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CHAPTER 13

Happy Valley: Compassion, evil and exploitation in an ordinary ‘trouble town’

Helen Piper

There can be few topics more vexed and contradictory than that of class, not least for the scholar of contemporary television. After many years in the wilderness when, so the historian David Cannadine punned, it was very much a matter of ‘class dismissed’ from national political and historical discourse (1998: 8), it is now finally back on the agenda, although variously configured in different disciplines. Most recent work which addresses class in relation to television has been preoccupied by the mutant genres of reality TV which provide rich pickings for a critique of ‘class injury’ (Couldry 2011). Certainly, the near fringes of British broadcasting schedules resemble a parade of unjust and distorted representations of the working class in shows such as *Benefits Street* (Channel 4, 2014), or *Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole* (Channel 5, 2014-), which feed into a wider media caricature ‘that we are all middle class, apart from the chav remnants of a decaying working class’ (Jones, 2012: 23). The debt owed by such programmes to an older ideological project has been widely observed, as they work to distinguish the ‘deserving’ from the ‘undeserving’ poor, and further demonstrate a legacy of unheroic, ‘shaming’ representations of working class women (Walkerdine, 2011).

In the face of such representational negativity, it is something of a paradox that subjective class affiliations should have remained relatively stable over the best part of four decades. As a recent British Social Attitudes survey observed, ‘Britain retains an intriguing attachment to a working class identity’ with around 60% of the British adult population consistently self-identifying as such (Park et al, 2013, p. vii). Moreover, and in spite of considerable change in the nature of occupations, the percentage now identifying as middle class (34%) has risen only 1% since 1983. The data is open to interpretation, but appears to contradict the objective sociological categories of class devised to reflect the changing face of British society and its workplaces. Tellingly, the BBC’s much publicised ‘Great British Class Survey’ of 2011 claimed that the ‘traditional working class’ is now only 14% of the population, and identified seven distinctive classes in place of the conventional three (Savage et al, 2013). Although the categories themselves have been critiqued as descriptors of class *fractions* which provide little insight to class relations (Bradley, 2014), some of the findings may be relevant here. Crucially, the survey observed the ‘blurring and fragmentation of conventional “middle” and “working” class boundaries’ (Savage et al, 2013, p. 245) and this seems most evident in classes such as ‘new affluent’ (which includes tradesmen such as plumbers) and ‘emergent service’ workers (including care workers, bar staff and so on). Together with the traditional working class and the ‘precariat’, these particular categories account for over 60% of the population as scoring poorly or moderately poorly in at least one measure of capital (economic, social or cultural), and so occupying positions which are in some way compromised within the overall social space.¹ Although there is no rigorous way to directly link the 60% of the BSA with the same proportion identified in the BBC survey, it may be justifiable to speculate that by identifying *as* working class, respondents may in some instances be identifying *with* a cultural construction of the working class that offers some purchase on their circumstances, as

these offer a noticeably less privileged subject position than that enjoyed by the established middle classes.

Recognising that class identity is, in part, a matter of cultural allegiance that does not necessarily map onto the nomenclature used by sociologists, can enable connections to be made with other relationships of cultural identification, for example between spectators/readers and fictional characters. Indeed, we might go further and consider how a viewing position of allegiance with a fictional protagonist can call upon sympathies, attitudes and values which are comparable to those underpinning class identity in a broader sense. To demonstrate this possibility and also, I hope, to challenge some of the more damning generalisations about British television and class, I shall here offer an analysis of *Happy Valley* (BBC 2014-), a recent drama series that appears to posit exactly the sort of ‘working-class heroine, difficult, feisty, never at ease with herself’ that the columnist Suzanne Moore called for nearly two decades ago, locating her within a community bearing many of the features (‘inner city, sink estates, crime, heroin epidemics, single mothers, ethnic minorities, teenage pregnancies’) that, Moore noted, may also constitute a coded ‘way of talking about working-class life’ (1998).

