Oh yes.
R: In what sort of ways?
P: Previously if my wife had come to me and said, and told me about a problem I would think, I would have thought at the time that she needs me to find a solution to this problem. And so I would reply, 'OK then what we need to do is dah-de-dah-de-dah,' that wasn't what she was saying at all. Um, she was just saying to me I need to let this out. I have got this bottled up, I don't need a solution to it, I don't need you to tell me how to solve it, or how to go about it. I just need you to listen to me. I just need you to listen because I have got something bottled up and I just want to, I just want to let it out. So, instead of problem solver as I used to be, I can now just listen to people and respond with a 'Hmm, oh I see.' Whereas, the X of ten years ago um, jump straight in. I know what the answer to that one is. That's probably a male thing as well, that's probably a male/female thing.

(Joe)

Both men and women in their middle years from lower socioeconomic groups described material constraints on their emotional beliefs and practices.

> You just have to get on with it because at the end of the day you have got a mortgage, haven't you? So, nobody else is going to pay it so you have just got to get down and get on with it.
>
> (John)

> We have an Asda uniform and we have pyjamas, because that is our lives.
>
> (Barbara)

In the qualitative interviews, while men from higher socioeconomic groupings, like those in Seale and Charteris-Black's study, appear to be more engaged in emotions talk, they also described emotions talk as not coming easily to them and claimed that if left to their own devices, this was not something they would engage in. Neil is a good example of this. University educated like Christine, he talks extremely fluently about the broader cultural turn to the therapeutic and, as we saw above, positions himself as more emotionally mature than his younger self. Yet his default position remains to go down to the gym on his own 'and work some stuff out' and, as in the extract below, he still frames this change in terms of talking as something he does for the sake of his partner.

> When I come back here or wherever and I am like in a terrible mood or I am kind of wound up, or I am really clammed up as well, sometimes it's like I don't want to talk about it! Then I realize it's not fair. I realize if I am on my own that's fine, but I realize if I am trying to be with someone it's not fair on them. So I would have to sort of talk about.
>
> (Neil)

As we will see in the next chapter, men of all classes also describe their relationships with other men as not facilitating emotions talk. Liam, for instance, captures the passivity of his male friends when he describes their listening style as 'being around'.

> Whereas I don't know, women seem to sort of listen more and care more. Whereas if you were talking to certain people like I know then they would probably sit there and listen but they wouldn't give a shit basically, wouldn't care. They just listen as being around, you know.
>
> (Liam)

Beliefs about emotions talk, then, are also beliefs about the nature of listening. For many, what matters is that talk goes no further; that the listener will not ask questions nor repeat what they have heard. Specifically, they describe seeking out those whom they perceive as non-judgemental and, crucially, *know* them and the background to the stories they are telling. They seek, in other words, unconditional acceptance, summed up by the phrase, 'no questions asked' and unconditional positive regard. These moral parameters, noted by Spencer and Pahl (2006) among others, will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

All talked out: Concluding thoughts

The analysis in this chapter has emphasized variations in how different groups perceive emotions talk and other aspects of the therapeutic. Despite Simon and Nath's (2004) claims that cultural explanations for gender differences in emotional expression are less relevant than structural ones, data from the STTT study suggest gendered differences in how the potential *risks* of engaging in emotions talk are perceived. Both qualitative and quantitative data suggest that gender, more than class, strongly shapes our beliefs about the value of emotions talk, though those with higher levels of educational achievement are more likely to know about therapy and counselling. At the same time, both datasets make clear that we need to take life stage and generation seriously. This can be seen in the narrowing of differences in how older men and women think about emotions talk, and in the ambivalence expressed by men from all classes in their middle years. These men are the generation who came of age at the time when the moral injunction that it is good to talk was starting to take hold but, like men of other ages (and classes), they struggle with the idea that they themselves should or need to talk.

Material constraints do, nevertheless, interact with cultural ones: as we have seen, some people simply have less time, resources and energy than others to engage in emotions talk and, as noted, both class and education shape perceptions of formal emotional support. These normative and material constraints form a backdrop to, but also shape, who is potentially there for us to turn or talk to in our everyday lives. I return to some of these constraints over the next two chapters.

Overall this chapter suggests that while the therapeutic might be symbolically pervasive, reflected in its seepage into everyday language, and in people's apparent investment in some of its precepts, unease about the therapeutic remains for some people as does, for others, a sense of distance from it. Contrary to suggestions that failure to participate in therapeutic discourse attracts the suspicion of lack of self-care and emotional dysfunction (Blatterer, Johnson and Markus, 2010), therapeutic precepts are seen by some as morally dubious, associated with not taking responsibility. To this extent, where the symbols and codes of the therapeutic are to the fore, it is sometimes in our oppositional talk about them. Moreover, as we have seen in relation to the 'good to talk' premise, even where people do accept therapeutic precepts *in principle*, this does not necessarily shape what they then think or do in their own lives.

As a result, we need at least to question the idea that the therapeutic ethos has offered a set of symbols and codes that have set the boundaries for our moral lives – a point I develop further in Chapter 8 when I look at the codes people *do* invest in. This chapter has primarily focused on the therapeutic premise that it is 'good to talk' by looking at people's beliefs about emotions talk, and how these are shaped by class, gender, age and generation.[5] There are, as we have seen, limitations to relying on cross-sectional data – we have had to rely on different generations at the same point in time – but analysis of quantitative data has allowed the importance of gender to be highlighted, the significance of social class to be questioned and the hitherto neglected dimension of generation to be foregrounded. We miss something important if we do not listen out for legacies across generations even in our own time. These emotional legacies, which in a UK context are shaped still by WW2, mean that the idea of any straightforward shift from resilience to vulnerability (Furedi, 2007) lacks sociological depth and needs further exploration. At the same time, they intimate the importance of relationships. People's accounts of their emotional lives, which I will explore in more depth in the next chapter and in the rest of the book, are deeply embedded in Williams' (1979, p.184) 'ordinary relationships'. To that extent, the argument that emotion (conceptualized in a non-relational way) is now our only moral reference point, and that the self is our 'ultimate object of allegiance' (Nolan, 1998), is perhaps more revealing of our analytical starting point as sociologists than the actual practices we are investigating. A *relational* focus on emotions and selves leads to different conclusions being drawn and, as the next chapter argues, a focus on talk about emotions also demands that we couple an understanding of who is talking with an appreciation of who is *listening*.

4
Look Who's Listening

In Part I of the book, I explored the cultural significance of disclosure, captured in Les Back's (2007, p.7) claim that ours is a culture in which 'there is a clamour to be heard, to narrate and gain attention'. Within the social sciences, though, the focus has been on talk without, curiously, much interest in who is doing the *listening*. Most of the discussion in the last chapter focused on our general orientations towards emotions talk, that is, on our beliefs and feelings about talking about our emotions. In this chapter, I focus on *whom* we are actually talking to. While holding on to a sense of the diverse nature of our relationships (Simpson, 2006) is important in order to avoid reinforcing a 'hierarchy of intimacy' (Budgeon, 2006), it is the case that 'the listeners' tend to be strongly patterned. In other words, while random acts of listening, like kindness, do happen, and we cannot ignore the significance at times of encounters with consequential strangers (Blau and Fingerman, 2009), some people are much more practised in the art of listening than others. In focusing on who is doing the listening, the chapter seeks to balance a preoccupation with the cultural imperative of disclosure with an understanding of the social networks, contexts and relationships within which disclosure is rendered possible (or not). In relation to both formal and informal support, emotions talk is the product of both choice and constraint, preference and availability – whether involving family and friends who are able and willing to listen, or local provision of talking therapies.

Drawing again on data from the STTT study, I seek, in particular, to illustrate empirically three more 'stubborn stories' that seem to run counter to much of the received wisdom of epochal social science. They are: the persistence of the informal (and relative absence of formal therapeutic intervention or 'professional listeners') in our emotional lives;

the patterning of the form that such informal support takes; and the persistent and patterned use of pharmaceutical, rather than talk-based, responses in our interactions with professionals.

The listeners

The continuing significance of the informal sphere in the offering of emotional support (Park and Roberts, 2002; Spencer and Pahl, 2006) cannot be overestimated. I will go on to demonstrate this further, starting with the lack of evidence from the STTT study of widespread reliance on sources of professionalized or formal emotional support. While bearing in mind the critique that the formal/informal dichotomy is artificial to begin with (see endnote i, Introduction), here my concern is with claims that relate to the formal end of the spectrum, that is, to the significance of professionals in our everyday lives.

Participants in the BSA survey were asked whether – when they had been feeling worried, stressed or down – they had *ever* talked to any of a list of professionals or others trained to help or listen. Those who had were then asked if they had done so in the last year.

At first sight, perhaps the figures seem high: four in ten adults (40 per cent) had discussed some aspect of their emotional lives at some point with a health professional, or someone else who is trained to help or listen, and a quarter (25 per cent) had done so within the past year. But it is clear that this contact was overwhelmingly with GPs rather than with more explicitly 'talk-based' sources of therapy or counselling. In terms of the latter, 16 per cent had spoken *at some point* to a psychologist, psychiatrist, counsellor or other therapist, while 6 per cent had done so within the past year. While the figures for those talking to religious leaders are relatively low, as we will see later, religion does play a key part for some people in how they make their way emotionally (Table 4.1).

In terms of age, the pattern across the first four age groups is generally what one might expect of any 'ever' measure relating to life experience – in other words, prevalence tends to rise with age. What is striking, however, is the way that the use of all types of formal support (but especially those associated with the talking therapies) drops sharply among those aged over 65. In other words – consistent with what we have already seen in Chapter 3 – there seems to be something fundamentally different about the experiences, as well as the attitudes, of the pre-war generation. This appears, then, to be a genuine cohort rather than a life-stage effect (Figure 4.1).

Table 4.1 Have spoken to professionals or others trained to help or listen when feeling worried, stressed or down, ever and in last year (%)

	Ever	Last year
Your GP	31	19
A psychologist	2	1
A psychiatrist	4	2
A therapist or counsellor you saw in person	13	4
A therapist or counsellor you spoke to by telephone	2	1
Someone from a support service who is trained to help people or to listen	3	1
Social worker or care worker	2	2
Minister/priest/other religious leader	4	2
Some other kind of professional	2	1
Any psychologist, psychiatrist, therapist or counsellor	16	6
Any of the above	40	25
Base = 2102		

Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

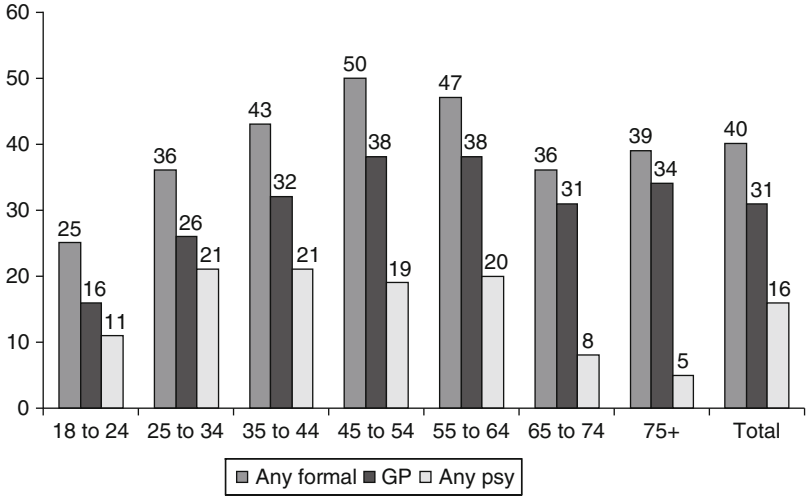

Figure 4.1 Have spoken to different types of professional when feeling worried, stressed or down, ever, by age group (%)

Notes: 'Any psy' = psychologist, psychiatrist, therapist or counsellor.
Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

It is also noticeable that members of the youngest age group are significantly less likely than the oldest to have sought support from their GP, but much *more* likely to have experienced talk-based therapy of some kind.

If we look at the use of formal support within the last year, the same broad patterns are evident: the highest figures are recorded by those in the two middle-age groupings; the lowest figures for GP contact are among the youngest age group; and the lowest for talk-based therapies among the oldest age group (Figure 4.2).

The peak of formal service use in middle age perhaps simply reflects need, and, as we saw in the last chapter, the emotional difficulties of the u-shaped curve. However, it is likely that there is also a cohort effect here; in other words, that the emotional difficulties experienced in midlife by those born in the period between, roughly, 1945 and 1965 are combining with a greater sensitivity to and awareness of counselling and its possibilities. The figures for 'last year' use of talk-based therapies among the youngest age groups suggest that demands on these services will continue to rise. In this respect, it could be argued that those who identify an emerging dependency on formal therapeutic relationships are simply anticipating future developments. There is, however, no

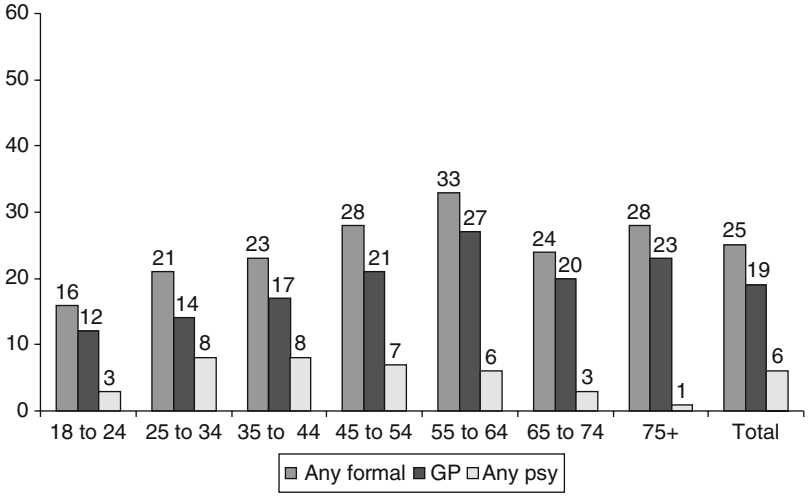

Figure 4.2 Have spoken to different types of professional when feeling worried, stressed or down, in last year, by age group (%)

Notes: 'Any psy' = psychologist, psychiatrist, therapist or counsellor.

Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

doubt that they overstate the extent to which such relationships define contemporary experience.

In terms of gender, women are slightly more likely to have accessed formal support – both ever and in the last year – although this difference is largely accounted for by higher levels of contact with GPs. In Chapter 3, we saw that there *are* gendered differences in why men and women choose not to talk about their emotions, but in terms of contact with overtly talk-based therapies, there was no significant difference in the BSA data in 'last year contact' by men and women. This lack of difference in men and women's actual use of services is an interesting finding, since – as we also saw in Chapter 3 – women are generally more predisposed to emotions talk of various kinds. Again, it suggests that use of such services is associated with actual need (defined in terms of significant mental health problems, which we know are experienced relatively evenly by men and by women) rather than with what might be caricatured as a voluntaristic 'project of the self'.

On that theme, it may be worth saying something briefly here about the relationship between formal service use, need and deprivation. In the BSA data generally there is a clear association between use of formal support and experience of mental health difficulties and poor mental wellbeing (as measured by the WEMWBS). There is also a strong relationship between mental health/wellbeing and measures of class/deprivation/income, so one would expect a higher level of service use among poorer people.

But the differences in use of formal support overall are not as great as might be expected, and there is no difference at all in the levels of use of more overtly talk-based therapies such as psychology, psychiatry and counselling. By contrast, however, poorer people *are* much more likely to have experience of using prescription medication to deal with emotional problems. In other words, it appears that among the poorest (and most needy) sections of British society, there is often a pharmaceutical rather than a talk-based response to emotional problems. I return to this issue later in the chapter.

Only a small minority of the population, therefore, appears to be engaged in emotions talk with professionals or others who are trained to listen; but webs of informal emotional support continue to play a key role in the lives of the majority. The BSA data provide several clear indicators of this.

First of all, when asked how often in the last year they have spoken to a friend or relative when feeling worried, stressed or down, around half (47 per cent) said they had done so at least once a month. Among those in relationships, a slightly larger proportion (56 per cent) said they had

talked to their spouse or partner with at least the same frequency. Of course, to some extent these figures may simply reflect need: in other words, many people may not have found themselves in situations in which they felt they needed such support. A related hypothetical measure is how likely people would be to talk to those close to them *if* they found themselves facing emotional difficulties. Two-thirds of those in a relationship (67 per cent) said they would be 'very likely' to talk to their spouse/partner in such a situation, while a further 24 per cent said they would be 'fairly likely' to do so. Four in ten (43 per cent) said they would be 'very likely' to talk to a close friend or relative, and a similar proportion (39 per cent) that they would be 'fairly likely' to do so.

Whether in a relationship or not, most people continue to have other people around them to whom they say they could, and would, talk if feeling worried, stressed or down. As part of the survey, participants were asked how many people in their lives might fill that role. 70 per cent indicated that they had at least three such sources of informal support, while 40 per cent had five or more. It is worth noting, though, that age is a key factor here, with the average number of potential emotional confidants declining sharply across the life course; and that, except in the youngest age group, women were more likely than men to have a greater number of such contacts (Figure 4.3).

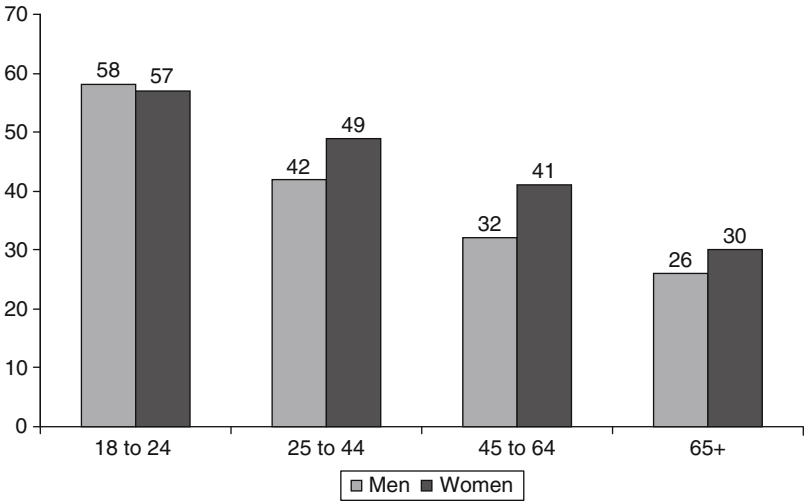

Figure 4.3 Have three or more people to turn to when facing emotional difficulty, by age group and gender (%)
Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

Women as emotional conduits

The first stubborn story was about the persistence of informal, and the relative absence of formal, support in our emotional lives. The second story concerns whom we actually turn to within the informal sphere. In practice, we remain heavily dependent on specific *kinds* of relationships within that sphere and on women more than men. As part of the survey interview, participants were asked to identify up to three people to whom they would choose to talk if they were feeling worried, stressed or down. The first thing to note is that spouses and partners remain overwhelmingly significant for those living in couple relationships; they were mentioned as a key support by 90 per cent of those who were married or living as married (and by 65 per cent of all those interviewed). What Spencer and Pahl (2006) called the 'archetypical suffusion relationship' between family and friends emerges as key also in the qualitative data, to the extent that those whose partner had died described the loss of their most significant emotional support, and some continued to see their partner as their key emotional support even after separation, divorce or, in some cases, death: 'I just say, sometimes if I get a bit fed up, I'll just think of what Ena used to say: "Come on now. Come on" ' (Hugh).

Given the central role that partners and spouses play in the emotional lives of most adults, it is worth considering the experiences of those adults who are not in such relationships, and are living either entirely on their own or as the only adult in a household with children. This group does not appear especially isolated or lacking in opportunities for talk-based emotional support. Indeed, there is no clear difference between them and those in multi-adult households in terms of the number of people in their lives to whom they can turn for emotional support or the frequency with which they actually do so. This supports research which makes the distinction between living on one's own and being lonely (Jamieson, Wasoff and Simpson, 2009; Jamieson and Simpson, 2013).

It is worth bearing in mind, however, that experiences of solo living are likely to be highly gendered. More women find themselves living alone in the first place (27 per cent, compared with 16 per cent of men, in the STTT sample as a whole) and their experiences will be shaped by women's greater connectedness with family and friends in general. Some have suggested that men living on their own, despite being sociable, may have fewer people they can discuss personal or intimate matters with (Jamieson, Wasoff and Simpson, 2009) – not least, as the STTT

study suggests, because they are less likely to turn to same-sex friends, and their relationship with them may be constraining of emotions talk.[1]

Of course, for those with partners, it can be difficult to choose not to describe one's partner as one's first port of call. In the personal mappings some participants (like Janet in Chapter 2), worked hard to justify not placing partners in the closest circle. Even when women do describe their partners as their main support, they go on to recount nuanced arrangements where they often 'held back' or hid emotional issues: perceiving them to have enough worries, at risk of getting angry, as not 'doing emotions' or simply as not able to offer what others could.

> I know that he will always be there for me and I can always turn to him, it's just I don't get the answers like I do from my mum.
>
> (Judith)

As we saw in the last chapter, men too describe holding back from their partners, though this was usually less to do with their partner's specific attributes than with their belief that there is not much to be gained from talking in general.

The quantitative data confirm that men's dependence on spouses or partners is more pronounced than that of women, for whom others – and especially mothers and same-sex friends – also occupy an important role (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 People to whom would talk, if feeling worried, stressed or down by gender (%)

	Male	**Female**	**All**
Spouse or partner	72	59	65
Father/stepfather	17	6	11
Mother/stepmother	29	33	31
Brother/stepbrother	17	7	12
Sister/stepsister	18	32	26
Son/stepson	15	14	15
Daughter/stepdaughter	16	24	20
Other male relative	7	2	5
Other female relative	5	15	10
Male friend	36	7	21
Female friend	14	57	36
Base	944	1158	2102

Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

There is a gender dynamic here for both men and women. Men are more likely than women to speak to fathers, brothers and male friends; women to speak to mothers, sisters and female friends. But while 17 per cent of men said they would speak to their father in the face of emotional difficulty, almost twice as many women (33 per cent) would speak to their mother; similarly 17 per cent of men would speak to their brother, but 32 per cent of women would speak to their sister. It is not only that women are likely to turn to other women; men, too, exhibit a dependence on their relationships with women. Although 17 per cent of men indicated that they would talk to their own father, 29 per cent would talk to their mother; 17 per cent would talk to their brother, but 18 per cent would talk to their sister; and 15 per cent would talk to their son, but 16 per cent to their daughter.

The qualitative data add to this rather static dichotomous picture. While younger participants described feeling more at ease talking to their mother in the first instance, they also described doing this knowing that it would in turn be shared with their father. Older men in the sample, who are fathers, confirmed a similar process from their end: hearing from their wives what their children have told to their mothers knowing that it would be 'relayed'.

R: So if they had worries they would tell [wife]?
P: Because she was there.
R: And would [wife] then tell you?
P: She would tell me when I came in.
R: And would you then be open with the kids about it?
P: Oh aye. Well they knew that I would know.

(Ian)

The quantitative picture outlined above cannot do justice to all the categories of people within the informal sphere that participants named as those they would talk to when facing emotional difficulties including in-laws, cousins, uncles and neighbours. Grandchildren, for example, have a particular role to play in people's emotional lives; they not only carry huge symbolism but act as a point of emotional connection with participants' own children.

> So they are a wee lifeline. They have thrown me a lifeline so they are important. We [participant and his son] have become closer to the extent of my grandson. What is the word I am looking for? He is the one that we focus on, we focus on him and we do things.
>
> (Bill)

Grandchildren are a source of support and also need support themselves. For some younger participants, as Young and Willmott (1962, p.41) found more than a half a century ago, having a grandparent – usually a 'nan' – is key to their sense of emotional security and, for some, this can be a closer relationship than they have with their own parents.

> And when I was little, I remember feeling like, er, I would often say things like, er, I'd go to say, 'Oh, I love you more than mum,' but I would never actually get it out. 'I love you more than', and then I would never finish it. But I remember saying it to her not that long ago, like since I've been more adult, and she was like, 'Yeah. No, I knew what you were meaning.'
>
> (Kate)

Just as it is not possible to cover all those relatives who offer support, neither is it possible to capture the diversity of the types of friendships participants describe having, or the nature of the interplay between the relationships they have with friends and family. Much of this, in any case, has been covered in other research (Spencer and Pahl, 2006) and will be touched on again in the next chapter, when the complexities underlying these patterns will be explored further, including the ways in which relationships with kin, friends and partners are 'activated'; the extent to which, despite claims that friendships are not as constrained by norms and obligations, people do reflect a great deal on what can be asked of friends; and the ways in which the support that people do receive and give is highly complex and not always positive.

My aim in this chapter is to emphasize the persistence of the *gendered* nature of our informal support patterns. In terms of friendships, the quantitative data above suggest that it is only in the context of relationships with friends that men are more likely to turn to other men than to women – perhaps because of an association between emotions talk and intimacy that renders exchanges with female friends still more risky outside of existing family or relationship boundaries. It is, however, worth looking at the qualitative data in relation to male friendships in more depth. They suggest that the pattern of both men and women seeking out women to talk to might be as much to do with the persistently restrictive nature of men's relationships with other men, at least in relation to talk, as with the distinct attributes of women as listeners. Nevertheless, as will be explored in the next chapter, men do offer each other significant support in ways other than talk, and in reading these data it is important to bear in mind that talk about not talking might

itself be a display of gender work (Smart et al., 2012). This does not mean that such displays are not deeply felt; for some men, even being asked about their friendships with other men can lead to defensiveness (Kiesling, 2005).

> It's just sort of like getting together and having a drink, just having a chat. Women do it all the time and nobody says anything about it do they?
>
> (John)

Men across the STTT sample, from different socioeconomic groups, describe having close male friends but are at pains to point out that this closeness is not based on talk, even though, as in the next chapter, men do describe rupture points in their lives which have changed how they interact with other men.

> Emotions [have] never been a massive part of why we're all so close and friendly. Whilst probably underneath it all that has to be there and that's probably what's made us so close as a group but we've never, I don't want to kind of be stereotypical here, but it's almost that kind of male type environment. So kind of deep and meaningful conversation about kind of private lives isn't, you know, generally on the agenda that much.
>
> (Jason)

P: Like [girlfriend] has commented on how unusually close I am with other guys that I am friends with, but there are only like four or five of them. But she has also commented on how easy our relationships are, how we are no trouble to one another.
[...]

R: And when [girlfriend] says you are no trouble to each other what did she mean?

P: We have an easygoing relationship, we don't push each other, we don't compete, we don't trouble each other to sort of, like I don't ask people personal questions. Um, if people want to talk about personal things that's fine by me. But I will kind of go out of my way to sort of not, 'So how is your relationship with such and such going? Are you guys getting married?' Or anything like that. It's none of my business. [...] They are supportive friends who don't, who are not looking to take things out of [you], they like you because they like you and they are there for you. I think that we try and probably do that for one another, we obviously have common

interests. That's how people tend to get along, you talk about things that you relate to, whether it's music or movies or whatever.

R: But you are not phoning each other up if you were having a tricky time with your girlfriend or your mum, you wouldn't be ringing one of these friends?

P: Not usually. [...] And I mean like my friend [...], he has got a couple of kids, and he had some issues with trying to get to see them, it's a very, very long-winded story. But he talked that through with me quite a lot but he was the kind of person who talks about it for ten minutes and go 'Oh enough of this bloody shit! Let's talk about something else for Christ's sake!' Let's be friends, let's not be counsellors to one another or whatever, and, yeah, so every now and again, we know where we are.

(Neil)

Picking up on the discussion about male friends in Chapter 3, the same also appears to be true of some younger men.

Not really, coz I don't think my mates would want to hear. They'd just be like, 'Oh well, just come out and get drunk.'

(Sam)

Yeah, they might just say, 'Yeah, yeah, whatever,' or something, or go off or whatever. But like with my mum and dad and my girlfriend, like if I spoke to them obviously they'd, well not obviously, well I can't say obviously, but they'll take me seriously, take me a bit more seriously, I suppose. I mean it's nothing against my mates like, that's the way they are.

(David)

For male participants in their forties and fifties – slightly older than the men above – socializing with peers might still be continuing, albeit in a pared-down fashion, but this is primarily a means of escaping rather than discussing problems. Mark, below, has a very similar reaction, to the hypothetical case of a friend asking for emotional support, to Sam's description above of his friend's likely reaction to the same situation – 'just come out and get drunk'.

R: But when you do, do you ever talk with them, with your friends about the things that get them down or the things they worry about?

P: No just talk about fun things. Rugby and golf and ....

R: And what, what do you think would happen if one of them said, you know, 'I have to tell you I'm, I'm feeling down?'
P: Well not too bad, I don't know really know that I've . . . .
R: It's never happened?
P: No.
R: Uh, huh.
P: I don't know how we'd react to that, probably say, 'Shut up and have another drink,' I would imagine. But if they came to you and says if there was something you could physically do to help them like being short of money or something like that you could certainly, like if somebody came along, I need a few hundred quid or something, that's easy you can give them that.
R: Yeah.
P: But emotional support, come to help.
R: Yeah, just that you wouldn't be sure?
P: No.

(Mark)

I think men are more judgemental. Or because of the tradition of it, of not speaking, men don't know how to listen and don't provide such good listening, if you know what I mean. I think that's it. I've seen even where I work [. . . .]. People do speak about quite tragic events in their lives. But the way it's dealt with is very, I don't know, it's almost as though men are frightened to explore those emotional depths and it's kept within parameters. The discussion is kept on a known level. You know, people know the right thing to say, stuff with bereavement, sickness in the family, loss, debt, lost the house to the bank or something.

(Paul)

If one clear feature of the patterning of our emotional relationships is the particular dependence on women, another is the way that the significance of specific types of relationships waxes and wanes across the life course. We have already seen that spouses and partners play a central role for the majority of the adult population who find themselves in couple relationships. But the process of partnering (and departnering) is also accompanied by other life-stage changes – for example, the emergence of adult children as potential emotional supports, and a decline in the emotional significance of one's own parents, either because they simply cease to occupy a central role in one's life or the nature of the relationship changes towards one of protecting them from emotional issues or worries.

> Because I think, er, especially my parents. They are older, so I shouldn't, I am an adult, so I shouldn't, you know, bring more worry for them.
>
> (Lucy)

> Yes I don't expect them to really concern themselves with my issues. As far as they are concerned I am sort of OK anyway I think. I think they think I am all right because I have got [husband]. Well my dad is not well to really even look after himself [...] and he is quite frail. He has lots of bother with it really, he is quite doddery. Um, I don't know I just wouldn't want to trouble him about anything now. Yeah. My mum is just so busy looking after him.
>
> (Ellen)

> Only she is very elderly now so bless her, you don't go talking about anything serious or upsetting because she is over 80.
>
> (Joe)

This is often especially true for those maintaining long-distance relationships with their parents or their children, as the distance can add to the emotional work parents/children need to do to stop relatives from worrying.

> P: I'm too far away from them. [...] well my mum still feels happy that I can phone her every week. [...] as long as she, she don't have to worry about that.
> R: She's happy. That's important?
> P: Yes.
> R: That's what you give her by phoning?
> P: That's why I always provide her, er, the good news.
> R: The good side.
> P: I wouldn't, I wouldn't say, 'Oh, I'm unemployed at the moment.'
>
> (Lucy)

Interestingly, though, when parents are asked about the support *they* seek or expect from their older children – especially their daughters – they, too, are often at pains to emphasize that they would not wish to burden them.

> My daughters, you would get loads of support from them but you wouldn't want to involve them, depending on what it was. I wouldn't do anything that would upset them.
>
> (Mary)

> I mean she rings me, not every day, but she rings me religiously possibly three times a week and we talk about, 'What kind of day have you had? What kind of day have you had?' but nothing really, you know, just peripheries, you know. Nothing, if something really had happened and I, you know, I wanted some kind of support and I felt really, I don't think I'd tell her because she would, you know, she's got too much on, she can't be doing with that, no. I don't want to take her over the top. So, you know.
>
> (Roz)

The graphs below summarize some of this fluidity in emotional dependencies across the life course, showing who men and women in different age groups say they would talk to in the face of emotional difficulties (Figures 4.4 and 4.5).

We see, then, that mothers remain a key support for both men and women in their twenties and thirties, but that spouses/partners then become key, before slowly declining again as the process of departnering kicks in. From the thirties onwards, for men, partners assume an overwhelming and relatively consistent importance throughout the subsequent years. The proportion of women relying on partners does jump

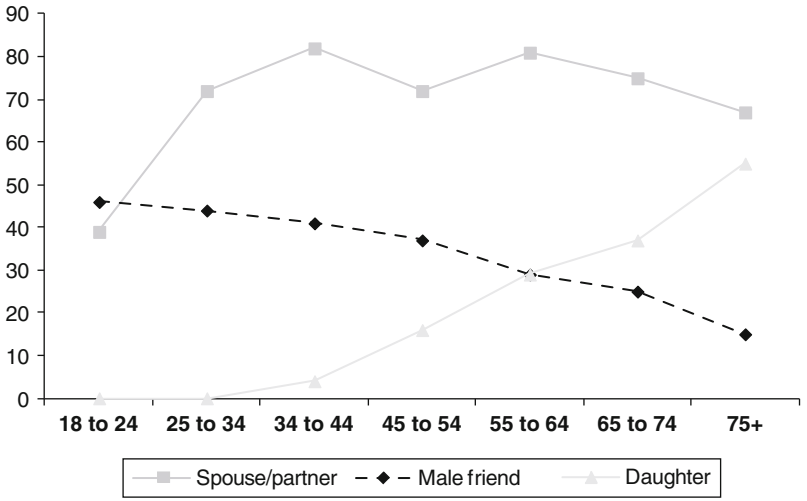

Figure 4.4 Who men would talk to when facing emotional difficulty, by age group (%)
Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

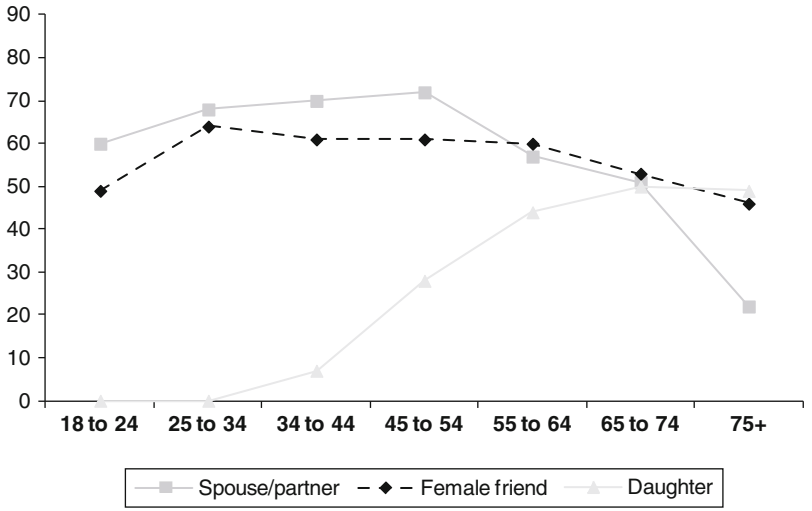

Figure 4.5 Who women would talk to when facing emotional difficulty, by age group (%)
Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

up, but not as much and then starts to fall again from midlife dropping right away again in the oldest age group – presumably as many become widowed.

