INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

U·M·I

University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Order Number 9421000

**With little means or time: Working-class women and leisure in
Late Victorian and Edwardian England**

Parratt, Catriona Mairi, Ph.D.

The Ohio State University, 1993

Copyright ©1994 by Parratt, Catriona Mairi. All rights reserved.

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

WITH LITTLE MEANS OR TIME: WORKING-CLASS WOMEN AND LEISURE IN
LATE VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN ENGLAND

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Catriona M. Parratt, B.A., M.H.K.

The Ohio State University

1994

Dissertation Committee:

M. L. Adelman

B. Nelson

L. J. Rupp

Approved by

Melvin L. Adelman

Adviser

School of
Health, Physical Education
and Recreation

Copyright by
Catriona M. Parratt
1994

To Ian and Tom

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks go to my adviser Dr. Melvin Adelman, not only for his guidance and patience, but also for his friendship which I value greatly. Thanks, too, to the other members of my committee, Drs. Barbara Nelson and Leila J. Rupp, for their advice and forbearance. The staff of both the Lincolnshire and Yorkshire Archives helped me to locate two useful collections of source material; I acknowledge their assistance. Dr. Nancy B. Bouchier also helped me find valuable source material and gave me encouragement along the way. I am very grateful to the faculty and students in the Department of Sport, Health, Leisure, and Physical Studies at the University of Iowa for their scholarly and emotional support. And to the two people who have shared most intimately the experience of writing this study: my husband, Ian and my son, Tom -- thanks.

VITA

March 30, 1956 Born - Crowle,
England

1977 B.A., University of
Birmingham, England

1978. P.G.C.E., Leeds
Polytechnic,
England

1984. M.H.K. University
of Windsor, Canada

1989-Present. Visiting Lecturer,
Sport Studies,
University of Iowa

PUBLICATIONS

"Athletic 'Womanhood': Exploring the Sources for Female
Sport in Victorian and Edwardian England." Journal
of Sport History 16 (1989): 140-157.

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Health, Physical Education, and Recreation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
VITA	iv
CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION.	1
II. SEXUAL DIVISIONS OF LABOUR, GENDER IDEOLOGIES, AND LEISURE	32
III. LITTLE MEANS OR TIME.	75
IV. BUT OUR LIFE WASN'T ALL WORK AND MISERY	115
V. CONCLUSION.	182
BIBLIOGRAPHY	186

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there have been significant developments in terms of both the volume and quality of scholarly inquiry into the history of women's sport and physical education. This is evidenced in the proliferation of published articles, the diversity of topics explored, and especially in the publication of several fine monographs and the first historical overview of women's sport. Despite these encouraging advances, there are certain limitations to the scholarship. To begin with, although sport and physical education have been quite thoroughly, if not exhaustively, investigated, the topic of women's leisure receives less attention. There is also a tendency to focus almost exclusively upon upper- and middle-class white women and neglect working-class women and women of colour or ethnic minorities. Furthermore, notwithstanding the emergence of gender as a category of historical analysis, much of the scholarship is still evidently driven by the impetus to recover women's past rather than examine the role leisure, sport, and physical education play in constructing and

shaping gender and other power relations.¹

The present study addresses some of these imbalances. Informed by critical Marxist and feminist approaches to cultural and historical analysis, it examines working-class women's leisure in late Victorian and Edwardian England. My purpose is not to survey women's leisure, but rather to explore some of its patterns and meanings, and particularly to consider how it was contoured and constrained by class and gender.

Sport and leisure historians have paid a great deal of attention to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Most maintain that significantly different forms and patterns of leisure emerged at this time and several see the period as an important one for the working people of England who once again began to enjoy recreational opportunities lost in the initial stages of industrialisation. Recent scholarship has revised but not eroded the notion that this was a period in which working-class opportunities and resources for leisure generally expanded.² Constructed around men's experiences and underpinned by masculinist assumptions about sport and leisure, this interpretation fails to acknowledge the extent to which gender crucially shaped working-class leisure opportunities, practices, and

ideologies. In this study I argue that when women's experiences and gender are made the focus of research, late Victorian and Edwardian leisure emerges less as a reflection of the progressive improvement of working-class life, and more as a set of cultural practices which highlighted and reproduced the social inequalities between women and men.

The central theme of this work, that sport and leisure practices reflect and reinforce gender relations, is one common in analyses of late twentieth century culture. It is also beginning to emerge as an issue in historical studies of sport and leisure. In the first and most extensive part of this chapter, a selection of works from a variety of fields and disciplines -- sport and leisure history, women's history, cultural and feminist studies -- is reviewed to construct the conceptual and contextual framework for the study. Following this discussion of the literature, I set out the major themes of the dissertation and conclude with a brief summary of each chapter.

It is now some twenty years since feminist scholars began their transformation of women's history. Their call for "a woman-centred history -- a history seen through the eyes of women and validated by women's

values," has prompted a wide-ranging, feminist revisionism in many fields of history. Initially, the 'new' women's history was preoccupied largely with disclosing women's historical experience, or, as Joan Kelly expresses it, with restoring women to history and history to women. However, during the 1970s, many feminist scholars shifted their focus from 'discovering' women in history to explaining the dynamics of the social relationships between women and men. This conceptual reorientation entailed recognising that gender should be added to such established categories of analysis as class and race. Generally, feminist historians understand the term gender as referring to the social organisation of sexual difference. It expresses the idea that sexual difference and the relationships between women and men are not rooted in biology or nature, but are socially and culturally constructed. Consequently, gender relations are the outcome of historical processes which operate in a variety of fields of human endeavour and experience.

The literature on the history of women's sport and leisure has only recently begun to reflect a shift in emphasis from recovering women's past to examining how sport and leisure help to construct gender relations. Indeed, much of the research in the field still may be

characterised as compensatory and contribution history, or 'herstory', to use a term that accurately conveys the central thrust of the early work in women's history. Given the neglect of women in most histories of sport and leisure, and the marking out of many leisure practices, especially sport, as a male preserve, this effort to find a place for women is understandable. However, if the scholarship in this field is to be transformed, as several scholars argue it should, then simply adding women and women's experiences to the list of subjects and topics to be investigated is not enough. Gender has to be made a central issue and this means examining the complex role which leisure and sport play in the construction and shaping of gender identities, roles, and relationships.⁴

Some of the more recent historical studies of women's sport address the question of its role in the construction and maintenance of gender relations. Patrica Vertinsky's analysis of late nineteenth-century prescriptions for women's exercise builds upon theories of patriarchy which explain the gender system as a consequence of men's 'need' to dominate women. This domination is exerted in various ways, one of which is through the institutionalisation of certain practices and ideas about reproduction. Vertinsky explicates the role

male physicians played in attempting to control women's reproduction by setting limits to their physical activities. She argues that the Victorians identified 'woman' so closely with 'mother' that menopause was frequently interpreted in medical texts as "the death of the woman in the woman." Helen Lenskijy also explores the issue of male control of women in a study of the United States and Canada covering the period from the late nineteenth century to the present. Lenskijy uses the concept of hegemony to explain how white, upper-class men (the 'dominant' group) achieved "consensus on the cultural and ideological dimensions of female sexuality through the ideas of male 'experts' in medicine, science and religion."

With their focus on the cultural construction of gender, these studies represent a significant development in the literature, but they also reflect the tendency within the scholarship to ignore the experiences of working-class women and neglect social class as an analytic category. The handful of studies that have examined the experiences of working-class women underline the importance of social class in shaping women's opportunities for and experiences of sport and leisure. Shirley Reekie, Susan Cahn, and Cindy Himes all stress

that class-specific notions of womanhood and femininity had a major impact on the extent to which women were able to engage in physical activity. Himes finds that between 1860 and 1940, upper- and working-class women in America had far more latitude in this matter than their middle-class counterparts. Reekie draws a similar picture in her study of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century England, though her rather broad conception of 'upper-class' leads her to conclude that it was only lower-class women whose participation in physical activity was not restricted by bourgeois notions of appropriately feminine and ladylike behaviour. Cahn also argues that class based ideals of womanhood could be seen in American women's sport from 1900 to 1960, the "more physical, sexual, assertive" image of working-class culture contrasting with "images of refined, vulnerable, modest" middle-class womanhood.⁶

In their recognition of the importance of class, these works indicate how the boundaries of the scholarship on women's sport and leisure history might be pushed in significant new directions. They show that middle-class ideologies such as the notion of 'true womanhood' did not necessarily influence the behaviour of other social classes and that there were viable

alternatives to the dominant model of constrained sport for women which such ideologies reinforced. Works that testify to labouring women's engagement in dynamic cultural practices like sport also disclose the agency of a group which is susceptible to being portrayed as victims and martyrs, yet it is possible to make too much of the ideological freedom which enabled working-class women to participate in physical and other forms of recreation. Strong currents of gender ideologies flowed through working-class culture and leisure, too, and any freedom which labouring women might have enjoyed in this realm was often checked by material and social constraints which narrowly circumscribed their lives.

Studies by Kathy Peiss and Kathleen McCrone illustrate the importance of such inhibitory influences. In the first published account of English working women's recreations, McCrone takes a preliminary look at three developments: the emergence of sport and physical education in state elementary schools, women's participation in team sports, most notably field hockey, and the sports programmes developed by the firms of Cadbury and Rowntree. McCrone concludes that, despite a growing desire on their part, working-class women's active involvement in sport remained rare "because the necessary

training, freedom of choice, and free time and money continued to be in short supply." Peiss' monograph on working-class women's leisure in turn-of-the-century New York is an important study. Peiss examines in detail the constraints which limited time and money imposed, and significantly, finds no evidence of women's involvement in sport. The vibrant world of public, commercial amusements which catered to the leisure needs of working men and unmarried, wage-earning women was accessible only to those with spare cash and free time. Peiss argues that leisure underlined and reinforced women's economic dependency and subordinate status even as it offered young women new opportunities for personal pleasure. Furthermore, both McCrone and Peiss show that while middle-class notions of 'true womanhood', femininity, and gentility had little consonance with the circumstances of working-class life, working people did have their own ideas about the propriety of female behaviour and this tended to limit the range of leisure opportunities open to women.⁷

In this dissertation, I explore the theme of constraint in leisure using insights drawn from Marxist and feminist scholarship. The relative merits of various approaches to the analysis of gender relations and inequalities have been and continue to be vigorously

debated by feminists in history and other fields of study. It is not my intention to review the debate here; the voluminosity of the literature and the complexity of the conceptual and methodological issues preclude such an exercise. However, a brief discussion of some of the⁸ concepts which inform this study is appropriate.