To date there have been two series of *Happy Valley* written by Sally Wainwright and produced for the BBC by Red Productions. The first of these sustained an audience of over 6.2million on BBC1 and garnered a string of awards, whilst in early 2016 the second series ended with what *Broadcast* magazine marvelled over as ‘a whopping 9.3 million/33%’ share (Price, 2016). The allusion in my own chapter title is to the track ‘Trouble Town’ by Jake Bugg, played over the opening credits and including the lyrics: ‘There's a tower block overhead/All you've got's your benefits/And you're barely scraping by’. Actually, *Happy Valley* represents a rather broader community of ‘ordinary people’ than this implies, bringing together the

unwaged, traditional working, and ‘lower middle’ classes in a distinctively Northern town. As I have previously discussed the series’ appeal to a sense of the national through a topography of typical urban deprivation nestled within the heritage of the West Yorkshire moors (Piper, 2016), and for reasons I will later explain as relevant to my opening discussion of class allegiance, I shall here focus on *Happy Valley*’s moral mediation of crime and the worldview towards which it stylistically and formally steers its viewers.

In each series of *Happy Valley* disruptions that can be described as criminal occur at three different narrative levels, sometimes alluding to a wider, unseen operational context of organised crime. For clarity we might liken these to a set of concentric circles which revolve around the central character, Catherine Cawood (Sarah Lancashire), a police sergeant who has operational responsibility for the day to day policing of a particular geographical community, much of it economically disadvantaged. As I discuss at length elsewhere, the various narrative and visual conventions of the British television police series usually work to guide the viewer towards a position of moral allegiance with the detective protagonist, who thereby enjoys a privileged ‘voice’ which speaks to and of national (and sometimes, local/global) social anxieties (Piper, 2015). Although a uniformed officer and not a detective, Catherine is so positioned in *Happy Valley* that she is party to both criminal incidents and investigative discoveries, all of which increase in dramatic intensity the closer they get to her personal life, and to the moral opposition with her criminal antagonist, Tommy Lee Royce (James Norton), which governs the emotional heart of the series.

At the most peripheral narrative level are incidents encountered by Catherine in the course of police duties, some of which she later relates to family as reported action, often with an earthy flourish of black humour. Indeed, series two begins with the account given by Catherine to her sister Clare (Siobhan Finneran), intercut by flashbacks, of her attempt to put a sheep out of its misery after it has been ‘rustled’ and persecuted by acid-crazed youths. At this

level, the metering out of justice is a key concern, whether deserved or undeserved, promised or denied, official or unofficial. For example, after sectioning a disturbed psychotic in series one, Catherine threatens to arrest a jeering on-looker before resorting instead to swifter retribution, in the form of an eye-watering wrench to his testicles in the privacy of the police car. That the same lad should later become an accomplice (and still later, victim) of Tommy Lee Royce is typical of the sort of repeat ‘coincidence’ that hints at a more endemic malaise.

Coincidence, in fact, is a key narrative strategy in *Happy Valley* to link the individual with the broader social fabric, often revealing criminal hierarchies, such as the chain of command linking the local and global drugs trade. In series two, the police rescue 22 young women who have been trafficked from Croatia and indentured to work in a biscuit factory. Unable to find space in a refuge for Ilinka (Ivana Basic), Catherine instead takes her to her own house for tea, echoing Clare’s outrage at what amounts to ‘slavery!’ before billeting her with Winnie (Angela Pleasence), an elderly neighbour from the former Yugoslavia. It is an act which, in narrative terms, imports the peripheral to the personal: literally and allegorically ‘bringing home’ the bigger international issue of organised slavery. Now amongst her own neighbours, Catherine must answer Winnie’s questions as to how such girls find themselves in ‘the pickle’, and how it is that the demonstrably ‘evil’ Knezevics (‘the Halifax mafia’) continually escape prosecution. Moreover, it is within the cosy confines of Winnie’s front room that Ilinka soon feels able to trust Catherine enough to confide the identity of another (trafficked and abused) woman whose murder is being investigated by the local CID.

Such ongoing police investigations comprise the second level of narrative which follows an unfolding chain of criminal events across the six episodes of each series. It is significant, perhaps, that in both cases these events should be prompted by the frustrated aspirations of a character aggrieved at having been denied the symbolic trappings of a coveted bourgeois lifestyle, but who quickly loses control of the retribution they set in motion. In the

first series the initial disruption is precipitated when accountant Kevin Weatherill (Steve Pemberton), angry to have been refused the pay rise he needs to send his daughter to private school, suggests to local entrepreneur and drug trafficker, Ashley Cowgill (Joe Armstrong) the idea of kidnapping Anne (Charlie Murphy), daughter of his boss, Nevison Gallagher (George Costigan). In the second, beauty counter assistant Vicky Fleming (Amelia Bullmore) resorts to ruthless blackmail after John Wadsworth (Kevin Doyle), a local detective, ends their affair along with her prospects of marriage and upward mobility. These well-delineated characters are more than the sum of their motives, and neither is presented entirely without sympathy or narrative punishment,² although it will become clear that their values are alien to the deeper moral logic of the series.