Female friendships remain a fairly stable presence across the life course, while male friendships become progressively less important as people age. The role of daughters as emotional supports becomes increasingly important from midlife onwards for both men and women.

Having said this, the qualitative data make clear that where older men, those aged over 60, do have friends – often neighbours or others in their local communities – these relationships are significant because, as wives or partners die, they often become older men's key social contacts other than family. While these friendships again tend to be based on doing things together rather than on emotions talk, they are, nevertheless, emotionally important relationships (Arber et al, 2003).

> But of a weekend now, [the neighbour] who used to live next door, he lives in the first bungalow up here now, they moved. I go with him every Saturday since I lost the wife, and just behind the church here there is a bowling green, a bowling club so we got there for about two

> or three hours on a Saturday like you know? Just for a bit of company like you know.
>
> (Hugh)

Neurochemical selves

So far I have looked at two stubborn stories about to whom people are talking. The third stubborn story is less about to whom we are talking than about how those people respond. Specifically, I consider now the role of medication as an alternative, or supplement to, talking support. Although the survey element of the STTT study was primarily concerned with beliefs and practices around emotions talk – in both its formal and informal guises – it also contained a question about lifetime experience of the use of prescription medication in response to emotional difficulty. There has, of course, been a growing concern within sociology with the emergence of 'neurochemical selves' (Rose, 2007a), that is, with the governing of our emotional selves through pharmaceuticals rather than through 'psy' talk, but such work has not always been concerned with how this fits with other ways of making our way emotionally.

I start with the basic question of how prevalent the use of such medication is, and how such use varies across the population. The first thing to note is, perhaps, how common it is: around one person in five (21 per cent) said that they had taken prescription medication at some point in their lives when feeling 'worried, stressed or down'. As such, pharmaceuticals, as we know from research in the mental health area (Rose, 2007b), clearly do play a significant role in the emotional lives of a significant minority of the population.

But not all groups are affected equally. Most obviously, women were significantly more likely to report use of such medication – 26 per cent doing so, compared with 16 per cent of men. In terms of age, experience of medication use 'ever' peaked not in the oldest age groups – as one might expect, given the longer time frame – but in midlife. Around a quarter of those between the ages of 45 and 64 said they had used medication in the face of emotional difficulties, compared with around one in ten of those aged 18 to 24, and one in five of those aged over 65. The following graph shows the way that gender and age interact, pushing figures for lifetime use up to around one in three for women in certain age groups (Figure 4.6).

The other very striking relationship was with social class or income: for example, those in the lowest income quartile were almost twice

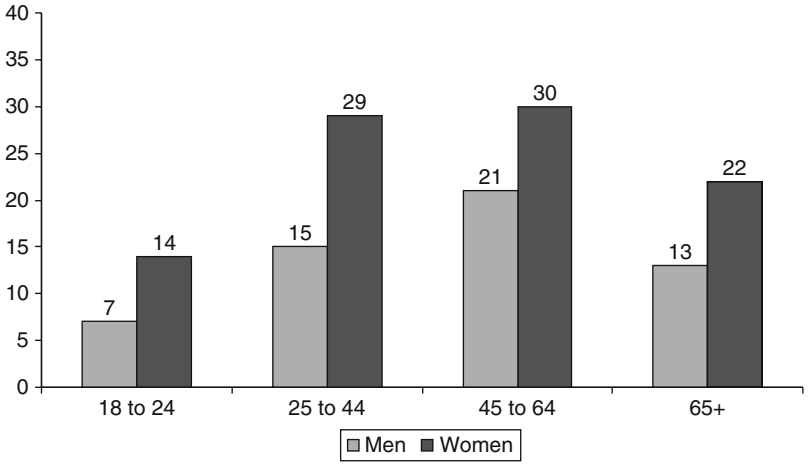

Figure 4.6 Use of prescription medication when facing emotional difficulty, ever, by age group and gender (%)
Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

as likely as those in the highest to have experienced a pharmaceutical response (31 per cent having done so, compared with 17 per cent). Interestingly, the gradient by income was more pronounced for men than women: in other words, there was a greater gap between the experiences of the least and most affluent men than the least and most affluent women. This is largely driven by the experiences of men in the lowest income group, who were as likely as women to have used medication at some point in their lives (Figure 4.7).

In the qualitative part of the STTT study, a wide range of reasons was given for taking medication ranging from long-term mental health problems to bereavement, relationship problems and other stresses as varied as falling out with neighbours to being accused of committing a crime. Despite the sense that use of medication was pervasive, talk about it was shaped by the same discourses as talk about emotional lives generally, including, as we will explore in more detail in Chapter 8, the idea that having 'bad times' is a part of life and that, as one participant put it 'taking medication to make my problems go away just doesn't seem right' (Shaun). Some struggled to accept that medication for psychological problems was, as Helen put it, 'needful medication'.

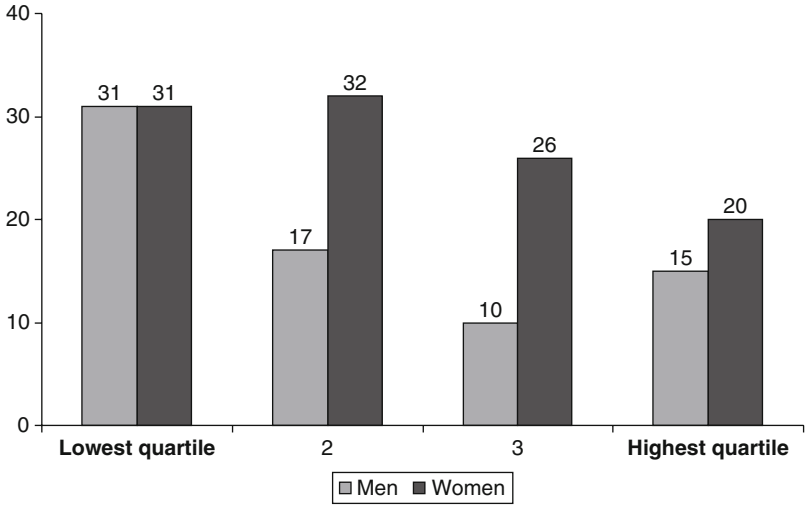

Figure 4.7 Use of prescription medication when facing emotional difficulty, ever, by household income (quartiles, %)
Source: 2007 British Social Attitudes survey.

> I think having a rubbish time is a fact of life and a part of life and I don't mean that in all cases that should be the case but definitely I think you should give things the course to try and sort themselves out before medication becomes involved. And luckily I have never been through something that I haven't been able to eventually get through. I haven't had to use medication but that's just, that's just me.
>
> (Will)

This might explain why for some people – even though they have taken it – medication jars with their sense of who they are.

> And I'd Prozac for about six months, and then thought, you know, I'm just not going to keep taking those coz I could go on forever, couldn't you? So I stopped taking it. You know, and I am one of those, quite a strong person, I think. When I look around and talk to other people anyway, yes, I think I am, you know.
>
> (Roz)

Anxieties about medication tended to be expressed through anxiety about its 'addictive' qualities, again there are concerns, as with emotions talk, about losing control.

> Because I think once you go down the slippery slope you have had it, and the same with drink.
>
> (Janet)

> I would be a bit wary of it I think, you know, coz it doesn't; it certainly has side effects, you know? And you see people who [...].You've heard of folk having medication, and oh they've got this, and then any time anything gets them down, they're back on it again.
>
> (Helen)

For those who do take medication, the relationship between medication and talking support needs to be understood. Is one a substitute for the other? Using the survey data, it is possible to compare experience 'ever' of prescription medication and engagement with 'psy' professionals. Not surprisingly, there is considerable overlap between them. For example, around four in ten of those with experience of medication use had also talked to a psychologist, psychiatrist, therapist or counsellor at some point in their lives; but this leaves more than half with experience only of medication.

Another way of looking at these data is to focus on those who have used prescription medication, but have never spoken to a 'psy' professional. Overall, 12 per cent of the population fell into this group, but this figure was around twice as high for women as men (15 per cent compared with 8 per cent) and rose steadily with age (from around 9 per cent of those under 35 to around 15 per cent of those aged over 65). Again, there was a clear income effect, with 18 per cent of those in the lowest income quartile falling into this category, compared with only 8 per cent of those in the highest.

Women from lower socioeconomic groups described being prescribed medication such as antidepressants, taking this for a short period of time, and coming off it again often without consultation with a GP.

> P: I took them for about four days. I thought, 'No way am I taking this', because my head just didn't *belong* to me. [...] I just felt as if I were in another world. And I would never ever, I'm very reluctant to take medication.
> R: Why?
> P: I wouldn't take it. [...] because it just made me feel *worse*. I just felt as if I didn't belong, were like a zombie going around.
> R: Mmm. And did he talk to you about that – the GP? Was he?

P: No. I just, I never went back. Stopped taking them. I only took them for about three or four days. I thought, 'No. This isn't for me.'
(Cath)

Others, by contrast, described being given medication by their GP and then remaining on it for long periods with little review. In the case of Barbara, whom we will meet again in Chapter 8, this involved being given sleeping tablets on the night of her husband's death and remaining on them for 20 years afterwards.

To argue this is not to suggest that the issue is purely one of supply – in other words that GPs are only proffering drugs rather than talk- based support. Issues of demand also need to be addressed.

P: And after my father died, I was prescribed Valium and Librium respectively.
R: And was that something that you felt wasn't helpful, or?
P: No. It was helpful.
[. . .]
P: The second time, after the fortnight, I went back and asked for some more.
R: Yeah.
P: He refused.
R: Did he?
P: Yes. Very wise man.
R: And, and how did you feel about that? Did you take his judgement or [. . .]?
P: Bit disappointed, but I took his judgement. He said, 'No. You've had enough.'
R: And what did you feel about why you needed more? [. . .]
P: I didn't feel that much better really but he just, but Valium and Librium just makes you feel level.
R: Yeah. Mmm.
P: So presumably I just wanted to go on feeling very level.
(Jill)

It is not surprising that we need to take issues of demand into account, given what we know from the last chapter about people's ambivalence about talking and, for many, their belief that it does not help. There is likely to be an interplay between the reasons why talking therapies might not be offered – issues of cost and availability – 'They just kept saying there is a big waiting list, there is a big waiting list. We never

got anybody at all. [...] if you can pay you can have what you want' (Martin) – and why medication, rather than talking support, is *asked* for.

Concluding thoughts

This chapter, like the preceding one, has emphasized again the importance of not conflating people's actual practices with discursive shifts in emotion culture. The key message is that if we focus on who is doing the listening as much as the talking – that is, if we take a relational focus – then claims about gender convergence and class divergence in emotional styles do not ring any more true than they did in the last chapter: women across all social class groups retain a key role as emotional conduits both for men and for each other.

More broadly, in mapping patterns of beliefs and practices about emotions talk and listening across the last two chapters, a complex picture has begun to emerge which raises questions not just about our engagement with therapeutic professionals but with key aspects of the therapeutic ethos more broadly including, crucially, our beliefs and practices about the value of emotions talk. The rest of the book sets out to understand this reluctance to talk and what it means for how we make our way emotionally. While the articulation of emotions is emphasized in Anglo-American culture (Nussbaum, 2001) there is, at the same time, a tradition that values not talking about one's emotions; or, at least, as George Eliot's (1986, p.226) reference to the 'roar that is on the other side of silence' suggests, an acknowledgement of just how much is left unsaid a lot of the time. The choice, as we saw in Chapter 2, is in any case rarely the straightforward one between emotional fluency and silence; more often than not we find ourselves relying on something close to 'bodily gestures as well as tired cliches and embarrassed mumblings' (Parr, Philo and Burns, 2005, p.98).

For some, this is to do with the nature of emotions, the belief that they need to be kept in the heart (Arendt, 1973, p.96). For others, as we saw in Chapter 1, it is to do with how emotions constitutively resist language (Anderson and Harrison, 2006), particularly in the face of suffering (Levinas, 1988). As we saw in Part I, some have begun to explore the class, gendered and race dimensions of suffering, and the inarticulacy that comes from the experience of not feeling heard or being silenced (Back, 2007). If we shift the focus to everyday relationships, such as those explored above, it is possible, then, that the reasons why people choose not to speak to professionals (or indeed family and friends) overlap with, and might be rooted in part in their beliefs about,

and experiences of, the constraints *on* talking about emotions as much as the constraints *of* talk. In other words, we have seen in the last two chapters that people understood the limits to their emotions talk as embedded in the material and normative constraints of their local situation and relationships as well as in doubts about the value of talking, doubts which are in their turn linked to the emotional legacies of their families.

Brannen and Collard (1982) pointed out some time ago that positing a unidirectional relationship between informal and professional support – that inadequacy in the former leads to seeking the latter – is simplistic. It is not just a question of the availability or otherwise of social networks (though this does matter), but that these networks and legacies 'provide a backcloth against which beliefs and attitudes about the value of confiding problems in others are shaped' (Brannen and Collard, 1982, p.5) and constrained. Relationships that are remembered, as much as those that are current, shape our engagement (or not) in talk.

Other reasons why things remain unspoken can be heard in our everyday talk of 'getting on with things', of 'sorting things out in our heads', of 'keeping busy in order not to think', of others just 'being there', of some things being 'nobody's business' and of not 'needing' to talk. This talk speaks to the cultural beliefs we hold about privacy and vulnerability. And while there has been a concern that the very secrets that held some families together in the past are now being exposed, creating in the process new vulnerabilities (Smart, 2007), we will see in Part III that a strong sense of privacy boundaries, in fact, persists.

This everyday talk also speaks to the ways we have of managing our emotional lives through actions other than talk, as well as to the nature of relationships that matter. Sociological theory can help us make sense of these practices but the converse is also true: such practices necessitate a critical reading of conceptualizations of intimate or close relationships, reflexivity, privacy and vulnerability. In the remainder of the book, the nature of the unspoken will be explored sociologically through looking more closely at these dimensions, starting with the nature of relationships which 'matter'.

Part III

5
The Practice of Being There

> It's almost like an emotional support through normality if you know what I mean, just carrying on with your life as well but having someone there [...]. That non-discussion that is getting on with your life and, you know, playing out the time of depression by doing the laundry, doing the shopping, doing the cooking, going to work, going to the cinema.
>
> (Paul)

This final part of the book considers emerging, or so far neglected, stories that might help us make sense of our emotional lives: stories about being, doing, reflexivity, privacy and vulnerability. This chapter begins by looking at what relationships that 'matter' look and feel like and teasing out what we mean when we say others are 'there' for us. To draw on Goffman's (1974) question, I am interested in *what it is that is going on*[1] when we are 'there' for others in the 'everyday', whether this 'being there' is real, imagined or hoped for. Jacobsen's (2009) point that 'everyday' can have a temporal meaning (what happens daily) *and* also refer to an attitude (an unreflexive, taken-for-granted outlook) is relevant here. While recognising that what constitutes the everyday is contested and problematic (see Sandywell's (2004) critique of the notion of an ahistorical and unmediated everyday life), in the context of this chapter, I am concerned with everyday emotional relationships in three senses. First, I am not focusing on the involvement of professionals in our emotional lives but on the informal level of kin and kin-like relations. Second, I am looking both at the day-to-day, background 'being there' – akin to Simmel's 'indifferent intimacies' (1950, p.127) – and at how we are there for others, and others for us, at moments of emotional rupture. The two are connected; not least because such moments concentrate

our[2] thinking about who and what we are emotionally connected to the rest of the time (Rebughini, 2011). Finally, my focus is on the everyday because my start point is how people themselves talk about emotional closeness. While the language of 'the intimate' is conceptually useful for sociologists, only some 'in real life' describe the relationships which matter to them in these terms.

Taking lay concepts and practices as a jumping-off point allows emotional closeness to be illuminated differently from work on intimacy which starts with types of relationships and works out from there. Here the focus is on the *practices*[3] of being there. And, while these cannot be straightforwardly equated with intimacy, there are some interesting points of connection. This is not just because 'being there' might be fundamental to how we understand kin/kin-like relationships – the people traditionally defined as 'there' for us – but also because it is at the heart of how we create, or fail to create, meaningful relationships. Being there, in other words, is both about practical mundane acts and also a signifier of relationships which matter. This fits in with a shift in focus away from less formal categories of relationships to the actual situations in which people experience the need to care and be cared for (Borneman, 2001). Conversely, if as Allan (2008) has argued, there has *not* been a suffusion of kin and friend relations to the extent some have suggested, understanding more about what 'being there' involves might help tease out the reasons why this distinction persists.

This chapter looks first at how people talk about relationships that matter, and what 'being there' means to them; and then at how these relationships are negotiated. The actual mechanisms by which social isolation threatens our physical and emotional wellbeing are not known (Misztal, 2011, p.167) but a key underpinning of this chapter is that exploring the nature of the connections which do sustain us can help us to understand the consequences of their absence. The chapter concludes by returning to the question of how a focus on the practice of being there shapes our conceptualization of intimacy.

Relationships which matter: Practices of being there

We know from Chapter 2 that methods illuminate, but also enact, emotional relationships. We cannot be complacent in our readings of who or what matters emotionally because often the absences, the unexpressed, are as significant as the spoken: 'I suppose I haven't *mentioned* my husband, but I suppose I say everything to him' (Jackie). How then do people talk about, or convey to researchers, a sense of

which relationships matter? It is notoriously difficult to understand and research what it is in what passes between people that counts as emotional support – as one researcher put it in their post-interview account, 'It was quite hard to get at [what was] support and what was chat' – and to point to why it is that some people or relationships come to count 'emotionally' and others do not. In part this is about the persistent difficulty we have distinguishing between relationship categories and particular relationships. For example, there may be a difference between what we should do/feel about mothers in general, what we should do/feel about our own mother and what we *actually* feel/do. As Finch (1989) points out, even when people think in terms of generalizations about how we should behave towards kin, they may still have good reasons for not applying the principle in *their* case, or there might indeed be several rules or norms linked to competing actions. What we do actually do is a mix, as Pryor (2006) puts it, of the normative and the affective. As others have noted, this means that we cannot equate 'doing' with 'feeling': people may be there for others in the sense of tending and caring for them, and yet not feel emotionally close (Ungerson, 2005). Here, however, I am interested in the ways in which emotional closeness happens through, and can be constituted by, doing.

The difficulty of knowing what it is one is actually researching is accentuated when we take on board the role of the imaginary: it remains fiendishly difficult to disentangle our actual lived relationships from the relationships of our imagination and longing. Again John Burnside, writing this time about his sister, captures this well: 'She was fierce about family, even when family let her down. Perhaps most of all when they let her down' (Burnside, 2006, p.30).

To the extent that 'being there' has been linked to emotional support, it has often been framed in quite narrow terms. Finch (1989, p.33), for instance, described it as involving 'listening, talking, giving advice, and helping people to put their own lives in perspective'. She concludes, on this basis, that emotional support is not a routine feature of family relationships and that, while kin relationships can be close in terms of contact or practical interdependencies, they are not necessarily based on emotional disclosure or confiding. Henwood and Coughlan (1993) make a similar point in their study of mother–daughter relationships. The relationships they looked at were often not defined as close, but even those that were tended not to emphasize emotional disclosure.

In the STTT study, when people were asked about what counts as emotional support more often than not they understood it as something

much less specific, active and overtly linked to talk than implied by Finch's description, yet still emotionally significant. In other words, people's accounts were about relationships which were extant and often taken for granted. *This* type of emotional support, as Henwood and Coughlan (1993) among others note, was present in kin as well as non-kin relations, and it is this support people have in mind when they describe others as being 'there' for them. What, then, does this 'thereness' involve? Unsurprisingly, it means different things depending on the nature of the relationship but many of the accounts shared some, if not all, of the following features.

First, almost by definition, it is about imagined or actual *reachability*. It can, for example, include being phoned by the same person, at the same time, every day or night, such as in the following extract.

> It was yesterday morning when the phone rang. I said, 'What's that about?' Coz my sister phones me. I don't need a clock in here. Every morning at half past ten, the phone rings, just to see if I'm all right. And this was a little bit earlier yesterday. I said, 'Who the hell's this, this morning?'
>
> (Hugh)

But it can also be about reachability in principle (the people we have in mind that we *could* ring up in the middle of the night should we need to): 'Now there have been in my life about four guys that I could lift the phone in the early hours and know they would be there' (Bill). Clearly there is a technological aspect to this: mobile phones have a particular significance, offering, as we saw in Chapter 2, the possibility of 'perpetual contact' (Katz and Aakhus, 2002; Wajcman, Bittman and Brown, 2009).

If this aspect of being there relates to simple ongoing reachability or availability, a second aspect emphasizes its caregiving and practical dimensions. Talk about being there tends to be used to refer to a range of things that people *do* for each other. As one might expect, this is a long and varied list that includes, for example, help with finances, driving people to hospital, helping people move house following divorce and providing support with child care. In this extract a woman describes the help offered by her parents following her divorce.

P: My parents were always there if you needed them for anything.
R: Um, how did it show?

P: The fact that they were there, and they would look after the kids anytime. Um, if you wanted to go out, 'Just go, we will see to things.' I don't know. How are they supportive? I mean they are just there for you.

(Mary)

And here a man describes the financial support offered by his workmate after his wife's death.

R: And so the folk at work would they help you by talking or would they help you just by . . . ?
P: Even one of the chaps I was very friendly with, after [wife] died, he came up to see me, how I was and he sat in the chair. The next thing he said was 'Are you needing any money?' He said, 'Here is £500.'
R: So he was just wanting to help?
P: I said, 'No, no.' I said, 'I don't require, but thank you very much.' But that's the kind of the comradeship you had.

(Ian)

Although often mundane, these activities carry huge emotional significance, and this links to a third aspect of being there: the way that shared experience of particular episodes or lives – even in the absence of talk – comes to deepen a sense of others being 'on our side'. This privileged knowledge (Jamieson, 1998) involves a sense of someone else *understanding* our feelings or experiences, based on knowledge of what we are going through and/or of us as individuals. Over time, this insider knowledge and experience of 'thereness' is jointly lived and sedimented (Youngblood, 2001). Being 'there' in the present often involves, then, having been there in the past. In the following a woman describes her husband's knowledge of her through his living alongside her and her illness.

I can't really say but I will anyway, he is the only person who has really come to understand it and other people have had involvement at times but um, just not, he has followed it through for a long time. I mean right from when we married, I mean I had a psychotic episode on our honeymoon! So you know he was right in there.

(Ellen)

For her, this means that only he has the understanding to offer the support she needs: 'him just being the person that he is and other people can't be that you see'. Similarly, in the following extract, a woman describes her brother *knowing* her grief following their parents' death.

> Coz he's ma brother. Because he knew, didn't he? [. . .]. He knew that. We were both going through the same things.
>
> (Jill)

For some men, there was a sense that to be there emotionally for others *effectively*, they had to have gone through a similar experience. Here are three different men's take on this.

> So I find it difficult to relate to people who have got particular problems that I have never experienced. I don't know if someone comes to me and says I have broken a bone in my leg, I have done that, I know what it's like. I know the pain you go through. If someone comes to me and says I am going through a divorce, I don't know, I can't advise you; I have never gone through that.
>
> (Matt)

In the next extract a man is describing being able to support another male friend after both their partners experienced miscarriages.

> Yeah I think if I hadn't had the kind of experience and the conversations and the support I'd got there I'm not sure I could have done or said the right things and whilst you know I'm not arrogant enough to think that I said all the right things or done all the right things I, I think I helped you know. And probably, we've probably got a kind of more open conversation about [. . .] these more kind of emotional things than we had certainly before the two events.
>
> (Jason)

And finally we return to an extract first introduced in Chapter 4. Here, Mark, a man in his forties is describing what sort of support he could potentially offer but in doing so does not connect his experience of having relationships or children to 'emotional stuff'.

> R: But what if it was about something that you'd experienced, you know like maybe a relationship or having children. What if it was

something that you actually knew about do you think you could help out then?

P: Probably aye if it's something I'd had experience of aye I probably could offer advice there for I'd be able to do that.

R: Yeah.

P: But if it was kind of emotional stuff, I don't think I'd be, I'd be much good there.

(Mark)

A failure to understand, and hence to 'be there', can have lifelong implications for personal relationships. In Chapter 8, we meet a woman, Dee, who describes how she cannot forgive her mother who was not 'there' for her when she had a child.

It is difficult, as Finch and Mason (1993) have pointed out, to separate decisions about being there or not for others from issues of personal morality. Drawing on Murdoch's (1970, p.36) observation that moral life is what goes on between explicit moral choices, Sayer (2011) has convincingly argued for this gap between 'is' and 'ought' to be within our sight as social scientists. We can hold different and contradictory moral positions, and these are embedded in concrete, material, embodied contexts involving particular people with specific needs. Such working through of the ethics of care is part of everyday morality – part of what we all do.

In the following extract, Liam, a young man we met in Chapter 3, describes the obligation he feels to be there for a friend, as they both have ill mothers and he knows the people and what is involved.

> I don't mind doing it. I feel obliged to do it to be perfectly honest with you in his situation because he's one of my closest mates. And I know his situation, I knew his mum before she got to the point where she couldn't speak anymore. So I perfectly understand all of the situation and stuff and erm, I think it would be wrong me knowing him so well and knowing what's going on for me not to offer any emotional support whatsoever. So it's just my place to do so whereas it isn't for other people even if they think it might be, so.
>
> (Liam)

The fourth dimension of being there is the sense of *being alongside* – watching TV or going for a drive with friends or family or, as the extract at the start of the chapter has it, having someone to 'play out the time of depression' with.[4] This often involves a silence that could be described

as knowing or acknowledged and, in practice, can mean giving permission to stay silent about known problems or losses. Being there in this context involves what Rebughini (2011), drawing on Simmel (1950), describes as 'protecting sacred spaces'. Being there, of course, is not always linked to problems or losses, and doing things together with other people matters in other situations just for the pleasure it brings.

Jamieson (1998, p.164) has suggested that while there may be a greater emphasis on knowing and understanding in contemporary intimate relationships, this is not, in practice, a key focus of personal lives: 'Loving, caring and sharing remain as important.' It is likely, however, not only that relationships are a mix of these different types of intimacy – disclosing and practical – but that it is *through* interactions, and acts of caring over time, that the knowing and understanding is constituted in the first place. In other words, the practical acts of caring are, in themselves, disclosing. When Finch and Mason (1993) suggested that there are rituals for offering/receiving support and that decisions about who should be there to offer support are not usually the outcome of explicit verbal statements, the decisions she was describing are embedded or sedimented in these extant and background practices of caring. That is why Jamieson's (2013) suggestion that verbal disclosure without any history of co-presence is likely to feel thinner than intimacy built through silent co-presence would seem to make sense. This is not to say that 'virtual' relationships are not important nor, as I go on to argue, that knowing one matters to others is not emotionally sustaining even without co-presence, but it is to suggest that this sustenance will often have its roots in co-presence. This is consistent with the fact that the majority of those interviewed in the STTT study (78 per cent) said that they would speak to those close to them face-to-face, about how they were feeling or just to catch up, at least once a week. Bringing to mind Young and Willmott's (1962) findings, from another time and place, about the extent of contact between adult women and their mothers, almost half in the STTT study (44 per cent) said they would do so almost every day. The proportion saying they would have at least weekly phone contact for the same reasons was similar (at 76 per cent). There are, as one would expect, strong age differentials, with text messaging being almost as common for younger people – an almost everyday occurrence for nearly six in ten (58 per cent) of those aged under 34, for example, compared with just 4 per cent of those aged 65 and over.[5]

Although not a universal feature across the different dimensions of being there, reciprocity figures prominently and was viewed as a prerequisite for most of the friendships that people described as their closest.

Jamieson (1998) has noted, though, that this tends to be a diffuse or generalized rather than direct reciprocity. Relationships change shape and people can become aware of uneven dependencies and yet still view these relationships as reciprocal because of earlier support. As one participant put it, sometimes relationships are in a state of 'yet to be' reciprocity (Francis). Reciprocity can in that sense be stretched across time, space and relationships. This does not mean, however, that reciprocity even in this broader sense is always reached, and sometimes people are conscious and resentful of imbalances.

So people are 'there' for one another in a host of different ways, many of which do not involve talk. But it is worth noting that 'being there' is by no means uncomplicated or always positive (Wallman, 1984; Layder, 2009). It can be experienced as hard work, as painful and in some cases as abusive especially if, as one participant put it, it amounts to having someone 'to take things out on'. Moreover, it can carry affective risks, risks of being pitied and of feeling somehow diminished.

> I have a friend here in [...] and because we've had some really stressful times and you know, she wants to give her support and her sympathy but it sounds patronizing and I don't want, I don't want to be patronized. [...] I sort of tell her something but then she tries to, she tries to make more of it. I can't explain it really but I, it really gets me. I get really annoyed.
>
> (Dee)

To an extent this is unavoidable because, as Tronto (1993) has pointed out, conflicts and inequalities inhere in relationships, particularly relationships that involve 'caring'. Some participants, like Michael, because of these risks, describe actively taking steps to avoid relationships of reciprocity and expectations of being there.

> I wouldn't involve myself; I wouldn't want other people involved. I think I would be hassling them you know. I think I will keep it to myself. I don't want to put on anybody else.
>
> (Michael)

Another distinguishes between friends who expect his help and those in the sheltered home where he lives, who have no such expectations.

> P: They come [the] other day and said, you know, 'Would I babysit?' I says, 'Hang on a minute.' I says, 'You didn't come for my 'elp

> when you were making that baby, did you?' He says, 'No.' I says, 'Well . . . [laughs]. Carry on.' [. . .] If you start doing things like that, you start giving your life away [. . .]. If you spend an hour doing something for somebody else, that's an hour of your life gone what you 'aven't used. [. . .]. But I do things for people in 'ere, but I just, that's just as a normal, coz they can't do nowt their selves. A lot o' them can't afford to have people in to do it, so I just do it.
>
> R: So why is it different doing things for these people, compared to doing things for your friends?
>
> P: Because friends expect it, and these people don't. And if friends expect it, I just don't do it.
>
> (Rob)

It is also worth noting that the 'thereness' of such relationships can be less permanent than it seems at any given point. Indeed accounts of being there have an important temporal quality because who is there, as we saw in the last chapter, shifts over time. As Spencer and Pahl (2006) observed, we have – and are part of – shifting social convoys: our significant others change through the life course and the ways in which we are there for others may change over time. Here, a participant explains how following the deaths of their respective husbands, two women who were distantly related through marrying cousins became 'like sisters'.

> Pete's cousin died the same year, [. . .] and I mean we always sent birthday cards to each other, like Bee and George and Pete and I, we always sent birthday cards and Christmas cards, and just met up at family things, but we weren't that close. But since Pete died and George died, which was in the same year [. . .] it's thrown Bee and I close together. And we've got really, we've like become like sisters, you know.
>
> (Rose)

This sense of fluctuating emotional connectivity has recently been commented on by Allan (2011), but, as we saw in Chapter 4, such fluctuations are experienced differently by different social groups. The temporality of being there is also, as I argued above, about the way that thereness is built up cumulatively through everyday acts and interactions, as the following account of one man's interaction with his neighbour illustrates.

> He lives directly opposite here, and he comes across every morning for his coffee with me, and he's across for an hour every night for a bit of craic.
>
> (Hugh)

This account illustrates the way that, particularly for older people, neighbours can come to be temporal convoys (Gillis, 1996, p.43), offering a shared sense of time. While, as we saw in the last chapter, such interactions tend to be patterned in particular ways, their emergence can also be random and have an out-of-time quality, such as in the first extract below where Jean remembers the owner of a local coffee shop acknowledging her mother's death.

> And it wasn't until I went up to pay the lady, the owner of the coffee shop and she just give me a hug and said, 'It's going to be hard this Christmas, Jean.' And I thought, 'Oh bless you' and she, you know, so it's the odd, out of the blue almost, isn't it?
>
> (Jean)

> You just happen to see them, and it's just, you just both happen to have that amount of time to spend you know and that sort of thing. So it's more organic than actually planned.
>
> (Carol)

While serendipity can be a factor in people finding themselves sharing a particular issue, when this happens with those we do not know, there may well be an element of 'the luxury of intimate disclosure' with strangers (Eliot, 1950; see also Day, 1985). Like some participants in the STTT study, we might be more at ease presenting such disclosure as accidental, in part because, as we saw in Chapter 2, it can feel discrediting to disclose to those whom we do not know, yet it is exactly the out-of-timeness of these encounters that makes them possible. The same also holds for the research interview itself – 'I've told you more than most' (Bill). Conversely, the planning involved in seeing a professional can be an obstacle to actually doing so. Particularly for some men, authenticity is wrapped up with spontaneity so that some participants could not countenance speaking to professionals, or for that matter to friends and family, about their emotions if it meant doing so in a planned way.

> If it ended up that we started talking about something then, all well and good, but um, I guess I wouldn't think of picking up the phone to speak to someone specifically about something.
>
> (Will)

Some people, then, have their strongest emotional connections with those at either end of the spectrum: those they have just met and those who are their partners. This is because some of the qualities associated with thereness – non-judgementalism and acceptance – might be easiest to come by from those who are most, and least, emotionally invested in us. As we saw in Chapter 2, for one participant this meant he got through a particular crisis by talking to his wife and to a stranger, a woman who sat next to him at a wedding: 'just with [wife] really other than that girl whose name I don't know' (Will). This raises the issue, which will be returned to below, of what intimacy actually *is*. This is important because, in practice, as others have documented, we share intimate *content* within a whole range of relationships including with the dead, pets and higher beings.