One major influence on my work is the cultural Marxism of E. P. Thompson and Raymond Williams. Working from Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Thompson and Williams have crafted a version of Marxism in which cultural forms such as leisure are understood as having an important role in maintaining class power. That power is exercised not through coercion, but through the establishment of a broadly based consensus that the capitalist arrangement of social, political, and economic relationships is beneficial to most, if not all, members of society. From this perspective leisure is viewed as an area of life in which that consensus is worked out. An important feature of this approach to cultural analysis is that the hegemony of dominant social groups is not totally secure, it is something they have to work to maintain in the face of challenges from competing hegemonies and resistance on the part of subordinate groups. Consequently, leisure is not only an arena of consensus

building, it is also a site for struggle between competing cultural practices and ideologies.⁹

In common with other forms of Marxist analysis, cultural Marxism tends to prioritise class over other power relations, but feminist scholars have found the concept of hegemony useful for understanding and critiquing gender relations. The many points of congruence between cultural Marxism and feminism are highlighted in the feminist cultural studies analysis of sport which Cheryl Cole and Susan Birrell advocate. Like cultural Marxism, feminist cultural studies considers both material and ideological factors central to the reproduction of relations of dominance and subordination, but extends the analysis from class to gender and (to a lesser degree) race. This feminist intervention into cultural studies has unquestionably enriched the field, particularly by examining the connections between gender ideologies and power relations and highlighting the importance of issues such as sexuality and physicality.¹⁰

The approaches outlined above converge with the interpretations which feminist historians offer of social and cultural practices in nineteenth-century England. Despite ongoing debates about the explanatory power of theories of class versus theories of gender, and

structuralist versus post- (or anti-) structuralist approaches, at a more concrete level historians agree that late Victorian and Edwardian England was a society penetrated by patriarchal and capitalistic ideologies and practices.¹¹ A hierarchical gender order was produced and maintained through the interaction of women and men in range of social and cultural settings and processes: the family, the workplace, education, the polity.¹² I argue in this study that leisure was also a significant site for the construction and maintenance of the late Victorian and Edwardian gender hierarchy. While cognizant of the risks of over-emphasising its importance in this regard, I agree with Peiss' claim that feminist historians have overlooked leisure. This neglect presumably derives from the assumption that issues such as work experiences, family relations, sexual and reproductive practices and politics are more worthy of attention than the apparently trivial realm of leisure. The conceptual frameworks which inform this study challenge that assumption and instead assert that cultural practices such as leisure do indeed play a role in shaping social and gender relations. A brief review of some recent analyses of contemporary British leisure will serve to illustrate this point.

During the last decade, feminist cultural and sociological scholarship has become increasingly concerned with issues of gender and power. This transformation of the field, as Birrell characterises it, is reflected in different developments, including the questioning of masculinist approaches to research. For example, feminist scholars note that the traditional conception of leisure as the opposite of full-time, paid employment is most useful for understanding the leisure of those women who are not married and who are full-time, wage workers. It has considerably less utility for analyses of the experiences of the many women who do not 'fit' this profile. Furthermore, the unique and compelling nature of domestic work, which is still undertaken primarily by women, makes the nature and extent of women's leisure very different than men's. Feminists also insist that women's leisure is constrained and limited to a much greater degree than men's not simply because women often lack the necessary material resources for leisure, but also because of the unwarranted control men exercise over women. This assertion both challenges the well-established idea that leisure connotes freedom of choice and the exercise of will, and pushes the sexual and gender politics of leisure to the forefront.

Erica Wimbush and Margaret Talbot have recently edited a collection of essays which illustrates the major currents in the feminist leisure research. The individual works cohere around the central idea that gender is a primary factor shaping and circumscribing women's leisure. This theme runs through studies of leisure sites such as sports grounds and street corners; in analyses of leisure policies, provisions, and practices which legitimate and sustain patriarchal relations; and in critiques of social institutions like the family and education system which both reflect and reproduce gender inequalities. Rosemary Deem's investigation of women's leisure in the English town of Milton Keynes in the 1980s also highlights the centrality of gender. Deem notes that factors such as employment patterns and personal finances impinge on different women to different degrees, but she believes that all women's leisure is "subject to overarching ideological and structural constraints" arising from oppressive gender relations and patriarchy. These constraints include dominant cultural beliefs about women's social role and gender appropriate leisure forms, women's vulnerability in many leisure venues, and the reluctance of men to create leisure time for women by

accepting responsibility for childcare and other domestic work. Other scholars, some of whom Deem would place outside the feminist tradition, share her commitment to the need for analyses of gender relations and power but depart from her on the issue of whether gender should be accorded primacy. For example, Chas Critcher advocates a multi-dimensional approach, and studies of women's leisure in ethnic minority groups also suggest that rather than prioritising gender, race or ethnicity, scholars should be sensitive to the multiple structural forces within which people live their lives. In a similar vein, Christine Griffin, Dorothy Hobson, Sue McIntosh, and Trisha McCabe show that while gender structures women's access to and experiences of leisure, it is not the only relevant issue. They note that the most thoughtful analysis of leisure should incorporate at least class, race, and gender, but, given the masculinist nature of most of the scholarship on sport and leisure, they make no apology for focussing
 14
 their attention on gender.

There are also different ways of conceptualising women's leisure. In a useful review of the research, Karla Henderson identifies three particular approaches: understanding leisure as free time; as recreational activities pursued during free time; and as

meaningful experience. Henderson favours the latter strategy which emphasises the meaning that women bring to various aspects of their lives. Thus, "leisure may be found in family interactions, community service, social interactions, work outside the home, and in taking time for oneself." It is this "framework of experience" which Henderson sees as the defining context for what she terms the "dimensions of time and activity." The impetus to accord women the right to define their experiences for themselves is an important corrective to the masculinist tendency of research to define out or otherwise marginalise and trivialise women. However, emphasising personal experience opens up another problematic issue, and that is the mystification of the material social processes which determine the individual leisure experience.¹⁵

This point bears upon the earlier discussion of particular conceptual frameworks, the divisive issue being whether women's leisure is primarily a question of individual choice and equal opportunities (a liberal feminist perspective) or whether it is a question of overarching, systems of oppression and inequality (a radical feminist or Marxist perspective). Within the first framework, leisure is likely to be comprehended

primarily as an issue of individual rights and personal experience, while within the latter, it is understood as being structured by gender or class relations.

As previously noted, I approach working-class women's leisure and sport from a Marxist and feminist framework. That is, I assume that working-class women's resources for, right to, and experiences of leisure were crucially shaped by patriarchal and capitalist social structures, but also that within those structures individuals exercised a degree of agency. My understanding of leisure is expansive and incorporates each of the three conceptualisations Henderson notes. Although I touch upon inter-class dynamics at times, my primary focus is upon gender relations within the working classes and the ways in which leisure and sport both reflected and reinforced those relations. This is a topic which has received very little attention in what is a quite considerable scholarship on the history of working-class leisure.

Historians have examined working-class leisure from a variety of perspectives, but its significance in the construction and expression of class relations has been an important, common theme. In much of the earlier literature, the debate revolved around what Gareth Stedman

Jones identifies as the "class expression versus social control" issue. Some historians have seen leisure practices as cultural mechanisms through which working people expressed their consciousness of themselves as a distinct and oppressed class and in which they experienced a self-esteem denied them elsewhere. Others have interpreted leisure, particularly in periods when social tensions were high, as a means for the imposition of bourgeois behaviours and attitudes upon the working masses. Scholars working in the cultural Marxist tradition have used the Gramscian concept of hegemony to mediate between these two interpretations. Using this framework, historians such as Hugh Cunningham and Eileen and Stephen Yeo view leisure as contested terrain upon which different social groups attempt to inscribe meanings and values. The outcome is a complex and ongoing interaction between attempts to control leisure from above and efforts to resist and assert some autonomy from below. John Hargreaves also uses the notion of hegemony to interpret historical developments in British sport, but in his work, the process is more stated than demonstrated.¹⁶

The main focus of the scholarship on popular leisure, then, has been class and class relations; or, to be more specific, men's experience and understanding of

these things. Worker solidarity, sociability, and bonding are recurrent motifs in many works, such as Alan Metcalfe's examination of football in the mining communities of Northumberland, and William Baker's account of the construction of a working-class football culture in the Victorian era. Richard Holt's recent book develops these themes most fully. Holt insists that conviviality lies at the heart of sport and his study is an eloquent testimony to the rich meanings bound up in the sporting experience: friendship, community, solidarity, identity, and loyalty. But, as Joan Scott writes of E. P. Thompson's classic study of the English working class, and as Holt himself acknowledges, the story recounted by historians of sport and leisure is "preeminently a story about men."¹⁷

Few historians have attempted to look at working-class sport and leisure from anything other than the male perspective, though John Hargreaves, Stephen Jones and John Clarke and Chas Critcher, are among those who recognise that sport and leisure practices have played a role in shaping gender relations. Hargreaves maintains that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, sport reproduced gender divisions within both the bourgeois and working classes. Clarke and Critcher

suggest that leisure both reflects gender divisions which are rooted in the social organisation of work and the family, and reinforces them; that is, leisure practices inscribe gender differences by enforcing dominant definitions of what it means to be female or male. It is feminist scholars who have provided the most detailed accounts of how these gender divisions worked in working-class life and leisure. Nicky Hart shows that the unequal distribution of material resources in working-class households in pre-World War II England financed men's leisure and insists that most, if not all, male pleasure came at the expense of women and children's welfare. Ellen Ross' examination of women's sharing and community building in London from 1870 to 1914 also discusses the gendered distribution of family resources. She documents the various strategies which women were constrained to employ to redirect wages into the housekeeping pool and away from men's social fund, but she also acknowledges, as Hart does not, that women had their own leisure culture and their own forms of sociability which sustained them materially and emotionally.

These feminist works provide the basis for challenging what has come to be something of a convention of the historical literature on working-class leisure.

Most scholars concur that during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, working-class resources, opportunities, and demand for leisure expanded significantly as working hours were reduced and purchasing power increased. Indeed, most analyses of working-class sport and leisure proceed from the basic proposition that after about 1870, working people found themselves with more leisure time, more leisure money, and an increasingly wide range of leisure goods and services upon which to spend these resources. This generalisation is often qualified by acknowledging that not all sectors of the working classes saw their standard of living improving. Unfortunately, the qualification is generally quite perfunctory and the whole issue of inequalities of leisure opportunities and resources within the working classes, specifically those rooted in and legitimised by gender, remains unexamined.¹⁹ One of the main objectives of this study is to disclose these inequalities and seek to explain them.

However, this dissertation is not concerned simply with examining the constraints which circumscribed working women's leisure. As recent feminist scholarship shows, even given the limitations of social structures and dominant ideologies, women create and participate in

leisure cultures and practices which enrich their lives. Under certain circumstances, working-class women with very limited resources were prepared and able to assert their right to leisure. The present study examines both these circumstances, and the leisure forms and practices which women crafted out of them.