It is also significant that the criminal disruptions of the second narrative level are all anticipated and executed during screen time, a strategy by which *Happy Valley* differentiates itself from the classic detective story in which events are driven by the enigma of a *previous*, usually unseen murder. In his analysis of detective fiction, Ernst Bloch calls this latter premise the *ante rem* (literally the ‘thing before’) tracing its antecedents in literature back to Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* which posited the original ‘darkness at the beginning’. In the detective novel, the murderous *ante rem* lurks in the wings, overshadowing all that occurs, perhaps prompting further murders and requiring the untangling of a ‘criminalistic knot’, likened in turn to the biblical ‘fall from grace’ (Bloch, 1980, p. 43). Given that the generic hybridity of contemporary television makes form an altogether less predictable prospect than Bloch’s prototype supposes, it may seem entirely unremarkable that the events of *Happy Valley* are not triggered by an off-screen murder. However, this is not so much a deviation as a distraction, for it is soon evident that there is indeed a ‘before’ which overshadows the drama, but this pertains to neither the first nor second level investigations, but to the inner level of narrative most personal to Catherine. Shortly into series one, Catherine first relates the tale of her grief after the suicide

of her daughter Becky (Elly Colvin), who had found herself unable to live with the trauma of having been raped by Tommy Lee Royce, and of subsequently bearing his child, Ryan (Rhys Connah). Catherine's decision to bring up Ryan against the wishes of her family also resulted in the breakdown of her marriage to Richard (Derek Riddell) and estrangement from her son. This past trauma is simply reported, it does not in itself require 'unearthing and reconstructing' (Bloch, 1980: 44), but what is yet to be discovered 'in accordance with the rules of detection, only in the plot and as plot itself' (1908: 45) is exactly *how* the unavoidable fact of Royce's paternity will continue to play out its 'curse' over time.

The consequences of Royce's past misdeeds (the 'accursed secret *ante rem*') reverberate at all narrative levels throughout both series. In *Happy Valley* it is not the viewer who must trail in the wake of the investigation; rather, and with the irony of a classical tragedy, it is Catherine who is kept in ignorance, struggling to close the gap on what the viewer already knows of Royce's involvement in Cowgill's drug trade, the kidnapping of Ann Gallagher, and the vicious crushing to death of PC Kirsten McAskill (Sophie Rundle). The viewer's privileged role of witness extends also, then, to narrative alignment with Catherine's gradual acquisition of knowledge. After a conversation with Royce's mother about Ryan, Catherine looks in her rear car mirror and glimpses Becky's lifeless face (figure 1), shown as a subjective image and followed by a series of short shots offering a privileged view of her distress at the memory (figure 2).



Figure 1



Figure 2

The use of optical alignment in this sequence contrasts with the visual abjection of the decidedly unemotional Royce, usually filmed in profile or as a somewhat detached figure within the frame (figure 3), often from a camera angled behind his shoulder or with its view impeded by another body. For the first half of this series, the closest sense of eye contact the viewer is offered with Royce is when, clad in a black balaclava, he prepares to rape Ann. It is a strategy that might be compared with the more conventional framing of his accomplice, Lewis Whippey (Adam Long), to whose disgusted reactions the viewer is instead made privy, suggesting an invitation to judge Royce purely by his monstrous deeds, without psychological insight to his motive. Indeed, the first reaction shot in which he is seen to betray any emotion does not come until he visits his sorry, drug-addled mother shortly after Catherine has done so (figure 4), and from her hears for the first time of Ryan's existence ('one of the smackheads down Hebden were saying it's yours')(series 1, episode 4).