> He [God] knows it all anyway, and he loves me so there's nothing I can tell him that he doesn't know.
>
> (Carol)

Negotiating being there

Being there, as we have seen, is, in part, about reachability. This can involve someone literally being there all the time, like one young man's perception of his mother's role during his stay in hospital: 'She's just been there with me from the very start. She stayed with me for the whole six months, like slept in a chair until I come out' (Martin). Some relationships, despite not having such ongoing contact, matter because of an emotional connection which allows relationships to be 'picked up where they left off'.

> Sandra and I have been friends for many, many, many years, probably 50-odd years, and she's been there for me if I need her, but we don't, we're not, we don't do much now together, but we know we are always there, you know. I mean like we'll meet in town just by chance and she'll say, 'We'll do something,' and I'll say, 'Oh yeah, we will,' you know, but something else happens and it's a roll-on

> thing. You're just getting on with the rest of your life, you know what I mean?
>
> (Roz)

While kin ties can lack ongoing contact and be 'picked up' in this way, they seem more likely than friendships to be framed as relationships that, while they *could* be activated at any point, tend not to be without good cause.

> I have got a sister in Bolton and if I was to phone just now and say 'Hello Mary it's Bill,' she will say to me 'What's the matter?'
>
> (Bill)

As others have noted, being there for kin is often based on a sense of responsibility and obligation rather than, necessarily, liking: 'We're there for each other obviously but we're not close' (David). These kin relationships are often *not* activated because of feeling rules or norms around not burdening others. This, as we saw in Chapter 3, is true particularly for women in their middle years, who are reluctant to impose on either their children or their parents. This does not mean, however, that people do not still feel a sense of connection, such as in the following extract where a woman is talking about her daughter, now in her thirties: 'I did not want to load all that on to her, but I knew she was there for me, and she knew' (Jenny).

Even if norms around kin being there are negotiated (Finch and Mason, 1993) and less regulatory than they used to be they can still be powerful (Gross, 2005). One participant who lived in a farming community described needing a 'thick skin' to cope with the fact that all three of her children now lived abroad while she continued to live in a community where the expectation is that families remain close by.

> Well, I have to be, I think I have to be thick-skinned to sort of survive because there are some times that people looking at us and thinking, 'Oh, poor Jean and Alan, they haven't got any family around here,' because round here nearly all the farms have got grandfather, father, grandson, an all-family unit. Not so much as they were mind but all family units. And the children go into the grandmother's every day from school and you know, all this. There is a lot of that around. And it does hurt but you just get used to it, you have to get used to it to be able to, erm, cope.
>
> (Jean)

The significance of what Gross (2005) calls the 'meaning-constitutive' traditions associated with kin can be highlighted in the emotion work people do to align their expected and actual feelings around kin in 'real life'. Francis described working hard to understand the emotional distance between himself and his sister.

> I think my response tends to be to work harder you know. It's almost like the horse in Animal Farm, you know, it's my fault I need to do more work and that would be exemplified by my elder sister you know where I would try and do more.
>
> (Francis)

Participants also do this work in interview, when they qualify or 'backtrack' on their expressed feeling.

> And I think if I was another generation I might have gone up and away. But I mean we will go out this afternoon and have a lovely time and he is a good husband.
>
> (Janet)

These meaning-making traditions are also evident in how hard it is to extricate oneself from kin. They remain, as Smart (2007, p.45) puts it, remarkably 'sticky' relationships.

While recognizing that 'friendship' is a relational rather than categorical term and that there are different types of friendship, it has been suggested that friend – unlike kin – relations, are less shaped by norms around duty and obligations, and less focused on concerns about being judged by, or upsetting, others (Spencer and Pahl, 2006). In practice, however, it seems we do reflect a great deal on what we can legitimately ask of friends.

> You still have friends but you won't go, even with your friends, you can only go a certain depth and then you will shut it.
>
> (Ian)

> Yeah, unfortunately my best friend, on all these anniversaries I've had, she's also had something. Because when I had my stroke her mum died so obviously I couldn't turn to her because she had her own problems and I wouldn't put my problems onto her when she had problems of her own because that's just not fair, is it? That's my best friend.
>
> (Judith)

> That doesn't mean that I didn't share any of it with people but there's a limit to how much you can do that before people start slashing their wrists or avoiding you in the street. [...] act as a kind of emotional vacuum cleaner and take away all the tolerance out of people. So I didn't do anything I wouldn't do, I didn't do anything like that.
>
> (Francis)

Alongside the recent focus on the elasticity of friendships, on their chosen, reciprocal and egalitarian nature (Budgeon, 2006; Pahl, 2000), the 'limits' of friendship are also increasingly acknowledged. This is so, both in the sense that Spencer and Pahl (2006) and Allan (1996) have noted, of there being interlocking constraints (cultural, structural, spatial and temporal limits), which shape if and how we 'choose' friends; and also, as we have seen earlier, in the sense that friendships have a critical, dark side (Spencer and Pahl, 2006; Smart et al., 2012) and their own imbalances.

> Or she will ring me up and say, 'Oh, you didn't sound very good, are you alright?' and you know I can't, I can't cope with that. I don't know why but I can't. I can't cope with that, I can't cope with her. I just, so I end up sometimes not telling her something [...]. And I can talk to other people but it's just her reaction. And I can't, I can't cope with this patronizing caring, [...], perhaps that's what it is, because she's over-caring, I don't know. And I can't cope with it.
>
> (Dee)

> It just seems to be me. I seem to be always the listener. You know, we, four, three or four of us get together once a month just to really encourage each other. Erm, and we've usually, listened to everybody else's problems and they come to me, 'What about you?' and I say, 'I can't beat that.' So yes, I am usually the listener.
>
> (Jean)

> Well she is. She's awfully sensitive. She's, er, as lovely as she is, she says [whispering], she's hard work. She's hard work. She's lost, and she doesn't have many friends any more, and I suppose, you know, she relies on me as a friend. 'And you're my oldest friend,' she says, and, er, and I'd be wary, because she could take things the wrong way [...] and turn things round, and not be, yeah, just not thoughtful or... no, no, that's not true, coz she is thoughtful, but it's all, what's

> in it for her. I think, so. Yeah. And not very understanding of what goes on here, in our lives.
>
> (Annie)

The discussion so far in this chapter lends further empirical support to the argument that talk is not the only basis for intimate relationships even among the middle classes; that much 'being there' is practical, but that it can also be based on a feeling of security, less measurable than talk or specific acts, which is constructed through knowing one is connected to others, usually though not always those who know us; that there are strong norms shaping friendships; and that we need to be aware of the limits/boundaries to friend relationships as much as to family. Negotiating who is 'there' means recognizing that even so-called elective relationships are shaped by norms and, as such, we have to be as cautious of using the word 'choice' here as in other contexts (Irwin, 2004). In the remaining part of this chapter, I explore further the meaning of intimacy or emotional closeness through looking at the *nature* of emotional connections and at those with whom we have these connections.

Conceptualizing relationships which sustain us

While close relationships can be about discreteness and about giving space, debates about intimacy still tend to focus on mutuality and emphasize the significance of disclosure (Allan, 2011). As Rebughini (2011) puts it, 'The opportunity to share one's own suffering with a friend' and 'the ability to listen with compassion but not pity' are fundamental to friend relationships. This chapter has explored instead the significance of others being there for us in ways that are, for the most part, not about talking. Sociologists, for example, Bengston, Biblarz and Robert (2002) like to draw on Robert Frost's (1915) words – 'home is where when you go there they have to take you in' – but equally relevant might be what Frost went on to say, that home is 'something you somehow haven't to deserve'. It is this unconditional 'thereness' of some relationships which is the essence of their mattering, and this is not quite the same as framing these as relationships of 'last resort' or obligation or as a 'safety net'. While there may, in practice, always be a choice about who we take in, literally or figuratively, this focus on unconditionality is something that can be offered by kin and non-kin, by our 'temporal convoys' (Gillis, 1996). These are the people, as Gillis puts it, who, in principle if not always in practice, sustain us. Such emotional

connections are, as this chapter has shown, grounded in everyday life, built up through shared experience, and, for the most part, through the *doing* of being there.

Over and above the potentially disclosing nature of the practices of being there, however, theoretical work needs to take on board the not-so-measurable aspects of emotional connection, including the peace of mind, the background sense of security that comes from believing others are simply on our side. It has been argued that some cultures, including East Asian ones, are more likely to recognize how dimensions such as 'reminding oneself of one's close others' (Taylor et al., 2007, p.832) are restorative of wellbeing. But this fails to recognize the extent to which those in Anglo-American societies also depend on, or are sustained through, this sense of 'thereness'. Particular others, living and dead, are part of our everyday imaginary; they are conjured up in our inner conversations, like Ena's voice in Chapter 4, 'Come on now. Come on' (Hugh). These relationships are akin to Pahl's (2000) 'fossil friends', 'friends of the mind'. While this sense of connection tends to come from those we have been intimate with, others we know only fleetingly can also give us a sense of connection, though it might be different in nature.

Simmel suggests that intimacy occurs where it is the 'vehicle or axis of a relationship' (1950, p.127), that is, where it is fundamental to the nature of that relationship. Others have suggested that intimacy is a quality (Jamieson, 2010), which means that it can occur in relationships not usually thought of as intimate, never mind having it as their 'axis'. Intimacy as a quality, then, is something that is contingent, not always present, even in those relationships where one might most expect it to be. In the above, I have tried, through the concept of 'being there', to understand more about what this quality might look or feel like while holding on to the argument, from Part II, that there are patterns of who is 'there' for us at different stages of our lives; in other words, that 'thereness' continues to be shaped 'by gendered roles, responsibilities and obligations' (Gillies, 2003, p.2).

Like intimacy, 'being there' can happen serendipitously. But it tends to be built up, often through unspoken acts/practices over time – and given the personal investment of time, emotion and knowledge as well as material resources involved, it is, not surprisingly, costly. While managing expectations of 'thereness' – our own and other people's – across different types of relationships is challenging, it is a part of most people's everyday lives, part of their emotional capital. Like reflexivity, which will be explored in depth in the next chapter, intimacy – and being

there – is a mix of things we do, think, remember and imagine and is suffused with emotions. These are not just the dramatic emotions we normally associate with the idea of the intimate – love, jealousy and hate – but low-level or background emotions such as feelings of security, implicit trust and acceptance. These are among the emotions which were surfaced conceptually in Chapter 1, but which are rarely the focus of sociological interest. Relationships which matter may well be more about doing, more emotionally mundane and, at the same time, more existentially necessary than has so far been acknowledged in sociological theory.

This chapter has engaged with the power of Williams' (1979, p.184) 'ordinary relationships' and with the question of what it would mean to take seriously the possibility, as Pilgrim (2009, p.330) put it, that 'being with' might indeed be as significant in life as 'doing' (or talking to). This is more than an abstract question; health research has, for some time, recognized the significance of perceived support for people's sense of mental wellbeing. In other words, believing we have people in our lives who matter to us, and to whom we matter, is significant in health terms. In Spencer and Pahl's (2006) words, perceptions that we are loved and cared for act as a kind of 'buffer', and to imagine ourselves as not mattering to others can have real (sometimes fatal) consequences (Brownlie, 2012).

Some of the forms of 'being there' which have been outlined above cannot be easily replicated by professionals, or would call for relationships with professionals which are more kin-like or friend-like and/or not explicitly talk-based. This raises a number of questions: whether the current balance between talk and non-talked based services is the right one and what the nature of professional emotional support should be. We saw in Part II that this question of authenticity, of professionals truly being on our side, and not just doing a job, mattered to people when deciding who to turn to (Brown and Kandirikirira, 2007, p.148). This is unsurprising given how 'being there' has been understood in this chapter. Yet, for some, professionals being outside the informal sphere is what makes them 'safe'. To understand this, we need to understand more about how we think about privacy and vulnerability, the focus of Chapters 7 and 8.

Archer (2000) has suggested that embodied knowledge is a 'knowing how' rather than a 'knowing that' and that it is through our practices of learning how, through doing, that we secure meanings. This chapter suggests that being there often involves doing, which both constitutes and is shaped by intimate (embodied) knowledge. Yet, despite Archer's

focus on practice, much of her analytical attention, as we saw in Chapter 1, is on talk – inner and outer conversations – rather than other forms of doing. I have argued in this chapter that we need to widen our lens to include these other forms of action if we are to understand our emotional relationships to others. Such actions have been the concern of sociologists who draw on theories of practice (Warde, 2005) yet, despite emotions being a key dimension of these theories (Schatzki, 1996) much of this work has not been directly concerned with the practices of emotional relationships per se (see, however, Phoenix and Brannen, 2014). In the next chapter, I suggest that we also need this focus on practices to be a part of understanding how we do, but also 'still', reflexivity.

6
Seizing the Spinning Top: Reflexivity in Practice

Despite theoretical interest in reflexivity, empirical research in this area is still rare (Phillips and Western, 2005). This is, likely, in part, to be a result of the methodological difficulty involved: akin to seizing a spinning top to understand how it works (James, 1890, p.244, cited Archer, 2010, p.5). Yet we do need to find out more about reflexivity, about how we make our way in the world and, specifically, the role of emotions in this. This chapter adds to empirical work in this area and engages with some of the conceptual work about reflexivity outlined in Chapter 1. While the themes considered here are complex ones, and could be the subject of a book in their own right, my aim is to focus on those aspects identified in Chapter 1 as undertheorized in previous work, namely the emotional, interpretive and relational dimensions of reflexivity (Burkitt, 2012). I explore these aspects through addressing three concerns: first, the nature of inner conversations – particularly the relationship between the emotional and cognitive dimensions of such talk, the role of others in self-talk, and what it means for one's inner conversation to be 'fractured'; second, the significance of what we *do* other than talk to ourselves; and finally, how it is we learn to be reflexive. In relation to the last of these, while, as we have seen, there has been a focus on childhood and the relational 'goods' and 'evils' of our formative years, we need to understand the fluctuating nature of reflexivity *throughout* our lives.

This chapter also aims to build on the work of Parts I and II to illustrate how reflexive practices are socially shaped including by class, gender and age and by a changing cultural context. In doing so, it moves between my interpretation of reflexive practices in people's accounts of their emotional lives in general and participants' own retrospective reflections on their reflexivity. As we saw in Chapter 2, getting

at these issues is not straightforward: the fact that people do not talk about emotions having shaped the decisions they have taken might be more revealing of what they are aware of and/or about people's beliefs about talking about emotions rather than about the actual relevance of emotions to their reflexive practices. For some, as we have seen, dismissing emotions might be key to their identity work, part of positioning who they are; for others, it might be the research itself which surfaces emotional reflexivity. This is a point introduced in Chapter 2 but developed further through a case study in Chapter 8. Before engaging with the three concerns outlined above, it is worth reiterating what the key arguments are from recent work on reflexivity.

In Chapter 1, I looked at arguments that reflexivity is increasingly emotionalized (Holmes, 2011) and in Chapter 3 we saw how one aspect of emotional reflexivity, talk about emotions, is shaped by traditional forms of stratification, including gender (Adkins, 2003). In this chapter, I am concerned less with the distribution of, or historical shifts in relation to, reflexivity than with its *qualities* and, in particular, with developing the argument, intimated in Chapter 1, that thinking about *practices*, rather than *types* of reflexivity, might offer greater analytic purchase in understanding how we make our way (emotionally) through the world.

As we saw in Part I, there has been an emerging critique of cognition-driven theories of reflexivity which focus on how we monitor our actions using knowledge (Giddens, 1991), and how we make decisions on the basis of inner conversations (Archer, 2007). For Burkitt (2012), these theoretical framings fail to give emotions their place at the centre of reflexivity. In other words, they do not allow enough for how emotions shape our understanding of self, others and the social world. Emotions in his framing are not just reflexively managed, as we saw in Chapter 1, but are key to how we engage with, and relate to, others – and as such are at the heart of reflexivity itself. For Burkitt (2012), there is no easy way to disentangle self-reflection (how we imagine others perceive us, and how this shapes how we view ourselves, others and the social world) from reflexivity – the knowledgeable production and reproduction of social action. He argues that reflexivity occurs when self-reflections interact with externally mediated knowledge and habitual feelings, but a lack of concern with relationships in relation to reflexivity has led to an underemphasis on emotions. Redressing this means moving away from models of reflexivity which are overly cognitive and individualistic, and are not concerned enough with people's interpretations. Like Mead (1934), Burkitt understands self-talk as

imaginative: we imagine how others perceive and judge us. As we saw in Chapter 1, this can mean that we are in dialogue with more than one voice, not just externally but also internally, and managing these different voices can be messy. I have touched already on the complicated relationship between remembering and emotions but, as we will see in this and other chapters, there is no clear distinction between remembering and imagining, and both are infused with, and productive of, emotions.

Though in her recent work Archer (2012) partly addresses Burkitt's critique that we develop our concerns through identification and disidentification with others, the relational turn in her work is, as I argued in Chapter 1, still limited and limiting. In part this might be because the empirical work on which it is based is restricted, focusing on the short period of university life of her interviewees (Archer, 2012). The now considerable body of sociological work on personal relationships makes clear, as does Part II of this book, that our relationships (with a whole range of people) play out across the life course in evolving and differentiated ways. My emphasis in Part II, and in the last chapter, was on the legacies/dispositions/things we carry which continue to have significance, often regardless of ongoing contact with familiars and similars, and in ways which are not necessarily about restricting our hopes and dreams. This emphasis challenges an unspoken hierarchy around reflexivity research which has led to communicative reflexives being positioned as 'stuck' (Porpora and Shumar, 2010). A sense of this hierarchy can be gleaned from *The Reflexive Imperative* in which Archer (2012, p.33) describes communicative reflexivity as involving familiars and similars who 'cut down to size' our dreams and aspirations, dragging any 'flight of fantasy down to earth' through their concern with the predictable and the private. The relational is not only devalued here, it is almost toxic – yet, as Porpora and Shumar (2010) point out, autonomous reflexivity might well require fewer skills than communicative reflexivity. As I suggested in Chapter 1, we need to be cautious of writing the 'other' out, as reflexivity – even so-called 'autonomous' reflexivity – involves interaction with real, imagined or remembered others. In terms of Archer's thesis, then, it is not just about challenging the evidence for her claim that we have fewer familiars and similars to complete our thoughts than in previous times; that ongoing and/or face-to-face contact is needed for familiars and similars to have a presence/a 'thereness'; and that their impact is always constraining. It is also about emphasizing the relational aspects of reflexivity.

Self-talk

Sociological research, philosophical explorations, psychological research and everyday experiences all point to our being engaged in some form of inner talk. The concept of 'inner conversation', however, is not without its critics. Sharrock and Tsilipakos (2013), for example, note that Archer, through her emphasis on self-talk as an interior question and answer process, distinguishes it from self-reflection or introspection. While Archer places such internal conversations at the heart of everyday mental activities such as rehearsing, imagining, budgeting and planning, Sharrock and Tsilipakos (2013) point out that what Archer's participants are actually describing is something much closer to thinking things through, talking to oneself and even asking oneself a question rather than having a *conversation*.

Putting to one side the question whether or not this reflection is best conceptualized as a conversation, the STTT study, while it did not set out explicitly to ask people about reflexivity, found that references to 'sorting things out in one's head', having 'a conversation with myself' or 'self-talk' were common. Moreover, asking people to reflect on their emotional lives more broadly, rather than on their educational and career choices, as Archer (2012) did, appeared to allow different aspects of how we make our way through the world to surface. In fact, asking about emotional lives produced accounts which are much closer to Archer's *theoretical* conceptualization of reflexivity as a 'passionate' *and* 'cognitive' conversation, inclusive of images and remembered sensations such as 'feelings of unease' than to the cognitive dimensions of planning, budgeting and rehearsing that are to the fore in her empirical work.

Participants' accounts from the STTT study point to the impossibility of being able to separate out the passionate and the cognitive. John, for example, spent much of his interview talking about his plans for living in North America. On one level this is very much a cognitive project involving budgeting and imagining his future life – 'somewhere more open, everything is packed together here' – but it is also emotionally sustaining. Even those whose plans are more modest – 'It's like in ten weeks, nine weeks I will be back in Prague for the Christmas markets' (Sue) – in their self-talk about these activities are doing more than simply organizing their resources in order to make their way; they are *keeping themselves going*.

Part II made clear that *who* is there and willing to listen shapes our talk about emotions, but the same is also true of our 'inner talk'. The role of

others – the relational aspects of reflexivity – is also key to understanding our inner conversations. These 'others' may be 'hidden' – either because they are part of someone's past, not obvious in their present, or part of our imaginary – but, nevertheless, they are part of reflexivity. I explore these possibilities through looking at Lucy's and Neil's accounts below. Lucy, who migrated to Britain in the last couple of years from South East Asia, and whose first language is not English, described the nature of her inner conversations when she first moved.

> I'm sure this kind of self-talking, so I can make myself more aware of the weaknesses and the strengths that I have [...]. Through this way to talk to myself, I mean not like a psycho way [laughs]. I just, 'Mmmm. I should maybe do [...] this one, and or do that one.' Through all this time I was self-talking, to bring myself more like a positive activity.
>
> (Lucy)

In her home country, Lucy could find people to talk to; here she adapts to impeded communicative reflexivity through imagining a sense of shared humanity.

> I will just walk in the city centre and then sit on the chair and then look at the people. They are walking around. I say to myself, 'Oh, this is the life' [...]. So I just go to the city centre maybe and take half hour's break [...] Yeah, well, when you see the people passing by, and then you are seeing those people. They need to eat, they need to live, they need to sleep. So just basic human beings. So everybody just acting as basic human being. That's what I mean. This is the *life*.
>
> (Lucy)

Accounts of emotional lives from the STTT study are suffused with imaginings of how others see us and we them, but also with imagined futures and re-imagined pasts; in other words, an emphasis on what *could* have been, as well as what Colapietro (2010, p.52) describes as 'undirected fancies'. The result, as Sayer (2010) surmised, is that often we end up apparently acting as a result of distracted musings rather than focused mulling. While Archer might acknowledge the former she stops short, Sayer (2010) argues, of seeing this as our acting on the basis of dispositions or habits of thought. I explore these habitual dimensions in more detail throughout this chapter and in the case study at the end.

Lucy's account is one of self-reliance and could be read as an expression of autonomous reflexivity. Yet, at the same time, it is often the knowledge that others exist, who matter to us, and for whom we matter, that fosters or nurtures such self-reliance in the first place. In Lucy's case, she has a strong network of family and friends in her home country as well as a husband in this country. Like her, while we might withdraw into our own heads, usually we do so temporarily *from* present relationships, and we often draw on past relationships to have the self-talk in the first place. Neil, for instance, at first reading, also fits the mould of one of Archer's autonomous reflexives, with his independence rooted in having experienced his parents' acrimonious divorce. And yet if one looks at his narrative as a whole it becomes clear that, despite his professed self-reliance, he has had a sense of strong extant support from his mother throughout his life.

P: Again a sense of kind of self-reliance I think which was not drummed into me but was just given to me freely by my mother. And she has been great; I mean anytime that anything is wrong with me I can't not tell her because she can always tell if there is anything going on with me. She has just been incredibly supportive.
R: How does she know when something is going on?
P: Oh just kind of tone of voice or, she knows me very well obviously and my general unwillingness to talk about things. Um, so she knows enough to kind of talk to me about things to a certain degree and enough to leave me alone to just kind of get on with it.

(Neil)

Neil does spend time, as Archer suggests autonomous reflexives do, searching out information online rather than through face-to-face encounters, but this virtual space can, of course, also be relational. Moreover, like all reflexives, 'autonomous' reflexives display values which are developed through interactions with others.

We saw in Chapter 1 that Archer (2012) allows for fractured reflexivity to be the outcome of impeded communicative reflexivity. Accounts from the STTT study make clear that so-called fractured reflexivity is something we all experience at some point, rather than a state associated with a particular category of people who have somehow less of a 'life of the mind' (Flam, 2010). Even at our most fractured, we never completely lack a 'stance' on society; this is Simmel's (1950) point that to reject society, it has first to be imagined. Moreover, the absence of external action is not in itself a sign of being fractured; data from the

STTT study suggest that inner conversations, like talk in interaction, can *be* the action (Wiley, 2010). In fact, a great deal of 'inner talk', as we have already seen in Part II, involves people managing their own expectations of themselves and others. In the following extract, a woman describes this inner work, this 'sensibility', in relation to her shifting relationship with her adult daughter who now has children of her own.

> Sometimes I do get quite upset, and then other times when I know I'm being really sensible, if you like, that's the way of life, that's how it goes, you know. She has higher priorities now. That doesn't mean to say that she doesn't care about me, that she doesn't love me, I know she does, but she's only got a limited amount of time, and there are three other people there in front of me obviously because, you know, and if she had any more trouble it'd be four. But she won't. But you know what I mean? It dilutes your relationship, and it has to really, you know, sensibility tells you that, doesn't it? You know. I mean there are moments when you wish you were like you were, but you're not and it's as simple as that.
>
> (Roz)

So even this brief exploration of self-talk suggests that rather than work with preset categories of reflexive 'types', there is much to be gained from taking an interpretive and relational approach to reflexivity as a practice, a practice from which it is impossible to write out emotions. But what about the possibility that reflexivity itself involves action other than self-talk? In Chapter 1, I noted that while Archer (2000) has a theoretical framework based on the interplay between social, practical and human order which focuses on *doing* this does not appear to be followed through into her later work on reflexivity. In the next section, I look at what we do, other than talk, to make our way emotionally.

What we do: Trivial pursuits?

We saw in Part I that there is an increasing focus on conceptualizing how emotions are expressed other than verbally, yet much theoretical work on reflexivity specifically still tends to focus on what we *say*, whether internally or to others, rather than what it is we *do*. Archer (2012), in her most recent account of reflexivity, refers only in passing, and somewhat dismissively, to listening to music as a way of emptying or blocking thoughts. In fact, she suggests, music acts on moods, on 'gut feelings' rather than emotions, and it is the former, she argues, to which those

who do not act are susceptible. Framing the debate in this way means that the opportunity for a richer understanding of the role music and other activities play in our emotional lives is lost, and instead we are left with a rather crude dichotomy between embodied 'mood' and emotion, and with little sense of how the expression of emotion through music, far from being a lesser form of agency, can in itself constitute action. I return to lay accounts of the reflexive possibilities offered by music below.

While there is, as noted in the last chapter, an increasing sociological interest in everyday practices[1], the privileging of emotional articulacy has meant that in much research on emotional relationships in Anglo American cultures, mundane, and yet pervasive, practices are under-researched, even though they may be key to how we make our way emotionally. As Sharrock and Tsilipakos (2013) argue, the fact that we engage in silent thinking does not mean that the inner is the only site for reflection, rather it is on a par with 'outer doings'. Yet, even though Archer (2012) acknowledges that we do not know the extent to which 'trivial pursuits' are to the fore in everyday life, she claims that her 'extremely articulate' sample are 'exactly what was required' (p.9) to understand reflexivity, revealing the ways in which the verbal, inner and outer, come to be prioritized in accounts of making our way. This is despite the fact, as noted, that Archer's overall theoretical framework is rooted in the primacy of practice. She is not alone, however, in neglecting such practices in relation to conceptualizing reflexivity; most social theorists share her focus on the verbal dimension of reflexivity. Mouzelis's (2010) exploration of apophatic reflexivity, with its roots in spiritual or religious traditions, is a notable exception here. Through inner exploration, the aim of apophatic reflexivity is to eliminate cognitions which might block goals that would otherwise spontaneously emerge. Mouzelis's focus is interesting as it highlights the historical specificity of different types of reflexivity and the way that meditative approaches are currently sidelined (Adams, 2007). It does not, however, address the much more mundane ways we have of stilling or engaging reflexivity that I am concerned with here.

Research on happiness and wellbeing, on the other hand, has been concerned with these everyday activities including the 'therapeutic' benefits of exercise and being outdoors (Duncan, Grazzani-Gavazzi and Kiran Subba, 2009). Accounts of everyday 'doing' as a way of keeping on an emotional even keel are also to the fore both in popular culture (Hattenstone, 2011) and in participants' accounts from the STTT study.

Sometimes these everyday practices are about *stilling* reflexivity, a means of stopping swirling thoughts and feelings, and so to that extent could be seen as the antithesis of reflexivity – a point I return to below – but sometimes they are a way of *engaging* in reflexivity, that is, thinking and feeling *through* the activity. It is not always easy for either the participant or the researcher to identify what the purpose of engaging in an activity is: whether it is a form of mindfulness, a routinized way of switching off or, indeed, a way of focusing on other issues. At different times, the same activity might fulfil all these purposes. Some participants, mainly men, linked exercise to getting time on their own in order to think – a way of 'being on my own at the gym to think things through'; but at other times it was described as a key means of 'letting off steam' and of 'clearing the head'.

> Like I say, if you'd had a big argument or something or something's upset you or something as well, I'd probably go to the gym, and then like just, I don't know, just, if you're a bit angry or whatever just let your aggression out on the weights I suppose, you know, or the running machine or whatever you're doing.
>
> (David)

For some, like David, *doing* as a way of trying to still or manage emotions and thoughts is a strategy; in other words, something they deliberately choose. For others, it is more habitual and, as such, these practices are 'surfaced' through people being asked to *remember* what they were doing during a particular time rather than how, explicitly, they 'got through' that time. As immersion in doing rather than talking can make others unhappy; some accounts, as we saw in Chapter 3, are also stories about engaging in talk for the sake of others. Such stories remain highly gendered (Duncombe and Marsden, 1998) and the following extracts, including one which builds on Neil's account from Chapter 3, describe the tension that can arise in relationships around men choosing 'to do' rather than to talk to their partners.

> Extract 1
> And I guess the longer we are together the more that becomes a little bit of shorthand as well. If I say it's work stuff I really don't want to talk about it she will leave me alone. She really will and I will stomp around, or I will play music, or I will go and hit a punch bag for a couple of hours and she knows that I will be fine about it. She has learnt to accept that. It's not a natural thing for her because she is

> very much of the opinion that she would want to talk about it to quite a great degree as far as I am concerned to try and deal with it and get past it. So yeah I guess just kind of learning to be a little bit more considerate I suppose.
>
> (Neil)

Archer (2007) drawing on Weber's distinction between action and social action is, as we have seen, dismissive of 'switching off' practices. Yet the fact that even these practices are socially embedded, invested with meaning both for ourselves and for those around us, reminds us of Elias's point that Weber's 'not wholly successful' distinction between action and social action produces the problematic category of 'purely individual action' (1994, p.207).

While much mental health discourse focuses on developing strategies for wellbeing, including positive thinking, the ways people *already* have of coping tend to be less acknowledged. To this extent, Frank (2007) may be right: that our tendency to focus on coping as something only the ill do, means that we ignore the coping that we are *all* busy doing. When policy and practice has focused on our 'ordinary' activities, it is often our more 'dysfunctional' practices that catch attention. Such activities were also mentioned by participants in the STTT study and were clearly steeped in social meanings. Paul's use of marijuana, for instance, is shaped by the absence of opportunity for communicative reflexivity either at work or when he comes home from his night shifts. But it is also clear that the smoking in itself is given meaning through how he imagines the response of those he is close to (Becker, 1953).

> P: I smoke marijuana when I am stressed [...], I do find it physically relaxing, it makes you go to sleep. I don't smoke socially but I will smoke if I am feeling a bit down about things [...].
> R: What would you say is the main benefit from that?
> P: The main benefit I think is to be honest being able to go to sleep [...]. But I think to be honest there is a slight, it must be a memory of it. I don't know, I think it works on two levels. I think it works on the physical level of making you sleep. And also, I thought about this, that it's almost like it's the only deviant thing I do [laughs]. You know, just the want to be deviant, you know. It's naughty, it's wrong, my wife doesn't like it, you know. 'God, I am depressed, I am going to do something terrible.' It's not that terrible. It's not terrible at all really unless you smoke the strong stuff [...]. But erm, there

is an aspect of 'Oh, I am really fucked off, I need to be deviant.' Yeah, I think it works on those two levels but mostly the sleep to be honest. If I come in and my thoughts are swirling. Because my job is really bad for that, if you are down about something and you drive for hours and ideas just go round and round your head, you know, you can. Because it's, everyone is a stranger that gets in the cab, you don't talk to them, it's not like being at work where people might say to you if you are looking a bit down, 'Are you okay?' You don't get any of that. So your thoughts are swirling around. And I think, coming home, having a couple of joints and going to bed it really knocks those thoughts out of your head.

[. . .]

R: And is that something you do rather than talking to people?

P: That's hard to say because I finish very late at night and there is never anyone around anyhow. So it's a very solitary, quiet, lights out kind of thing. Maybe, it doesn't resolve anything, it's an immediate fix. Swirling problems go away.

(Paul)

For most, however, acts of stilling are woven into the pattern of the day, from hoovering to gardening to walking the dog. People, using phrases we are all familiar with – 'forgetting things', 'losing yourself', 'clearing your mind', 'stopping things going over and over in your mind' – describe *losing* awareness of self and/or of inner talk or thoughts. In this mental (and sometimes physical) space, 'time flies in' and it is this quality that leads some to describe this time/space as 'therapeutic' or as having a 'chill factor'. In the following extracts very different activities are being described, but they share this quality of suspension, though some describe being in the moment and others simply switching off.

I have got a greenhouse out there, all my little plants now and I am concentrating on them plants and that's it.

(Ian)

It's [crafts] a very satisfying thing to sit down, and it's just, it's sort of, I can kinda get lost in my own world, you know?

(Helen)

R: What is it you love about fishing?

P: Oh well it's just, it's tranquillity and it's the thrill of it when you hook it you know just really nice on the boat. If you

> have any troubles you have got none, they just seem to disappear. You know because you are just concentrating on your fish.
> (Leslie)

Sometimes, to achieve this sense of stillness involves being in a particular place. In the following account, Michael describes having lived in one town all his life. He talks about the significance to him of his proximity to the sea. By the end of the extract below, it is clear that the comfort that comes from being alone with his dog by the sea is something he first experienced in childhood, and so this particular dimension of making his way emotionally in the world has developed over 40 years.