In the many, diverse accounts of the lives of working-class women in late Victorian and Edwardian England, there are two constants: work and poverty. The necessity of providing for her own material needs, and once she married, those of her family, in a period of meagre wages and virtually no state welfare, dominated the working-class woman's life and crucially shaped her leisure experiences. Lacking the resources of leisure time and leisure money which became increasingly available to working men in this era, women had limited options available to them. The nature of women's work, particularly the perpetual demands of domestic labour, further restricted their horizons. These factors combined to make working-class women's leisure distinctly different both in degree and kind from those of working men and in this way, leisure reflected and reinforced women's economic dependence on men, and their subordinate position relative to them.

The ideological forces which impinged upon working-class leisure in this period also helped to construct the gender hierarchy. Most significant in contouring leisure practices and attitudes towards women's involvement in particular forms of leisure were those clusters of beliefs and ideas associated with the economic doctrine of the family wage; the cults of domesticity and femininity and masculinity; the notion of separate spheres; and ideas about respectability. Cultural beliefs about the problems and meliorative potential of leisure were also important, but they can be understood as a specific expression of the ideologies noted above.

These material and ideological factors combined to make leisure what Rosemary Deem and Erica Wimbush have described as a relative freedom for working-class women in late Victorian and Edwardian England.²⁰ They severely limited the extent of working-class women's leisure and significantly shaped its form and meaning. However, it would be inaccurate to suggest that these material and ideological constraints fully contained all women's behaviour, at all times. Life-cycle stage was also a major influence upon the nature and extent of most working-class women's leisure, while diversities in working-class customs and family relations (particularly

with respect to the issue of 'respectability'), and individual will were significant factors for certain groups of women. Consequently, while in a general sense it could be said that all working women's leisure was hedged about by dominant structural and cultural limits, specific groups of women were able to negotiate or disregard those limits.

The next two chapters of the study establish the historical and cultural context for the examination of working-class women's leisure which follows in chapter four. Chapter two looks at the changing socio-economic dynamics of working-class life and the concomitant gender ideologies which developed during the nineteenth century; chapter three examines the material circumstances arising from these developments and their constraining influence on women's leisure. The most significant material factors were the availability or lack of free time and discretionary income, and the nature of women's work, but women's access to other leisure resources (for example, facilities such as club rooms and public houses, voluntary associations and other organisations) are also understood as material influences.

Chapter four situates working-class women's leisure within the material and ideological framework sketched out in chapters two and three. The central organizing theme for this analysis is the life cycle. At each life-cycle stage, women's social and economic status, familial role, and work experiences changed and so, too, did their leisure opportunities and experiences. Chapter four examines this theme by taking a general look at the nature, extent, and significance of working-class women's leisure in England around the turn of the century. As the study shows, for most of those women, for most of their lives, leisure was a very relative matter.

ENDNOTES

1J. A. Mangan & Roberta Park, eds., From 'Fair Sex' to Feminism: Sport and the Socialization of Women in the Industrial and Post-Industrial Eras (London: Frank Cass, 1987). Recent monographs include Kathleen McCrone, Playing the Game: Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870-1914 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1989); Patricia Vertinsky, The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors, and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990). Allen Guttman, Women's Sport: A History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). For a review and critique of the scholarship, see Nancy L. Struna, "Beyond Mapping Experience: The Need for Understanding in the History of American Sporting Women," Journal of Sport History 11 (1984): 120-133.

2

On the late nineteenth-century emergence of an expanded working-class leisure culture, see Peter Bailey, Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885 (London: Routledge, 1978); James Walvin, Beside the Seaside: A Social History of the Popular Seaside Holiday (London: Allen Lane, 1978); idem., Leisure and Society, 1830-1850 (London: Longmans, 1978); John Lowerson and John Myerscough, Time to Spare in Victorian England (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1977); Hugh Cunningham, Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c.1780-c.1880 (London: Croom Helm, 1980): 140-141. Cunningham is among those who question the idea of an unqualified expansion of working-class leisure. See idem., "Leisure," in John Benson, ed., The Working Class in England, 1875-1914 (London: Croom Helm, 1985): 133-164. Several scholars argue that important changes in leisure, for example, the degree to which it was commercialised, were already emerging in the eighteenth century. See John H. Plumb, "The commercialisation of leisure in Eighteenth century England," in Neil McKendrick, ed., The Birth of a Consumer Society (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982): 265-285. Others suggest that many significant changes did not occur until after World War I. See Stephen G. Jones, Workers at Play: A Social and Economic History of

Leisure 1918-1939 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986).

3There is an extensive literature on the development of the new women's history. For a useful review and critique, see Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988): 15-27, 28-50; Joan Kelly, "The Social Relation of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 1 (Summer 1976): 809.

4Struna, "Beyond Mapping"; Joan Hult, "Women to the Mainstream of Sport History," paper presented at the AAPHERD pre-convention conference, Las Vegas, April, 1987; Catriona M. Parratt, "From the History of Women in Sport to Women's Sport History: A Research Agenda," in Margaret Costa and Sharon Guthrie, eds., Women and Sport: A Scholarly Analysis (Champaign, Ill.: Human Kinetics Press, forthcoming, 1994).

5

Vertinsky, The Eternally Wounded Woman; idem., "Exercise, Physical Capacity, and the Eternally Wounded Woman in Late Nineteenth Century North America," Journal of Sport History 14 (1987): 7-27; idem., "Final Prescriptions: Menopause, Old Age and Exercise for Nineteenth Century Women," paper presented at the 17th NASSH convention, Clemson University, May 1989; Helen Lenskij, Out of Bounds: Women, Sport and Sexuality (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1986): 12.

6

Shirley Maxwell Reekie, "The History of Sport and Recreation for Women in Britain, 1700-1850" (Ph.D. Dissertatio, Ohio State University, 1982); Kathy Peiss, Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Susan Kathleen Cahn, "Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Women's Sport, 1900-1960" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1990): 394; Cindy Himes, "The Female Athlete in American Society, 1860-1940"

(Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1986); Kathleen E. McCrone, "Class, Gender, and English Women's Sport, c. 1890-1914," Journal of Sport History 18 (Spring 1991): 159-182.

7

McCrone, "Class, Gender, and Women's Sport"; Peiss, Cheap Amusements.

8

For overviews of feminist theory, see Josephine Donovan, Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions of American Feminism (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1985); Alison M. Jagger and Paula Struhl Rothenberg, Feminist Frameworks: Alternative Theoretical Accounts of the Relations Between Women and Men (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984). For important collections of essays on the Marxist, materialist, and feminist debate, see Lydia Sargent, ed., Women in Revolution: The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism (London: Pluto, 1981); Annette Kuhn and AnneMarie Wolpe, eds., Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978). For a useful review of this work and other approaches to explaining gender, see Sylvia Walby, Patriarchy at Work (Cambridge: Polity, 1986): 5-49.

9

E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (New York: Vintage, 1963); Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

10

For a synopsis of the feminist cultural studies approach, see Susan Birrell, "Discourses on the Gender/Sport Relationship: From Women in Sport to Gender Relations," Exercise and Sport Sciences Reviews 16 (1988): 480-481.

11

For both a review of the various theoretical approaches in women's history and a post-structuralist alternative to them, see Scott, Gender.

12

For a useful review of the historical scholarship, see Harriet Bradley, Men's Work, Women's Work: A Sociological History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Employment (Oxford: Polity Press, 1989), 27-49.

13

Birrell, "Discourses," 459-502. The following by no means exhausts the scholarship, but it is fairly representative. Margaret Talbot, Women and Leisure: A State of the Art Review (London: SSRC/Sports Council, 1979); Rosemary Deem, "Women, Leisure, and Inequality," Leisure Studies 1 (1982): 29-46; idem., "Feminism and Leisure Studies: Opening up New Directions," in Erica Wimbush and Margaret Talbot, eds., Relative Freedoms: Women and Leisure (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986); Erica Wimbush, Women, Leisure and Well-Being (Edinburgh: Centre for Leisure Research, 1986); Diana Woodward, Eileen Green, & Sandra Hebron, "The Sheffield Study of Gender and Leisure: Its Methodological Approach," Leisure Studies 7 (1988): 95-101; Debbie Chambers, "The Constraints of Work and Domestic Schedules on Women's Leisure," ibid., 5 (1986): 309-325; Rachael Dixey, "It's a Great Feeling When You Win: Women and Bingo," ibid., 6 (1987): 199-214; Karla A. Henderson, et al., A Leisure of One's Own: A Feminist Perspective on Women's Leisure (University Park, PA.: Venture Publishing, 1989); Helen Lenskyj, "Measured Time: Women, Sport, and Leisure," Leisure Studies 7 (1988): 233-240; Susan M. Shaw, "The Meaning of Leisure in Everyday Life," Leisure Sciences 7 (1985): 1-24; idem., "Gender and Leisure: Inequality in the Distribution of Leisure Time," Journal of Leisure Research 17 (1985): 266-282; Betsy Wearing and Stephen Wearing, "'All in a Day's Leisure': Gender and the Concept of Leisure," Leisure Studies 7 (1988): 111-123; Diana Woodward, Eileen Green, and Sandra Hebron, "The Sociology of Women's Leisure and Physical Recreation: Constraints and Opportunities," International Review for the Sociology of Sport 24 (1989): 121-133.

14

Wimbush and Talbot, eds., Relative Freedoms; Rosemary Deem, All Work and No Play? The Sociology of Women and Leisure (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986); Chas Critcher, "Radical Theories of Sport: the State of Play," Sociology of Sport Journal 3 (1986): 337-

343; Christine Griffin et al., "Women and Leisure," in Alan Tomlinson, ed., Leisure and Social Control (Eastbourne: Brighton Polytechnic, Chelsea School of Human Movement, 1981). The quotation is from Deem, "Feminism and Leisure Studies": 9; Bruce Carrington, Terry Chivers & Trevor Williams, "Gender, Leisure, and Sport: A Case Study of Young People of South Asian Descent," Leisure Studies 6 (1987): 265-279.

15

Karla A. Henderson, "The Meaning of Leisure for Women: An Integrative Review of the Research," Journal of Leisure Research 22 (1990): 228-243.

16

Gareth Stedman Jones, "Class expression versus social control? A critique of recent trends in the social history of 'leisure'," History Workshop Journal 4 (1977): 163-170; Bailey, Leisure and Class; Cunningham, Leisure; Richard Holt, Sport and the British: A Modern History (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Eileen Yeo and Stephen Yeo, eds., Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590-1914: Explorations in the History of Labour and Leisure (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1981); John Hargreaves, Sport, Power and Culture (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986). The scholarship examining the class dimensions of sport and leisure is extensive. For useful reviews, see William J. Baker, "The State of British Sport History," Journal of Sport History 10 (1983): 53-66; Peter Bailey, "Leisure, culture and the historian: reviewing the first generation of leisure historiography in Britain," Leisure Studies 8 (1989): 107-127.

17

The quotation is from Scott, Gender, 72. Alan Metcalfe, "Organized Sport in the Mining Communities of South Northumberland, 1800-1889," Victorian Studies 25 (1982): 469-495; William J. Baker, "The Making of a Working-Class Football Culture," Journal of Social History 13 (1979): 241-251; Holt, Sport and the British: 347.