Figure 3



Figure 4

Although dramatically apprehended by Catherine at the close of series one and now serving a life sentence, Royce continues to exert his curse by proxy in series two. Seemingly moved by news of his mother's death, Royce starts to manipulate his 'fiancée', Frances (Shirley Henderson), who has taken on a false identity and a position as a teaching assistant at Ryan's school. During her prison visits, Royce urges Frances to do more and more to reclaim Ryan

(now ten years old) from the allegedly malign influence of his grandmother, suggesting that Catherine stole his son and murdered his mother ‘just to piss on’ him. Filling the frame, the couple whisper face to face in these sequences, their conspiracy intensified by the dynamic colour combinations of their clothing: Royce clad for visitors in a burgundy sweatshirt; Frances, wearing a vivid pistachio cardigan (episode 1 and 4) or purple and green blouse (episode 3). The heavily regulated prison is an ironic setting for these conversations, emphasising the illegality of the intervention that Royce asks Frances to ‘imagine’, whilst remaining such an emotionally inaccessible villain that the viewer can never be entirely certain whether, in fact as well as declaration, he has actually come to believe in Catherine’s culpability.

The idea that Ryan’s fate will be ‘cursed’ by his genetic inheritance from Tommy Lee Royce is directly mooted by Catherine to Richard, although he rejects the possibility, arguing that Ryan has not grown up unloved or ‘treated like dirt on a daily basis in squalor and chaos’ like his father. In this scene and others, Royce’s upbringing and desire to influence in turn his son (‘what kind of life is that for a lad, eh? Living with an old woman and no dad’) (series 1, episode 5), relate him plausibly to a wider social picture in which dysfunction, addiction, poverty and neglect can have inter-generational repercussions. Royce is well aware of his own disadvantage, telling Frances to ‘fuck “legal”! When’s doing anything legal ever got anybody like me anywhere?’ (series 2, episode 4) At the resolution of this second series, the cause of his particular villainy is subject to a further dialectical exchange, this time between Catherine and Frances, the latter insisting that that ‘no-one is born evil’, and that Royce is simply ‘a product of his childhood’; Catherine countering that he is a murdering psychopath, a sex offender (comparable to ‘twisted fucks’ such as Jimmy Savile)(series 2, episode 6). Shortly afterwards, the timely revelation that Royce has been manipulating a number of other besotted ‘fiancées’, strengthens her argument that Frances’s educated liberalism is ‘unhinged, certainly

misguided', and her Christian faith in Royce deluded. An old nature/nurture conundrum is thus rather carefully negotiated and left partially open: although Catherine elsewhere reminds that poverty and neglect play a significant part in the shaping of a life, such factors are ultimately rejected as mitigation; moral responsibility is insistently upheld at a deeper personal level.

The structure of allegiance that privileges Catherine's worldview is encouraged by the access that the viewer is offered to her feelings, and reinforced by her quick wit and ability to say it as it (so very clearly) *is*. In her professional life there are numerous incidents - some small, some momentous - whereby her values and personal integrity are put into relief. Although she is fobbed off when she checks whether anyone has thought to warn 'the girls on Stonyroyd Lane' about a predatory attacker, it is left to her to do this whilst off duty, offering sandwiches as she does so. Later, after Leonie (Hebe Beardsall) is attacked, Catherine takes to task the Special Constables who failed to properly care for her or follow up on the assault, accusing one in particular of being 'a lazy sod ... whose first and last instinct is to do the minimum' (series 2, episode 4). Repeatedly, Catherine demonstrates a readiness to attribute blame where it truly belongs, yet to extend professional compassion when needed: Leonie is not 'just' a prostitute, she is 'a vulnerable 19 year old who is where she is because she's had a shit life'.

Shortly into the final episode of the second series, Catherine visits a nearby farm and discovers two bodies slumped at the dining table: Daryl Garrs (Robert Emms), a young sheep farmer previously persecuted by local youths, and that of his mother, Alison (Susan Lynch), who was responsible for his execution. Realising that Alison is just alive but dangerously overdosed, Catherine drags her to the doorway where she continues to prop her up, muddling around as she takes advice on how to make her vomit. Alison's incapacity makes for an oddly enforced intimacy between the two women, both now smeared with Daryl's blood, together shrouded by the grey-green of the farmhouse stone and gloomy moorland drizzle. The viewer

is in a privileged position, fully aware that Alison acted from pity and fear following her son's confession to murder, but Catherine's gradual, dawning appreciation of exactly what the other woman has done (and crucially, *why*) makes this a powerful moment of *anagnorisis*. Obligated to arrest and caution her, Catherine nevertheless continues to cradle Alison in her arms, resting her chin on the top of her head in a gesture of maternal comfort (figure 5). It is perhaps the most eloquent demonstration of Catherine's seemingly inexhaustible capacity for compassion, and a moment of moral elevation for the emotionally-engaged viewer. Only later does it become clear that the scene is also the maturation of another Oedipal *ante rem*, Darryl having been fathered by his own grandfather, his mother having spent a life time shielding him from prying eyes and local ridicule.