P: I mean when I moved down to [...] you are miles away from the sea and it's all built-up areas, you know, you can't escape. I hate that, I have got to escape. I can go out with the dog for five minutes and I am down at the sea away from it all.
R: And that's important to you?
P: Oh that's important to me. I couldn't move away from here. Even moving back to [...]. I would hate this because I am further away from the sea, I would have further to walk [...].
R: And, yeah, I am just thinking about what you are saying about that, about what helps and what doesn't help.
R: Yeah if the beach and that wasn't there I would be kind of really, really fed up. I can escape there, I spent most of my young life down there. I was down there every day, sometimes before school and just after school straight down there exploring. I would be there myself. I was always myself, I spent most of the days myself down there and whatever. I love the place, my mum and dad's ashes are down there. I feel I can go there and I am at home kind of thing, you know?
(Michael)

Sometimes the same activity can be both a means of stilling reflexivity and a source of the problems people wish to escape from. This is particularly true of work: for some, work is at the heart of their problems while for others it gives them something to hold on to.

R: It must have been devastating for you when [wife] died?
P: Oh aye.
R: Can you tell me how you got through that or how you are still getting through it?
P: Work.

R: Work. Uh huh.
P: I just threw myself into [it]. If there was any extra shift work, any extra shifts going I just worked them. Then after two or three years, 'Father it's time you were getting out and about.'

(Ian)

Prosaic ways of stilling need to fit in with the demands of the working day, and so some people – often men – describe driving or simply sitting in their car during work time.

> Yeah during the day at work [...]. I'll just go. Go away out for an hour and just go for a drive [...] I'll just put the radio on and put a CD in or something and just go for a drive down the M6.
>
> (Mark)

Reflecting the persistent gendered division of labour, women were more likely to mention housework.

R: Are there things you do that get you through?
P: Like a lot of people, you do, er, humdrum household chores.
R: Yeah.
P: You clean the house. Spotless. It ends up spotless. The more tragedies you have, the more spotless your home is.

(Jill)

> One of the things I do is I start cleaning things. It seems practical, or tidying, or in some way trying to control one's life. Restoring order!
>
> (Christine)

While many of the above practices are about stilling thoughts, creating and listening to music are key practices that people use to *think through*. The accounts people give of the role music plays in helping them make their way emotionally bear little relation to the restricted role given to it by Archer (2012) in *The Reflexive Imperative* where, as we have seen, music is framed mainly in terms of its contribution to 'relational poverty'.

There is a fascinating body of work emerging across disciplines which is engaged with what it means to be lost and found in music. Some of this has drawn on different levels of consciousness through which we engage with music – akin to the distinction between practical and discursive consciousness noted earlier – and has explored what it means for us to become listening bodies (Clarke and Clarke, 2011). Exploring

embodied engagement with music as part of our everyday reflexivity would be an interesting way to develop sociological thinking about the role of doing in reflexivity, but here I make the more basic point that rather than impoverishing our relationships, music, in participants' accounts, is a means of working through relationships and emotions. In the STTT study, participants described deliberately listening to music to manage their emotions: because they 'wanted to be unhappy', to 'lift spirits' or to cope with stress by 'turning up the volume' (John). Here Lee talks of listening to music in the car on the way to work as a way of helping her prepare for the racism she experiences there.

R: But the music, that helps?
P: Yeah it does.
R: Did it make you feel happier or what?
P: No. Sometimes the music does help you to get, what I mean is when I am going to work it does, it builds you up a bit. Like, OK ready! It's like listen to the music and ready to go to work, or ready to cope with whatever they, you know. So I think that's it [...]. I have changed my job now. It's not a very nice place. So every day I go to work I turn the music so loud so you are sort of like singing and people look at you, when you are driving, I am really singing, like proper singing in the car. I think people can hear me outside as well. But people look at me, like look at this foreigner, crazy, shouting and screaming in the car. I am going, 'I don't care,' but you know I am singing whatever. When you arrive to the workplace, I switch off the engine and sit down going, 'What are they going to talk about me today?' It's horrible.

(Lee)

For some, music, like Neil's accounts of exercise earlier, allowed them to have time to themselves, and the act of listening was often associated with particular spaces and places – putting on Ipods and going for long walks or retreating to dens.

R: What is it you think that gives you?
P: I don't really know I like going out at night and just put my [...] IPod on and just walk round the village and that.
R: Is it a switch, is it sort of switching off?
P: Aye definitely I go out for a walk for hours.
R: Could you?
P: Oh aye just put the music on.

(Mark)

> I just like some sort of solitude and the music. I spend a lot of time just I've got a kind of what I call a den upstairs and if there's anything that's bothering me I just go up there. I've got some music on and that's where I kind of quickly bounce around what I need to do. I come out of there and kind of think, well that's what I need to do.
>
> (Jason)

Part of understanding the place of music in our lives is understanding its significance to how we make sense of our biographies and manage our identities (DeNora, 2000).

> Right OK. Chandler [from television series *Friends*] whom I'm very fond of, broke up with the woman [...] and he's talking with Phoebe and he said, 'I now finally understand Lionel Ritchie songs.' There's a lot of that in, I think, emotional times with music you know [...] there are lots of albums that I could name that are like that, but people only understand in certain times of trauma. You know Beach Boys' Pet Sounds is the classic teenage, early twenties boy's angst that lots of people don't get.
>
> (Francis)

We see in the following extract, from Will, the multiple ways that music can become part of our reflexive practices. He introduces the subject of music in the context of a friend at work who committed suicide, and goes on to explore how he has used music since to mediate how he is feeling in the everyday.

P: So it was quite a big thing for everyone, so I became a lot closer to a lot of people at work. And I have always, like, music is really important to me and the kind of music that I am playing will probably give you an idea of what mood I am in. So I guess, probably, I played a lot of loud raucous music during that time. [...]

R: Was the music, did it actually help you to feel things or did you use it as a distraction from feeling things?

P: I think both because, sometimes, speaking about that event specifically, or after it, sometimes I would want to just play it loud as a distraction and then, I really, I have always really listened to lyrics and I like a song or not because of the lyrics, and there would be some songs that I would all of a sudden find this new meaning in and it could relate to, or I felt that, they were sort of, I could relate to them basically. They were sort of summing up how I felt at that moment in time so those would be the ones that maybe I wouldn't be blaring them out, but actually be sort of listening to them [...].

R: You said something about how you would know how I was feeling by the music, is that still true?
P: Yeah. Yeah. I think so. And actually on the computer there I have got a music programme, I play around with music now and sort of make songs out of other songs and I guess it's probably an element of how I feel.

(Will)

For Neil, another man in his thirties, music has played a significant role both at the level of primary or practical consciousness – in terms of himself as a 'listening body' – but also in terms of how he communicates with others.

> Music is a sort of fundamental concept, not just in terms of making it but just listening to it and yeah the whole thing really I suppose. I guess, what it does to you, it sort of accesses something quite primal doesn't it really, music? I also view music as a level of communication, sometimes I can be not so great at verbal communication I think, interacting with people via music is great and I get a lot out of that [. . .]. I mean several people have kind of laughed about it in the past. [Girlfriend] has mentioned it a couple of times as well that I am never happier than when I am communicating with someone with a big massive barrier between us! [laughter]

R: Meaning, what barrier?
P: Just like twenty feet!
R: Oh I see! The stage you mean?
P: Yeah a stage, a microphone, a feeling of us and them, but I do get a big kick out of it. I get a big kick out of changing people's moods. I love the idea of four or five people, or ten people, or however many people, doing things with their hands to make noise which affects people's moods. It's spectacular [. . .] and that level of kind of weird intrinsic you know guttural communication is hugely important to me. I love that.

(Neil)

Learning emotional reflexivity

We have a sense from the accounts in the chapter so far of some of the ways reflexivity can be stilled or facilitated through different practices and, from Michael, a beginning of a sense of how these ways of being

come to be learned. In Chapters 1 and 3, the narrative of the 'childhood fix' where life is understood as cumulative, as a 'series of causes' (Plummer, 2001, p.193), was identified as a key tenet of the therapeutic cultural shift. But we have also seen that even difficult childhoods need not necessarily be understood as deficient and/or shaping adulthood negatively. Moreover, as we saw in Chapters 4 and 5, our ways of learning to be emotional are mediated through the relationships we have throughout our lives. As Paul put it in Chapter 3, our 'emotional bank' develops over time. As adults, we can gain new ways of understanding self and others through our emotions. For some, like Jill, this learning might take place through their work.

P: Or if I'm feeling hurt or upset, I write it down. It was part of my training though is that.
R: Is it?
P: Yeah. The clinical psychology.
[...]
P: I've a colleague who says she knows that it helps me to write things down, so she advises me to write things down.
R: Mmm. And so you've only done that since you were in your forties?
P: Yeah. Probably. [...] it clarifies your thoughts and [...] it helps to sort out your thoughts when you put it down on paper. You can also take it out of your mind. If things are going round and round and round, if you write it down. You can put it somewhere else.

(Jill)

For Ian, a man from a working-class background who was part of the pre-war 'mustn't grumble' generation, the skills he has learned from work are framed less in terms of emotional expression than of stoicism. The expression he uses about working for the emergency services, that it gave him the 'backbone', is the same one he uses to describe his wife: 'she was the backbone'; both, in effect, kept him standing. In the account below he emphasizes the interplay between the worlds of family and work – through choosing to tell a story about a time when he encountered a family member, unexpectedly, in the course of his work. His reflexivity, as we saw in Chapter 3, is shaped by his gender, class and generation.

R: Sometimes when people have gone through what you have gone through, they sometimes end up speaking to a counsellor because

they struggle to come to terms with losing someone. Has that ever happened?

P: No. Being in the emergency services it gave you the backbone to deal with life and death. [...] like it was, I was in this area, I was in the emergency van, there was a road accident just at the bus stop down there, a youngster coming from the school, not watching what she was doing, out behind the bus and was struck by two cars. I turned up at the road accident and it was my niece. I dealt with it, because your sole purpose is your patient not what you feel at the time. So I dealt with it. So this was, thirty year's service, looking after the public in every aspect of life [...]. Even when you were dealing with childbirth, stillborn, I mean I had 21 births, here, there and everywhere.

R: So you feel it's given you something that helps you cope personally?

P: Oh yes. Because you were dealing with it eight hours a day seven days a week.

R: What do you think it gave you, can you put it into words what you think it gave you to deal with your own life I am talking about?

P: Oh it gives you the backbone to deal with your own life, with all the problems, because those problems could arise at any time with your own family.

(Ian)

Some, such as Joe (see his account in Chapter 3) develop an understanding of reflexivity, and the role of emotions in this, through having contact with counselling professionals, and then subsequently becoming involved in counselling training themselves.

Our learning to be emotionally reflexive can be understood in terms of the transmission of emotional capital across generations, but it is also a process shaped by the sociocultural changes discussed in Chapter 3. Cath's account, for instance, highlights how she learned how to make her way emotionally during her childhood, but also how she adapted as a result of broader sociocultural shifts. She offers a narrative, all the more powerful for its understatedness, which shows that emotions, while they may have been unspoken during her childhood, were nevertheless forcefully expressed in other ways.

> And my dad used to go into a bit of a sulk [...] and they wouldn't *speak* for days. And he used to do such childish things, like switch the electric off. So we'd be sat in the dark waiting for 'im to come home

and, and actually put it on. Childish. He was very selfish, er, but apart from that.

(Cath)

These lessons about emotions she took with her into adulthood.

P: But we were brought up not to show your feelings.
R: OK. OK. [. . .] And do you mean, so how would that . . . ?
P: It 'as affected me.
R: Yeah.
P: You feel it inside [*very upset*].
R: Yes.
P: [*very upset*]. But you can't say it. You, you feel things, but you feel you're not allowed to let them out.
R: [. . .] How was it in the house? When people were upset, what did you do?
P: We didn't 'ave to be upset. We 'ad to just get on with it.

(Cath)

In the later stages of the interview, Cath reads her past through a current discourse about the value of emotional openness and, as she enters her late middle years, describes how her way of being emotional has shifted through exposure to therapeutic narratives and practices. In midlife she briefly seeks marriage guidance counselling, and extracts advice from women's magazines and talk shows: 'I mean, you know, when he's [Jeremy Kyle] sort o' been on about things, I might o' included 'em when I've been talking to [husband] sort o' thing.' Cath makes sense of the emotional legacy from her younger years through current emotion culture.

P: And I mean even now there's things that I can't talk to [husband] about
R: Mmmm.
P: And I should be able to [. . .]. But that could be wi' my upbringing. That there's part o' me that never ever shows me real self actually.

The theme that she *should* be able to talk, that her 'real self' remains hidden as a result of her not talking, is repeated throughout her interview. Keeping things 'in' for Cath is not right: close relationships should

be based on disclosure, and her inability to talk about her emotions with those she is closest to represents a failing, 'because you need to tell people how you feel'. Cath rejects the ways of her upbringing, and the cultural shifts towards emotional openness and new cultural practices of emotions talk seem to be the lens through which she now judges this earlier time, the time of not talking, but also how she now judges herself. Our emotional ways of being, like Cath's, can come to seem out of place and time in adulthood, an example of emotional hysteresis, though for some the realization that there might be other ways of being emotionally in the world can become apparent during childhood through, for example, having contact with other families.

> Everybody is emotional in some way but I just didn't see it with [my family] at all. And I think I have missed out on quite a number of things like that. It didn't make them any worse as people, they were still, they would do everything for you if they could. But there were things missing you know? I would have loved to have done that, give my mother a hug and a kiss before I would go out, because I saw it in other people's houses and I thought, 'It's lovely that.' And they thought, 'What are you on about? It's normal.' I thought, 'It's not normal though because I don't do it.'
>
> (Frank)

Making our way emotionally

In this chapter so far, different dimensions of reflexivity have been explored: the nature of inner talk, including the blurring of its cognitive and passionate aspects, and the relevance of others to self-talk; the meaning of fractured reflexivity; the role of doing (habitual and strategic) rather than talk in relation to reflexivity; how we learn to be reflexive, including the shifting nature of reflexivity across the life course and the relationship between reflection and reflexivity, in other words between self-interpretation and (cultural) knowledge. Across all of these has been a concern to emphasize the significance of relationships, emotions and the meanings we bring to our lives. I conclude this chapter by exploring how these dimensions are interwoven in one account.

Matt is a man in his fifties who lives in a small town in the North of England. Married with three grown-up sons, he currently has several part-time jobs and is trying to deal with debt he has accrued through a failed business venture that he left a salaried job for.

> I haven't done things properly as far as the finance is concerned. I don't blame my wife one little bit, it's me; I am a bit old-fashioned. You think that the man's the provider and I haven't been able to provide for the family and that's it.

Born in the 1950s, Matt grew up in the North of England where his parents ran a hotel. Both his parents were alcoholics and Matt describes a childhood shaped by his parents' problems. He clearly views his way of being reflexive as shaped by these early years. This account of his childhood is constructed in part through others' voices, primarily his wife's.

> I have spoken to [wife] about this, and she thinks it was my childhood, brought up by two alcoholics, where you don't share anything because of the family situation.

'Blaming' one's parents sits uncomfortably with Matt however; for him it is too much of 'an easy crutch'. Again, for him, it is only by drawing on his wife's voice that he feels this narrative can be legitimately told.

> Because I didn't get any parental guidance, and I am not blaming my parents for that; it's an easy crutch to use. I didn't get any parental guidance, and they couldn't guide me because they didn't know anything [...]. There was no one behind me saying here is what to do, so I had to plough my own furrow. [...] I am not trying to bring people down because they are not here to defend themselves but because of that, because of the family trait and the way I was brought up, I think, she [wife] thinks it's all because of that. And it could be right because my sister is identical, she will not even mention her mother's name.

Much of Matt's narrative is about managing voices and images from the past. He recalls, for instance, his parents turning up drunk to support him at a school rugby match. He remembers everything about this scene: the smallness of the crowd; the darkness of the stands; the loudness of his parents and, above all, his feeling of shame.

> It was a night match, it was the reserves and you don't get a big crowd at the reserves, so you hear everybody and I was through playing and

> the loudest two were my parents and they were drunk. And everybody could hear them and at half-time people were saying, 'Who are these two idiots?'

He imagines how things could have been different, for instance for his sister: 'If she had had a normal family life, she would have been an accountant or whatever.' In the following, sparked by a question about whether he has any friends locally, Matt reflects on the (embodied) emotional legacies that he believes shape his relationships as an adult.

> P: I would say I don't have any friends here. I would say I have acquaintances, I have people I know, [wife] has friends. But because I don't go to the pubs and things like this I don't really socialize in that way. So I had one guy, a very nice guy, he lived across the road, probably the one guy I would have said would have been nearest a friend. I remember one night saying from his window, I was out in the garden, 'Do you fancy going for a pint?' 'No I don't.' That probably ruined that! [Laughter]
> R: But it wasn't what you wanted to do?
> P: No. And I actually detest pubs. I abhor going into pubs and I think, I am certain, that's because of my childhood. I was brought up in [a hotel] and to get to our living room we had to pass by the alcohol and the smoke, just to get into where we lived. And that I absolutely detested, at that time, I still do now [...]. I remember an instance when I was a youngster, six/seven years old, going to the swimming pool for the very first time with friends. And I had never been swimming in my life, and as soon as I got there, there was a noise and I think I went and sat on the balcony, the noise. I think pubs are the same, I don't like, it's not that I am claustrophobic, I don't like big crowds and I think, I think that stems from my childhood.
>
> (Matt)

Emerging cultural narratives are also relevant to Matt's understanding of his emotional way of being in the world now. On the one hand Matt is highly sceptical of the professionalization of emotional lives.

> The doctors just 'Give me a pill and it will cure it.' I wouldn't go to the doctor. I would just say 'I will cure myself, I will go for a walk, or I will do this, I will think things out' [...]. Um, so I try and resolve the

> problem myself, so if someone comes to me and says I am depressed. Go away! You don't know what depression is.
>
> (Matt)

And yet, on the other hand, he can see the benefits of talking about one's emotions – 'it is the right thing to do' – and describes himself as lacking self-confidence.

> I can remember as a teenager knowing that I was always slow coming forward. Um, and as a teenager I wrote away for something that I saw in a magazine that was about giving you more confidence and everything else. And I do suffer from low self-esteem and lack of confidence and I have been like that all my life, and I realize that. But I get by, I can survive until I was made redundant.
>
> (Matt)

This sense of being hindered – 'I use the word problem, hindrance; something has held me back maybe rather than a problem' – has led Matt, as an adult, to read self-help books. Reading these texts has left him with the conviction that 'anybody can do anything they want to' and this, in turn, led him to seek out a hypnotherapist whom he hoped would help him 'get something out' and overcome this 'hindrance'. In practice, however, he found the hypnotherapist more expensive, but not more helpful, than the books so he stopped attending. Self-help/improvement narratives coexist alongside the dominant cultural narrative 'that it is good to talk' in his account, and both jostle with other more sceptical inner voices shaped, in part, by his sense of what being masculine means. Much of this inner dialogue is played out in his relationship with his sons, and his past relationship with his father. It is a gendered and generational account.

> At least I am honest with myself. I don't hug my children, it might happen, it might happen. I think I am old-fashioned. I have got three sons and they are fine lads but I would never hug them but [wife] would. Uh, so I am more, I think I'm the old-fashioned male who would shake their hand and say 'Well done son!' I think that's, well it is wrong; my father never, never hugged me or anything like that.
>
> (Matt)

When faced with his witnessing one of his sons being emotionally upset, Matt's instinct is to withdraw and let his wife step in.

> And I was in the corner saying to myself goodness sake stop blubbing you know. I didn't say that to him but I felt it [...]. But he needed someone and he got his mother.

And threaded through all of this is Matt's inclination when facing times of emotion fracture to *do* rather than talk. In fact when Matt draws a mapping of what or who gets him through he puts sports and mental games such as puzzles before what he describes as 'close friends'. These practices, as we saw for other men, cause tension with his partner.

R: And you mentioned a couple of times, I know exercise is important to you. It sounds like since you were a boy you were always involved in exercise. Is that one of your key ways of dealing with?
P: I think so. Um, when I was made redundant I used to go running half-marathons and I didn't do marathons but I did half-marathons, and I always felt that by doing that I got rid of any stress or strains and that is a strange thing to say but the exercise relaxed me.
[...]
R: But it's different for your wife, she has got a different approach?
P: She doesn't like exercise whatsoever.
R: Is [wife] someone who would want to talk through problems?
P: Yeah she does. Yeah.
R: So how do you manage that?
P: Difficult isn't it?

(Matt)

In this chapter, thinking about reflexivity through life narratives (Vandenberghe, 2005) such as Matt's, and the relationships that make up such biographies, has highlighted the key role emotions play in relationships, and hence in reflexivity. Relationships, real or imagined, always affect reflexivity. These relationships need not be face-to-face – in fact their significance may be deeply symbolic as I suggested in Chapter 5, and they may be experienced as limiting or restrictive, but they are still what makes reflexivity possible. This chapter points to a multilayered understanding of reflexivity: of the interdependence between self-reflection, reflexivity (including knowledges such as the therapeutic which are culturally and socially shaped) and habitual embodied patterns unfolding within relationships in particular material contexts. Focusing on the *practice*, rather than type, of reflexivity highlights how our reflexive abilities continue to be shaped according to our social position throughout our lives – for example, by our experience of

work, ageing and relationships as well as, crucially, by cultural norms. Archer (2003), in *Structure, Agency and Internal Conversation* refers to the fact that the partner of one of her participants is doing a counselling course and how this seems to have had an unsettling effect. That, however, is as far as her analysis goes. We are left with little understanding of what impact the cultural directive that it is 'good to talk' has on our sense-making and how our understanding of 'the nature of human nature' (Mills, 1959, p.165) is being shaped by such transformations.

If people are talking more about emotions, or even feeling that they should, how does this cultural ethos impact on our understanding of the 'kinds of human beings' (Mills, 1959, p.158) we should be? Does it strengthen our capacity for self-talk though emphasizing the significance of the 'intrapsychic' (Gagnon, 1992) or does 'verbal overshadowing' (Schooler and Engstler-Schooler, 1990 cited in Illouz, 2007, p.245) impoverish this inner world? Part II suggests that in practice such overshadowing is not all-pervasive but that, nevertheless, we might still, like Cath and Matt, be aware of such cultural imperatives and find ourselves wanting in relation to them.

Finally, going beyond Wiley's (2010) claim that inner talk might not lead to action but, on occasion, *be* the action, I have argued in this chapter for a greater focus on the significance of 'everyday' practices other than talk in our emotional lives. We lose something by simply dismissing these as trivial pursuits, not only because we spend so much of our time engaged in them, but because such practices are *always* social carried out as they are by particular people in specific contexts at different times (Reckwitz, 2002). The next two chapters extend the analysis of 'not talking' further by exploring the ways people use privacy boundaries, and resist positioning themselves as vulnerable.

7
Living in the Second World

The unsaid has been a recurrent theme throughout this book: in the conceptual discussions about practical consciousness; the methodological challenges of the unspoken; the variations in the propensity to engage in emotions talk; the contingency of who is actually there to listen or coax us to talk; and the unspoken dimensions of reflexivity examined in the last chapter. In this chapter, I continue that exploration by looking at why and how we keep things private. To argue that we live in a culture shaped by disclosure is to suggest that our sense of what counts as 'private' has diminished. This chapter challenges this thesis through an exploration of the hard work people actually do to maintain privacy in their everyday lives. Understanding *not* talking, through investigating our beliefs and practices about privacy, is an exercise which involves engaging with the related concepts of 'the public', the 'personal' (Mills, 1959) and 'secrecy' (Smart, 2011).

Sociological engagement with the nature of 'the private' and 'the public' is, of course, long-standing (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2002), and the discipline's turn to the personal, the intimate and the subjective (Bailey, 2000; Butt and Langdridge, 2003) has led to renewed interest in the blurring of the boundaries between the two, and how each acts to constitute the other (Brewer, 2005). It has also involved attempts to distinguish 'the personal' from the private, to avoid the latter becoming completely conflated with intimacy and a sense of the self (Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards, 2001; 2002). For example, Ribbens McCarthy and Edwards suggest that the personal is concerned with issues to do with self, identity, emotions, intimacy or the body. The private, by contrast, is not simply 'interior experience' but 'a set of practices and orientations that are shared within social settings and interactions' (2002, p.209). Some of these debates are confusing, because the same terms are

being used in slightly different ways, but the main line of argument here is that the private is always social and involves a range of different relationships, practices and mindsets, which cannot simply be equated with the personal or with particular physical spaces. The rise of social media has further concentrated our thinking in this area. While, as we will see, disclosure on television represents for some a clear breach of privacy boundaries, the self-disclosure threshold in relation to social media has been a source of considerable debate (Burkhart, 2011). It is not always clear what 'public' means for the Internet user given that the Internet public is something abstract, anonymous and a means of establishing visibility (Markus, 2010).

Smart (2009) has suggested that, although part of a longer history of disclosure and confession about self, there is a growing urgency in the UK to reveal personal truths. She also notes in a later work, however, a 'cultural tolerance' for secrets (Smart, 2011). As explored below, this is not necessarily contradictory, if we bear in mind Simmel's (1950) assessment that secrets are more than tolerated: they are in fact elementary. That there is a relationship between privacy and secrets then is unsurprising, given that it is through the latter that the boundaries of the former are drawn (Bauman, 2011). As Smart notes, those boundaries shift over time, depending on cultural mores but also on the actors involved – including, potentially, researchers. For Smart (2011), like Kuhn (1995), family secrets and memories are bound up with each other: both can be rehearsed over time and become a means of bridging the gap between the families we have and those we yearn for. How we manage this gap through narrative performance is illustrated in the next chapter. Memories *about* secrets or what is kept private are difficult to pin down because of the multilayered nature of secrets; the fabrication of both memories and secrets; and power relationships which mean that not everyone has access to the same knowledge (Smart, 2011). As Konrad (2005) has noted, often what happens is an active *not* knowing, a deliberate not seeking out of information, in order to manage issues that are potentially disruptive. To that extent secrets are a way of defending against vulnerability – a point I also return to in the final chapter.

All of this suggests that issues of privacy are also inextricably bound up with beliefs about self, self–other relations and *who* the 'self' can be disclosed to. Protecting a sense of self depends on the limits of self-disclosure (Bondi and Fewell, 2003): on, as one participant in the STTT study put it, not 'gossiping' about ourselves. These beliefs, and resultant privacy boundaries (Petronio, 2002), are not just interpersonally negotiated and embedded in differentiated relations but also historically

and culturally located. The argument that there has been a cultural shift towards emotional openness suggests an understanding of the self as somehow less bounded and more porous. We have already had strong empirical indications in Part II, however, that while such shifts may be happening, they are far from all-encompassing – a line of argument I develop further below.

The idea that disclosure could be on the increase while there is simultaneously an ongoing tolerance for secrets can, as already suggested, be made sense of through Simmel's (1950, p.361) understanding that 'restriction of the knowledge of one about the other' is a 'social fact' with each of us only ever revealing 'fragments of our inner life' (1950, p.312). It is difficult, if not impossible, to quantify whether or not there has been an increase in disclosure, but to use Swidler's framing, we need at least to ask questions about the 'seriousness' of these disclosures and about how much still remains undisclosed.

My aim in this chapter, therefore, is to shift the focus away from disclosure to examine the persistence, alongside this 'manifest world', of the 'second world' (Simmel, 1950) constituted by *what we do not talk about*, and I do this by looking at our practices of 'holding back'. Researching secrets and 'the private' poses a challenge; whether we are dealing with written or spoken accounts, we are, by definition, working with what people are *willing* to share. Smart (2011) suggests that if it were not for collections such as the Mass Observation Archive, we might have struggled to access the secrets of the middle classes in the recent past. Even with this archive, however, participants tend to write about secrets that are not ongoing or directly related to themselves. Rather than focus on what people are willing to share, it might be as interesting to focus on the work they do in interview and in their everyday lives, to stop short of telling (or of asking). Privacy is always *negotiated* territory; as Lewis Carroll said, it is not love that makes the world go round, but minding our own business (cited in Day, 1985). It is this *work* of holding back our own – and not asking about other people's – business, as well as our beliefs about those who fail to undertake this work of maintaining 'friendly distance' (Crow, Allan and Summers, 2002), that I explore in the following accounts and enactments.

Constituting the second world

People's talk about privacy is embedded in their beliefs about British emotion culture, which is often framed in comparison to the openness of North American culture.

> I think it's more Americanized, I don't think over here you would say I am going to a therapist, because you wouldn't, you just phone the hotlines or whatever, whereas I think that kind of American culture is 'Oh my God, I have got a problem, I need to go and speak to someone', and they are straightaway out and going and speaking to someone. I think the British are more conservative, [we] don't do that, we will sort it out, and then if something happens we will phone. We are, like, keep it in the family.
>
> (Lisa)

As we saw in Chapter 3, there is a strong perception among the general population that people in the UK are more open now about their personal lives than in the past. This can be heard in the way participants in the STTT study relate how their own parents' and grandparents' lives were often a mystery to them, with most not knowing when their parents were worried or even whether they talked to each other. In both the extracts below, memories of privacy are played out generationally and, in the second, through privacy boundaries relating to the emotional and physical.

> Well I didn't know things. No I wouldn't have known if my parents had had any money problems or whatever and they must have had like everybody else, or if they had an argument, I wouldn't even know my mum and dad had had an argument. Uh, whereas, yeah I think I probably was more open with them [own children] about things, yeah. Whereas my mum's generation probably thought 'not in front of the children' sort of thing.
>
> (Jenny)

> I mean we knew our parents had their ups and downs and arguments, but never in front of the children. The same as my father was that old-fashioned. Although it was like a living room with their bedroom in it, a hall, and then the bedroom where all the kids slept. If my father came out of the living room he would never come out without a shirt on. Even if it was the middle of the night and he heard one of us wakened, the shirt would be pulled on. So it was very closed in, in that respect.
>
> (Pat)

Some older participants described retrospectively finding out things that were quite shocking to them. Cath, now in her sixties, for instance, recalls finding out she had a new baby brother.

P: Well I think the first thing that [. . .] was significant to me was when my brother was born.
R: Oh right. What age were you?
P: Er, seven.
R: Mhm.
P: And it were, it were quite traumatic because, in them days, your parents didn't tell you that they were 'aving a baby [. . .] and he was born at home, and I always remember that I was ill at the time. I had a temperature, so I was actually sleeping downstairs. Me mum and dad had the bed downstairs.
R: Mmmm.
P: And, er, I was actually sleeping downstairs with them. And in the middle of the night, my dad said, 'Come on. We'll 'ave to put you upstairs now.' He lit a fire in my bedroom.
R: Mmmm.
P: Went up, and I just went to bed as normal. And next day, he came up and he said, 'Come down and meet your baby brother.'
R: Oh, goodness.
P: Well that to me was a real shock, and it's always stuck in me mind.

(Cath)

> My brother on one occasion said, 'What's the matter with our father? He is acting like an old woman, you can't talk to him, he is flying off the handle.' But it [was] because my mother had lost a breast. She wasn't allowing him to be able to talk to us and say, 'Look for goodness sake I am uptight, don't come in.' Because we carried on as normal.
>
> (Bill)

Participants contrasted this way of being with their own greater openness now. Indeed, the absence of privacy boundaries, of holding back, is often given as a signifier for emotional closeness: 'There's nothing I couldn't tell her' (Sophie); 'She can just read me like a book so there is no point hiding anything from her' (Claire). In practice, however, even for those who make such claims, complete openness is rare. Only two participants in the STTT study maintained throughout their account that they shared *everything*: Barbara with her friend whom she speaks to every night, and Carol with God – a God that as we heard at the end of Chapter 5, she believes already knows everything, which renders the concept of sharing redundant.

What is striking is the extent to which having claimed that their lives are more open than those of their parents and grandparents and – in

some cases, having deliberately sought to make them so – participants' accounts are, nevertheless, full of instances of holding back, as are the interviews themselves. In the remainder of this chapter, I explore this in more detail through looking first at experiences of, and beliefs about, holding back from family, friends and professionals; the place of 'public' disclosure; and, finally, enactments of constituting 'the second world' within the research interview.

Privacy boundaries

Many different feeling rules relate to the when, where and what of disclosure and these can be context specific. One area, for instance, where people have to manage the relationship between what is said and what remains unsaid is at work. Participants hold views – often gendered – about what can be brought home from the workplace to be discussed with others, but also what should and should not be discussed in the workplace.

> I worked in a factory with 300 men [...] when the talk was all man talk, and I believe man talk was fine, it wasn't offending anybody. And when I came home I didn't bring that into the house right. I went into office work and it was both sexes and I realized the women, the women talk right [...] about the problems they are having with their partners, or being out last night and 'This guy was chatting me up' [...]. But there are certain things that are intimate and personal that you should, you can share with certain people. But uh [...] It's gone too far, it's gone too far.
>
> (Bill)

Work poses particular challenges around privacy boundaries when home and work are not separate. Carol, for instance, whose partner is a minister, described learning to police different types of boundaries for her own wellbeing.

> P: I suppose being a leader of a church you've got to set boundaries, otherwise people, in a way you are like public property anyway; everybody knows you, you don't know everybody else, but they, because you're the leaders, then everybody thinks they know you. [...] So we let the church family know that, you know, really past eight o'clock at night, really, we don't really want any phone calls. And, unless it's an emergency. Um, and then [...] it's like office hours. You know, like if you want to get married in a church, okay, but

> you wouldn't ring up your solicitor at nine o'clock at night, would you? [...]. And there's also the boundaries like, like personal boundaries about [...] that you still have privacy, that your family is your family and it's a private [...]. And my husband doesn't like to stand up in the church and tell everybody about you know, what happens in our private family.
>
> (Carol)

Decisions about what is private in the workplace, as we will see below, also depend on the framing of the relationship, on whether someone is perceived primarily as a colleague or a friend who happens to also be a colleague.