18

Hargreaves, Sport, Power and Culture: 67; John Clarke and Chas Critcher, The Devil Makes Work: Leisure in Capitalist Britain (London: Macmillan, 1985): 161; Nicky Hart, "Gender and the Rise and Fall of Class Politics," New Left Review No. 175 (May/June 1989): 19-47; Ellen Ross, "Survival Networks: Women's Neighbourhood Sharing in London Before World War I," History Workshop Journal 15 (Spring 1983): 4-27. Also see Ross McKibbin, "Why there was no Marxism in Great Britain," English Historical Review 99 (1984): 24.

19

The idea that changes in living standards and working conditions expanded working-class leisure in the last quarter of the nineteenth century is widely accepted, see Bailey, "Leisure, Culture, and the Historian," 11-12; idem., Leisure and Class: 105; Cunningham, Leisure, 140-191; W. Hamish Fraser, The Coming of the Mass Market, 1850-1914 (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1981); John K. Walton, The English Seaside Resort: a Social History 1750-1914 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983).

20

Deem and Wimbush, Relative Freedoms.

CHAPTER II

SEXUAL DIVISIONS OF LABOUR, GENDER IDEOLOGIES, AND LEISURE

The development of industrial capitalism in nineteenth-century England had a major impact on the lives of working-class women. In the context of shifting patterns of economic and cultural production, women's roles and responsibilities changed, both within the family and in a broader social sense. These changes crucially affected women's leisure. Sexual divisions of labour and gender ideologies which emphasised sexual difference and rationalised men's dominance of women were particularly important in this respect. They influenced especially women's right to leisure, and the nature of and meanings attached to their leisure roles and practices. By the middle of the century, there were two contesting visions of working-class leisure, one which was consonant with the emerging capitalist and industrial order and which paralleled and reinforced gendered identities and roles in the workplace and the family. The other was connected strongly to the economic and cultural order which was being eroded and in this model, gender divisions and patterns were less clearly defined. This chapter

examines the connections between sexual divisions of labour, gender ideologies, and these contrasting versions of working-class leisure.

The effects of industrialisation on working-class women were varied and complex. Although historians have offered divergent interpretations of their impact, certain generalisations can be made. The most fundamental and far-reaching change was the shift away from a domestic mode and locus of production. In the domestic system, husband, wife, children, servants, and apprentices lived and worked together in one household, and economic production and family life were interwoven. Single women worked either in the family household or, if their labour was not required at home, as servants in other households. Married women were responsible for a wide range of domestic tasks, including the production of food and other commodities for family consumption, and the bearing and caring of children. They were also centrally involved in productive activity directed to the exchange economy: the wife of an artisan worked alongside her husband, usually performing preparatory or finishing tasks, while in propertyless families, wives hired themselves out as wage labourers, often alternating different kinds of paid work¹ and juggling this with domestic labour.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the process of industrialisation began unevenly but surely to transform this system. As industrial capitalism eclipsed the domestic, agrarian mode of production, increasing numbers of independent, primary producers and artisans found themselves forced into the labour market as wage earners, and working-class families organised themselves as wage economies in which the major imperative was earning enough money to pay for food, shelter, clothing and other necessities. Unmarried women now worked as wage labourers who contributed most, if not all, of their earnings to the family fund. Married women continued to play several roles, contributing their labour or earning wages as the needs of the family demanded. Increasingly, however, both women and men began to identify the home and family duties as central to women's social role and wage labour as something which a respectable woman would wish to avoid. For the most highly skilled and paid workers, the ideal of a wife and family supported entirely by a male wage-earner became possible during the latter part of the nineteenth century; for the vast majority, it was an ideal which they would² never be able to turn into reality.

With the decline of the domestic system of production and the eventual ascendancy of industrial capitalism, older established sexual divisions of labour were challenged, re-defined and, ultimately, etched more deeply into the patterns of working-class life. By the first few decades of the nineteenth century, traditional beliefs about women and men were crystallising into the polarised gender ideologies of the Victorian era. The relationship between these economic and cultural processes, and their impact on people's lives was complex and often contradictory, but their general tendency, especially at an ideological level, was to emphasise women's domestic roles and concomitantly render their involvement in the realm of public, wage work problematic. Organising work on the basis of gender was not uniquely a feature of industrial capitalism: in many domestic and agrarian economies, women and men performed distinct tasks, as did the young and elderly. However, the shift of exchange production from the household and family workshop to factories and mills seems to have inscribed gender even more clearly upon the division of labour.

Several characteristic features of women's work in the nineteenth century reflected this gendered organisation of labour. Apart from a small percentage

employed in cotton textiles, which was the first industry to mechanise and one in which women eventually enjoyed relatively good working conditions and wages, throughout the nineteenth century the majority of working-class women were ghettoised into low-paid, traditionally 'female' occupations. By mid-century, forty-five percent of women workers were employed in manufacturing, but only half of these were textile operatives; the remainder were in traditional, home-based garment trades such as millinery and dressmaking. Domestic service, which along with agriculture was a major employer of women in the pre-industrial period, constituted forty percent of the female workforce in 1851 and continued to be the single largest occupational category for women until after the First World War. Countless women also continued to work, as they had before industrialisation, in the informal 'hidden' economy as street vendors, laundresses, boardinghouse keepers and the like. In short, as Louise Tilly and Joan Scott note, throughout the nineteenth century "the majority of working women [in England] performed jobs with low levels of skill and low productivity similar to those that had characterized women's work for centuries."³

In occupations employing both women and men, patterns of gender segregation and stratification became more pronounced as the century unfolded. This pattern was especially prevalent in primary and extractive industries such as agriculture, fishing, and mining. Despite the fact that each of these occupations had a long history of female employment, by mid-century, a fairly broad spectrum of society considered them unsuitable for women. Employment patterns in agriculture are illustrative of general trends in all three occupations. In the 1840s, between a quarter and a third of agricultural workers were girls and women. Twenty or so years later female workers still constituted a significant proportion of the agricultural labour force in certain parts of the country, but the report of a parliamentary commission conducted in 1867-68 clearly showed that the employment of girls and women had declined. By the turn of the century, census figures revealed that only two percent of farm labourers and farm servants were female. Aggregate figures mask the persistence of female agricultural workers in certain regions and a great deal of women's work undoubtedly went unrecorded by census takers and other investigators, but according to Ivy Pinchbeck, "by the end of the nineteenth century women had almost ceased to be employed as wage

earners in agriculture."⁴

In both fishing and mining, long-established and distinct sexual divisions of labour intensified during the nineteenth century to the point of the almost total exclusion of women. To take the latter as an example, campaigns in the 1840s and 1880s to end women's employment in mining, first as underground and later as surface workers, were part of the same broad cultural process which defined agricultural labour as unsuitable for women. Mining, a physically exhausting, dirty, and to many contemporaries, degrading job was antithetical to dominant notions about womanhood and by 1842, the employment of girls and women underground had become illegal. Women's surface work continued into the twentieth century and its eventual demise was attributable to technological developments rather than reformist opposition. Nevertheless the rhetoric invoked by opponents to the employment of the "pit brow lasses" in the 1880s emphasised the tensions between contemporary beliefs about women and their employment in 'masculine' occupations.⁵

Sex-typing and gender segregation were characteristic of nineteenth-century manufacturing too, as studies of specific industries indicate. Pottery, capitalised but not mechanised by the middle of the

eighteenth century, had a highly specialised division of labour. Women began to be employed in significant numbers at about this time and worked mostly in decorating the wares men crafted. By the end of the century, the major occupations for women were in preparatory, cleaning, and simple decorative processes. Throughout the nineteenth century most tasks in the pottery industry were gender specific with women clustered in auxilliary or finishing tasks. The introduction of new technology in roughly the last quarter of the century contributed to a restructuring of the sexual division of labour which continued into the twentieth century. Jobs which had previously been considered beyond either the skill or strength of women, once mechanised, could be performed by them. Significantly, however, even when women and men worked at the same tasks, gender segregation persisted: for example, women worked on lighter, smaller articles, or machine-produced 'inferior' wares while men used traditional hand techniques for higher quality goods.⁶

The history of pottery illustrates the malleability of gender lines in that industry: as new technologies were introduced, women assumed tasks which had previously been the provenance of men, though in the process these jobs were also re-defined as 'inferior'.

Hosiery reveals a similar pattern. As industrial capitalist practices spread, women were employed in the traditionally masculine occupation of frame-knitting and a long-established sexual division of labour began to break down. However, there were further sub-divisions within frame-knitting, between plain and fancy work, and as was the case with pottery, women worked primarily in those processes which were considered less skilled. Factory production expanded in the second half of the century and this accelerated the tendency to de-skill and feminise the labour force. Nevertheless, by the 1870s, male workers were able to re-assert themselves as frame-knitters and most women worked in ancillary processes such as seaming and stitching.⁷

A number of studies show that despite variations in timing, motives, and other particulars this gendering of the organisation of work was endemic. In some trades, gender demarcations were more rigid than in others. For example, male trade unionists in the shoemaking industry played an important role in creating a pattern of strict gender segregation which has persisted from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present. But, as both Bradley and Miriam Glucksmann reveal, even in industries founded at the turn of the twentieth century which did not

have the established sexual divisions of labour of shoemaking and older trades, systems of gender segregation⁸ quickly developed.

The ideological complement to a system of production which allocated tasks and remunerated workers on the basis of sexual difference began to emerge most fully in the later part of the eighteenth century, though many of its central elements can be found in earlier centuries. Leonorre Davidoff and Catherine Hall have traced notions about domesticity, separate spheres, female and male superiority and inferiority, family and work roles, and sexuality from such eighteenth-century writers as William Cowper and Hannah More through to Sarah Stickney Ellis and Harriet Martineau in the 1830s and 1840s. Linked closely with Evangelicalism and the earnest, emergent middle classes, the gender ideologies propagated by these and many other writers enjoyed a wide currency during the nineteenth century. Furthermore, while such beliefs as the centrality of domesticity and women's physical frailty were clearly most consonant with middle-class life, working-class people also shaped their relationships and cultural practices around similar ideas about gender. As Barabara Taylor suggests, this was not simply a question of the working classes aping those

higher in the social hierarchy; it was an understandable response to major changes in the social and economic fabric of their lives.⁹

A common starting point for eighteenth and nineteenth-century ideas about sexual relations and gender appropriate roles and behaviour was the assumption of natural, and therefore unalterable, differences between women and men. This appeal to nature to explain and rationalise cultural gender arrangements was rooted in enlightenment thought. Hannah More, whose prescriptive writings are strongly influenced by enlightenment philosophy believed that women were naturally suited for the domestic sphere, while men were just as naturally made for "the more public exhibitions on the great theatre of human life." Over half a century later, John Ruskin, one of the major contributors to the Victorian debate on gender proceeded from a similar notion of the inherent differences of women and men to assign the former to a restricted (if regal) sphere while Henry Maudsley and other conservatives used the same rationale to deny women's involvement in endeavours such as higher education. In 1874, Maudsley wrote: "women are marked out by nature for very different offices in life from those of men." The sentiment was shared by many and shaped a wide

range of cultural practices: family roles, social roles,
 10
 ideals of masculinity and femininity, and leisure.