Figure 5

It is through such moments of dramatic precision that Catherine is presented as flawed, but courageous, virtuous, dutiful and empathetic. The invitation is not merely to identify vicariously with the ups and downs of her personal emotional journey, but to consider and

share her values and emphatically moral outlook ('nobody needs to be scared of me unless they've done something they shouldn't have', series 2, episode 3). Media psychologists such as Arthur A. Raney (2011) have sought to differentiate some emotions such as compassion or (righteous) anger as being 'more prototypically moral than others' (for example, sadness) in that they trigger reactions that are prosocial rather than self-serving. Raney argues that entertainment which evokes prototypical moral emotions leads viewers 'to contemplate their existence, to ruminate on the human condition', to think as well as feel (Raney, 2011: 20). Even though media psychology can seem remarkably disinterested in how *texts* actually do their work on the mind, and I would certainly challenge Raney's derogatory understanding of mass media audiences (as largely disinterested in truth), the distinction usefully underlines how affect is essential to media enjoyment but does not preclude the textual framing of complex moral and prosocial questions. In *Happy Valley*, Catherine's significance is not limited to her own subjectivity, as even her most personal emotions tend to be shackled to matters of justice that are also of general moral or social significance.

Although *Happy Valley* resists the nomenclature of class politics, it is possible to read its emphatic morality in class terms. Notwithstanding the strongly Northern orientation of much British social realism, simply being in possession of a Yorkshire accent is not a *de facto* claim to working-class status, and police officers technically rank as middle class in sociological schema (see Savage et al, 2014). However, Catherine and family are marked as decidedly 'ordinary' in lifestyle and status, certainly in contrast to those enjoying economic leverage like Nevison Gallagher, or political clout, such as Councillor Gascoigne (Steven Hartley), arrested by Catherine on drink and drug charges but against whom the evidence is quietly destroyed. Off duty, Catherine is often to be found with Ryan and Clare (a job-seeking, recovering addict) in a home steeped in bright colour, surrounded by pleasant clutter, chintz curtains, and Asian glass baubles. The kitchen is a frequent setting, replete with bold tomato red walls and turquoise

cupboards which are themselves a creative work in progress, one by one sporting a newly-painted gypsy flower motif during the course of the second series. The cumulative effect of all this is warm, unrestrained and sensuous, perhaps toying with what David Batchelor elucidates as the sometimes ‘chromophobic image’ of colour ‘as feminine, oriental, cosmetic, infantile, vulgar, narcotic and so on’ (2000, p. 71). Above all, the house is a space for living rather than for the display and performance of social distinction, its décor a far cry from the muted palette and minimalist ‘good taste’ which marks the ‘ideal’ bourgeois home advocated by leisure programming and magazines.

Notwithstanding, Catherine’s display of lower middle class ‘ordinariness’, I would suggest that her personal class status is rather less important than her ability to empathise with, and speak for a compromised subject position, and it is less influential than her articulation of moral values which are at odds with the ‘ideology of the ever-enterprising self’ (Skeggs and Wood, 2012, p. 232) disseminated by middle-class discourses of self-improvement. As noted earlier, the contemporary working class is often today ‘presented as a feckless group: resistant to change, problematic in terms of social norms and behaviours’ (Beider, 2011), frequently in need of middle-class guidance. However, such representations belie the more nuanced documentation of communities by historians and sociologists such as Ken Roberts, who reminds that the British working class has typically upheld specific *values*, including meritocracy, solidarity, security, and the provision of universal services (2001, p. 86). The relative continuities of traditional working-class ideology is further supported by contemporary ethnographic studies, including Harris Beider’s own recent work with white English working-class neighbourhoods which suggests an identity still invested in ‘a strong work ethic, respect, collective values and reciprocal support’ (2011). Similarly, Michèle Lamont’s study of working-class men in the USA and France argues that although patterns of morality are historically and culturally contingent, common structural conditions do tend to lead to common

moral values amongst workers, notably an emphasis on hard work, straightforwardness, and personal integrity which ‘help them compensate for their low socio-economic status’ (2000, p. 51):

workers are more concerned than professionals with keeping the world in moral order (with protecting and providing in particular) because of the environment in which they live, which is more dangerous and less predictable and economically stable (2000: 53).