> I might go to the canteen with her and chat about something but that's because she is a friend who happens to be at work rather than a colleague. I wouldn't mix colleagues and my feelings.
>
> (Will)

So although contexts matter, relationships remain key to understanding feeling rules about privacy. Jourard's (1966, p.311) observation still holds true: 'the most powerful determinant (of variations in self-disclosure) so far discovered is the identity of the person to whom one might disclose himself and the nature and purpose of the relationship between the two people'. It is not just, as we saw in Chapter 4, a question of what we feel we can tell different categories of people – friends but not family, mothers as opposed to fathers, daughters as opposed to sons – but also, as we saw in Chapter 5, what we choose to tell our own mothers, fathers, sons and daughters.

> P: Well, I suppose daughters talk. I mean my daughter talks differently to me than she does to my husband. I mean, she wouldn't say some things to my husband that she says to me. She wouldn't ask him certain things that she asks me. But then.
> R: What kinds of things are those?
> P: Personal things. Yeah.
>
> (Judith)

Resonating with the findings about emotional stratification in Chapter 3, the STTT findings suggest strong gender and age, rather than class, differences in talk about privacy boundaries. These are not detailed here – in part because they mirror findings discussed in Part II – but broadly it

appears women are more likely than men to describe having people in their lives to whom they tell everything. This, of course, does not necessarily mean that they actually *do* share everything, but, this perception – or idealization – of these relationships matters. It is often female friends or relatives, rather than partners, whom women place in this role. This may reflect the extent to which relationships with husbands or partners are taken for granted and hence unremarked upon, but it is also likely to tell us something important about how women – both those who live on their own and with partners – continue to rely, as we have seen in Chapter 4, on other women albeit with the caveats noted in previous chapters. On the other hand, if men do talk about one key person to whom they disclose everything, as we saw in Chapter 4, this is likely to be their partner. In terms of age, as noted in Chapter 3, young women appear to be more open than older people with their friends, but like young men they still have a sense of privacy boundaries. For the most part, for both young women and many men, these boundaries are to do with the embarrassment of disclosing; while for older men, and particularly for older women, 'the private' appears to be more shaped by their positioning of themselves as self-reliant, though also, perhaps, by the reduced availability of potential listeners. In practice, it is those in their middle years, particularly women, immersed in the lives of both older and younger generations, who are most actively juggling privacy boundaries in relation to family and friends. While these broad patterns exist across social groups, lack of disclosure is, as suggested in Chapter 6, embedded in *particular* family biographies and relationships.

Beliefs about what should be kept private interact with other feeling rules so, for example, some women describe, as noted in Part II, acting according to the 'not-burdening' rule: keeping things hidden for the sake of others. For example, Jean, in the first extract below, recounts a narrative about not sharing with her husband the fact that her daughter-in-law had written something nasty about her; and in the second extract, Barbara describes holding back information from her husband because he is 'a worrier'.

P: Well, there was one incident when [. . .] I haven't even shared this with my husband but [her neighbour] knows. I found some writings that she'd written and they were really quite malicious about me [. . .]. And then a few days later [neighbour] said, 'What did you do with that book?' And I said, 'Well, it went in the Rayburn.' And I've now forgotten it, it's gone.
(. . .)

R: And you said there it's something that you didn't share with your husband?
P: No, I didn't. I didn't tell him that particular thing. [. . .] I didn't think it was necessary. Because he was hurting anyway with what things were happening.

(Jean)

P: I would tell [friend] because I wouldn't worry [husband].
R: So you would be worried about worrying him?
P: Mmm.
R: Why is that?
P: Because he is a worrier.
R: Right, so you protect him?
P: Yeah. He is a worrier. [. . .] He can't handle it, you know? So I wouldn't tell him. But I could tell Susan.
R: So when you were in hospital at Christmas time? [. . .]
P: Mmm. I didn't even tell him I was going in.
R: You didn't tell him.
[. . .]
P: But I know he's there for me, you know?

(Barbara)

Boundaries between knowledge shared with families and with friends have to be managed. One such boundary issue relates to partners: some people do not wish to discuss their partners with their families, not least because their partner is understood to be a part of their family. The decision about what is kept private within the family and not shared with friends might be enforced by family members, including partners. In the following extract, Matt describes how he and his wife have told no-one about their debt. Initially this appears to be a joint decision but Matt then recalls a time when he was actively silenced by his wife.

> She is like me in that respect [. . .]: what goes on between these four walls stays within these four walls. She wouldn't talk to anyone [. . .]. So we do that together but we wouldn't talk about things publicly and I don't think she would seek assistance from outside these four walls [. . .]. You have just reminded me of something, I didn't, I have never shared it with someone but you have just reminded me of a night after too much alcohol, last September, when [friend] was over from [. . .]. We were downstairs and just reminiscing about days gone by. [. . .] I don't know how we got on to the subject, we got on to the subject of money and I said look [. . .] I am hard up. He said you are not as hard up as me, I said [. . .] you don't know how hard up. He

> said I am a bankrupt. I said 'You are not!' And of course it's open plan so people can hear upstairs and I thought everybody else's doors were closed but they weren't. I said [...] 'I am not a bankrupt but this is' and I could hear [wife] say 'Don't say a word!'
>
> (Matt)

Assessments of the nature of different friendships, and the impact of disclosing to some friends and not others, also have to be carefully managed and, as we saw in Chapter 4, may change over time.

> You know, it's funny. I mean Margaret who I've just been away with, I mean she tells me all her intimate secrets of her life at the moment, which I wouldn't want to discuss with anybody else, and I do mine with her. But I might not tell Sandra, who I've just been swimming with, I might not, you know. It's just certain people that you know are so on your side and so reliable that you can tell them anything and then other people that you just want to know a little bit about you, you know. It's funny, isn't it? You must have people like that as well [...]. I know things about Margaret that other people [don't]. It does make it tricky really because we have mutual friends who I know don't know, and sometimes it's a little bit tricky, isn't it?
>
> (Roz)

Part II also highlighted that there is strong ambivalence about what should remain 'private' in relation to professionals. For some, understanding something as private means, *by definition*, not sharing it with professionals such as counsellors: 'I would have the feeling that it was really none of their business' (Jenny). For Ian, his GP only knows so much about his family life, not the 'nooks and crooks'. Similarly Lucy would 'never dream' of raising emotional issues with her GP despite describing her GP as a 'close friend'. Some people also saw knowledge about any contact with counsellors as belonging to the category of private, as activities which should remain unspoken, in part because of the persistence of stigma noted in Chapter 4.

> It's not something people say, is it? 'Oh, I have just been to my appointment with my shrink, or counsellor.' It doesn't sort of like crop up in everyday conversation does it?
>
> (John)

R: And so even though you've never had an experience yourself of sort of talking to like a counsellor or someone like you mentioned, do you know anyone who has gone through that?
P: Erm, no, I don't know anyone. But then would they tell you if they had been to see a counsellor? I don't even know if my closest friends would tell me if they'd been to see a counsellor just from what I know of them. Personally if I'd been to one I don't think I'd tell anyone. I don't know.
R: Why? Why wouldn't you tell anyone, do you think.
P: I don't really know, I don't really know. Embarrassment maybe that they think I need to go.
R: What would be embarrassing about it do you think?
P: Well, the fact that you weren't able to deal with it yourself. Or talk to someone in your group of friends, I suppose. That you feel you need to go and seek help from someone else.

(Liam)

Yet, on the other hand, as Simmel notes, the fact that the stranger 'embodies the synthesis of nearness and distance' can lead to 'surprising openness' (1950, p.404), as can the related sense that one's secrets are protected by a sense of professional containment. As we saw in Part II, however, this 'professional distance' may also lead to questions about the genuineness or authenticity of such interactions. The reverse of the comfort that comes from a sense of being known is the unease of feeling that one's privacy could be breached through this knowingness. As touched on in Chapter 5, the absence of 'distance and intermission' (Simmel, 1906, p.448) can pose risks. Linking back to the imaginative and interpretative nature of reflexivity explored in Chapter 1 and in the last chapter, this sense of one's privacy potentially being breached through being known relates not just to actual interactions, but to our imaginings about how we might become the subject of someone else's thoughts. Here, for instance, is one participant talking about meeting the receptionist of her health centre in town.

> But the thing is, if there was anything came out, they would be sacked, they would be sacked in, you know, instantly. But when I meet her and I have this sort o' thing: 'Hmm. I wonder what's going through your mind?' You know, given that I've been at the health [centre].
>
> (Helen)

The issue here is the blurring of roles and the taking of intimate knowledge from the safe 'professional' space into the wider community.

Christine, another participant, offers a twist on the significance of remembering shared intimacies, a remembering which is usually at the heart of feeling known and part of 'good' friendship. She points out that in the co-counselling movement[1] she has been involved in, the objective is *not* to remember the details of the encounter or to take knowledge away from it, but simply to be a witness at the point that it is shared.

P: You are not supposed to refer at any time to anything that is in the sessions. And it is quite amazing. If you said to me, 'What did you listen to last week?' You were there, you were absolutely there, but you do not remember because you are not asked to remember, it's not that kind of thing, that's private.
R: That's private?
P: To the person who's speaking [...]. It's confidential [...]. You are setting up a kind of priest/listener role but it is equal time so it is balanced, it's totally balanced. And the understanding is that you do not refer to it again.
R: The interesting thing of course is that with friendships you often judge friendships by the extent to which people do remember?
P: Yes. And I don't quite know how one sorts it out. I don't think there are many things that I have co-counselled about that I wouldn't also speak to friends about. But the private rabbiting that one does before making a decision, the pros and cons, the ifs and buts, the maybes.
R: That you are doing.
P: The what ifs.
R: Yeah.
P: It's thinking aloud [...] and it's very cheap. [....]. You don't spend any money doing it; all you need is a kitchen timer.

(Christine)

Public disclosure

One of the key ways people make clear their own privacy boundaries is through their talk about those who choose to disclose aspects of their emotional lives publicly – for example, in the media and particularly through talk-shows. While people appear to feel some sense of moral obligation not to criticize those seeking counselling help, the opposite is true for those who choose to discuss their emotional lives with journalists or others involved in the media. In this extract,

celebrity and talk-shows involving members of the public are lumped together, representing inappropriate disclosure and a breach of privacy boundaries.

P: I mean you watch the television, watch these programmes on the television, people spill their most intimate details out to the world and his wife, don't they? They do, don't they? And you think, 'Well I don't want to know about that.'
R: And what sort of programmes are you thinking about?
P: Oh, all these sort of chat shows and stuff like that, Jonathan Ross and all those sort of programmes, they just talk about anything and everything, don't they? And then, and you read in the magazines about everything, real personal details that, you know, you'd think, 'Well I wouldn't tell anybody that,' you know. [. . .] and I sit there and I think how could people go on there and discuss really personal details, that are going to be put out to anybody?
R: And why do you think they do?
P: I really don't know. I mean, I really can't imagine ever going on TV and saying I was raped by this one and that one, or I am having a baby and it could be him, him or him who is the father. These things happen to people in life. OK you accept that these things happen but I don't see me ever going on TV and telling the world that.

(Roz)

While distaste or vitriol towards talk-show culture works to highlight one's own privacy boundaries, as with other attempts at abjection, ambivalence could also be read into such accounts, perhaps rooted in a desire to make visible that which has remained hidden, such as with Helen in Chapter 2.

For some participants, public confessions seem to serve a positive purpose, allowing people to identify or feel part of something, offering in the process a vocabulary of the interior and of relationships, as we saw in the last chapter when Cath described drawing on Jeremy Kyle in her attempt to talk to her husband. One participant, who had the experience of being on a talk-show, captures this dual quality of reality TV as validating and as abject.

P: I was actually on one of his programmes, and my daughter came on with me.
R: And how did you get on to that?

P: It was one thing that was going on. [...]. And I just phoned and blew, but my daughter came on with it. And they had the panel at the front. Actually, I've got it on tape somewhere [...]. It wasn't staged. I don't feel it was staged. All right, maybe the questions were directed, but the answers and things, it wasn't make-believe if you know what I mean [...].

R: Was there anything about it that you regret, or you would have changed?

P: The only bit I regretted was that my younger daughter wasn't too happy, although there was nothing that was outright that she could say was wrong. It was just the idea of me going on and speaking about my problems really.

R: What was it about that that she didn't like?

P: She just didn't like me going on and talking about my life.

R: She didn't like that.

P: Didn't like it. [...] I think in her mind, it's private. That is the way she is. She's very like me in a lot of ways [...].

R: No, but did you feel that that sharing of the personal stuff, did you mind doing that, or was that, did that feel ok?

P: In a way, it helped. When I look at it in retrospect, in a way, yeah, I'm glad I did do it [...]. Because it's a bit of like self-validation. You know? You're saying what happened. 'Listen to me. I'm not making it up.' So I think with going on there and doing that, you're validating your life to a certain extent. And I think in that respect it helped.

R: But you don't feel that Jeremy Kyle, you mentioned that, to you, isn't the same? [...]

P: I feel it's very, some of the situations that are coming up are just unreal. I mean for people to go on, and say and do what they do, is just a wee bit over the top. Whereas I think, with [...], it was more of a, it wasn't an individual problem. It was more of a general problem [...]. But with Jeremy Kyle, it's one family battling it out with another sort of thing and, to me, that is a self-problem.

(Pat)

Although the fieldwork for the STTT study pre-dated the explosion in the use of Twitter, Facebook and many other social networking sites, elements of the distaste that some feel for the public disclosure of talk-shows can also, of course, be found in concern about the use of social media. There is some evidence of an emerging generational divide in

attitudes towards online privacy, even if engagement with the digital realm is by no means confined to the young (Brandtzæg, Lüders and Skjetne, 2010).

Enacting holding back

Talking about 'the private' is, by definition, troublesome and, of course, helps to constitute it. Researchers, for the STTT study, prefaced questions about whether there were things participants would not tell anyone with the reassurance 'you don't need to tell me what they are' and, as we saw in Chapter 2, worked *with* participants to allow things to remain private.

R: [laughs] And tell me, are there things, you don't need to tell me what they are, but are there things, because you've described yourself as 'quite open' actually, you're someone that does like to talk about how they're feeling. Are there things that you don't talk to anyone about?
P: Now then.
R: Without having to say what they are.
P: Things, are there things that I don't talk to *anyone* about? Er, no. There are things that I would restrict the audience.
R: Mmm. Can you tell me what category of things we're talking about?
P: Friendship, friendship things.
R: So you, do you mean you wouldn't tell one group of friends about *another* group of friends, or?
P: I would restrict the, restrict the audience. Yeah. I would according to the content.
R: OK.
P: Because of acceptability or *not* acceptability.
R: Right. So it's, it's not about *protecting* people. It's about how they would react to what you were saying?
P: Well, protecting *yourself* really. [. . .] Coz it's being, being, er, canny.
(Jill)

As we saw with Lisa and the issue of gambling in Chapter 2, it is clear from their post-interview notes that researchers are acutely sensitive to issues that might be considered 'off limits' or 'no-go areas'. It is also clear from these notes that they did considerable work during and after interviews to sort out where such boundaries might lie.

> We talked about things which she 'could' have talked about that were 'not relevant' to the interview.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Jill)

> One subject which I thought may/should? have come up more was the fact that [they] had never had children; 'There was no, what do you call it, IVF in those days.' This was something they were 'very sad about'. However it didn't seem to come up any more than this and I picked up that it was perhaps somewhere that Rose didn't want to go too much.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Rose)

> A theme of the interview was getting on with things and she was getting on with the interview, while crying. I was unsure about talking about a recent bereavement but we did go back to it at the end even though I felt ambivalent about 'using' this experience. [...] It felt strange her saying she would not talk to a professional because it was 'none of their business'. I didn't know if that also said something about how she felt about the interview.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Jenny)

Participants, too, in their follow-up telephone interviews reflected on what they had shared, creating a sense of, what was described in Chapter 2 as a 'morning after the night before feel' about the experience: 'You feel as if you have let your guard down a bit' (Ellen).

As we have seen, for some, especially male, participants the decision to disclose information 'in real life' is read as a spontaneous act, so it is perhaps not surprising that the same should also hold true of the interview. As with other research studies, some participants, during or after interview, made it clear that they had never before told anyone what they had just told the researcher. To an extent, sharing what is considered private with a stranger – someone whom they have never met and are unlikely to again – is, as we saw in Chapter 2, morally dubious and, therefore, has to be managed. It is possible to read some accounts of surprise at the nature of the qualitative research interview – that it was *so* personal – as part of this management of a potentially discrediting process, though it might also speak to lack of understanding in advance about the nature of the research encounter, especially since participants were recruited from a quantitative sample and may not have fully appreciated how the survey interview would differ from a more exploratory interview. For some, unexpected sharing is framed in terms of the qualities of the researcher; something about him or her that enabled the

disclosure to take place, or in terms of the greater good, of helping others: 'As long as it helped someone, it can be used as a case example' (Bill). For others, it was justified in terms of the fleeting, non-judgemental nature of the research relationship which gives people freedom to share things.

> Well I would be kind of embarrassed but I know that you are going away to [. . .] and I probably won't see you again.
>
> (Leslie)

Only one participant, Janet, described thinking and planning what she was going to say in the interview – 'In my head, I was doing it at half-past-four this morning' – and as the post-interview notes suggested, she used the interview as an opportunity to disclose.

> She said she had been up at 4 o'clock in the morning thinking about what to say today. She was quickly very tearful and very annoyed at herself for being so. I felt the weight of her expectations about the interview and tried to give her back some sort of control but I was left feeling that the interview was an opportunity to be upset.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Janet)

As well as the space in the interview where decisions are made about what can be said and what can be asked, the location of the interview is also relevant to disclosure. Most of those who took part in the follow-up interview identified it as significant that they were interviewed at home, a place where they felt safe and where they would not be overheard. Of course, in practice, others flowed in and out of these spaces and places, though some had worked to maintain their privacy by arranging times when others would be absent.

> Cath had previously said on the phone that it would be best if we talked when her husband wasn't there so I suppose I went in to the interview expecting Cath to want to talk about her husband or about 'secrets'.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Cath)

> Her husband came back and when I asked her if she wanted to continue she said yes, but not about what we had been talking about.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Mary)

Researchers, for their part, described feeling anxious about people breaching their *own* privacy by allowing others to be present and, on one occasion, it was the researcher who took it upon herself to suggest a participant's child should not be present.

> She was at home with her 10-year-old son. She seemed to assume he would be 'sitting in' on things and he sort of flitted around the room as we spoke. I was distracted by this and by trying to work out if she would make the decision when things were too private/personal for him to stay or if that was my job. Eventually, I felt I had to say that perhaps the next set of questions might be best just the two of us but I was left wondering if she would have made that call.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Helen)

What is experienced as intimate and/or private is, as the above accounts suggest, highly subjective and made all the more complicated by the fact that, as we saw in Chapter 5, what feels intimate is not always what we expect and not always *where* we expect to find it.

> I needed to phone for a taxi but there was no phone downstairs. She reminded me she didn't like phones and so I had to go upstairs. This felt intrusive, that I shouldn't be behind the scenes of the life she had just spent two hours describing.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Ellen)

In Part II, I looked at beliefs and practices as part of the therapeutic ethos, at if and how these have, in Raymond Williams' (1977) sense, structured our feelings. In this chapter, my start point was, not the cultural shift towards emotional openness that people believe has taken place, but rather the work we do in 'holding back', maintaining and protecting the second world both in 'real life' and in the research interview. In the final chapter, I turn to another key dimension of how emotional lives 'in our own time' have been conceptualized: our beliefs and practices about vulnerability. Again, as with the exploration of being there, reflexivity and privacy, it is an absence of talk that I begin with, namely why we might choose not to talk about vulnerability.

8

On Not Telling Our Sad Stories: Where Have All the Vulnerable People Gone?

At the heart of the epochal stories about our emotional lives in Anglo-American societies outlined in Part I is the claim that we increasingly perceive ourselves to be vulnerable. Despite a dearth of empirical evidence (Misztal, 2011, p.35), such claims, which include theorizing about how individualization and globalization create vulnerable selves, are a dominant strand in sociological narratives about emotional lives (Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 2003, p.97). This 'before and after' narrative, as we have seen, has been criticized for failing to understand social change as allowing for both tradition and reflexivity (Adams, 1996).

In Part II of the book, we saw that experiencing vulnerability is not necessarily a reason for talking to professionals: for the vast majority, life's problems remain the stuff of the everyday and do not tend to be incorporated into the therapeutic. The last chapter suggested that this might, in part, be because we perceive this 'stuff' to be private and not the business of 'strangers'. In this chapter, I want to explore further the subject of vulnerability – specifically, whether being vulnerable is the framing through which we choose to interpret our way of being in the world. Not perceiving ourselves as vulnerable might be one reason for not talking about vulnerability, but there could be others. We might, for instance, see ourselves as vulnerable yet still choose not to talk about it, either because it makes us feel uneasy to do so or because we believe we will not be heard or, indeed, may be actively silenced. In other words, like Matt in the last chapter, we might believe we will be on the receiving end, implicitly or explicitly, of the injunction not to 'say a word'. These possibilities are not discrete and, as Riessman (1993) pointed out some time ago, we need to work across the ideational, textual and interpersonal aspects of accounts, as well as the broader social context, to make sense of meanings. In this chapter, I do this by analysing the STTT

study qualitative dataset as a whole, but also by shifting analytical focus and offering an in-depth analysis of one participant's narrative. As with Chapter 3, then, this final chapter is as much a methodological as a substantive and conceptual exploration. By looking at how we conceptualize and research vulnerability *and* how we do both in relation to the STTT study, I aim to understand why we might choose not to talk about vulnerability and/or to see it as the dominant framing for understanding our lives. In doing so, I come full circle to the key themes of Parts I and II of the book.

Conceptualizing vulnerability

Murphy (2011) suggests that the key background assumption we hold about vulnerability is that it is linked to weakness, a state in which we are 'exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally' (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013b). An early seventeenth-century word, vulnerability comes from the Latin root *vulnus,* the 'wound' (ibid). Other definitions emphasize not only being open to attack or criticism but a state of susceptibility, for instance to temptation. Synonyms flesh this out further: to be vulnerable is to be conquerable, assailable, unprotected, unsafe or insecure. These normative ideas about vulnerability are built into our understandings of harm and wellbeing.

All of us, at some time, will have known the state of vulnerability as it is described here. Likewise, in the STTT study, there were stories of loved ones having died, jobs lost, severe debt, victimization, depression, physical illness and loneliness. These experiences often had economic, social, psychological and physical dimensions, and were usually a combination of some or all of these. Yet, in the STTT study, participants tended to position these as vulnerable *times*, rather than themselves as vulnerable *beings*. This distinction is something that sociological commentaries which emphasize the rise of the vulnerable self have, for the most part, ignored.

In what follows, I begin by developing a conceptual framework to help understand why vulnerable selves tend not to dominate even in a study which gave participants explicit permission to talk about vulnerable times. I start with the idea that we distance – or are encouraged to distance – ourselves from vulnerability. I then look at three conceptual pairings: ordinary and extraordinary vulnerability, subjective and objective vulnerability, and vulnerability and wellbeing/happiness, as a way of making sense of such practices. Across all of these interlinked

dimensions is a concern to hold on to the sociocultural context within which these understandings are formed.

Distancing

It is not difficult to see how an understanding of vulnerability as susceptibility to harm might lead us to disavow this state and, indeed, project it on to others, particularly on to those with whom we do not identify (Gilson, 2011). While usually construed as a psychological process, distancing is culturally shaped. Dominant constructions of masculinity (Connell, 2005), for example, help explain why men, in particular, resist identifying themselves as vulnerable (and we know from Part II that gender faultlines are persistent). Similarly, the sizeable number who are still of the 'mustn't grumble' generation, along with the legacy of resilience stories across generations detailed in Chapter 3, might also play a part in explaining why people distance themselves from vulnerability; but a wider unease with vulnerability still needs to be made sense of. For Butler (2004), this unease is linked to a desire to maintain a masterful, independent subjectivity, an identity privileged in capitalist societies. Claiming invulnerability, then, becomes a way of denying that which unsettles or threatens us. Layton (2009) has also explored in a North American context the ways in which the growth of neoliberalism and the emphasis on self-responsibility has left people feeling a sense of shame at their vulnerability and with a desire to emphasize their self-reliance. For Charles Taylor (2011), however, these beliefs need to be made sense of within a longer time frame, as part of a shift from a pre-modern understanding of a porous self, one at the mercy of demons, spirits and cosmic forces, to a modern understanding of a 'buffered' self, bounded and in control of the meaning of things.

There have been attempts of late to reposition vulnerability; to see it in a more positive or, at least, more ambiguous light. This has involved a shift from seeing it as a property, towards understanding it as a potential condition. Drawing on Butler, Gilson (2011) suggests an understanding of vulner*ability* as both an openness to being affected, and *affecting*, in positive and negative ways. Vulnerability here, then, is a condition which has the potential to affect everyone and the consequences of which are open: it could lead to harm, but it might also lead to something new and rewarding. This framing offers more possibilities, both theoretically and in practice, than one which focuses on precariousness alone (Misztal, 2011). Whether we view vulnerability as a state of precariousness or something more equivocal, the relationship between 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' vulnerability and, relatedly, 'subjective'

and 'objective' vulnerability – and the cultural shaping of both – needs to be teased out.

Making vulnerability ordinary: The nature of dependency and corporeality

An emphasis on vulnerability as a condition which we all potentially share is rooted in our interdependencies and corporeality. These are themes running through feminist philosophical work on caring and, in recent years, social theorists have been re-engaging with these ideas (Butler, 2004; Turner, 2006; Misztal, 2011). Butler (2004) writes of how our initial dependency as children shapes our lifelong dependency on others, and sociological work on trust and intimacy has similarly engaged with how the relationships which both protect us from, and expose us to, vulnerability are shaped by what happens in childhood (Giddens, 1991; Jamieson, 1998). We saw in Chapter 3, however, that people may engage with these ideas but not necessarily position their challenging childhoods negatively, nor see childhood as the only life stage that shapes our understanding of vulnerability.

Theorists interested in the ontology of vulnerability have also come to focus on its embodied nature (Turner, 2006). Some of this work – for example, by Butler (2009, p.2) and Cavarero (2000) – grapples with the issue of how vulnerability can be grounded in *all* human bodies, and yet be experienced uniquely by each (Murphy, 2011); in other words, how it can be a part of the human condition and yet also socially constituted and hence open to challenge (Misztal, 2011).

This relationship between vulnerability, dependency and embodiment is the basis for understanding the duality of our response to vulnerability: care or violence (Butler, 2004). Cavarero (2000) notes that these two poles – caring and wounding – are built into the condition of vulnerability. This duality is unavoidable insofar as acting ethically *always* presupposes the possibility of unethical practice (Sayer, 2011). Vulnerability, then, is not only a precondition for trust, but trusting always carries the risk of leading to further vulnerability (Misztal, 2011). Many of our relationships are asymmetrical and involuntary, leaving us not in control of what they require of us. For Kittay (1999), this is an opportunity to understand our interdependencies though Whitney (2011) suggests that, in her urge to discredit the liberal model of independence, Kittay draws analytical attention to the body's vulnerability rather than its potential power, including the power that comes *through* vulnerability. This is a point I return to below when looking at ill health.

Much of the work on vulnerability and dependency builds on the significance of recognition and the harm that comes from non- or misrecognition. Specifically, it draws on Hegel's understanding (Williams, 1997) of an ethical relationship as one where there is a prior act of mutual recognition (Turner, 2006). Recognition is framed here as a basic human need from which there flows a moral duty, or at least a normative expectation, to meet such need (Honneth, 2007). Power is always involved in such relations. This is not just because recognition from some matters more than from others but because, fundamentally – as with the duality of caring and wounding and ethical/unethical practices – even if claims are recognized, there is always the *possibility* that they might subsequently be refused. While the emphasis in the literature has understandably been on how the risks of trusting increase with power differentials (Misztal, 2011, p.121), it is also true, as the case study later on makes clear, that being depended *upon* also leaves us vulnerable.

Our tacit understanding and acceptance of the pervasiveness of our (embodied) inter-dependencies – and of the risks of these – might well be a part of why we tend not to focus explicitly on vulnerability in talking about our lives. In other words, at some level, we accept that to be human is to live with (embodied and relational) risks, and to that extent they are not 'remarkable'; that is, they do not merit being talked about. Research across a whole range of issues, from class to health to crime, suggests this positioning of our lives as 'ordinary' is not unusual (Cornwell, 1984; Donovan and Hester, 2010), though, as Miles, Savage and Bühlmann (2011) note, these framings, as is the case with vulnerability, are historically contingent. For Sellman (2005), for instance, ordinary vulnerability is an outcome of the uncertain world in which we now live, a point made by Luhmann (1979) and more recently again by Misztal (2011), who writes of vulnerability as 'built into' our way of being in an unpredictable world.

To be *more* than ordinarily vulnerable, then, is something beyond this. For Sellman (2005) it is to have our ability to flourish compromised, as when we find ourselves in need of nursing or medical care. Drawing on reasoning similar to Whitney (2011) above, who emphasizes that there can be power *in* vulnerability, Sellman's interpretation is contested by those who argue that illness does not equate in any straightforward sense with a lack of flourishing, not least because we never know in the longer term how adversities such as ill health will play out. It is possible that more-than-ordinary flourishing could be the outcome of more- than-ordinary vulnerability (Carel, 2008; 2009a).

The possibility of wellbeing *within* ill health is only now being considered, partly as a result of a cultural shift in health discourses which has allowed ill health to be potentially framed in terms of adaptability rather than disruption (Carel, 2009b). In part, this draws on the discourse of positive psychology (Haidt, 2006) and argues that we have tended to underestimate resilience and not paid enough attention to the way adversity can, through the possibility of 'post-traumatic growth', make good relationships better (Carel, 2009b).

It remains the case, however, that even if we do not *perceive* ourselves to be vulnerable, *objectively* we might well be so since our understandings of vulnerability, like wellbeing, are fallible (Sayer, 2011). This leads Misztal (2011, p.128) to argue that, while subjective accounts of vulnerability are important, we cannot ignore the 'objective conditions' which cause the vulnerabilities in the first place.

In these instances, it might be against our interests to *feel* we are not vulnerable (Sellman, 2009). This caution is particularly apposite at a time when there is an expectation that suffering can be 'rationalized' and 'individualized' away (Wilkinson, 2005) and where we can find ourselves 'bright-sided' (Ehrenreich, 2009). The risk here is not just from current rationalization but that such rationalization leaves us ill-prepared for life's *further* irrationalities (Wilkinson, 2013). Taylor reminds us again that these processes have long histories, as ascendancy discourses are rooted in older narratives in the west of growth; and, from Christianity, of the divine story, a narrative of moving 'from innocence to strife and then to a higher harmony' (1989, p. 106).

We need, then, to understand how our engagement with, and resistance to, vulnerability are culturally shaped. Those concerned with the 'cultural politics of vulnerability' (Lloyd, 2008) have focused on how vulnerability has become attached to specific groups (Frankenberg, Robinson and Delahooke, 2000) rather than associated with adverse circumstances per se. Furedi (2008), too, maps how vulnerability has become increasingly individualized, yet the very fact that vulnerability has been linked to *so* many individual groups – children, women and those who find themselves cared for as a result of ageing or disability – suggests that it is the failure to meet particular norms that in itself produces suffering/vulnerability (Cadwallader, 2007). Furedi's (2007) thesis is that there *has* been an increase in those who are defined as vulnerable, while others posit a similar rise in relation to discourses about resilience (Taylor, 1989; Ehrenreich, 2009). Being *defined* as having a vulnerable or indeed resilient identity, and *owning* this identity, however, are not the same thing. As we established in Chapter 1, discourses

around vulnerability may well have increased, even if the neoliberal concern with autonomy and mastery means this has not happened in an en bloc fashion. Our investment in such discourses, however, remains a complicated business and cannot simply be read off, or assumed from, discursive change. To do that, as many social scientists have done, adds to the 'catch all' nature of vulnerability (Misztal, 2011) and weakens its analytical purchase.

Vulnerability and wellbeing

Part of conceptualizing vulnerability in a way that strengthens its analytical possibilities involves addressing how it is inextricably bound up with understanding wellbeing – what constitutes a good life – and suffering. Although she acknowledges that a focus on vulnerability links issues of justice to reflections on what constitutes a good life, Misztal (2011) suggests that happiness and vulnerability are discrete research possibilities. Exploring the relationship between vulnerability and happiness/subjective wellbeing (the two terms are being used interchangeably here) is, however, necessary to make sense of vulnerability. As is clear from the growing critique of happiness studies, happiness is as much a historical and cultural construct as vulnerability (Ahmed, 2010). Keeping this cultural framing in mind, I suggest two aspects of wellbeing/happiness need investigating in relation to understanding vulnerability: its temporal aspects and the role that meaning plays in relation to wellbeing.

In relation to the first of these, work on happiness has been concerned with its episodic or diachronistic features; in other words, the degree to which happiness is a transitory moment – a moment of joy – or defines a life or a large part of a life: what Martin (2009) termed 'global happiness'. This is what Durkheim (1984) had in mind when he distinguished between pleasure, which he related to 'ephemeral causes' and happiness, which he suggested we carry within ourselves.

Cottingham (2009), too, writing in the same volume as Martin, suggests happiness is not something that can be 'broken into summable units' (2009, p.22) and that it has to be assessed as part of a 'complete life' where there is always the possibility of a reversal of fortune. To be human, for these authors, is to have a sense of oneself moving through time; so, given our awareness of finitude, a degree of diachronicity is intrinsic to happiness. Vulnerability, too, linked as it is to the irreversibility of the past and the unpredictability of the future (Misztal, 2011) has a strong temporal dimension. But vulnerability can also be understood as part of a 'complete life'. The ability of people to give a pattern to

their lives is what the philosopher Richard Wollheim was referring to when he wrote of some people leading 'their lives more than others, though each has only one life to lead' (1980, p.299). This making of life 'a piece' happens, he suggests, through a 'mental connectedness' which ties the present to the past, creating in the process a new past 'under whose influence the future may then be brought' (1980, p.305). Not surprisingly, perhaps, evidence of such connectedness in the STTT study is more pronounced among the older than the younger participants and is shaped by discourses, including the therapeutic, which, as we know from Part II, have a differential impact across social groups. For some, it is early family experiences that give their life an 'overallness'; for others, it is a specific crisis or turning points in their lives – being diagnosed as having a physical or mental illness, experiencing war or migration or becoming religious. Such narratives, including the belief that the present is tied to the past – the notion of the 'childhood fix' introduced in Chapter 6 – are themselves culturally and historically specific.