The degree to which these ideas about women's inherent capabilities and inclinations influenced behaviour has been questioned and, as the history of the feminist movement makes apparent, they did not go uncontested. Indeed, the internal contradictions of middle-class gender ideologies rendered them open to challenges and re-interpretations, particularly when they were presented as ideals for working-class women. Nonetheless, working-class people also espoused doctrines of domesticity, separate spheres, and masculinity and femininity. Historians have located the origins of these visions of gender in the male workshop culture of certain eighteenth-century trades. In the early part of the nineteenth century, groups of skilled working men used them as an ideological buttress in defence of their economic and social position and, from about mid-century, they constituted a dominant element in the political rhetoric of this, the most privileged sector of the working classes. The eventual ascendancy of these conservative attitudes towards gender has been charted in studies of working-class movements such as Owenism and
 11
 Chartism.

The Owenites undertook one of the most thorough nineteenth-century appraisals of gender relations. While characterised by a range of opinions on the matter, in its most radical form Owenite socialism challenged the very concepts of the privatised family and women's subordination to men. Taylor's study of Owenism examines the close connection between socialism and feminism in the early decades of the nineteenth century and their eventual divergence. Working people dominated Owenism from the late 1820s till the movement's collapse in 1845, and women were significantly involved in its activities. Robert Owen's criticism of the institutions of marriage and the privatised family provoked intense controversy both within the movement and among its opponents in the 1830s and 1840s. Working-class women, while appreciative of proposals advocating reform within marriage and their right to divorce, were generally leery of any radical reconstruction of gender relations. As Taylor explains, by the 1830s, economic and social forces had made formal marriages much more desirable among working people than they had previously been. For women, a legal union represented a degree of economic security and respectability which was increasingly denied to those who lived outside such a relationship. "Under these

circumstances, women were usually more interested in enforcing the obligations of marriage than in abolishing them. Safer relationships, rather than freer ones, were a common goal." By mid-century, the impetus among working people for any significant, egalitarian re-structuring of the sexual and social relations between women and men had ebbed away, and the feminist-socialist linkage with it. In the longer term, the more conservative gender ideologies of Chartism, one of the most important and widespread working-class movements in British history, proved to be far more enduring and influential than those¹² of Owenite feminism.

Some proponents of the People's Charter subscribed to sexual equality and women's suffrage, but more generally the movement espoused doctrines of domesticity, the family and marriage, and gender roles and identities which corresponded closely to those of the middle classes. "The class that came to its own in Chartism," writes Jutta Schwarzkopf, "was one in which women's needs and requirements were submerged in those of men and in which unquestioned male authority and female subservience, its counterpart, became the proclaimed hallmarks of working-class masculinity and femininity respectively." The consonance between middle-class and

radical working-class ideas about gender is reflected in Chartist literature from the late 1830s to the early 1850s which shows that assumptions about the natural differences between women and men undergirded beliefs about their roles and responsibilities, and the proper constitution of their social relations.¹³

Chartist leaders universally condemned married women's employment outside the home, and even though they granted that unmarried women should be permitted to work to support themselves and their dependents, most believed that women were, by nature, unsuited for wage labour. National figures such as Henry Vincent, Ernest Jones, Thomas Wheeler, and William Lovett all expressed this belief and painted doleful images in their speeches and writings of women morally and physically blighted by wage labour.¹⁴ In Jones' novel, Woman's Wrongs, the rigours of employment have a crippling effect on the health and vitality of two of the central female characters. Anna, the young milliner, dies from a wasting illness (probably consumption) brought on by the combined effects of overwork, starvation and her seduction and betrayal by a son of the "favoured few."¹⁵ Laura, the tradesman's daughter, describes the effect that her years of clerking in her father's concern have had upon her:

From twelve years of age I was hailed to a desk, poring over figures. I grew into a form as cold, and stiff, and rigid, as the columns that I added up. From being made a machine of, I began to look like one.¹⁶

This degradation of literary figures reflects the concerns expressed in the Chartist press and public proclamations about the effect of wage labour on real women. "Will you," thundered the authors of the 1839 Manifesto of the General Convention, "...allow your wives and daughters to be degraded, your children to be nursed in misery, stultified by toil, and to become the victims of vice our corrupt institutions have engendered?"¹⁷ Attacks such as this were common. Male workers and Chartist leaders inveighed against factory production and the expansion of piece-work and female and child labour, all of which undermined the economic and social position of skilled artisans; and they used gender ideologies in which the middle classes shared to do so:

And what is the result of the wife's being driven to the factory? That she dies young -- that her poisoned milk kills the sickly child -- that the child, neglected, meets accidents, crippledom, and death....What is the result of the children being set to premature work? Disease, and early death, ignorance and vice. The fountains of society are poisoned, and a still more decayed and vitiated race is prepared for each ensuing generation.¹⁸

Prostitution represented the ultimate degradation of women forced into the wage labour market and accounts of sexual

harassment and exploitation reported in governmental enquiries into women's employment in mines and textile factories, re-appeared in Chartist newspapers as powerful inducements for supporting their movement.¹⁹ Jones made good use of such material:

the vile lust of those men [masters in the Yorkshire textile factories] is exercised in seducing the female portion of their work-people; hence it has become a proverb, "If you would earn good wages, you must be friends with the master." Yes! Mind and body are prostituted at those unholy shrines of mammon!"²⁰

Prostitution was doubly potent as a metaphor for the vulnerability of working-class women and the oppression shared by all working people when coupled with the antithetical image of female domesticity and motherhood. Chartists cherished the social institution of marriage and they frequently invoked visions of humble but happy homes and families in their writings and speeches. Often, they presented working-class homes and families threatened by the forces of capitalism and 'class legislation', or conjured up images of a golden past in which even the poor man's cottage was a haven of happiness.²¹ This extract from John Watkins 1841 "Address to the Women of England" illustrates the point:

I am supposing a picture, which thank Heaven! is yet to be found in England, although growing scarcer every day; the picture of a labouring man who can

support himself, his wife and children, in a cottage of content, not necessitated to overtask his strength for half wages; but one who can lay by something against a "rainy day."²²

It was in a "cottage of content," supported by and supportive of her wage-earning husband, caring for and educating his children, that the respectable working-class woman belonged: "the proper sphere of woman is home; and a proper woman should be suffered to rule there."²³

Chartist women seem to have concurred with these sentiments, although evidence of their views on this and other issues is admittedly sparse. "Sophia" was one whose opinions were recorded in The English Chartist Circular. In a response to Watkin's piece and several of her own essays which the periodical published subsequently, "Sophia" asserted women's intellectual and moral equality with men, but nonetheless acceded to Watkins' opinions on women's domestic duties:

We have to show our husbands, that in turning poets, etc., we do not neglect the poetry reality [original emphasis]; that while we cultivate the powers of mind which we feel ourselves to possess, in common with them, we are careful that our houses be more clean, our children better instructed, our own persons scrupulously neat.²⁴

Female activists who organized to press for the Charter inhabited the same philosophical ground. They justified their involvement in political affairs, and their

militancy, on the grounds that political, economic, and social injustices were destroying their homes and families and argued that granting full democratic rights to working men was the only way to ensure "happy homes, true religion, righteous government, and good laws."²⁵

The conservatism expressed in Chartism persisted as a mainstream of working-class thought on gender. After mid-century, mass based political activism declined and skilled working-class men organized to secure specific economic and social goals: "wages, conditions and benefits sufficient to ensure financial security for a family."²⁶ This pursuit of the 'family wage,' based upon the exclusion and marginalising of women as wage workers and their idealisation as wives and mothers, continued as a central plank of organized labour's reformist agenda throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. As ideals, the doctrines of domesticity and the family wage were realisable for only a very small sector of the working classes, for only a tiny proportion of working men were able to afford the luxury of a non-wage-earning, dependent family; as ideology, they served to justify economic and cultural practices which significantly privileged men over women and which enforced the latter's dependency; and, together with the sexual division of

labour which they served to rationalise and reinforce, they shaped working-class leisure to a significant degree.

The identification of the wage-earning role with men and the supportive, domestic role with women had important implications for leisure. Early nineteenth-century commentaries on the duties and rights of husbands and wives indicated that men's responsibility for wage-earning gave them an unequivocal right to leisure:

If a working man should make thirty shillings a week he may drink ten pints if he pleases; go to a coffe-house every night, and read the papers, and bring in fifteen shillings a week to keep home and pay the rent withal. He has a right do this, [original emphasis] for he makes the money.²⁷

In an 1866 essay entitled "Domestic Economy," John Broadhead, a Birmingham compositor presented the same argument: "Home is that hallowed spot where, after the toils, troubles, and difficulties of the day, we can rest our weary limbs....Home is almost the only place in which we can fully enjoy the peace and comfort which are the
28
just reward of our labours [my emphasis]. As marginalised, secondary wage workers, or as domestic workers, women could not make the same claim to leisure. A wife's work in the home counted as "nothing."

She gets no wages. Her wages come from her husband; they are optional; he can give her either twenty shillings to keep house with, or he can give her only ten. If she complains, he can damn and swear, and say, like the Duke of Newcastle, "Have

I not a right to do as I please with my own?" And it is high treason in women to resist such authority, and claim the privilege of a fair reward of their labour!²⁹

This arrangement of productive and social roles both granted men the right to leisure and rendered them the beneficiaries of women's labour which provided them with leisure services in the home. Domestic ideologues from both the working and middle classes characterised the ideal working man's home as a refuge in which he would find comfort and rest at the end of the working day and saw women as primarily responsible for ensuring that this would be so. Watkins, the Chartist, neatly summed up this sexual division of labour and leisure:

Man goeth forth to work and returneth for that rest and refreshment which his labour at once needeth and provideth. Woman, in the mean time, fitteth and prepareth the good things provided by his toil, and she cheereth his worn spirit by words and looks and deeds of love.³⁰

In the 1860s, Thomas Wright, "the journeyman engineer," wrote in a similar vein of day-workers returning home to "find a bright, cosy room, a nice warm tea, and a smiling wife, mother, or landlady waiting for them." In Wright's opinion the most critical factor determining the comfort of the working man's home was his wife's housekeeping skill: "Among the working classes the wife [original
31
emphasis] makes the home."