Although united to some extent by a common regard for moral order, there are of course differences between communities, perhaps because of other cultural factors, or due to the need to maintain or cope with racial divisions, such as those separating white from North African workers in the French cohort. However, there is a common distancing of working class values from those of the professional middle classes, which tend to place more emphasis on qualities attractive to managers such as ‘conflict avoidance, flexibility, and team orientation’ (2000: 37) which in some circumstances may actively conflict with the working-class need to stand up for oneself. Such examples of ‘boundary work’ as Lamont terms it, are always characteristic of class identity which defines itself through ‘symbolic exclusion’ as well as commonality.

Lamont’s study attributes to the working class a highly principled outlook linked to particular historical conditions of limited possibility, which meshes in interesting ways with the *identifiable* moral worldview of *Happy Valley*. As the examples I have given attest, Catherine exemplifies personal integrity and makes explicit demands of hard work and straightforwardness, of both senior officers and junior colleagues. In her public capacity as crime fighter - best demonstrated by the most peripheral level of narrative - she continually

exercises moral judgements of relative culpability, some of which may well appear to reframe what Edensor and Millington call ‘the enduring distinction between ‘respectable’ and ‘rough’ working classes’ (2013: 150) by differentiating the ‘scrotes’ from those who have simply had a ‘shit life’. However, Catherine’s prosocial ideology is in other ways inclusive, insisting on the equal treatment of all (‘no-one is above the law’), advocating compassion, demanding the inclusion of marginalised social groups such as migrants, and actively resisting a wider neo-conservative ideology which holds individuals responsible for their own disadvantage.

Given the emphasis on inclusivity in *Happy Valley*, and the insistence that crime is a consequence of systematic, as well as personal failure, the type of ‘boundary work’ that it encodes may be of particular interest. Crucially, the symbolically excluded in *Happy Valley* is not a racialised other, but the murderous abject figure of evil that is Tommy Lee Royce. However, unlike so many real-life working-class perpetrators of crime such as Mick Philpott or Karen Matthews who have been demonised by the tabloid press³, Royce is not constructed as ‘typical’ of his class or district because his agency is located within a balanced representation of a community, as part of a discourse of wider social responsibility. As the scenes cited earlier suggest, the viewer is nevertheless invited to consider how a childhood blighted by poverty, drugs and neglect may have contributed to his depravity, implying that these blights of working-class life are a social (much as Royce is, for Catherine, a personal) - cursed *ante rem*, spilling over from generation to generation.

Finally, perhaps it should be recognised that although *Happy Valley* is open to class-conscious reading, this does not make it a politically class-conscious text. Certainly, its gruelling emotional rise and fall would have troubled an earlier generation of Marxist critic suspicious of textual proclivity for emotional, interpersonal relationships. However, the unmistakable emphasis on inequality and exploitation would seem to throw into question the conventional objection to melodrama, based on the premise that ‘[m]elodramatic suffering

reduces the violence of everyday life into individualized emotion thereby occluding the workings of broader social and historical structures' (Skeggs and Wood, 2012 p. 27). The violence of *Happy Valley* is instead mediated by Catherine so as to promote active moral contemplation, continually posing questions as to who (or what) is responsible, and suggesting reasons why justice may be denied. Although falling somewhat short, perhaps, of becoming a 'melodrama of protest' (a label attributed to many of Ken Loach's films by Leigh, 2002) *Happy Valley* similarly mobilises sympathies with a character in order to 'activate a sense of outrage' at injustice (Leigh p. 22). Indeed, the series bears all the hallmarks of an authorial vantage articulated from within 'the dominated fraction of the dominant class' recognised by Bourdieu and which, as James Zborowski (2016) emphasises, may share particular sympathies with the dominated, resistant culture of the working class, inclining it towards negative portrayals of the social world and making its values and worldview of particular, and in this case expressive, importance.

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¹ see Skeggs 1997, p. 127-8, who treats this as characteristic of the working class.

² Weatherill is caught and convicted; Fleming is murdered by Wadsworth who ultimately kills himself.

³ In 2013 Mick Philpott was found guilty of manslaughter for causing the deaths of his six children by arson, making him the subject of a typically generalising invective from the *Daily Mail*, see Dolan & Bentley (2013). For an analysis of the media coverage of Karen Matthews' role in the abduction of her daughter Shannon Matthews, see Jones (2012 pp. 13-38).

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