Second, and relatedly, is the relationship between *meaning* and wellbeing. Metz (2009) argues that meaning and wellbeing, while conceptually distinct, do relate to each other: in other words, although there will be exceptions, it is difficult to imagine a meaningful life if one is deeply depressed, or a happy life without a sense of some meaning. Our perceptions of vulnerability, in turn, depend on the meanings we attach to suffering (and, relatedly, how we understand a happy or meaningful life), meanings which shift across biographical time. Wilkinson (2010), for example, drawing on Weber, explores how people, when they experience suffering, shift from having 'charismatic needs', a desire to escape through religious or utopian longing, to a search for a practical means of overcoming affliction, or explanations that make sense of what they are experiencing. These beliefs about the nature or meaning of life are key to our sense of wellbeing and vulnerability even if, like our values in general (Sayer, 2011), they are not always verbalized or even fully formed.

While what is read as meaningful, and as constituting a good/happy life, shifts across historical as well as biographical time (Berlant, 2002), a key concern in recent years has been with what needs *have* to be met to secure wellbeing (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999; 2004). As with the discussion of vulnerability above, we might try to make wellbeing a matter of will, through framing our suffering in particular ways (Frank, 1995), yet still fall short of securing wellbeing.

Looking at ordinary/extraordinary and subjective/objective vulnerability and the relationship between wellbeing and vulnerability makes clear that to understand our lack of talk about vulnerability we need a conceptual framework that embeds individual and interpersonal

accounts in a sociocultural and material context. Ultimately, however, working out *how* we claim vulnerable *or* resilient status for ourselves and, crucially, are granted it by others, needs detailed empirical analysis. This involves engaging with long-running debates about the interpretive rights of social scientists and lay actors, and with how to evaluate their respective interests (Kemp, 2012). In the next section I do this by looking at our practices as researchers. Talk about vulnerability is shaped by methodology – not surprisingly given that our methods, as I argued in Chapter 2, are a part of the emotion culture we are investigating. In this context, I look further at the issue of power, and whether or not the absence of talk about vulnerability tells us as much about what others are willing to hear as what we are willing to say.

Researching vulnerability

The STTT study illuminates how the conceptualizations outlined above play out in practice. Some people, for instance, used the fact that they were currently 'vulnerable' as a reason for not taking part in the study, while others took part despite apparent vulnerability – for instance, currently receiving treatment for cancer or following a recent miscarriage. The research design itself, focused as it was on biographical time, could be read as having encouraged linear, and possibly even transformative, narratives (Becker, 1997); in other words, as encouraging a diachronistic outlook where vulnerability becomes part of a whole. A study based on self-report in real time might have allowed for different stories about vulnerability to emerge (Duncan, Grazzani-Gavazzi and Kiran Subba, 2009). Stories that take best care of people, Frank (2007) suggests, are the ones that 'keep us on the road'; but, he notes, it can be difficult to tap into such stories. This is because when they are not in use such stories are easily forgotten, leading us to think, as noted in Chapter 6, that only the ill are coping, when, in fact, we all are. It could be that this is also the fate of vulnerability stories, especially if, as noted, we seek accounts retrospectively. Yet, as we saw in Chapter 2, it can be participation in research which surfaces these forgotten stories and which leads participants to reframe themselves and/or their experiences as vulnerable. This was the experience of Dee, whom we meet later in this chapter.

Researchers' notes indicate that vulnerability might be *perceived* even if it is not claimed. This raises a set of analytical questions, some of which were touched on in Chapter 2, around evaluating different interests and the extent to which we *allow* vulnerability to be expressed intersubjectively, whether in research or in the world beyond it. What some participants frame as 'soldiering on', we might (accurately or not) hear as resilience *or* languishing, as a suboptimal getting by. The

possibility of recognizing vulnerability where it is not claimed, or at least not unambiguously, is highlighted in the extract below. Barbara, a woman in her early sixties, is describing how she has used sleeping tablets for over 20 years, starting the night her husband died. Her long-term use of prescribed medication, and what some may read as traumatic or intrusive memories, become normalized as part of coping.

P: You know if I can time my tablets right, and I go to bed, I can close my eyes and go to sleep. If I don't time it right, it's John's face that appears in front of me. You know, it's just, from a man that worked [. . .] to a 6 stone guy who had a horrible death, that's what I see at night. Yeah.
R: Have you ever considered speaking to a counsellor or a therapist about John's death?
P: No.
R: No? Can you tell me why you wouldn't consider it?
P: Because I felt that I'd actually coped with it, you know, apart from the images that I see of him. But I suppose in a way – and I often think about it – the images of John.

(Barbara)

While Barbara defines this as coping, it seems to sit uncomfortably beyond Craib's (1994) 'disappointment' or Freud's 'ordinary unhappiness' (Breuer and Freud, 1895). Resilience could still be read as the outcome of what it is Barbara describes, but the researcher, or the reader of the research, might hear it differently. Is Barbara's lack of talk a form of silencing akin to Baldwin's (2003) account of why Sonny Liston appears inarticulate? Tracking such 'silencing practices' (Dotson, 2011) is, by definition, difficult. Drawing on Spivak's (1988) understanding of epistemic violence and the silencing of marginalized groups, Dotson distinguishes between 'testimonial quieting', where a speaker fails to be recognized as a knower, and 'testimonial smothering', a form of self-silencing which is nevertheless still coerced. The former has been experienced by people who are oppressed in some way, including women such as Dee who, as we will see, was silenced by her family and the norms of the time in which she lived. For Dotson (2011), the latter involves conversations which one feels one cannot have because one doubts the competence of the audience – in other words, we may have doubts that we will be heard or that it will make a difference even if we are. In the case of women's self-censorship, however, as we saw in Part II, it might also be linked to a fear of burdening others and to their entrenchment in the role of listener.

Researchers are influenced by the same feeling rules and cultural imperatives around vulnerability as participants, and can work to facilitate or silence talk of vulnerability. Kleinman and Copp (1993) argued that they tend to position their participants as underdogs, rather than victims, leading to an overemphasis on 'gutsy survival strategies' and a downplaying of any sense of hopelessness. In more recent times the reverse might be true, as vulnerability becomes a dominant framing for research and there is a growing tendency to focus on, rather than downplay, participant vulnerability (ESRC, 2012).

In the remainder of this chapter, I examine how these conceptual and methodological explorations of vulnerability can help us understand empirical accounts. We need these explorations to be embedded in everyday accounts because despite recent calls for the development of a general theory, or 'aggregate concept', of vulnerability to work at a global – as well as institutional and interpersonal – level, and to be informed by our individual experiences of vulnerability and resilience to it (Misztal, 2011), such theorizing has not tended to be embedded in such experiences. In fact, most of the dominant theoretical frameworks that have engaged with vulnerability – including risk, governmentality and therapeutic culture, as well as Misztal's multidimensional account, have been noticeably underengaged with everyday understandings and accounts. So, while some sociologists have a growing sense that empirical engagement with subjective testimonies of specific forms of suffering has not been matched by similarly rich theorizing about how social and cultural forces shape suffering (Wilkinson, 2013), the opposite has often been the case for those theorizing about social change and the rise of vulnerability as a dominant cultural framing.

Vocabularies of vulnerability

In this last section, then, I draw on the STTT study to see what everyday accounts can add to the conceptual and methodological discussions engaged with so far. As was the case with inner conversations, the STTT study did not set out to directly explore people's understanding of vulnerability but, given its focus, it is surprising that so few participants mentioned the word directly: only three in hundreds of hours of interviewing. These three instances were a woman describing her feelings after moving house (Ellen); a young man when describing his mother's hospital ward – a 'vulnerable place' (Liam); and another man when describing how he would feel if he were to share personal details at

work (Paul). If nothing else, this might suggest that the language of vulnerability does not resonate with 'lay' people as much as it does with sociologists. Wilkinson (2010, p.75) makes a similar observation about sociology's approach to risk, suggesting that it acts to sideline 'the everyday languages, modes of expression and bodily experiences with which people negotiate life's problems'.

The point here is not just that people do not use the language of vulnerability but that their stories of 'how they are' (Sayer, 2011), or have been, are not framed as vulnerability stories. To use C.W. Mills' (1940) framing, their vocabularies of motive are not framed in terms of vulnerability. Which, if any, of the framings engaged with so far have traction in helping us understand this? Are people silenced by the cultural imperative to be happy (Ahmed, 2010)? In other words, are they, implicitly or explicitly, 'distancing' themselves – or being distanced by others – from vulnerability? If so, is this being done through investing in ascendancy narratives or through positive self-talk? And, if people are doing any or all of these things, what part are we playing as researchers in helping or hindering them to do so? I explore these questions through accounts from across the study as well as a detailed analysis of one participant's – Dee's – account.

Stories about how we are

There is an extensive body of cross-disciplinary work on life histories and on the kind of stories we tell to make sense of the lives we have lived, what Plummer (2001, p.192) calls 'life-pattern narratives'. Some of this has focused on epiphanies or turning points; other work has been concerned with the overarching genres or master motifs which structure our accounts. Taking the accounts from the STTT study as a whole it is striking how few explicitly 'bright-sided' accounts there are (Ehrenreich, 2009). Participants tended not to recount 'pure' ascendancy narratives, stories of overcoming life's problems against all odds. For a few this was because at the time they took part in the research they were facing 'extraordinary' vulnerability. Others, while apparently happy to acknowledge their vulnerability to themselves, feared doing so in the world 'out there'. This echoes the contingent nature of emotions talk explored in Chapters 4 and 5: sometimes we hold back talk (including talk about vulnerability) but sometimes we are held back by the absence or the actions of others (or at least by our beliefs about these others). In the following extract, one of the few participants who used the word 'vulnerable' directly is describing how he feels in his all-male workplace.

> And I wouldn't share any information about the state of my relationship if it were in a bad way or something like that. Some do, some are very quiet about it but personally I wouldn't. I think because making myself vulnerable [. . .], I don't feel they can help me so therefore I feel I am making myself vulnerable. It's quite a harsh form of conversation we have in there sometimes [if you] expose your weaknesses sometimes. You know, that can be a source of humour or whatever and I don't feel comfortable with that.
>
> (Paul)

Many in the STTT study, however, appeared neither to distance themselves from vulnerability nor to engage in bright-sided or ascendancy narratives. The master motif was not one of misery or happiness (Plummer, 2001; Ahmed, 2010) but, rather, of simply having to get on with things. Sometimes this was a resigned getting on: 'I have always taken the attitude, well, that's what you have got to deal with so get on and deal with it' (Jenny), akin to seeing life as a series of 'negative epiphanies' (Gallagher, 1993). Sometimes the finitude of life produced something more positive.

> P: Because life's very short.
> R: Mmm.
> P: Because I've developed a philosophy that anything can happen any time, and probably will in fact.
> R: Mmm.
> P: And, er, logic would dictate to me that there is not a lot o' time. [. . .]. Therefore I get through by filling my life with wonderful things, like horses and dogs.
>
> (Jill)

Occasionally, the 'getting on' is shaped by an *explicit* secular world-view – 'and it's for you to make the best. Life is, you've got to grab it by scruff of neck and shake hell out of it' (Rob) – or a religious or spiritual one.

> I have accepted the fact that, I accept what the Bible says, I accept there is more to life than this you know and I accept it. OK my plans as I planned them haven't fallen in, whereas I now view it as God's plan.
>
> (Bill)

But, for the most part, as Charles Taylor (1989) suggests, the moral ontology behind our views remains implicit. For Taylor, the tentative nature of our beliefs suggests a world of 'fuzzy commitments' (Taylor, 1989, p.11) and points to a 'stabilised middle condition' where we escape 'emptiness, without having reached fullness', with 'fullness' understood by Taylor to be linked to beliefs about God, reason or nature (2007, p.6). Whether or not the stories from the STTT study speak to this 'middle condition', explicit world-views were for the most part missing, and in their place were stories which had neither the clarity nor the straight lines of happiness *or* vulnerability narratives. They tended to be pragmatic stories where life is accepted as challenging – 'And in life, things don't just *go* on a straight line, do they?' (Cath) – and where, as others have found, structural explanations for difficulties were not to the fore: 'I was brought up to be, you know, er, sort of "if you make your bed, you lie in it", you know?' (Dee)

This is not to say that participants did not engage in techniques of self similar to those promoted by the happiness experts. They often understood challenges in relative terms, and sought perspective from the trials and tribulations of others. In other words, they were already doing what positive psychologists suggest they should be doing – counting their blessings – and, as such, were doing the emotional work of trying to envision their reality in a particular way (Hochschild, 1983).

> I think I also feel very lucky. I might moan and groan, but you know, compared to some people's lives it's been quite, just ordinary and uneventful, but nothing really, really terrible. You know, you read about some people, don't you, and think, 'Oh, I don't know how you cope with that. I don't know how you cope with it.' So really I've been lucky.
>
> (Roz)

> But you see other people in a hell of a lot worse condition and you think well it's not that bad then really is it?
>
> (Frank)

Vulnerability, through this process of relativizing, is made ordinary. But this is also achieved through universalizing, through positioning vulnerability, as some of the social theorists we discussed earlier did, as part of what it means to be human: 'But then these sorts of problems everybody has had' (Jean). In the following extract about her father's death, Jenny makes clear the ordinariness of her vulnerability through her understanding of what it means to live (and die) well.

P: And as I say it's a thing everybody has been through. [. . .] And the fact that we were able to talk it out and say, well look he had a good life, he was able to choose right up to the end, he didn't want to go into hospital, he wanted to be in his own house, we were able to give him that, look after him at home. He died in his own bed, he was aware right up to that night, it was only the last couple of hours of his life that he wasn't aware. So he had a good life and he picked the way he died himself. So I think that is quite a comfort. [. . .] I mean as my brother said to me, 'How many people in our age group can say they have got two parents living?' Which is true! It is true.

R: It doesn't make it any easier

P: No it doesn't. It doesn't. You are wanting them to live forever but they are not going to live forever are they?

(Jenny)

While this acceptance was present in some younger people's accounts of 'getting through', there is, a we saw in Chapter 3, a life-stage dimension to this, with younger participants – especially young men – more likely to distance themselves from vulnerability, or to find strategies for 'doing' (see also Chapter 6) as a way of managing feeling vulnerable.

> It's just I'd rather not bring things up most of the time. Because I don't like people asking questions about things that have already happened, it sort of annoys me slightly when you have to keep thinking about it again, so.
>
> (Liam)

> To be honest with you, I don't really like looking in the past to what's happened if you know what I mean, I look to the future. I just, I don't know why, that's just the way I've always been.
>
> (David)

For those in their middle years or beyond, however, pragmatic acceptance was more to the fore.

> I think, in life, everybody at some time goes downhill, as you get, as you are young everything is enjoyable, everything is enjoyable when you get married, and have family, everything is going up, and up, and up. But some time you must come down, you can't go all your life. The way I think you are tested as a character is how you react in the bad times. Now people who have never had those times don't know

> that, and I had never known that until [...] and I found out an awful lot about it myself.
>
> (Matt)

Hugh, from an older generation, shares this sense of acceptance of the universal nature of vulnerability.

> As you're getting older you keep thinking of these things, you know. But, well everybody has to go through that in life, haven't they? You've got to lose somebody [...]. It's hard, but you cannot live with the dead.

This pragmatism about difficulties was also there, however, for Will, whose partner had had a miscarriage and who, at 31, is younger than both Hugh and Jenny. As noted in Chapter 4, Will sees difficult times as part of life and this is why he would not consider professional help.

Some have suggested that such stories of 'carrying on' have a class dimension in British culture. In other words, that there is not only an appreciation of those who 'just get on with it' (Skeggs and Wood, 2008, p.564), who cope, but that this value of 'indefatigability' is part of working-class culture in particular. Accounts of soldiering on in the STTT study are not limited to those from lower socioeconomic groups, but some from these groups, like John in Chapter 3, for whom 'getting on with it' was determined by having a mortgage which 'nobody else is going to pay', do display this indefatigability.

As we have seen, there is a life-stage element to how we tell our stories about 'how things are', with younger people less likely to think of life (and vulnerability) as a piece. Most people, as noted in Chapter 3, reflecting the pervasive cultural significance attached to childhood and no doubt encouraged by the project methodology, have a view of their current way of being in the world as connected to early family experiences, whether these experiences were positive or unhappy. The life-pattern story here is that of the 'childhood fix' – though not necessarily, as noted several times now, with a negative outcome.

> A lot of the ways in which I have coped have all related back to my sister dying. I think that growing up from a very early age with a sense of loss and something which is fairly big really in terms of emotional experiences that you are likely to encounter. You know the death of a sibling is fairly high up there, especially for a small child you know, when you are just like an emotional sponge. So kind of growing up

> with that, certainly gave me a sense of perspective on anything else that happened, because you have that kind of, well what's the worst that can happen? Well, actually, the worst already has happened so this is just something else.
>
> (Neil)

Contra Misztal (2011) who, as we will see later in the chapter, focuses on forgiveness as a remedy for vulnerability, another dimension of these STTT 'life-pattern narratives' are the traces across the piece of what has 'never' been forgotten or forgiven and the way such memories still shape emotional lives. As we will see with the case study of Dee later in the chapter, often they are about things said or not said.

> When she knew I was as the family called it 'in trouble' then she came and she talked and she was talking to us and I always remember crying and my mother saying, 'That's what I have been waiting for.' You know. [Participant gets tearful at this point]. So erm, so yeah [...]. Instead of having the support she wanted me to be grovelling. [...] I can't really relate back to that time but I remember it, I remember it very well.
>
> (Dee)

As the conceptual work in the last section made clear, making of life (and vulnerability) a piece is not just about the temporal, about this moving between past, present and future; it is also about *meaning*, about how suffering – and fortune – is understood.

> I think, you know, things happen to you in life and you're never, ever eternally happy and you're never ever eternally sad, are you? You know, it'll all come better or it'll, if I'm really, really happy and everything's on a high I think, 'Oh my God, how long's this gonna last? Better make the most of it coz it will go down the dip in a bit,' you know.
>
> (Roz)

The above, then, is what everyday talk about 'how things are' sounds like. Some of this talk is familiar, clichéd even: it is what we hear ourselves and others say. While there are variations by gender, class and age, this talk points to people telling pragmatic rather than happiness or vulnerability stories which have been the main concern of sociologists in recent years. In these stories, world-views are not always explicit though

for all but the youngest there are attempts to think of life, and hence of vulnerabilities, as a piece. Some people do appear to work hard to make life ordinary either through relativizing or universalizing, though there are powerful reminders that the absence of talk about vulnerability can often be revealing of our beliefs about or experiences of feeling unheard or silenced.

The STTT study points to people making sense of, or at least accommodating, vulnerability through a mesh of emotional legacies, real and imagined, relationships, cultural shifts, world-views and socioeconomic circumstance. The big sociological stories about vulnerability, as we saw in Chapter 1, have tended not to sound like this. Instead they have been oppositional stories – stories of being hailed by discourses of vulnerability *or* of self-discovery and reflexivity. More recently, they have included perspectives that recognize relationships though, by necessity perhaps given their aggregate focus, these framings also tend to be stories with fairly 'clean' lines – stories of forgiveness, caring and promising (Misztal, 2011). While these are relational accounts, they are also abstract and do not capture the ways in which the reckoning of relationships makes forgiving, caring and promising deeply complex practices. It is this complexity which underlies the clichéd nature of the talk above.

To get a fuller sense of that complexity, I switch analytical focus at this point to look at one biographical narrative from the STTT study. Here we can see how 'upstream' (Vaisey, 2008b), a dominant (moral) discourse – the imperative that it is 'good to talk' – becomes a *lived* morality. We also see how vulnerability is experienced through layers of (gendered and classed) relationships – lived, remembered and longed for – and played out across historical, generational and biographical time. We can hear how vulnerability is refracted through the research encounter itself and the culture of which it is a part. We have seen how different research methods create different insights into emotional lives: surveys allow us to answer questions about how social processes impact on particular social groups and here a narrative approach embeds social processes in a particular biography. While such narratives are *about* lives and are not all that these lives *are* (Plummer, 2001), they do, nevertheless, help structure how these lives are experienced. To that extent, stories do achieve things and follow-up interviews with both researchers and participants highlight the consequences of telling, and listening to, them.

In what follows, I draw on an interview with Dee, a woman in her late fifties who experienced a pregnancy outside of marriage at a time and in a place in which this was considered highly stigmatizing: respectable working-class, rural England in the early 1970s. Working with the idea of

guided narratives in the STTT study, research participants like Dee were invited to talk about their lives, using timelines as prompts, and then, if it had not already emerged, about a particular time in their lives which they felt they had had to 'get through'. The stories Dee and other participants told in response to these questions shared narrative qualities of seeking to impose order and meaning, sometimes through a sequencing of events, and of attaching significance to particular characters and settings (Lawler, 2002). These narratives of getting through however, were not vacuum-packed but nested within broader life narratives. Neither were they continuous but disrupted both by other narratives, and by more traditional question and answer interactions within the interview. I have reconstructed the thread of a biographical narrative through (mainly) sequential interview extracts. The process of selection and transcription of these is, in itself, a highly interpretive act even if the numbering of the data gives some reassurance about how particular extracts relate to the interview as a whole. Such accounts can be criticized for not having the structural properties of a narrative (see Riessman's, 1993, critique of Ginsburg, 1989) and for the researcher's interpretation resulting in an 'in-between genre, a mediated life story narrative' (1993, p.32). I think it is useful for two reasons, however, to hold on to the idea of narrative here – both to describe the data and for the analysis. First, because the notion of narrative captures something important about how the participants' attempts to make sense of getting through are inextricably intertwined with life narratives. These life stories are not always sequential but rather are revealing of how time past, present and future coexist (Tamboukou, 2008; Eliot, 1944). This is particularly relevant to how we understand vulnerability which, as we have seen, has a temporal quality. Second, and relatedly, analysis of how a participant makes sense of getting through, can be understood as a narrative *performance*, a performance of a moral self, with emotions talk (in its absence or presence) a key dimension of this performance. Evidence for narrative as performance or as a dramatization can be found, Riessman (2008) argues, in a number of structural features of the text: the use of direct speech, which has the function both of bringing the audience in and allowing things to be said that it might be tricky to say oneself; use of asides – stepping out of the action to address an audience; repetition to build drama; and switching tenses to emphasize agency.

The analysis, below, then, is based on a close reading of Dee's transcript and listening to her interview recordings not just for thematic content but for their dialogic or performative properties (Riessman,

2008). The narrative performance is produced locally within the interview and in relation to wider societal processes but also, by looking at post-interview accounts, we hear how it is *received*. In other words, Dee's story can be thought of as a narrative product – as a story told – and as a narrative process (the telling of a story). Drawing on the idea of dramatic irony, Goldie (2012) has shown how our memories of the past can be infused with what we *now* know, and that through imagining and remembering we create emotions that are 'new' and not memories of what was felt at the time. Dee's account is a good illustration of this complexity, how our narratives can be as messy as the lives they describe in that they mix up, and move between, perspectives of ourselves then and now, our memories, and our imaginings both about the past and the future.

Dee

Although Dee had chosen not to do a timeline, the biographical focus of the interview meant that her becoming pregnant at a young age was raised early in the interview. Dee described the emotional legacy of the pregnancy though she chose not to read its impact through discourses linked to the therapeutic or to vulnerability. As we will see, however, this position shifts during the period of her involvement in the research.

45 And then at sixteen I got pregnant erm, and I got married because then there
46 wasn't the options that are around now. [. . .] I then went into a stormy marriage which was
47 erm [sighs.] What's the word I am looking for? Erm, I got beaten about quite a lot. Erm,
48 left that marriage and
[. . .]
53 and I decided that, you know, the marriage that I was in wasn't what I wanted for the
54 future. I had a young daughter and I decided that no, I'd walk out of that marriage and I
55 did.

Dee goes on to bring her life up to date, reflecting on the current emotional demands involved in managing the needs of her now adult children, her ageing mother and work. Having reached her middle years, Dee looks back on a life shaped by teenage motherhood and full-time work, and forward to a more hopeful future.

57 And I think the next stage of my life I'd like to look at retirement and, and, you
58 know, and enjoying myself. I think from the age of about seventeen I've always
59 worked and been a full-time mum as well. And and I just want time to myself now.

Later in the interview, however, it becomes clear that there is a complication in this narrative which has ongoing ramifications: as she was unable to support her child financially when her marriage broke down, Dee's parents stepped in to help look after their grandchild. Dee's relationship with her parents was poor and her wider family excommunicated her for many years as a result of her decision to leave her husband. The extent and depth of her exclusion is *performed* in the following extracts through the language of the 'forbidden', and through repetition and listing. While relationships with the family gradually improved over the years, Dee finds it hard to forgive or to forget. The direct speech in the second extract brings home to the reader what Dee perceives as the moral duplicity of her relatives.

265 And it took five years before any of my family spoke to me again.
266 And I don't mean my parents. I mean, my cousins, my uncle, my aunts. Everybody,
267 they were forbidden to talk to me and they, they wouldn't, they couldn't talk to
268 me. I wasn't invited to christenings, I wasn't invited to weddings, I didn't have
269 birthday cards, I didn't have Christmas cards or Christmas presents or anything.
270 Erm, because they were afraid of upsetting my parents and you know, didn't want
[...]
333 to upset them. And as time went on so the family started to talk to me again and
334 my aunts [...] you know, used to say to me, 'We just, we just can't believe that
335 they've treated you the way they have.' But equally I look at them and think well,
336 you didn't have to side with them, you could have sided with me but you didn't.

337 You know. So although I talk to the family and that's fine I, there is just that bits I
338 can't, I just can't let go, you know.

Running through Dee's narrative is the alternative story that she imagines could have been hers had her family reacted differently: 'if the option had been there for them and they [could] have said, "Look, you don't have to get married, we will support you, don't worry about that." But that never came from them.' In her fifties, in a long-term marriage and with a good network of friends at the time of the interview, Dee remembers these past events both as another time – 'the whole world was against me, that there was no-one, there was nowhere to turn. Whereas now it's got a different feel to it'. The memories here are observer memories – they produce new emotions but the 'old' emotions also have a living presence – 'And I think perhaps it's because of what happened to me when I was younger I now tend to think that "Oh, am I misreading something?" '. This legacy is felt most strongly in her relationship with her mother. Dee, mid-life, cares for her mother, a role she is highly ambivalent about: 'All the things that have gone on and I can't forgive her for them'.

> And I need to be caring. And I don't want to be caring. Erm, that's a horrible thing to say, I know, but that's how I feel, you know, and I feel as I am more or less cornered because there isn't anyone else. There is only my brother and myself and as I say he's living in [....] now so I am now stuck that I have to, not necessarily totally look after my mother but I have to be there for her and I have to do things and, and really I don't want to do them. That's a horrible thing to say.

While Misztal (2011) acknowledges the complexity of care relationships between adult children and their parents, the implications of this messiness for theoretical thinking about forgiveness, caring and promising needs further exploration. To an extent, this can only be done by looking at the details of emotional legacies such as Dee's; summarizing empirical literature on patterns of care keeps us one step removed from what this complexity sounds and feels like and the compromises it inevitably involves. To know forgiveness as more than an ideal type we need to understand empirically the constraints on this 'mysterious and unpredictable faculty' (Misztal, 2011, p.204).

Dee's account also suggests that what matters might be less forgiveness of others than self-forgiveness. Her narrative supports Goldie's

(2012) point that while self-forgiveness is far from easily won, it is possible because there is a sense of having a self then, and now, so that, like forgiveness, it can be seen as dyadic-like. Similarly, while Misztal (2011) is right to suggest, in the context of promising, that we need to know more about the relationship between social support and vulnerability, the emphasis, as argued in Chapter 5, needs to be on the *nature* of this support rather than, as is the case in Misztal's (2011, p.168) account, on reading off support from the density and size of networks.

Yet, the more emotionally open society Dee lives in now is not one where she feels at ease. For Dee talking about emotions *lacks* morality: strength is associated with keeping things in, with not sharing one's vulnerability. Despite her own experiences of family not being a support, she resists what she sees as the social change towards seeking outside help, preferring instead to keep things within the family. The sequence below makes clear the extent to which morality and emotions talk have become entangled for Dee, and emphasizes again the power of the wished-for narrative of family support, of family together 'fighting the world'. The moral judgement Dee shows towards single mothers today could be heard as a form of ventriloquism – where one voice speaks through another voice or voice type (Bakhtin, 1981). Here Dee appears to be appropriating our dominant culture's denigration of single mothers, perhaps as a way of distancing herself from vulnerability and retrieving in the process some degree of moral standing. Her emphasis on the gap between how her family actually, and *should* have, behaved also does the moral work of directing the reader to where fault lies.

1306 R: And what do you think makes it easier for people nowadays than then to talk?

[. . .]

1311 P: I think then people's morals were better. Now, it's so relaxed. There is no
1312 discipline, there is no control and anything goes now and I just think that people
1313 don't care what they say anymore or what they share. It's not a
1314 weakness now. And in some respects it can be almost you gain points because
1315 you've done something, because you are an unmarried mother now and you've
1316 got children, the more children you've got the more benefits you get and 'isn't

1317 this good, and isn't this better'? Whereas I think then, we, I think,
1318 society was far better then than it is.
[. . .]
1379 R: Can you give me any examples of . . . ?
1380 P: I think youngsters today are too ready to talk and and expect somebody to
1381 find answers to their problems instead of resolving them themselves. Does that
1382 make sense?
1383 R: Hmm.
1384 P:Whereas years ago it seemed to be weak and you, you stuck together as a
1385 family to talk, to work problems out. And that might sound a bit contradictive
1386 with me but I, I think you kept everything within the family and you didn't let it.
1387 Whereas now you kind of like hang all your dirty linen out and I don't think
1388 that's the best way to be.
[. . .]
1410 R: And you said there that you think that the family unit was maybe a better way
1411 of people dealing with problems but that maybe that sounded a bit
1412 contradictory for you. So how does that make sense for you then?
1413 P: I don't, I don't know really. I can't find to put it into words. It's kind of like,
1414 I mean, really when I got pregnant, I should have been able to talk to my parents
1415 and we should have been able to stick, this is what I expected. And they should
1416 have supported me and it didn't matter what everybody else thought outside.
1417 And it, you know, it should have been kept, and we together, could have fought
1418 the world. Whereas it didn't happen for me like that.

When Dee is contacted for post-interview follow-up, however, her framing shifts and she reflects on how the research interview itself has led

her to revise her opinion on the value of talk. Crucially, too, it affords another understanding of why Dee makes the link between morality and talking: other than not wanting to seem weak, she believed that she had been morally in the wrong, 'the one at fault'.

> I found it easy talking to a complete stranger [the researcher] and I probably should have discussed certain things that happened in my life, I probably should have discussed it with someone at the time. But most people were too close but equally I didn't want to admit some things and I didn't want to seem to be weak. And I felt, with one part of my life, really, I was the one at fault and it took a long time to see that I wasn't.
>
> (Telephone follow-up interview, Dee)

As argued above, the post-interview accounts with researchers allowed for the dialogical or performance elements of narratives to be further analysed. The researcher who interviewed Dee describes the impact of Dee's story on her and, through doing so, gives us some sense of the success of Dee's narrative as a moral performance and, at the same time, of the emotional work expected of researchers as an audience for these performances. The lack of forgiveness Dee feels resonates with the researcher's reaction.

> Dee had suffered a lot in her life. She'd been through some horrible stuff and as the interview went on I could feel myself getting quite angry about her mother's reaction to things. Internally I was thinking 'what a bitch' – obviously didn't express.
>
> (Researcher post-interview notes, Dee)

Dee is part of the majority in the BSA sample we heard about in Part II of the book, who believe there have been cultural and social shifts towards an acceptance that it is 'good to talk' about our emotions. We can see in the above account, however, how this discourse is refracted through particular life events: her experience of the middle years; the relationships which she had, remembered or wished for; the times in which she lived and lives; and, relatedly, the choices and constraints of her gendered and economic position. The narrative is about emotions 'old' and 'new', and it is these emotional legacies that blur the distinction between meaning-constitutive and regulative traditions; in other words between linguistic and cultural frameworks for making sense of the world and traditions which can involve threats of exclusion from moral communities (Gross,

2005). It is not just that cultural messages can also be regulative – the moral injunction to talk or be happy for instance – but that the exclusionary effects of regulative traditions continue to have such strong emotional resonance in the present, shaping values and practices. As Dee puts it, there are bits that can't be let go of. This seems to be particularly true for women; it is hard not to read/understand the emotional, physical and material costs of the events described – unplanned pregnancies, violent marriages and single parenthood – as falling particularly heavily on them. We do not know what the men – the fathers, brothers and husbands – in Dee's story would have to say. They will have their own emotional legacies, though given what we learn about the gendered nature of emotional lives from Part II, these are likely to be narrated and lived out in different ways.

Many of the features discussed in the first part of this chapter re-emerge in Dee's narrative in an interconnected way. Vulnerability is both embodied and social: Dee finds herself physically vulnerable and this is compounded by her social position, living in a rural community in the early 1970s with neither the economic or social supports to live independently with her child. Her way of dealing with this is strongly shaped by cultural shifts about what it is permissible to share, and by relationships which allow or silence such vulnerabilities. In Dee's case the grievous wounds of non-recognition have taken place deep within the family but, at the same time, other relationships, for example with a new partner, bring happiness and comfort. To that extent, the narrative supports Misztal's (2011) assessment that reducing a sense of vulnerability is closely linked to building trust.

Dee shares the pragmatic world-view already identified as recurring across the STTT study – 'And you just get on with life, you know. You think well, that's then and that's gone on' – one in which, like other participants, she compares herself with others who have it worse. In the follow-up interview it is clear that this world-view, along with distancing strategies – 'put in a box and shut the door if you know what I mean'– has allowed her to keep vulnerability in its (ordinary) place. Like others in the study, Dee might feel encouraged by the biographical methods to make of life (and vulnerability) a piece but as we saw in Chapter 2, through surfacing the background, such methods can also rupture this strategy.

> I hadn't realized they had created such an impact on my life at the time and it isn't till you start to go through it that you think, 'Gosh, how did I cope with that?' At the time you just cope with it and move on.