The broader social ramifications of women fulfilling their responsibility for creating homes conducive to men's comfort and leisure were significant. In their attacks upon women's wage work, middle-class and working-class commentators ascribed many of the problems facing labouring people to women's employment outside the home. "It is not the daily toil in the sweat of his brow which threatens the workman's domestic peace," ran one typical essay on the topic, "it is that we have taken the key-stone from his arch by tempting his wife away from her proper and natural sphere of domestic labour."³²

According to critics of the practice, infant mortality, poor nutrition, dirt, disease, and immorality could all be laid at the door of the woman who neglected her home in order to work for wages outside it. Wage-earning wives were blamed for sapping men's will to discharge their familial and social duties as breadwinners. Women's wage work was also held to be responsible for a more general degradation of the working classes and their failure to advance socially and morally. Dominant social views of leisure changed throughout the course of the nineteenth century and popular recreation came increasingly to be seen as offering the potential for 'improving' the working classes. With this shift, women's role in shaping a

domestic, wholesome leisure culture became more important and criticisms of women's wage work often included references to its deleterious effect on working-class leisure practices.

This concern prompted debate over two related issues. The first was that girls and women who worked outside the home did not receive a proper training in the necessary housewifely skills and consequently were unable to attend to the leisure wants of their husbands. "If our employers of labour desire to inculcate those habits of modesty, morality, docility, and domestic usefulness, which are essential to the duties and comforts of married life," ran a piece in the Long Sutton parish magazine, "they will do well to limit their employment of youthful labour to the male sex."³³ The 1867-68 Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture reported that in particular regions, this was a widely held belief. In several midland counties, such as Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire, and Nottinghamshire, and in Cambridgeshire, and parts of Yorkshire, employers and the 'best' of the labouring people themselves seem to have agreed that field labour rendered girls and women unfit "for domestic servants, and badly trained for labourers' wives."³⁴ The 1893 Royal Commission on Labour

found that the greatest hostility to married women's employment in the Yorkshire textile industry came from those employers who had worked their way up from the status of hired hand. These men attributed a "great deal of the unhappiness and drunkenness in working families [to] the wives being in the mills, and...the consequent dirtiness and untidyness of their homes."³⁵

The second matter of concern was that women's experiences in the culture of wage work were liable to give them such a taste for amusement themselves that they would be reluctant to settle for the quieter, self-denying role of providing for someone else's pleasure. Along with this argument ran the related one that wage work encouraged a taste for particular forms of leisure which compromised the morals of working-class girls and women. Wage work outside the home, then, appears to have carried with it associations of personal freedom which threatened dominant notions of appropriate gender identities, roles, and relations among working people.

The parliamentary investigations into various trades and occupations show clearly that leisure practices were an issue in the debates surrounding the employment of girls and women. Where female agricultural labour came under attack, for example, there was often a consensus

that it led to a troubling lack of restraint on behaviour. The 1867 Royal Commission noted that employers and working people in the county of Northamptonshire were convinced that young girls and women who were employed in field labour learned "loose and disorderly habits." Mr. Portman's report on Cambridgeshire and the East, West, and North Ridings of Yorkshire echoes this sentiment. The commissioner pointed out that the decline in women's employment as servants in farming families had left the daughters of agricultural labourers with no satisfactory means of acquiring domestic training. He went on to praise several industrial schools which had been established as a means of compensating for this. Commenting on one of the schools, he wrote : "It is the only instance of the kind I met with, and it is quite worthy of imitation by those who have the opportunity with the view of drawing the tastes of girls away from the license of field labour [my emphasis], and fitting them³⁶ for domestic service and their future duties in life." If working-class women were to be willing and able to perform their domestic duty of providing for men's comfort and leisure, care had to be taken that their own appetites for leisure were not piqued:

The true comfort of man depends upon his home; men are capable of going through almost any labour when

they have a comfortable home waiting to welcome them; but the wild tone of reckless liberty acquired by a rude taste for the labours of the field in girlhood unfits the tastes and destroys the domestic habits in woman which alone can make home happy and comfortable to her husband[my emphasis].³⁷

Some trades were reputed to be especially likely to make young women unsuitable as working men's wives, either because they encouraged frivolousness and shallowness, or because they somehow compromised their womanliness. Millinery, dressmaking, and shop work were characterised in the former way. "Dressy and vain," contemptuous of housework, a woman of the "young-lady class" was likely to prove to be a sloven upon marriage, incapable of making her home comfortable and attractive. Thomas Wright contrasted her "very unfavourably with...the really clever housewife, who goes actively about her work, and in her clean, cotton working-gown looks to the full as comely and attractive as she does...after her work is done."³⁸ Primary occupations like agriculture and mining and the heavier manufacturing trades, strongly identified with masculine strength and coarseness, were even more unsuitable. Not only the nature of the work, but the workplace culture and associations seemed certain to compromise a woman's gender identity and ascribed social role. The personal habits and leisure practices of girls and women employed in these occupations disturbed critics.

The Dudley nailmakers presented one of the starkest pictures of working-class womanhood apparently gone awry: "The women seem to have lost all traces of the modesty of their sex, and from childhood are addicted to swearing, smoking -- resembling as far as possible the other sex in their habits and deportment, even to the wearing of their coarse flannel jackets." The behaviour of girls and young women working in the Staffordshire brickfields seemed equally "grotesque" and subversive: "As they run from place to place, they sing snatches of coarse songs or crack obscene jokes for mutual encouragement....The foreman's account of these girls was that they were 'very bold and cheeky.'³⁹"

Testimony presented to government commissioners indicated both that it was not simply or necessarily the work place, or work practices that were believed to engender such unseemly habits, and that connections were made between moral character and particular leisure customs. Several witnesses stated that charges of immorality in the Staffordshire pottery factories were unfounded but one noted that the clay-bank girls, who were not as closely supervised as the paintresses, could not be persuaded to attend the evening classes and girls' clubs sponsored by Anglican and Nonconformist social

missionaries. Another declared that whatever lack of moral restraint female pottery workers exhibited came not from their work experience, but through their incidental association with male co-workers. The "worst girls" were those who had to walk a considerable distance to their place of work: they "got into the habit of starting together with boys and men walking in the same direction, and their behaviour and language was disgraceful."⁴⁰ In rural districts, long-established leisure customs were enmeshed with work customs and the participation of women in the one was as disturbing as their involvement in the other. The harvest frolic and largesse were still a popular climax to the busiest work season in agricultural districts in East Anglia, in Essex, and Hertfordshire. Despite efforts on the part of reform minded people to repress or reform them, these traditional bacchanalia persisted into the 1860s and beyond and women's presence at feasts "at which the language, the drunkenness and riot, surpass...more than we can conceive to be possible amongst a society calling themselves Christians," caused⁴¹ no little concern to 'respectable' people.

A great deal of this kind of sermonising against traditional popular leisure practices went on during the nineteenth century, as reformers attempted to persuade the

working classes into tamer, more sobre forms of play. The middle classes were the most vocal and visible advocates of 'rational recreation' but the movement also had a working-class constituency.⁴² Working men who propagandised domesticity and the patriarchal family not only attempted to shape economic and productive life in accordance with their beliefs about gender, they also constructed a model of leisure which ran along the same lines and which departed in significant ways from the older, established popular culture represented by the harvest frolic and largesse.

The older tradition of leisure itself had been shaped by ideas about gender, but nonetheless seems to have offered women a wider range of possibilities than that which had emerged by the middle of the nineteenth century. This is illustrated in women's involvement in popular sports and physical activities which, from the middle ages through to the early nineteenth century was wide-ranging, if not as extensive as that of men. At fairs and hirings, ale-feasts and other holidays, women played ball games such as cricket, stoolball, and football, ran in footraces, and competed in contests of strength, pugilism, and sword-fighting. In a study of the period from 1700 to 1850, Shirley Reekie identifies a

significant decline in the extent to which working-class women engaged in these and other physical recreations and sports. She attributes this to the combined influence of urbanisation and industrialisation, which severely reduced the requisite space and free time, and the disapprobation⁴³ of middle-class Evangelicals. I would suggest that the espousal of domesticity and rational recreation by sectors of the working classes themselves must also have been important.

This is one of the points made by Barbara Taylor in her examination of the recreational culture of the Owenite socialists. The tensions engendered by the shifting productive relations between women and men in the 1830s and 1840s resounded through the cultural realm in which segregation on the basis of gender was a widespread tendency. The Owenite practice of encouraging heterosocial gatherings and amusements was a departure from more general customs and prompted responses from their opponents which mimicked the scandalised accounts middle-class rational recreationalists gave of traditional popular leisure forms. Yet the impetus to include both women and men in social and political events was countered by a general closing down of the range of behaviours possible for respectable working-class women at this time.

This tension was revealed as Owenites attempted to re-shape popular recreation around a consciously family-centred, feminised ideal in which women and children, as well as men, could participate and from which all would derive pleasure. "Low and debasing" practices were eschewed in favour of picnics, dance classes, and concerts, but this attempt to elevate popular recreation carried with it increasingly restrictive notions of female behaviour; by the 1840s, for example, women drinking and frequenting public houses risked compromising their reputations whereas previously, they had done so habitually. Taylor concludes that while domesticised leisure certainly implied mutuality and shared pleasures, in practice it tended to reinforce a sexual division of leisure which accorded men more freedom and emphasised women's servicing and nurturing roles.⁴⁴

The Owenite approach to leisure was hardly typical of the working classes in general, but the tendency for emergent models of popular recreation to limit women to the domestic hearth and constrain their behaviour was pronounced. By the middle of the nineteenth century, rational recreation stood at one pole of a range of working-class leisure behaviour and ideologies, with the more hedonistic, dissolute customs associated with the

past as its twin. In a series of essays on different aspects of working-class life ("Out of Work," "Getting Married," and "Saturday Evening in Victoria Park" were among the topics covered), The Working Man fleshed out some of the particulars of these oppositional leisure cultures and underscored the ideas about gender implicit

within them.⁴⁵ After work, a "steady-going sort of fellow" reflects:

I do like to enjoy myself; and if my enjoyments are found at home, in a chat with my wife, a game with the children, and a little odd jobbing about the house and bit of garden, a walk in the lanes in summer, or a stroll along the streets to show Nelly the shops, or an hour with the newspaper or book -- if, I say, these are my pleasures, they certainly have one or two advantages over the amusements which are sometimes run after.⁴⁶

The advantages of such simple, domestic pleasures were their affordability, the fact that wives and children could share in them, and that they could be indulged in without regret. Not so the attractions of the beer shops and low theatres which appealed to very different sorts of working men, those

who are so far on the wrong road that I am afraid they will never get on the right one. If their wages were doubled they would be just as poor, and their wives would be just as wretched, and they would have only so much the more to spend on beer and pipes, and in betting that some scoundrelly skittle-sharp would not take the lot in two.⁴⁷

In another piece on New Year customs, the same contrast is

made. After tea, "Tom" gathers his wife and children around the newly swept hearth where they chat about their respective days: "I told mother [I always call her mother when the children are about; she likes it, and says that, as a title, duchess, no, or even queen, is not to be compared to it] what a big engine we were making on a new construction, and she told me how she thought she had lost little Billy." "Charley," on the other hand, a workmate who married a girl with a "pretty face and a liking for artificial flowers...and a queer home they have, that's a fact," spends the holiday evening with his wife, in cheap finery at the theatre; "that's their notion of enjoyment...but not ours." Other shopmates see the old year out "over a tripe supper and cards. There will be too much drink about, mother; and if they don't lose at least half a day to-morrow, I shall be surprised."⁴⁸

Formulistic and moralistic as they are, these writings provide insights into the ideological aspects of working-class leisure and the extent to which it was penetrated by particular ideas about gender and respectability. Again, the rhetoric made much of the mutual benefits women and men would derive from spending time together in the pursuit of sober, homely pleasures, but in practice a great deal of this leisure entailed work

and limited horizons for women. Hannah Mitchell, working-class feminist and socialist, reflected bitterly on this gap between theory and practice. As a young wife in the decades spanning the turn of the twentieth century, she found it difficult to cope with the "domestic treadmill." Mitchell soon realised that the socialist vision of freedom did not extend to women. Her own scant leisure time was taken up with catering to the demands of young male socialists who "expected Sunday dinners and huge teas with home-made cakes, potted meat and pies, exactly like their reactionary fellows." In like manner she complained of socialist men's expectations that after marriage "the girl who had shared their week-end cycling or rambling, summer games or winter dances would change all her ways with her marriage ring and begin where their mothers left off."⁴⁹

The propagandistic nature of much of what was written about popular leisure also speaks to the tensions between traditional and emergent customs. Despite the ascendancy of industrial capitalism with its emphasis on work-discipline, rationality, and both social and gender order, and even with the licensing and taming of many working-class amusements, leisure continued to be contested terrain. Working people did not view themselves

as an undifferentiated whole and particular sectors and groups had diverse ways of enjoying whatever free time they had. This had an important bearing on the nature and extent of women's leisure, as I will argue in chapter four; but for now I want to consider some of the circumstances which materially constrained that leisure.

ENDNOTES

1Harriet Bradley, Men's Work, Women's Work: A Sociological History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Employment (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 41-42; Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, Women, Work, and Family (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978), 12-24, 30-60, 64-77; Ivy Pinchbeck, Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850 (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1930; reprint ed., 1969), 7-19, 111-121, 282-284.) For detailed studies of the separation of work and home among the middle classes, see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850 (London: Hutchinson, 1987); Bonnie J. Smith, Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981).

2

Tilly and Scott, Women, Work, and Family, 123-36; Pinchbeck, Women Workers, 53-65.

3

Tilly and Scott, Women, Work, and Family, 63-77.

4

Bradley, Men's Work, Women's Work, 73-74, 75-92; Pinchbeck, Women Workers, 110; Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1867-68, vol. 17, Cmnd. 6867, "Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture," x, xiii, xiv, xviii, xxiii, xvi.

5

Angela V. John, By the Sweat of Their Brow: Women Workers at Victorian Coal Mines (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 36-65, 167-222; Pinchbeck, Women Worker, 240-270.

6

Bradley, Men's Work, Women's Work, 117-130;
 Jacqueline Sarsby, Missuses and Mouldrunners (Milton
 Keynes: Open University Press, 1988).

7

Bradley, Men's Work, Women's Work, 127, 131-39;
 Gail Braybon and Penny Summerfield, Out of the Cage (London:
 Pandora, 1987).

8

Bradley, Men's Work, Women's Work, 146-58, 159-
 71; Miriam Glucksmann, "In a Class of Her Own," Feminist
 Review 24 (1986), 7-37; idem., Women Assemble: Women
 Workers and the New Industries in Inter-War Britain
 (London: Routledge, 1990), 197-225.

9

Davidoff and Hall, Family Fortunes, 149-192;
 Catherine Hall, "The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic
 Ideology," in Sandra Burman, ed., Fit Work for Women
 (London: Croom Hall, 1979), 15-32; Barbara Taylor, Eve and
 the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the
 Nineteenth Century (London: Virago, 1983), 84.

10

Hannah More, Essays Principally Designed for
 Young Ladies (1777), 2-3, 5, quoted in Davidoff and Hall,
Family Fortunes, 169; Jane Rendall, The Origins of
 Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States
 1780-1860 (London: Macmillan, 1985), 7-32; John Ruskin,
 "On Queen's Gardens," Sesame and Lilies (1865), quoted in
 Kate Millett, "The Debate Over Women: Ruskin vs. Mill," in
 Martha Vicinus, ed., Suffer and Be Still: Women in the
 Victorian Age (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,
 1974), 121-139; Henry Maudsley, "Sex in Mind and
 Education," Fortnightly Review 21 (1874), 468, quoted in
 Elaine and English Showalter, "Victorian Women and
 Menstruation," in *ibid*, 38-44; Walter E. Houghton, The
 Victorian Frame of Mind (London: Oxford University Press,
 1957), 9, 22, 348-53.

11

On the history of the feminist movement, see Rendall, The Origins of Modern Feminism; Olive Banks, The Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981). On the intellectual roots and emergence of domestic and gender ideologies among the working classes, see Catherine Hall, "The Tale of Samuel and Jemima: Gender and Working-Class Culture in Nineteenth-Century England," in Harvey J. Kaye and Keith McClelland, eds., E. P. Thompson: Critical Perspectives (Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 1990), 86-99; Harold Benenson, "The 'Family Wage' and Working Women's Consciousness in Britain, 1880-1914," Politics and Society 19 (1991), 71-72; idem., "Victorian Sexual Ideology and Marx's Theory of the Working Class," International Labor and Working Class History 25 (1984): 1-23; Maxine Berg, "Women's Work, Mechanization and the Early Phases of Industrialisation in England," in Patrick Joyce, ed., The Historical Meanings of Work (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 73; Wally Secombe, "Patriarchy Stabilized: The Construction of the Male Breadwinner Wage Norm in Nineteenth-Century Britain," Social History 11 (1986), 53-76.

12

Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem, 83-117, 183-216. The quotation is from idem., 205.

13

Dorothy Thompson, The Chartists (London: Temple Smith, 1984); Jutta Schwarzkopf, Women in the Chartist Movement (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 4; Anna Clark, "The Rhetoric of Chartist Domesticity: Gender, Language, and Class in the 1830s and 1840s," Journal of British Studies 31 (January 1992), 62-88.

14

Schwarzkopf, Women in the Chartist Movement, 35-77; William Lovett, The Life and Struggles of William Lovett (London: Trubner & Co., 1876), 266.

15

Ernest Jones, Notes to the People, vol. 2, (May 1851-May 1852; reprint ed., New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968), 629-632, 649-652, 670-672, 689-692, 710-712.

16

Notes to the People, 848.

17

On the Manifesto of the General Convention, see Thompson, The Chartists, 67, 69, 83. For the full text of the manifesto, see Lovett, Life and Struggles, 209-215.

18

Notes to the People, 547.

19

On the threat of prostitution, see, for example, *ibid.*, 297-299, 567-571; The English Chartist Circular and Temperance Record for England and Wales, vol. 1, no. 8 (1841; reprint ed., New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1968), 31.

20

Notes to the People, 619.

21

On the idealisation of marriage and family, and perceived threats to them, see for example, *ibid.*, 532; The Friend of the People, no. 1, December 14, 1850, 5, 8; *ibid.*, no. 2, December 21, 1850, 11, 16; *ibid.*, no. 3, December 28, 1850, 20; The People: Their Rights and Liberties, Their Duties and Their Interests, (Series I, Wortley 1848-51, Series II, Wortley 1851-2; reprint ed., Westport, Conn., 1970), No. 14, 104; No. 37, 291; The English Chartist Circular, vol. 1, no. 28 (1841), 112. For an earlier description of radical working-class domesticity, see Samuel Bamford, Passages in the Life of a Radical (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), cited in Hall, "The Tale of Samuel and Jemima," 85.

22

John Watkins, "Address to the Women of England," The English Chartist Circular, vol. 1, no. 13 (1841), 49.

23
Ibid.

24
Ibid., vol. 1, No. 16, 63.

25 The Northern Star, February 9, 1839, quoted in Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem, 267.

26
The quotation is from Sally Alexander, Anna Davin, and Eve Hostettler, "Labouring Women: a Reply to Eric Hobsbawm," History Workshop, No. 8 (1979), 179. For different perspectives on the 'family wage' issue see Jane Humphries, "Class Struggle and the Persistence of the Working-Class Family," Cambridge Journal of Economics 1 (1977), 241-258; Michelle Barrett and M. Macintosh, "The Family Wage: Some Problems for Socialists and Feminists," Capital and Class 11 (1980), 11-133. For a more recent contribution to this debate, see Jane Mark-Lawson and Anne Witz, "From 'Family Labour' to 'Family Wage'? The Case of Women's Labour in Nineteenth-Century Coalmining," Social History 13 (1988), 151-174.

27
The Pioneer, March 22, 1834, quoted in Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem, 100.

28
The Working Man: A Weekly Record of Social and Industrial Progress, vol. 2, no. 24 (New Series), December 15, 1866, 238.

29
The Pioneer, March 22, 1834, quoted in Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem, 100.

30
Watkins, "Address to the Women of England,"
49.

- 31
Thomas Wright, The Great Unwashed, (London: Tinsley Bros., 1868; reprint ed., New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1970), 31, 190.
- 32
327. The Working Man, vol. 1, no. 21, May 26, 1866,
- 33
1866, 57; "Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture," Appendix Part I, xviii, xxiii, xxvi; Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1893, vol. 23, Cmnd. 6894, "Report of the Commission on Labour," 102.
- 34
"Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture," 1867, x, xxvi.
- 35
102. "Report of the Commission on Labour," 1893,
- 36
"Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture," 1867, xxiii, xxvi.
- 37
1866, 57. The Working Man, vol. 1, no. 4, January 27,
- 38
Wright, The Great Unwashed, 37-41, 48.
- 39
362. The Working Man, vol. 1, no. 23, June 9, 1866,

- 40
63. "Report of the Commission on Labour," 1893,
- 41
"Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture," 1867, 146.
- 42
On the repression and reform of popular recreation, see for example, Robert W. Malcolmson, Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Peter Bailey, Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885 (London: Routledge, 1978).
- 43
Shirley Maxwell Reekie, "The History of Sport of Sport and Recreation for Women in Britain, 1700-1850" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Ohio State University, 1982), 33-152, 166-70. For a similar pattern of the marginalisation of women in radical politics, see Thompson, The Chartists, 120-151.
- 44
Taylor, Eve and the New Jerusalem, 217-37.
- 45
The Working Man, vol. 1, no. 6, February 10, 1866, 91; vol. 1, no. 13, March 31, 1866, 195-6; vol. 1, no. 15, April 14, 1866, 227; vol. 1, no. 18, May 5, 1866, 274-5; vol. 1, no. 20, May 19, 1866, 315; vol. 1, no. 22, June 2, 1866, 338-9; vol. 1, no. 25, June 23, 1866, 387-8.
- 46Ibid., vol. 1, no. 4, January 27, 1866, 55.
- 47
Ibid.