In part this is because the researcher facilitates talk about vulnerability: 'it sounded like her life had involved a long period of holding it together and she was looking forward to the opportunity to let some stuff come out now' (Researcher post-interview notes, Dee).

Misztal's (2011) recent attempt to offer a sociological theory of vulnerability is important to the extent that it foregrounds relationships. She is working across different but integrated levels, including local and international communities, but emphazises the importance of *individual* strategies for dealing with vulnerability, such as forgiveness and promising. To that extent, understanding how these strategies work in practice, from the bottom up, is crucial. The above analysis of Dee's story is an attempt to offer such an approach. While it cannot engage fully with the whole of Misztal's rich, multilevel framework, it does raise some interesting questions. Does it, for example, make sense to write of 'involuntary dependencies' as Misztal (2011) does, given that in many relationships vulnerability is to be found in the blurred space between 'voluntary' and 'involuntary'? Even with the most 'voluntary' of dependencies we are rarely in complete control of what such relationships require of us or what we can give. Relatedly, the analysis in this chapter points to the need when thinking about vulnerability to understand fully the ramifications of the *connections* between past, present and future. Misztal (2011, p.125) does highlight these temporal connections: pointing out that forgiveness of the past opens up possibilities for the future by releasing us from the consequences of the past (though the material consequences, presumably, are less easily wished away). And, of course, her overall argument is that time is built into vulnerability (the unpredictable future, irreversible past, and the need to master the present) and that these are linked to 'the linear experience of human time in the process of life' (Misztal, 2011, p.133). A focus on linearity, however, might prove to be less than helpful because in practice we do not tend to experience life/ time in this way. Decisions made about caring, as we see in Dee's account, are impossible to disentangle from the past as well as the future, the imagined. Decisions over time form a 'coastal shelf' (Larkin, 1974), that protrudes into the present. So while Misztal (2011) might be correct to describe forgiveness happening through 'creating trust relationships', other less positive emotions, with their own histories, can also seep in to make this difficult. A related complication here might be Misztal's suggestion that some forms of trust are more cognitive and others more affective; so that one of her remedies for vulnerability, caring and taking responsibility, involves an affective form of trust, while another remedy, making promises, involves a more cognitive form. Again, in practice, the affective and cognitive elements

of Misztal's remedies, like the elements of reflexivity, are not so easily distinguished.

Finally, part of thinking about the temporal and the relational aspects of vulnerability also involves, like the critique of Illouz's (2008) focus on 'deficient' childhoods, not seeing the past as only involving pain or, even when this is the case, understanding that such difficulties can still form the basis of, or lead to, resilience. As we saw in Dee's case, it also involves understanding that forgiveness, contra Mizstal, is not the only strategy for dealing with vulnerable pasts. Reappraising one's own sense of responsibility – that is, the possibility of self-forgiveness – might be just as important.

A sociological theory of vulnerability overall, then, needs – as Dee's story and the analysis in Chapter 6 suggest – to be embedded in what it is people actually do, think and feel when getting through. The embedded approach in this chapter has led to a questioning of recent sociological writing which has been concerned with cultural discourses of vulnerability *or* happiness, but not with everyday stories that fall between, including stories of 'getting on with things'. Coming full circle to the approach to understanding 'affective-discursive practices' (Wetherell, 2012) advocated in Chapter 1, understanding vulnerability involves engaging with the meanings people attach to their biographies in specific (embodied) relationships and socioeconomic situations while all the time listening attentively for how these meanings and relationships are culturally and historically shaped.

9
Conclusion: Having Our Heads Turned by the Ordinary

Writing about ordinary relationships is not a discrete endeavour; the interconnected nature of our lives means that, in writing about such relationships, one teeters much of the time on the verge of writing a sociology of everything. Some readers might feel that this balancing act has not been successful. Others might be questioning the focus on everyday emotional lives at this time and asking whether sociology has not got better things to do in times of global economic and environmental crisis? Yet to engage with such lives is to engage with beliefs and practices about culture, reflexivity, emotions, vulnerability and suffering – all of which are impossible to uncouple from broader social, economic and political contexts and how we manage the challenges of these. Those whose specific interest is therapeutic culture, on the other hand, might be feeling short-changed for different reasons. The book, after all, has not really been about therapeutic culture – at least not in the ways engaged with by sociologists to date. Yet it is exactly because these previous accounts have failed to engage adequately with 'lay' accounts of 'keeping on the road' – and the ways in which such accounts often suggest resistance to, or lack of resonance with, the 'therapeutic ethos' – that the book came to be written.

I have grappled in this book with how better to conceptualize and research emotional relationships 'in our own time'. 'Grappling' feels like the right word, as what has unfolded has been tentative at times, often leading to more questions than answers. It was, however, a sense that the big theoretical stories about emotional lives were too smooth, and were not grappling *enough* with the complexities of those lives and relationships that sparked the idea for the book in the first place. Whether about the shifting nature of reflexivity, the significance of the therapeutic or the prevalence of vulnerability, these stories seemed unconvincing

because they were, for the most part, unashamedly undifferentiated accounts but also because they did not take seriously ordinary relationships and their reckonings. In other words, the implications of the stratified and relational dimensions of how culture, reflexivity and emotions work had not been fully acknowledged in, or followed through into, theoretical work.

In Part I of the book, I explored what following through a relational focus might look like conceptually and methodologically, while in Parts II and III, I applied this focus to findings from the STTT study in order to identify stubborn and emerging stories about our emotional lives. The stubborn stories of Part II were concerned with emotions talk; with who talks and who listens. This part of the book emphasized the persistence of gendered relationships of support but also the need for us to look at the interplay between gender, age, generation and socioeconomic context. It also questioned claims about the professionalization of our emotional lives and suggested that if this cultural change was happening, it was as much based on psychopharmaceuticals as on the expansion of the talking therapies.

The variations in talk that surfaced in Part II intimated that, as much as we need to engage with cultural shifts towards emotional disclosure, we also need to understand more about why many of us choose *not* to talk about our emotional lives and what it is we do instead, or as well. The significance of the unsaid has emerged throughout the book: in discussions about practical consciousness; the unnarrated; the methodological challenges of the unspoken; the variability in who talks and who listens; the unspoken dimensions of reflexivity; privacy boundaries and in our not talking about ourselves as vulnerable. In thinking how we might take forward the conceptualization of ordinary relationships, I argue for the importance of these dimensions to be recognized. I have called these stories emergent, not because they are informed by what is currently deemed theoretically 'cutting edge' – indeed the opposite might be said to be the case – but in the sense that they grow out of people's own accounts about 'how things are'. To this extent, I would argue, contra Illouz (2008, p.245), that the focus on talk in research accounts might be less a case of therapeutic persuasion leading to verbal overshadowing or linguistic introspection, than a reflection of our failure as sociologists to be curious enough about the non-verbal, background and extant ways we get by. In thinking about future work, then, this book can be read as a call to be curious about, to have our heads turned by, what Paul in Chapter 5 called 'that non-discussion that is getting on with your life'. Alongside the stubborn stories identified in Part II, these

stories about not talking not only challenge our current conceptualizations of intimate relationships, reflexivity, privacy and vulnerability but have possible implications for those who plan and provide emotional support services, services which – increasingly, perhaps – tend to take talk as a given.

The narrative of this book about the epochal, persistent and emergent/neglected stories we can tell about our emotional lives has relied heavily on people's everyday stories of making their way emotionally. The boundaries between their words and mine are blurry: it is not always clear when, as Plummer (2001) puts it, their voice is heard through mine or vice versa. This, though, is what the terrain looks like beyond the big, smooth stories of being hailed by 'the therapeutic', of descending into vulnerability and of retreating from our familiars and similars.

Looking back, the clean lines of such stories might seem reassuring and one response might be to draw them back in. I hope, however, that by raising questions about who is doing the talking and listening, about what we are doing other than talking and, ultimately, about how we make our way emotionally, we see the value in first getting straight the small stories about ordinary relationships in our own time.

Appendix – Participant Characteristics (Qualitative Interviews for the Someone To Talk To Study)

Participant		Gender	Age	Standard occupational classification	Lifetime experience of formal support from a psychologist, psychiatrist, therapist or counsellor
1	Lisa	Female	18–24	Managerial & professional occupations	No
2	Ian	Male	65–74	Intermediate occupations	No
3	Michael	Male	45–54	Lower supervisory & technical occupations	Yes
4	Neil	Male	25–34	Managerial & professional occupations	No
5	Jenny	Female	45–54	Lower supervisory & technical occupations	No
6	Mary	Female	35–44	Lower supervisory & technical occupations	No
7	Mark	Male	35–44	Managerial & professional occupations	No
8	Jason	Male	35–44	Managerial & professional occupations	No
9	Matt	Male	55–64	Employers in small org; own account workers	No
10	Francis	Male	45–54	Managerial & professional occupations	No
11	Shaun	Male	18–24	Managerial & professional occupations	No
12	Christine	Female	65–74	Managerial & professional occupations	Yes
13	Judith	Female	45–54	Intermediate occupations	No

14	Liam	Male	18–24	Lower supervisory & technical occupations	No
15	Paul	Male	35–44	Employers in small org; own account workers	No
16	David	Male	18–24	Semi-routine & routine occupations	Yes
17	Rose	Female	75+	Intermediate occupations	No
18	Rahul	Male	55–64	Lower supervisory & technical occupations	Yes
19	Dee	Female	45–54	Managerial & professional occupations	No
20	Jean	Female	55–64	Employers in small org; own account workers	No
21	Roz	Female	65–74	Intermediate occupations	No
22	Hugh	Male	75+	Employers in small org; own account workers	No
23	Bill	Male	55–64	Semi-routine & routine occupations	No
24	Janet	Female	55–64	Semi-routine & routine occupations	No
25	Will	Male	25–34	Employers in small org; own account workers	No
26	Helen	Female	45–54	Managerial & professional occupations	No
27	Carol	Female	55–64	Intermediate occupations	No
28	Sue	Female	18–24	Employers in small org; own account workers	No
29	Joe	Male	55–64	Semi-routine & routine occupations	Yes
30	Leslie	Male	55–64	Lower supervisory & technical occupations	No
31	Sam	Male	18–24	Lower supervisory & technical occupations	No
32	Martin	Male	18–24	Lower supervisory & technical occupations	No
33	Pat	Female	55–64	Semi-routine & routine occupations	No
34	Barbara	Female	55–64	Semi-routine & routine occupations	No
35	Amy	Female	18–24	Never worked	Yes
36	Ellen	Female	35–44	Intermediate occupations	Yes
37	John	Male	45–54	Lower supervisory & technical occupations	No
38	Jackie	Female	55–64	Intermediate occupations	No

(Continued)

Participant		Gender	Age	Standard occupational classification	Lifetime experience of formal support from a psychologist, psychiatrist, therapist or counsellor
39	Cath	Female	55–64	Semi-routine & routine occupations	Yes
40	Rob	Male	65–74	Semi-routine & routine occupations	No
41	Sophie	Female	18–24	Intermediate occupations	Yes
42	Kate	Female	18–24	Semi-routine & routine occupations	No
43	Colin	Male	75+	Lower supervisory & technical occupations	No
44	Ruth	Female	35–44	Lower supervisory & technical occupations	No
45	Lee	Female	35–44	Employers in small org; own account workers	No
46	Nick	Male	35–44	Semi-routine & routine occupations	Yes
47	Claire	Female	18–24	Lower supervisory & technical occupations	No
48	Ali	Male	18–24	Never worked	No
49	Lucy	Female	35–44	Managerial & professional occupations	No
50	Frank	Male	55–64	Semi-routine & routine occupations	No
51	Annie	Female	35–44	Intermediate occupations	No
52	Jill	Female	55–64	Managerial & professional occupations	No

Notes

Introduction: The Death of Ordinary Relationships?

1. The terms 'formal support' and 'informal support' are used in the book to distinguish broadly between the support offered by family and friends and by 'services' but as Chapter 2 makes clear, these distinctions are not always maintained in practice. This blurring, the fact that 'personal engagement' can be seen as compatible with the professional role (Banks, 2013; Halmos, 1965) and the rise of provision described as 'semi-formal', means it makes little sense to think only in terms of a dichotomy of formal and informal support.

1 What We Talk about When We Talk about Emotion Culture: The Role of Culture, Reflexivity and Emotions

1. Another option for accessing moral judgements is the use of vignettes (see Finch and Mason, 1993).
2. Whether all reflexivity is relational is a moot point. One could argue that Archer's (2000) definition of embodied knowledge allows for actions which involve cognition (though we are unaware of it) but which are not learned and, therefore, not relational. She cites as an example of such knowledge our leaning into the wind when we walk. It is unclear, however, if we are not aware of this cognition if such knowledge actually counts as reflexivity in Archer's (2003, 2007) later understanding of the term. In any case, seeing embodied knowledge as not relational depends on accepting Archer's definition of what counts as social in the first place. Leaning into the wind, for instance, could be argued to be, like other efforts to balance or use the body, always social (Mauss, 1936). Alternatively, one could dispute Archer's claim that such acts do involve thinking. For Mead (1934, p.135), for example, sensuous or habitual reactions akin to the 'bare thereness of the world' we feel when just waking up, belong to the 'life of the organism' not the experience of the self.

2 About Distances: Researching Emotional Lives

1. The title of the foreword in Miller (2010).
2. Funded by the ESRC, this study was run jointly between the University of Stirling and the National Centre for Social Research and involved, at different points, up to six researchers.

3. Cognitive testing is where interviews are carried out to specifically test how questions 'work': whether they do the job they are intended to do.
4. The BSA is based on a representative sample of the adult (18+) population in England, Scotland and Wales. Participants are interviewed in their own homes using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). For the STTT study module, 2102 interviews were conducted between May and November 2007 with a response rate of 51 per cent.
5. In total 52 in-depth qualitative interviews were carried out. Researchers kept post-interview notes on these interviews. Sixteen follow-up interviews were also carried out with a range of individuals who took part in the main study. Characteristics of each participant are summarized in the Appendix. Each participant has been given a pseudonym and where necessary biographical information has been changed to secure anonymity.
6. Research participants were asked to fill in timelines prior to interview. The personal support mappings were adapted from Spencer and Pahl's (2006) personal network mappings. Eighteen participants carried out timelines and 39 carried out personal mappings. These can be read, as Linde (1993) puts it, as directed tellings, as imposing narrative coherence – reflected in people saying things like 'I had an idea what you were after'. Some people spent a great deal of time on these and for others, even if they were empty, they were a physical prop in the interview and they did help people to talk about life events and stages. For some, it was a way of staying on the course they had decided on though some would comment on how far they had wandered from the timeline story, reflecting on what they had not intended to share. Some timelines acted like visual representations of Gilligan's (2009) 'I poems' – the boiled-down version of what they had been trying to convey; for example, Colin's timeline stopped abruptly a decade previously, the day his wife died.
7. Personal and structural forms of reflexivity need not necessarily be mutually exclusive (Gray, 2008). Similarly, those who draw on memory work (Haug, 1987) are working with personal memories but within a social structural framework.
8. In interview exchanges, 'P' refers to participant and 'R' to researcher. Omissions are represented by ellipses in square brackets [. . .].

3 'It's Good to Talk' and Other Stories

1. An important caveat here is to note that these data were collected in 2007. The period since has seen a proliferation of Internet-based activity including, of course, the rapid expansion in the use of social media and it is likely, therefore, that the picture will have shifted. This is not to say, however, that questions about the differentiated nature of online use and the seriousness with which it is engaged in do not remain important.
2. Men in their middle years are not, of course, a discrete grouping and I am drawing here on a broad understanding of middle years, including men in their thirties, forties and fifties. In part I do this to reflect the spread of the age categories covered by the BSA sample. The youngest group in the sample are the 18 to 24 grouping and the oldest, the 60+. The middle groups, therefore, are the 25–44 and the 45–59 groupings.

3. WEMWBS is a validated scale aimed at measuring the key dimensions of subjective wellbeing.
4. For some people, of course, war is not just a historical reality but part of their current biographies. Ali, a young man who took part in the research, was a refugee from a war zone, and describes the nullifying effect the war has on those who live in combat areas: 'I mean basically there was no school, no education, just staying at home every day, knowing nothing about the world.' He, too, perhaps because of language and other cultural differences, did not draw on emotional discourses to explain the impact of the war on him personally.
5. Disability and ill health are also interesting dimensions to consider in relation to emotions talk and while not analysed quantitatively here they not surprisingly did feature in accounts from the STTT study and, as we will see later in the book, shaped participants' talk, for instance, about intimacy and vulnerability.

4 Look Who's Listening

1. The STTT study provided little evidence that men living on their own were especially isolated in this respect, although the scope for detailed analysis here was somewhat limited by the relatively small number of men in this group.

5 The Practice of Being There

1. Of course as others have noted, Goffman's question assumes a focus on the present and the singular when the reality is there may well be multiple things going on which are shaped by the past.
2. By 'our', I mean both researcher and lay understandings.
3. I have used the word 'practices' here and, to the extent that the sayings and doings outlined in the chapter become routinized and involve habitual 'forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, "things" and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge' (Reckwitz, 2000, p.249) cited in Warde (2005, p.133), they could be understood through theories of practice. I return to this point in Chapter 6.
4. In this participant's case he is not referring to depression as a clinical state but to his feelings of grief following his mother's death.
5. As noted in an earlier footnote, the development of social media since 2007 will have changed this picture considerably.

6 Seizing the Spinning Top: Reflexivity in Practice

1. Some theorists have developed their conceptualization of such practices through looking at human *and* non-human relations (Whatmore, 2006) though this has led to concerns that in doing so we lose sight of ordinary

human relationships. (See debate between Thien, 2005, McCormack, 2006 and Anderson and Harrison, 2006.)

7 Living in the Second World

1. Co-counselling is reciprocal peer counselling where equal turns are taken to be client and counsellor. In Christine's account turn-taking is measured by a kitchen timer. See http://www.co-counselling.org.uk/.

References

Adams, B. (1996) 'Detraditionalization and the Certainty of Uncertain Futures' in P. Heelas, S. Lash and P. Morris (eds.) *Detraditionalization: Critical Reflections on Authority and Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell).

Adams, M. (2003) 'The Reflexive Self and Culture: A Critique' *British Journal of Sociology* 54(2): 221–238.

Adams, M. (2007) *Self and Social Change* (London: Sage Publications).

Adams, M. (2010) 'Losing One's Voice: Dialogical Psychology and the Unspeakable' *Theory & Psychology* 20: 342–361.

Adkins, L. (2002) 'Reflexivity and the Politics of Qualitative Research' in T. May (ed.) *Qualitative Research: Issues in International Practice* (London: Sage Publications).

Adkins, L. (2003) 'Reflexivity: Freedom or Habit of Gender?' *Theory, Culture and Society* 20: 21–42.

Adorno, T. (1997) *Aesthetic Theory*. Translated and edited by Robert Hullot-Kentor. (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press).

Ahmed, S. (2004) *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press).

Ahmed, S. (2010) *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press).

Allan, G. (1996) *Kinship and Friendship in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Allan G. (2008) 'Flexibility, Friendship and Family' *Personal Relationships* 15(1): 1–16.

Allan, G. (2011) 'Commentary. Friendship and Emotions' *Sociological Research Online* 16(1) http://www.socresonline.org.uk/home.html/16/1/15.html.

Anderson, B. and Harrison, P. (2006) 'Questioning Affect and Emotion' *Area* 38: 333–335.

Anderson, S., Brownlie, J. and Given, L. (2009) 'Triumph of the Therapeutic? Beliefs and Practices about Emotional Support in the UK' in A. Park, J. Curtice, K. Thomson, M. Phillips and E. Clery (eds.) *British Social Attitudes Book* (London: Sage Publications).

Andrews, M. (2004) 'Memories of Mother: Counter-narratives of Early Maternal Influence' in M. Bamberg and M. Andrews (eds.) *Considering Counter-Narratives: Narrating, Resisting, Making Sense* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing).

Arber, S., Davidson, K., Daly, T. and Perren. K. (2003) *Older Men: Their Social Worlds and Healthy Lifestyles*. ESRC Full Research Report, L480254033. Swindon: ESRC

Archer, M. (2000) *Being Human: The Problem of Agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Archer, M. (2003) *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Archer, M. (2007) *Making Our Way through the World: Human Reflexivity and Social Mobility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Archer, M. (ed.) (2010) *Conversations about Reflexivity* (London: Routledge).

Archer, M. (2012) *The Reflexive Imperative in Late Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Arendt, H. (1958) *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
Arendt, H. (1973) *On Revolution* (London: Faber and Faber). Originally published in 1963.
Austin, J. L. (1962) *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
Back, L. (2007) *The Art of Listening* (Oxford: Berg).
Bailey, J. (2000) 'Some Meanings of "the Private" in Sociological Thought' *Sociology* 34: 381–401.
Bakhtin, M. (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press).Originally published in 1935.
Baldwin, J. (2003) 'The Fight: Patterson vs. Liston The Nugget, February 1963' in D. K. Wiggins and P. B. Miller (eds.) *The Unlevel Playing Field: A Documentary History of the African American Experience in Sport* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press). Originally published in 1963.
Banks, S. (2013) 'Negotiating Personal Engagement and Professional Accountability: Professional Wisdom and Ethics Work' *European Journal of Social Work* 16(5):587–604.
Barbalet, J. (1998) *Emotion, Social Theory and Social Structure: A Macrosociological Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Barbalet, J. (2011) 'Emotions Beyond Regulation: Backgrounded Emotions in Science and Trust' *Emotion Review* 3(1): 36–43.
Bauman, Z. (2003) *Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
Bauman, Z. (2011) 'Privacy, Secrecy, Intimacy, Human Bonds – and Other Collateral Casualties of Liquid Modernity' *The Hedgehog Review* 13(1) http://iasc-culture.org/THR/THR_article_2011_Spring_Bauman.php.
Baym, N. (2010) *Personal Connection in a Digital Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
Beck, U. and Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2003) *Individualization: Institutionalized Individualism and its Social and Political Consequences* (London: Sage Publications).
Becker, G. (1997) *Disrupted Lives: How People Create Meaning in a Disrupted World* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
Becker, H. S. (1953) 'Becoming a Marihuana User' *American Journal of Sociology* 59(3): 235–242.
Bengston, V., Biblarz, T. and Roberts, R. (2002) *How Families Still Matter: A Longitudinal Study of Youth in Two Generations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Bennett, T. (2007) 'The Work of Culture' *Cultural Sociology* 1(1): 31–47.
Bennett, T., Savage, M., Silva, E., Warde, A., Gayo-Cal, M. and Wright, D. (2009) *Culture, Class, Distinction* (London & New York: Routledge).
Berlant, L. (2000) 'The Subject of True Feeling: Pain, Privacy and Politics' in J. Ahmed, J. Kirby, C. Lury, M. McNeil and B. Skeggs (eds.) *Transformations: Thinking Through Feminism* (London: Routledge).
Berlant, L. (2002) 'Two Girls, Fat and Thin' in S. M. Barber and D. L. Clark (eds.) *Regarding Sedgwick: Essays on Queer Culture and Critical Theory* (New York: Routledge).
Berlant, L. (2004) *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion* (New York: Routledge).

Berlant, L. (2008) *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham and London: Duke University Press).

Billig, M. (1997) 'The Dialogic Unconscious: Psychoanalysis, Discursive Psychology and the Nature of Repression' *British Journal of Social Psychology* 36: 139–160.

Blackman, L. (2005) 'The Dialogical Self, Flexibility and the Cultural Production of Psychopathology' *Theory and Psychology* 15: 183–206.

Blanchflower, D. and Oswald, A. J. (2008) 'Is Well-being U-shaped over the Life Cycle?' *Social Science and Medicine* 66: 1733–1749.

Blatterer, H., Johnson, P. and Markus, M. (eds.) (2010) *Modern Privacy: Shifting Boundaries, New Forms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

Blau, M. and Fingerman, K. L. (2009) *Consequential Strangers: The Power of People who Don't Seem to Matter . . . But Really Do*. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co).

Bollas, C. (1987) *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known* (New York: Columbia University Press).

Bondi, L. (2005) 'Making Connections and Thinking Through Emotions: Between Geography and Psychotherapy' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30(4): 433–48.

Bondi, L. and Fewell, J. (2003) ' "Unlocking the Cage Door": The Spatiality of Counselling' *Social and Cultural Geography* 4: 527–547.

Borneman, J. (2001) 'Caring and Being Cared for: Displacing Marriage, Family, Gender and Sexuality' in J. D. Faubion (ed.) *The Ethics of Kinship: Ethnographic Inquiries* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield).

Bottero, W. and Irwin, S. (2003) 'Locating Difference: Class, "Race" and Gender and the Shaping of Social Inequalities' *The Sociological Review* 51(4): 463–483.

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L. (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Brandtzæg, P. B., Lüders M. and Skjetne, J. H. (2010) 'Too Many Facebook "Friends"? Content Sharing and Sociability versus the Need for Privacy in Social Network Sites' *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction* 26(11–12): 1006–1030.

Brannen, J. (2003) 'Towards a Typology of Intergenerational Relations: Continuities and Change in Families' *Sociological Research Online* 8: 2 http://www.socresonline.org.uk/8/2/brannen.html.

Brannen, J. and Collard, J. (1982) *Marriages in Trouble: The Process of Seeking Help* (London: Tavistock Publications).

Breuer, J. and Freud, S. (1895) *Studies on Hysteria*. Translated and edited by James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press).

Brewer, J. D. (2005) 'The Public and the Private in C. Wright Mills's Life and Work' *Sociology* 39(4): 661–677.

Brown, W. and Kandirikirira, N. (2007) *Recovering Mental Health in Scotland: Report on Narrative Investigation of Mental Health Recovery* (Glasgow: Scottish Recovery Network).

Brownlie, J. (2011) ' "Being there": Multidimensionality, Reflexivity and the Study of Emotional Lives' *The British Journal of Sociology* 62(3):462–481.

Brownlie, J. (2012) 'Male Suicide in Mid-life: Linking Private Troubles and Large Social Processes' in C. Wyllie et al. (eds.) *Men, Suicide and Society: Why Disadvantaged Men in Midlife Die by Suicide* (Surrey: Samaritans).

Budgeon, S. (2006) 'Friendship and Formations of Sociality in Late Modernity' *Sociological Research Online* 11(3) http://www.socresonline.org.uk/11/3/budgeon.html.

Burkhart, G. (2011) 'When Privacy goes Public: New Media and the Transformation of the Culture of Confession' in H. Blatterer, P. Johnson, and M. Markus (eds.) *Modern Privacy Shifting Boundaries, New Forms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

Burkitt, I. (1997) 'Social Relationships and Emotions' *Sociology* 31(1): 37–55.

Burkitt, I. (1999) *Bodies of Thought: Embodiment, Identity and Modernity* (London: Sage Publications).

Burkitt, I. (2002) 'Complex Emotions: Relations, Feelings and Images in Emotional Experience' in J. Barbalet (ed.) *Emotions and Sociology* (Oxford: Blackwell).

Burkitt, I. (2008) *Social Selves* (London: Sage Publications).

Burkitt I. (2010a) 'Dialogues with Self and Others: Communication, Miscommunication, and the Dialogical Unconscious' *Theory & Psychology* 20(3): 305–321.

Burkitt, I. (2010b) 'Fragments of Unconscious Experience: Towards a Dialogical, Relational, and Sociological Analysis' *Theory & Psychology* 20: 322–341.

Burkitt, I. (2012) 'Emotional Reflexivity: Feeling, Emotion and Imagination in Reflexive Dialogues' *Sociology* 46(3): 458–472.

Burnside, J. (2006) *A Lie about My Father* (London: Jonathan Cape).

Butler, J. (2004) *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso).

Butler, J. (2009) *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (New York: Verso).

Butt, T. and Langdridge, D. (2003) 'The Construction of Self: The Public Reach into the Private Sphere' *Sociology* 37(3): 477–493.

Cadwallader, J. (2007) 'Suffering Difference: Normalisation and Power' *Social Semiotics* 17(3): 375–394.

Cahill, S. E. (1999) 'Emotional Capital and Professional Socialization: The Case of Mortuary Science Students (and Me)' *Social Psychology Quarterly* 62(2): 101–116.

Cancian, F. M. (1987) *Love in America: Gender and Self-Development* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

Canetto, S. S. and Cleary, A. (2012) 'Introduction: Men, Masculinities and Suicidal Behaviours' *Social Science and Medicine* 74: 461–465.

Carel, H. (2008) *Illness* (Stockfield: Acumen).

Carel, H. (2009a) 'A Reply to "Towards an Understanding of Nursing as a Response to Human Vulnerability" by Derek Sellman: Vulnerability and Illness' *Nursing Philosophy* 10(3): 214–219.

Carel, H. (2009b) ' "I am well, apart from the fact that I have cancer": Explaining Well-being within Illness in L. Bortolotti (ed.) *Philosophy and Happiness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan).

Castoriadis, C. (1987) *The Imaginary Institution of Society: Creativity and Autonomy in the Social-historical World* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Cavarero, A. (2000) *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*. Translated by Paul Kottman (London and New York: Routledge).

Chodorow, N. (1999) *The Power of Feelings* (Yale: Yale University Press).

Clark, C. (1997) *Misery and Company: Sympathy in Everyday Life* (Chicago: Chicago University Press).

Clark, C. (2004) 'Emotional Gifts and "You First" Micropolitics' in A. S. R. Manstead, N. Frijda and A. Fischer (eds.) *Feelings and Emotions: The Amsterdam Symposium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Clarke, D. and Clarke, E. (eds.) (2011) *Music and Consciousness: Philosophical, Pyschological and Cultural Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Cleary, A. (2012) 'Suicidal Action, Emotional Expression, and the Performance of Masculinities' *Social Science & Medicine* 74: 498–505.

Colapietro, V. (2010) 'Cartesian Privacy and Piercian Interiority' in M. Archer (ed.) *Conversations about Reflexivity* (London: Routledge).

Collins, R. (2004) *Interaction Ritual Chains* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press).

Connell, R. (2005) *Masculinities* (Vol. 1) (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Cornwell, J. (1984) *Hard Earned Lives: Accounts of Health and Illness from East London* (London: Tavistock).

Cottingham, J. (2009) 'Happiness, Temporality and Meaning' in L. Bortolotti (ed.) *Philosophy and Happiness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan).

Craib, I. (1994) *The Importance of Disappointment* (London: Routledge).

Craib, I. (1995) 'Some Comments on the Sociology of the Emotions' *Sociology* 29: 151–8.

Crawford, J. M., Kippax, S., Onyx, J. and Gault, U. (1992) *Emotion and Gender: Constructing Meaning from Memory* (London: Sage Publications).

Crossley, N. (1996) *Intersubjectivity. The Fabric of Social Becoming* (London: Sage Publications).

Crossley, N. (1998) 'Emotion and Communicative Action: Habermas, Linguistic Philosophy and Existentialism' in G. Bendelow and S. Williams (eds.) *Emotions in Social Life* (London: Routledge).

Crow, G., Allan, G. and Summers, M. (2002) 'Neither Busybodies nor Nobodies: Managing Proximity and Distance in Neighbour Relations' *Sociology* 36(1): 127–45.

Daatland, A., Veenstra, M. and Lima, I. (2010) 'Norwegian Sandwiches: On the Prevalence and Consequences of Family and Work Role Squeezes over the Life course' *European Journal of Ageing* 7: 271–281.

Day, K. J. (1985) *Perspectives on Privacy.* Unpublished PhD (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University).

Day-Sclater, S., Jones, D. W., Price, H. and Yates, C. (eds.) (2009) *Emotion: New Psychosocial Perspectives* (London: Palgrave Macmillan).

Dennett, D. C. (1991) *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little Brown and Company).

DeNora, T. (2000) *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Denzin, N. K. (1990a) 'On Understanding Emotions: The Interpretive-Cultural Agenda' in T. D. Kemper (ed.) *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions* (Albany: State University of New York Press).

Denzin, N. (1990b) 'Agnes and Harold: A Feminist Narrative Undoing' *Sociological Theory* 8(2): 198–216.

Derrida, J. (1981) *Positions*. Translated by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

De Swaan, A. (1990) *The Management of Normality* (London: Routledge).

Donovan, C. and Hester, M. (2010) 'I Hate the Word "Victim": An Exploration of Recognition of Domestic Violence in Same Sex Relationships' *Social Policy and Society* 9(2): 279–289.
Dotson, K. (2011) 'Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing' *Hypatia* 26 (2): 236–257.
Doucet, A. (2006) *Do Men Mother? Fathering, Care and Domestic Responsibility* (Toronto: Toronto University Press).
Doucet, A. (2008) ' "From Her Side of the Gossamer Wall" Reflexive and Relational Knowing' *Qualitative Sociology* 31: 73–87.
Duncan, E., Grazzani-Gavazzi, I. and Kiran Subba, U. (2009) 'Reflections on Positive Psychology' in L. Bortolotti (ed.) *Philosophy and Happiness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan).
Duncombe, J. and Marsden, D. (1993) 'Love and Intimacy: The Gender Division of Emotion and "Emotion Work": A Neglected Aspect of Sociological Discussion of Heterosexual Relationships' *Sociology* 27(2): 221–241.
Duncombe J. and Marsden D. (1998) ' "Stepford Wives" and "Hollow Men"? Doing Emotion Work, Doing Gender and "Authenticity" in Intimate Heterosexual Relationships' in G. Bendelow and S. J. Williams (eds.) *Emotions in Social Life: Critical Themes and Contemporary Issues* (London and New York: Routledge).
Durkheim, E. (1984) *Division of Labour in Society* (New York: Free Press). Originally published in 1893.
Ecclestone, K. and Hayes, D. (2009) *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education* (New York: Routledge).
Edwards, D. (2007) 'Emotion Discourse' in J. Potter (ed.) *Discourse and Psychology* (London: Sage Publications).
Ehrenreich, B. (2009) *Bright-Sided: How Positive Thinking Is Undermining America* (New York: Metropolitan Books).
Elias, N. (1994) *History of Manners* (London: Basil Blackwell). Originally published in 1978.
Eliot, G. (1986) *Middlemarch* (Oxford: Clarendon Press). Originally published in 1871.
Eliot, T. S. (1950) *The Cocktail Party* (New York: Harcourt, Brace).
Eliot, T. S. (1944) *Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber).
Elliott, A. and Lemert, C. (2006) *The New Individualism: The Emotional Costs of Globalization* (London: Routledge).
Elliott, J. (2005) *Using Narrative in Social Science Research*: *Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (London: Sage Publications).
Emslie, C., Ridge, D., Ziebland, S. and Hunt, K. (2007) 'Exploring Men's and Women's Experiences of Depression and Engagement with Health Professionals: More Similarities than Differences? A Qualitative Interview Study' *BioMed Central Family Practice* 8(43), http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1941733/.
ESRC (2012) *Economic and Social Research Council Framework for Research Ethics*. http://www.esrc.ac.uk/images/framework-for-research-ethics-tcm8-4586.pdf, date accessed 28/3/2014.
Faubion, J. D. (2001) *The Ethics of Kinship: Ethnographic Inquiries* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield).
Finch, J. (1989) *Family Obligations and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Finch, J. and Mason, J. (1993) *Negotiating Family Responsibilities* (London: Routledge).
Flam, H. (2010) 'Emotions and the Silenced or Short-circuited Self' in M. Archer (ed.) *Conversations about Reflexivity* (London: Routledge).
Foucault, M. (1982) 'The Subject and Power' in H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow (eds.) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
Frank, A. W. (1995) *The Wounded Storyteller* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
Frank, A. W. (2004) *The Renewal of Generosity: Illness, Medicine and How to Live* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
Frank, A. W. (2007) 'Five Dramas of Illness' *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 50(3): 379–94.
Frankenberg, R., Robinson, I. and Delahooke, A. (2000) 'Countering Essentialism in Behavioural Social Science: The Example of the "vulnerable child" Ethnographically Examined' *The Sociological Review* 48(4): 586–611.
Fraser, M. and Puwar, N. (2008) 'Introduction: Intimacy in Research' *History of the Human Sciences* 21: 1–16.
Fraser, N. (2007) *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World* http://eipcp.net/transversal/0605/fraser/en, date accessed 13 March 2013.
Frosh, S. (2007) 'Disintegrating Qualitative Research' *Theory and Psychology* 17: 635–653.
Frost, R. (1915) 'The Death of the Hired Man' in R. Frost (ed.) *North of Boston Collection* (New York: Henry Holt and Company).
Furedi, F. (2004) *Therapy Culture: Cultivating Vulnerability in an Uncertain Age* (London: Routledge).
Furedi, F. (2007) 'From the Narrative of the Blitz to the Rhetoric of Vulnerability' *Cultural Sociology* 1(2): 235–254.
Furedi, F. (2008) 'Vulnerability – Analytical Concept or Rhetorical Idiom' in J. Satterthwaite, M. Watts and H. Piper (eds.) *Talking Truth, Confronting Power* (Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books).
Gabb, J. (2008) *Researching Intimacy in Families* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
Gagnon, J. H. (1992) 'The Self, its Voices and their Disaccord' in C. Ellis and M. Flahery (eds.) *Investigating Subjectivity* (California and London: Sage Publications).
Gallagher, T. (1993) 'The Ghosts of Dreams' in W. L. Stull and M. P. Carroll (eds.) *Remembering Ray: A Composite Biography of Raymond Carver* (California: Capra Press).
Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall).
Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books).
Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
Giddens, A. (1992) *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press).
Gillies, V. (2003) *Family and Intimate Relationships: A Review of the Sociological Research. Families & Social Capital ESRC Research Group Working Paper*. http://www1.lsbu.ac.uk/ahs/downloads/families/familieswp2.pdf, date accessed 11 November 2013.

Gilligan, C. (2009) 'Making Oneself Vulnerable to Discovery. Carol Gilligan in Conversation with Mechthild Kiegelmann' *Qualitative Research Forum* 10(2), http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1178/2718.
Gillis, J. (1996) *A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual, and the Quest for Family Values* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
Gilson, E. (2011) 'Vulnerability, Ignorance and Oppression' *Hypatia* 26(2): 308–332.
Ginsburg, F. (1989) *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
Goffman, E. (1961) *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company).
Goffman, E. (1974) *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row).
Goldie, P. (2000) *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
Goldie, P. (2012) *The Mess Inside: Narrative, Emotion, and the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
Gordon, A. (2008) *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press).
Gordon, S. L. (1990) 'Social Structural Effects on Emotions' in T. D. Kemper (ed.) *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions* (Albany: State University of New York Press).
Gray, B. (2008) 'Putting Emotion and Reflexivity to Work in Researching Migration' *Sociology* 42(5): 935–952.
Gross, N. (2005) 'The Detraditionalization of Intimacy Reconsidered' *Sociological Theory* 23(3): 286–311.
Habermas, J. (2004) *Public Space and Political Public Sphere – the Biographical Roots of Two Motifs in my Thought*. Commemorative Lecture, Kyoto 11 November. http://homepage.mac.com/gedavis/JH/Kyoto_lecture_Nov_2004.pdf, date accessed 28/3/2014.
Haidt, J. (2006) *The Happiness Hypothesis* (New York: Basic Books).
Halmos, P. (1965) *The Faith of the Counsellors* (London: Constable).
Haraway, D. (2004) 'Situated Knowledges' in S. Harding (ed.) *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader* (New York and London: Routledge).
Harding, J. and Pribram E. D. (eds) (2009) *Emotions: A Cultural Studies Reader* (London: Routledge).
Hattenstone, S. (2011) 'Why I Run: "To Look like George Clooney" ' (*Guardian*, 1 July 2011). http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2011/jul/01/why-i-run-ronson-hattenstone-catherine-bennett-clooney, date accessed 11 November 2013.
Haug, F. (1987) *Female Sexualization: A Collective Work of Memory* (New York: Verso).
Heaphy, B. (2007) *Late Modernity and Social Change: Reconstructing Social and Personal Life* (London: Routledge).
Henwood, K. and Coughlan, G. (1993) 'The Construction of "Closeness" in Mother–Daughter Relationships across the Lifespan' in N. Coupland and J. F. Nussbaum (eds.) *Discourse and Lifespan Identity* (California: Sage Publications).
Hochschild, A. (1983) *The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press).

Hochschild, A. (1999) *The Commercial Spirit of Intimate Life and the Abduction of Feminism: Signs from Women's Advice Books* http://sociology.berkeley.edu/public_sociology_pdf/hochschild.pdf, date accessed 28 March 20143.

Hochschild, A. (2003) *The Commercialization of Intimate Life: Notes From Home And Work* (San Francisco and Los Angeles: University of California Press).

Hochschild, A. (2012) *The Outsourced Self: Intimate Life in Market Times* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan).

Hochschild, A. R. (2004) 'Ideology and Emotional Management: A Perspective and Path for Future Research' in A. S. R. Manstead, N. Frijda and A. Fischer (eds) *Feelings and Emotions: The Amsterdam Symposium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Holmes, M. (2010) 'The Emotionalization of Reflexivity' *Sociology* 44(1): 139–154.

Holmes, M. (2011) 'Emotional Reflexivity in Contemporary Friendships: Understanding It Using Elias and Facebook Etiquette' *Sociological Research Online* 16(1): 11 http://www.socresonline.org.uk/16/1/11.html.

Honneth, A. (2007) *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (Oxford: Policy Press).

Illouz, E. (2007) *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Illouz, E. (2008) *Saving the Modern Soul: Therapy, Emotions, and the Culture of Self-Help* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press).

Irwin, S. (2004) 'Attitudes, Care and Commitment: Pattern and Process' *Sociological Research Online* 9: 3 http://www.socresonline.org.uk/9/3/9/3/irwin.html.

Jackson, S. (2010) 'Self, Time and Narrative: Re-thinking the Contribution of G. H. Mead' *Life Writing*, 7 (2):123–136.

Jacobsen, M. H. (ed.) (2009) *Encountering the Everyday: An Introduction to the Sociologies of the Unnoticed* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

James, W. (1884) 'What is an Emotion?' *Mind* 9: 188–205.

James, W. (1890) *Principles of Psychology Volume 1* (New York: Macmillan and Co).

Jamieson, L. (1998) *Intimacy: Personal Relationships in Modern Societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Jamieson, L., Wasoff, F. and Simpson, R. (2009) 'Solo-living, Demographic and Family Change: The Need to Know More about Men' *Sociological Research Online* 14(2) http://www.socresonline.org.uk/14/2/5.html.

Jamieson, L. (2010) 'Intimacy as a Concept: Explaining Social Change in the Context of Globalisation or Another Form of Ethnocentricism?' *Sociological Research Online* 16(4) http://www.socresonline.org.uk/16/4/15.html.

Jamieson, L. (2013) 'Personal Relationships, Intimacy and the Self in a Mediated and Global Digital Age' in K. Orton-Johnson and N. Prior (eds.) *Digital Sociology: Critical Perspectives* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan).

Jamieson, L. and Simpson, R. (2013) *Living Alone: Globalization, Identity and Belonging* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

Jepperson, R. L. and Swidler, A. (1994) 'What Properties of Culture Should We Measure?' *Poetics* 22: 359–371.

Joas, H. (1996) *The Creativity of Action* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Joas, H. (2000) *The Genesis of Values* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Johnson, F. L. and Aries, E. J. (1983) 'The Talk of Women Friends' *Women's Studies International Forum*, 6: 353–361.

Jourard, S. M. (1966) 'Some Psychological Aspects of Privacy' *Law and Contemporary Problems* 31: 307–318.
Karpf, A. (1996) *The War After: Living with the Holocaust* (London: Heinemann).
Katz, J. E. and Aakhus, M. A. (eds.) (2002) *Perpetual Contact: Mobile Communication, Private Talk* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Kemp, S. (2012) 'Evaluating Interests in Social Science: Beyond Objectivist Evaluation and the Non-Judgemental Stance' *Sociology*, 46(4): 664–679.
Kiesling, S. F. (2005) 'Homosocial Desire in Men's Talk: Balancing and Re-creating Cultural Discourses of Masculinity' *Language and Society* 34: 695–726.
Kittay, E. F. (1999) *Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency* (New York: Routledge).
Kleinman, S. and Copp, M. (1993) *Emotions and Fieldwork. Qualitative Research Methods 28* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications).
Kohli, M. and Kunemund, H. (2005) 'The Midlife Generation in the Family: Patterns of Exchange and Support' in S. L. Willis and M. Martin (eds.) *Middle Adulthood: A Lifespan Perspective* (California: Sage Publications.
Konrad, M (2005) *Nameless Relations* (Oxford: Berghahn Books).
Kuhn, A. (1995) *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London: Verso).
Langellier, K. M. and Peterson, E. E. (2004) *Storytelling in Daily Life: Performing Narrative* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press).
Larkin, P. (1974) 'This Be the Verse' in P. Larkin *High Windows* (London: Faber and Faber).
Lasch, C. (1979) *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co).
Lasch, C. (1984) *The Minimal Self: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co).
Law, J. (2004) *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* (Oxford: Routledge).
Law, J. and Urry, J. (2004) 'Enacting the Social' *Economy and Society* 33(3): 390–410.
Lawler, S. (2002) 'Narrative in Social Research' in T. May (ed.) *Qualitative Research in Action* (London: Sage Publications).
Layder, D. (2009) *Intimacy and Power: The Dynamics of Personal Relationships in Modern Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
Layton, L. (2009) 'Who's Responsible? Our Mutual Implication in Each Other's Suffering' *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 19: 105–120.
Lazarsfeld, P. and Menzel, H. (1961) 'On the Relation between Individual and Collective Properties' in A. Etzioni (ed.) *Complex Organisations* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston).
Levinas, E. (1988) 'Useless Suffering' in R. Bernasconi and D. Wood (eds.) *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other* (London: Routledge).
Lichterman, P. (1992) 'Self-Help Reading as a Thin Culture' *Media Culture and Society* 14(3): 421–447.
Linde, C. (1993) *Life Stories: The Creation of Coherence* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press).
Lively, K. J. (2008) 'Emotional Segues and the Management of Emotion by Women and Men' *Social Forces* 87: 911–960.
Lizardo, O. (2006) 'How Cultural Tastes Shape Personal Networks' *American Sociological Review* 71(5): 778–807.

Lloyd, M. (2008) 'Towards a Cultural Politics of Vulnerability: Precarious Lives and Ungrievable Deaths' in T. Carver and S. A. Chambers (eds.) *Judith Butler's Precarious Politics: Critical Encounters* (London & New York: Routledge).
Luhmann, N. (1979) *Trust and Power: Two Works by Niklas Luhmann* (Chichester: Wiley).
Lupton, D. (1998) *The Emotional Self* (London: Sage Publications).
Lynch, K. and Lyons, M. (2008) 'The Gendered Order of Caring' in U. Barry (ed.) *Where Are We Now?: New Feminist Perspectives on Women in Contemporary Ireland* (Dublin: New Island Press).
Mannheim, K. (1952) *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press).
Markus, M. R. (2010) 'Can Solitude Be Recaptured for the Sake of Intimacy?' in H. Blatterer, P. Johnson, and M. Markus (eds.) *Modern Privacy: Shifting Boundaries, New Forms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan).
Martens, L., Halkier, B. and Pink, S. (2014) 'Researching Habits: Advances in Linguistic and Embodied Research Practice' *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 17(1):1–9.
Martin, M. W. (2009) 'Suffering in Happy Lives' in L. Bortolotti (ed.) *Philosophy and Happiness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan).
Mason, J. (2006) 'Mixing Methods in a Qualitatively Driven Way', *Qualitative Research* 6: 9–25.
Mason, J. (2011) 'Facet Methodology: The Case for an Inventive Research Orientation' *Methodological Innovations Online* 6(3): 75–92.
Mauss, M. (1936) 'Techniques du Corp' *Journal de Psychologies* 32: 3–4.
Mazanderani, F. and Brown, I. (2010) 'Privacy as a Practice: Exploring the Relational and Spatial Dynamics of HIV-related Information Seeking' in S. Gutwirth, Y. Poullet, P. De Hert and R. Leene (eds.) *Computers, Privacy and Data Protection: An Element of Choice* (London, New York: Springer).
McCann, G. (2007) *Fawlty Towers* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Press).
McCormack, D. (2006) 'For the Love of Pipes and Cables: A Response to Deborah Thien' *Area* 38(3): 330–332.
McGee, M. (2005) *Self-Help, Inc. Makeover Culture in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press).
Mcleod, J. and Thomson, R. (2009) *Researching Social Change* (London: Sage Publications).
Mcleod, J. and Wright, K. (2009) 'The Talking Cure in Everyday Life: Gender, Generations and Friendship' *Sociology* 43(1): 122–139.
McNay, L. (2003) 'Having it Both Ways: The Incompatibility of Narrative Identity and Communicative Ethics in Feminist Thought' *Theory Culture and Society* 20(6): 1–20.
McNay, L. (2008) *Against Recognition* (Cambridge: Polity Press).Mead, G. H. (1934) *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
Mestrovic, S. G. (1997) *Postemotional Society* (London: Sage Publications).
Metz, T. (2009) 'Happiness and Meaningfulness: Some Key Differences' in L. Bortolotti (ed.) *Philosophy and Happiness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan).
Miles, A., Savage, M. and Bühlmann, F. (2011) 'Telling a Modest Story: Accounts of Men's Upward Mobility from the National Child Development Study' *British Journal of Sociology* 62(3): 418–441.
Miller, A. (2010) *Presence: Collected Stories of Arthur Miller* (London: Bloomsbury).

Miller, D. (2008) *The Comfort of Things* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
Miller, D. (2011) *Tales from Facebook* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
Mills, C. W. (1940) 'Situated Actions and Vocabularies of Motives' *American Sociological Review* 5(6):904–913.
Mills, C. W. (1959) *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press).
Misztal, B. A. (2005) 'The New Importance of the Relationship between Formality and Informality' *Feminist Theory* 6(2):173–194.
Misztal, B. A. (2011) *The Challenges of Vulnerability: In Search of Strategies for a Less Vulnerable Social Life* (London: Palgrave Macmillan).
Moran-Ellis, J., Alexander, V. D., Cronin, A., Dickinson, M., Fielding, J., Sleney, J. and Thomas, H. (2006) 'Triangulation and Integration: Processes, Claims and Implications' *Qualitative Research* 6(1): 45–59.
Moreno Figueroa, M. G. (2008) 'Looking Emotionally: Photography, Racism and Intimacy in Research' *History of the Human Sciences* 21: 68–85.
Moskowitz, E. S. (2001) *In Therapy we Trust: America's Obsession with Self-Fulfillment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).
Mouzelis, N. (2010) 'Self and Self-Other Reflexivity: The Apophatic Dimension' *European Journal of Social Theory* 13: 271–284.
Murdoch, I. (1970) *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: Routledge).
Murphy, A. V. (2011) 'Corporeal Vulnerability and the New Humanism' *Hypatia* 26(3): 575–590.
Neilsen, H. B. and Rudberg, M. (2000) 'Gender, Love and Education in Three Generations' *European Journal of Women's Studies* 7(4): 423–453.
Nolan, J. L. (1998) *The Therapeutic State: Justifying Government at Century's End* (New York: New York University Press).
Nowotny, H. (1981) 'Women in Public Life in Austria' in C. Fuchs Epstein and R. Laub Coser (eds.) *Access to Power: Cross National Studies of Women and Elites* (London: George Allen and Unwin).
Nussbaum, M. C. (2001) *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Nussbaum, M. (2011) *Creating Capabilities*: *The Human Development Approach* (Boston: Harvard University Press).
O'Connor, P. (1998) 'Women's Friendships in a Post-Modern World' in R. G. Adams and G. Allan (eds.) *Placing Friendship in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Okely, J. (2007) 'Fieldwork Embodied' in C. Shilling (ed.) *Embodying Sociology* (Oxford: Blackwell).
Oxford Dictionaries (2013a) http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/ethos.
Oxford Dictionaries (2013b) http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/vulnerable.
Pahl, R. (2000) *On Friendship* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
Park, A. and Roberts, C. (2002) 'The Ties that Bind' in A. Park, J. Curtice, K. Thomson, L. Jarvis and C. Bromley (eds.) *British Social Attitudes: The 19th Report* (London: Sage Publications).
Parr, H., Philo, C. and Burns, N. (2005) 'Not a Display of Emotions: Emotional Geographies in the Scottish Highlands' in J. Davidson, M. Smith and L. Bondi (eds.) *Emotional Geographies* (London: Ashgate).

Petronio, S. (2002) *Boundaries of Privacy: Dialectics of Disclosure* (Albany: State University of New York Press).

Phillips, A. (2002) *Promises, Promises: Essays on Literature and Psychoanalysis* (London: Faber and Faber).

Phillips, T. and Western, M. C. (2005) 'Social Change and Social Identity: Postmodernity, Reflexive Modernisation and the Transformation of Social Identities in Australia' in F. Devine, M. Savage, J. Scott and R. Compton (eds.) *Rethinking Class, Culture, Identities and Lifestyle* (London: Palgrave Macmillan).

Phoenix, A. and Brannen, J. (2014) 'Researching Family Practices in Everyday Life: Methodological Reflections from Two Studies' *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 17(1):11–26.

Pilcher, J. (1994) 'Mannheim's Sociology of Generations: An Undervalued Legacy' *British Journal of Sociology* 45(3): 481–495.

Pilgrim, D. (2009) 'CBT in the British NHS: Vague Imposition or Imposition of Vagueness?' *European Journal of Psychotherapy & Counselling* 11(3): 323–339.

Pink, S. (2009) *Doing Sensory Ethnography* (London: Sage Publications).

Pink, S. and Leder Mackley, K. L. (2012) 'Video and a Sense of the Invisible: Approaching Domestic Energy Consumption Through the Sensory Home' *Sociological Research Online*, 17(1): 3 http://www.socresonline.org.uk/17/1/3.html

Plummer, K. (2001*) Documents of Life 2: An Invitation to a Critical Humanism* (London: Sage Publications).

Porpora, D. V. and Shumar, W. (2010) 'Self Talk and Self Reflection: A View from the US' in M. Archer (ed.) *Conversations about Reflexivity* (London: Routledge).

Prendergast, S. and Forrest, S. (1998) ' "Shorties, Low-Lifers, Hardnuts and Kings": Boys, Emotions and Embodiment in Schools' S. J. Williams (ed.) *Emotions in Social Life: Critical Themes and Contemporary Issues* (London and New York: Routledge).

Pryor, J. (2006) 'Children and their Changing Families: Obligations, Responsibilities and Benefits' in F. Ebtehaj, B. Lindley and M. Richards (eds.) *Kinship Matters* (Oxford and Portland Oregon: Hart Publishing).

Pupavac, V. (2005) 'Human Security and the Rise of Global Therapeutic Governance' *Conflict, Security and Development* 5(2): 161–181.

Reay, D. (2004) 'Gendering Bourdieu's Concept of Capitals?: Emotional Capital, Women and Social Class' in L. Adkins and B. Skeggs (eds.) *Feminism after Bourdieu* (London: Blackwell).

Rebughini (2011) 'Friendship Dynamics between Emotions and Trials' *Sociological Research Online* 16(1) http://www.socresonline.org.uk/16/1/3.html.

Reckwitz, A. (2002) 'Toward a Theory of Social Practices. A Development in Culturalist Theorizing' *European Journal of Social Theory* 5(2):243–263.

Remnick, D. (1998) *King of the World: Muhammad Ali and the Rise of an American Hero* (London: Picador).

Ribbens McCarthy, J. and Edwards, R. (2001) 'Illuminating Meanings of "the Private" in Sociological Thought: A Response to Joe Bailey' *Sociology* 35(3): 765–777.

Ribbens McCarthy, J. and Edwards, R. (2002) 'The Individual in Public and Private: The Significance of Mothers and Children' in A. Carling, S. Duncan, and R. Edwards (eds.) *Analysing Families: Morality and Rationality in Policy and Practice* (London: Routledge).

Rieff, P. (1966) *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith after Freud* (New York: Harper and Row).
Riesman, D., Glaser, N. and Denney, R. (2001) *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press). Originally published in 1950.
Riessman, C. K. (1993) *Narrative Analysis* (California: Sage Publications).
Riessman, C. K. (2008) *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences* (California: Sage Publications).
Rose, N. (1990) *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (London: Routledge).
Rose, N. (2007a) *The Politics of Life Itself* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
Rose, N. (2007b) 'Pyschopharmaceuticals in Europe' in M. Knapp, D. McDaid, E. Mossialos, G. Thornicroft (eds.) *Mental Health Policy and Practice across Europe* (Maidenhead: Open University Press).
Rubin, L. B. (1986) 'On Men and Friendship' *Psychoanalytic Review* 73: 165–181.
Sandelowski, M. (2003) 'Tables or Tableaux? The Challenges of Writing and Reading Mixed Methods Studies' in A. Tashakkori and C. Teddlie (eds.) *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioural Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications).
Sandywell, B. (2004) 'The Myth of Everyday Life. Towards a Heterology of the Ordinary' *Cultural Studies* 18(2/3): 160–180.
Savage, M. (2009) 'Against Epochalism: An Analysis of Conceptions of Change in British Sociology' *Cultural Sociology* 3(2): 217–238.
Sayer, A. (2005) 'Class, Moral Worth and Recognition' *Sociology* 39(5): 947–963.
Sayer, A. (2010) 'Reflexivity and the Habitus' in M. Archer (ed.) *Conversations about Reflexivity* (London: Routledge).
Sayer, A. (2011) *Why Things Matter: Social Science, Values and Ethical Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Schatzki, T.(1996) *Social Practices. A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
Scheff, T. (1987) 'Interminable Quarrels: Shame-Rage as a Social and a Psychological Spiral' in H. B. Lewis (ed.) *The Role of Shame in Symptom Formation* (New Jersey: LEA).
Schooler, J. W. and Engstler-Schooler, T. W. (1990) 'Verbal Overshadowing of Visual Memories: Some Things are Better left Unsaid' *Cognitive Psychology* 22: 36–71.
Seale, C. and Charteris-Black, J. (2008) 'The Interaction of Age and Gender in Illness Narratives' *Ageing and Society* 28(7): 1025–1045.
Sellman, D. (2005) 'Towards an Understanding of Nursing as a Response to Human Vulnerability' *Nursing Philosophy* 6: 2–10.
Sellman, D. (2009) 'Vulnerability and Nursing: A Reply to Havi Carel' *Nursing Philosophy* 10: 220–222.
Sen, A. (1999) *Development as Freedom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).
Sen, A. (2004) 'Elements of a Theory of Human Rights' *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 32(4):315–356.
Sennett, R. (2012) *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation* (London: Allen Lane).

Sharrock, W. and Tsilipakos, L. (2013) 'A Return to the "inner" in Social Theory: Archer's "inner conversation"' in T. P. Racine and K. L. Slaney (eds.) *A Wittgensteinian Perspective on the Use of Conceptual Analysis in Psychology* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

Shattuc, J. M. (1997) *The Talking Cure: TV Talk Shows and Women* (New York: Routledge).

Simmel (1906) 'The Sociology of Secrets and Secret Societies' *American Journal of Sociology* 11(4): 441–498.

Simmel, G. (1950) *The Sociology of George Simmel* (New York: Free Press).

Simon, R. W. and Nath, L. E. (2004) 'Gender and Emotion in the United States: Do Men and Women Differ in Self-Reports of Feelings and Expressive Behaviour?' *American Journal of Sociology* 109(5): 1137–76.

Simpson, R. (2006) 'The Intimate Relationships of Contemporary Spinsters' *Sociological Research Online* 11(3) http://www.socresonline.org.uk/11/3/simpson.html.

Skeggs, B. (2000) 'Introduction' in J. Ahmed, J. Kirby, C. Lury, M. McNeil, B. Skeggs (eds.) *Transformations: Thinking through Feminism* (London: Routledge).

Skeggs, B. (2004) *Class, Self and Culture* (London: Routledge).

Skeggs, B. (2005) 'The Making of Class and Gender through Visualizing Moral Subject Formation' *Sociology* 39(5): 965–982.

Skeggs, B. and Wood, H. (2008) 'The Labour of Transformation and Circuits of Value around Reality TV Viewing' *Continuum* 22(4): 559–72.

Skeggs, B., Thumim, N. and Wood, H. (2008) 'Oh Goodness, I am Watching Reality TV' *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 11(1): 5–24.

Smart, C. (2007) *Personal Life: New Directions in Sociological Thinking* (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Smart, C. (2009) 'Family Secrets: Law and Understandings of Openness in Everyday Relationships' *Journal of Social Policy* 38(4): 551–567.

Smart, C. (2011) 'Families, Secrets and Memories' *Sociology* 45(4): 1–15.

Smart, C., Davies, K., Heaphy, B. and Mason, J. (2012) 'Difficult Friendships and Ontological Security' *Sociological Review* 60(1): 92–109.

Solomon, R. (2004) 'On the Passivity of the Passions' in A. S. R. Manstead, N. Frijda and A. Fischer (eds.) *Feelings and Emotions: The Amsterdam Symposium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Solomon, R. C. (2002) 'Reviewed Work(s): Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions by Martha C. Nussbaum' *Mind, New Series* 111: 897–901.

Spencer, L. and Pahl, R. (2006) *Rethinking Friendship: Hidden Solidarities Today* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press).

Spivak, G. (1988) 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press).

Stanley, L. (ed.) (2013) *Documents of Life Revisited* (Aldershot: Ashgate).

Stanley, L. and Temple, B. (2008) 'Narrative Methodologies: Subjects, Silences, Re-readings and Analyses' *Qualitative Research* 8(3): 275–81.

Stearns, C. Z. and Stearns, P. N. (1986) *Anger: The Struggle for Control in America's History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press).

Stearns, P. N. (2004) *American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth Century Emotional Style* (New York: New York University Press).

Stearns, P. N. and Stearns, C. Z. (1985) 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards' *The American Historical Review* 90(4): 813–836.

Steedman, C. (2000) 'Enforced Narratives: Stories of Another Self', in T. Cosslett, C. Lury and P. Summerfield (eds.) *Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theories, Methods* (London: Routledge).

Strangleman, T. (2012) 'Work Identity in Crisis? Rethinking the Problem of Attachment and Loss at Work' *Sociology* 26: 1007–1018.

Svasek, M. (2005) 'Emotions in Anthropology' in K. Milton and M. Svasek (eds.) *Mixed Emotion: Anthropological Studies of Feeling* (Oxford: Berg Publishers).

Swidler, A. (2001) *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters* (Chicago: Chicago University Press).

Swidler, A. (2008) 'Comment on Stephen Vaisey's "Socrates, Skinner, and Aristotle: Three Ways of Thinking About Culture in Action." ' *Sociological Forum* 23(3): 614–618.

Tamboukou, M. (2008) 'Re-imagining the Narratable Subject' *Qualitative Research* 8(3): 283–292.

Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (2003) *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications).

Taylor, C. (1989) *Sources of Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Taylor, C. (2007) *A Secular Age* (Mass: Harvard University Press).

Taylor, C. (2011) *Dilemmas and Connections* (Mass: Harvard University Press)

Taylor, S. E., Welch, W. T., Kim, S. H. and Sherman, D. K. (2007) 'Cultural Differences in the Impact of Social Support on Psychological and Biological Stress Responses' *Psychological Sciences* 18: 831–837.

Thien, D. (2005) 'After or Beyond Feeling? A Consideration of Affect and Emotion in Geography' *Area* 37(4): 450–456.

Thoits, P. (1991) 'Gender Differences in Coping with Emotional Stress' in J. Eckenrode (ed.) *The Social Context of Coping* (New York: Plenum Press).

Thoits, P. (2004) 'Emotion Norms, Emotion Work and Social Order' in A. S. R. Manstead, N. Frijda and A. Fischer (eds.) *Feelings and Emotions: The Amsterdam Symposium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Thrift, N. (2008) *Non Representational Theory: Space, Politics and Affect* (London: Routledge).

Tilly, C. (1984) *Big Structures, Large Processes and Huge Comparisons (*New York: Russell Sage Foundation).

Tronto, J. C. (1993) *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York: Routledge).

Turner, B. S. (2006) *Vulnerability and Human Rights* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press).

Turner, J. H.(2008) 'Psychoanalytical Sociological Theories and Emotions' in J. E. Stets and J. H. Turner (eds.) *Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions* (New York: Springer Publishing).

Turner, J. H. (2007) *Human Emotions: A Sociological Theory* (New York and Oxford: Routledge).

Ungerson, C. (2005) 'Care, Work and Feeling' *Sociological Review* 53: 188–203.

Vaisey, S. (2008a) 'Socrates, Skinner, and Aristotle: Three Ways of Thinking about Culture in Action' *Sociological Forum* 23(3): 603–613.

Vaisey, S. (2008b) 'Reply to Ann Swidler' *Sociological Forum* 23(3): 619–622.
Vaisey, S. (2009) 'Motivation and Justification: A Dual-Process Model of Culture in Action' *American Journal of Sociology* 114(6): 1675–1715.
Valentine, G. (2006) 'Globalizing Intimacy: The Role of Information and Communication Technologies in Maintaining and Creating Relationships' *Women's Studies Quarterly* 34: 365–393.
Vandenberghe, F. (2005) 'Book Review: The Archers: A Tale of Folk (Final Episode?)' *European Journal of Social Theory* 8(2): 227–237.
Vysma, M. and Tankink, M. (2007) 'Introduction: The Various Uses of Intersubjectivity as an Analytic Tool' *Medical Anthropology* 19(1): 5–8.
Wajcman, J., Bittman, M. and Brown, J. E. (2009) 'Families without Borders: Mobile Phones, Connectedness and Work-Home Divisions' *Sociology* 42: 635–652.
Walker, K. (1994) 'Men, Women, and Friendship: What They Say, What They Do' *Gender and Society* 8(2): 246–265.
Walkerdine, V., Lucey, H. and Melody, J. (2001) *Growing up Girl: Psycho-Social Explorations of Gender and Class* (London: Palgrave).
Wallman, S. (1984) *Eight London Households* (London: Tavistock).
Warde, A. (2011) 'Cultural Hostility Re-considered' *Cultural Sociology* 5(3): 341–366.
Warnock, M. (1962) 'Preface' in J. P. Sartre (ed.) *Sketch for a Theory of Emotions* (London: Methuen).
Wetherell, M. (2012) *Affect and Emotion: A New Social Science Understanding* (London: Sage Publications).
Whatmore, S. (2006) 'Materialist Returns. Practising Cultural Geographies in and for a More-than-Human World' *Cultural Geographies* 13(4): 600–610.
Whitney, S. Y. (2011) 'Dependency Relations: Corporeal Vulnerability and Norms of Personhood in Hobbes and Kittay' *Hypatia* 26(3): 554–574.
Wiley, N. (2010) 'Inner Speech and Agency' in M. Archer (ed.) *Conversations about Reflexivity* (London: Routledge).
Wilkinson, I. (2005) *Suffering: A Sociological Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
Wilkinson, I. (2010) *Risk, Vulnerability and Everyday Life* (Oxford: Routledge).
Wilkinson, I. (2013) 'The Problem of Suffering as a Driving Force of Rationalization and Social Change' *British Journal of Sociology* 64(1): 123–141.
Williams, C. (2004) 'Moving Pictures: George Eliot and Melodrama' in L. Berlant (ed.) *Compassion*: *The Culture and Politics of an Emotion* (New York: Routledge).
Williams, R. (1977) *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
Williams, R. (1979) *Politics and Letters: Interview with New Left Review* (London: Verso).
Williams, R. R. (1997) *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
Wollheim, R. (1980) 'On Persons and their Lives' in A. Rorty (ed.) *Explaining Emotions* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
Woodiwiss, J. (2009) *Contesting Stories of Childhood Sexual Abuse* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
Wouters, C. (2007) *Informalization: Manners and Emotions since 1890* (London, Los Angeles: Sage Publications).

Wright, K. (2011) *The Rise of the Therapeutic Society: Psychological Knowledge and the Contradictions of Cultural Change* (Washington: New Academia Publishing).

Young, M. and Willmott, P. (1962) *Family and Kinship in East London* (Harmondsworth: Penguin).

Youngblood, D. (2001) 'Rainbow Family, Rainbow Nation: Reflections on Relatives and Relational Dynamics in Trinidad' in J. D. Faubion (ed.) *The Ethics of Kinship: Ethnographic Inquiries* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield).

Author Index

Subject Index