48

Ibid., vol. 1, no. 2, January 13, 1866, 22-3.

49

Geoffrey Mitchell, ed., The Hard Way Up: The Autobiography of Hannah Mitchell, Suffragette and Rebel (London: Faber & Faber, 1968), 96.

CHAPTER III

LITTLE MEANS OR TIME

The British people were able to concern themselves with more than mere subsistence; they had a surplus to spend on more and better food, on a wider range of clothing, on more elaborate furnishings for their homes and a greater variety of leisure pursuits. For the first time most people had a choice [original emphasis] of how and where to spend their money.¹

Historians have seen the third quarter of the nineteenth century as a period in which working-class resources, opportunities, and demand for leisure expanded significantly.² Fuelling this expansion were changes in the hours and conditions of work and living standards, specifically a reduction in work hours and a rise in real wages. This chapter examines these, the material circumstances which contoured working-class leisure in late Victorian and Edwardian England, from the perspective of women. My thesis here is that the idea of a substantial and widespread expansion of working-class leisure in this period, especially commercial leisure, needs to be qualified. Such an interpretation masks the critical importance of gender in determining the amount of free time and personal spending money that working people had at their disposal and, consequently, gender's part

in significantly constraining the leisure of working-class women.

Both common and scholarly wisdom associate leisure with free time. This association may be somewhat problematic when considering women's leisure, but understanding time as a necessary resource does help illuminate the inequalities of nineteenth-century working-class leisure. Throughout the century, the general trend was toward an expansion of leisure time and a reduction of work time. As early as 1814, cotton workers in Manchester were calling for restrictions on work hours and during the early 1830s, the Owenite Society for National Regeneration advocated an eight hour work day. However, it was from about the middle of the nineteenth century, through a combination of state legislation and worker organisation, that significant restrictions began to be placed upon work hours.³

The 1847 Factory Act was an important legislative step, marking what Hugh Cunningham describes as "a symbolic return to a pre-industrial norm" of a ten hour working day. The 1850 act was another landmark because it fixed daily hours of work within a specified twelve hour period and so prevented employers from using the infamous relay system to nullify the provisions of the

Ten Hour Act. This legislation also guaranteed textile workers a Saturday half-holiday, but added half an hour to the weekly work day, thus making the regular work day 10 1/2 hours. Successive acts legislated the shorter working day and Saturday half-holiday in several other industries, with those most closely allied to textiles the first to be drawn under the legislative umbrella: bleaching and dyeing in 1860, lace-work in 1861, pottery manufacturing, lucifer match-making, percussion cap-making, paper staining, and fustian cutting in 1864. The 1867 Factory Act, with its broad definition of a factory, and a Workshop Act in the same year which covered workplaces employing less than fifty people, meant that a ten and a half hour day was now prescribed for workers in most industrial concerns in England and Wales. Ten years later, textile workers gained a further reduction of a half hour daily from, Monday through Friday, and a decline of from seven to six⁴ and a half hours on Saturday.

In occupations not covered by factory legislation, worker organisations were the primary means of asserting control over work and leisure hours. Those trades with a strong craft tradition in which most production continued to take place in small workshops were able to defend customary holidays quite successfully, and

practices such as Saint Monday persisted into the latter part of the nineteenth century and beyond in certain occupations. For other groups of workers, particularly those in which there was little or no union organisation, the struggle for a Saturday half-holiday was a protracted affair. Whereas in cotton manufacturing, a 4 P.M. end to work on Saturday was the general rule at the beginning of the nineteenth century, unskilled labourers did not achieve this until the end of the century, and shop assistants continued to have to fight for early closing⁵ until the First World War.

In many respects, these developments represented a re-arrangement and regularisation of work hours, rather than a significant reduction. Despite the unevenness and ambiguousness of the changes, historians generally concur that by the third quarter of the nineteenth century, they generated more leisure time, more clearly defined leisure time, and more regularised leisure time for working people. In addition to this expansion of leisure time, a general rise in living standards during roughly the last three decades of the nineteenth century led to an increase in working-class spending power which further fuelled the demand for leisure.

Two major indicators are commonly used to chart improvements in working-class living standards: money wages and real wages. Money wages increased significantly from 1850 to 1900 with two thirds of the rise occurring between 1850 and 1874. Over the next quarter of a century, there was a further thirteen percent increase, then, after rising sharply in the last few years of the century, money wages fell from 1900 to 1904 and again in 1907 and 1908. Beginning in 1910 another upward turn took money wages to a 1914 level which was almost double that of 1851. During this same period and despite some contradictory movement, prices were generally either stable or falling. In fact, from 1874 to 1896, prices fell by forty percent. This downward trend bottomed out at the end of the 1890s and prices rose significantly thereafter until the First World War when the average increase was between thirty-two and forty-five percent.⁶

With respect to real wages, historians calculate that they remained static during the 1850s as price increases kept pace with the rise in money wages. In the early 1860s, however, real wages began to rise and continued to do so till 1900. There were contradictory trends in certain parts of the country and in some industries, but the common portrait is one in which there

was a substantially improved standard of living for the mass of the population from the 1870s till the onset of the new century.⁷

For the decade or so before the First World War, there is less consensus on the matter of working-class living standards. Between 1899 and 1913, most sectors of the working classes found that their real earnings fell as the cost of housing, food, and clothing rose while wage levels remained static at best. Historians differ as to its significance. Peter Thompson argues that other improvements -- better working conditions, increased leisure opportunities, and state welfare provisions -- balanced the decline in real wages. Wray Vamplew also believes that the drop in real wages was not that significant. He points out that the average real wage for the period 1900 to 1913 was still higher than that for the 1890s as a whole. Other scholars are less sanguine. Terence Gourvish concludes that nineteenth-century gains in working-class living standards were significantly retrenched in the early part of the twentieth century. Standish Meacham also asserts that late-nineteenth-century improvements for working people were checked during the first decade of the twentieth century. He indicates that while hours of work may have been reduced, there was a

marked intensification of the labour process in the Edwardian period, and that the economic security of skilled workers was threatened by the risk of their displacement by the unskilled.⁸

There are, then, several important points of disagreement on the issue of the material circumstances of working people in this period, but there is also a clear consensus that those circumstances were improving sufficiently to stimulate the development of a working-class market for a variety of commodities and services which included leisure. Ross McKibbin makes the connection clear: "British wages did permit more or less everything that made up late-nineteenth-century working-class pastimes: the development of organized hobbies, mass sport, popular betting, a modest domesticity and the commercialization of much working-class entertainment."⁹

A substantial scholarship exists on this growing mass consumer and leisure culture, one or two examples of which will be discussed here. In a social history of English seaside resorts, John Walton traces the development of a working-class holiday industry in northern England. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, workers regularly visited the west coast at the August spring tide to bathe in and drink the

sea water which was believed to have curative and regenerative properties. By the early 1850s, these brief annual migrations had developed into long-weekend visits and, by the 1870s, extended holidays away from home were commonplace among workers from the industrial areas of Lancashire and south Yorkshire. Four factors in particular fuelled the increased working-class demand for seaside holidays, a demand which Walton considers to have been "the most important generator of resort growth in northern England in late Victorian times." These were the development of a fast, cheap railway system; the availability of a regular surplus income; several consecutive days of agreed holiday; and, the development of resort facilities to satisfy the perceived demands of working-class holidaymakers. While these conditions varied with period and region, by the end of the nineteenth century there was a sufficiently well-established and widespread popular market for seaside holidays to stimulate the growth of specialised working-class resorts such as Blackpool.

Sport was another working-class leisure form which flourished in this period. In fact, Vamplew characterises mass, commercialised sport as one of the economic success stories of the late Victorian period.

Like Walton's examination of the rise of working-class holidaymaking, Vamplew's explanation of the growth of spectator sport is rooted in economic change. The most critical factor in his analysis is the dramatic rise in the spending power of the working class, but other contributory influences were the general acceptance of the Saturday half-holiday and increased life expectancy, both of which expanded the potential market for spectator sport. Vamplew concludes that the increasingly prosperous working classes constituted the major market for the commercial sport spectacles which became a feature of urban culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.¹¹

Sport and leisure historians have acknowledged that there were major contradictions between increasing prosperity on the one hand and continued widespread deprivation on the other, but these tensions have unfortunately gone unexplored. Feminist scholars have identified gender as an important source of the contradictions. Several studies demonstrate that many working-class families used gender as a criterion for distributing material resources and that this practice significantly disadvantaged women and children. These familial customs were connected to broader economic and

social arrangements. Contemporary understandings about the appropriate social role for women and their capabilities influenced rates of pay, hours and conditions of work, and the kinds of occupation that were available to women. In the workplace, as in the family, common wisdom and custom constructed a hierarchy of inequality between women and men which was both reflected in and¹² reinforced by leisure.

This relationship between gender and the distribution of resources tends to be obscured in analyses of leisure which prioritise freedom of choice and consumer demand and assume that everyone exercised those freedoms equally. For example, Vamplew writes:

From the 1880s falling prices, especially for food, brought greater prosperity to the working class as a whole. It is not being argued that any working man, let alone his family, could afford to attend sports; clearly, contemporary social surveys repudiate such a notion. However, many budget studies which show how much is left for recreation and other spending after meeting necessary expenditure are deficient in that they are reluctant to accept that all spending is optional [original emphasis].¹³

As John Clarke and Chas Critcher point out, even if individuals are able to choose how to dispose of their personal resources (and this choice is central to Vamplew's analysis), they have little control over how society allocates those resources in the first place. In

the period with which this study is concerned, most of the evidence suggests that material constraints rooted in the gender order left working-class women with almost no control in this regard.¹⁴

Certainly, contemporary commentators and reformers who were otherwise poles apart in their views on the extent and causes of poverty, and how best to alleviate its effects, spoke with unanimity on one issue: the "unrelieved drabness, ill-health, toil, and monotony," the "suffering and...overwork, and poverty," the "monotony and hopelessness" of many working-class women's lives. These observations cannot be reconciled easily with melioristic judgements on working-class living standards in this period. Rather, they suggest that for women, there was precious little time or money to spare for leisure.¹⁵

On the surface, at least, women stood to gain from the general improvements in working hours and living standards. After the 1840s, female workers were the focus of reformist campaigns for protective legislation designed to restrict their hours of work and prevent their employment in certain occupations. Earlier factory acts which had reduced the work hours of children and young persons under the age of eighteen had resulted initially

in the exploitation of women as a cheap, alternative labour source, but later legislation extended the restrictions to cover women employed in textile factories. With the passage of the 1874 Factory Act, both women and children textile workers were prohibited from working for more than ten hours a day and by the end of the century this legislation had been consolidated and extended to non-textile factories in which mechanical power was used and workshops where manual labour was employed in making, repairing, or altering any article for sale. In those occupations covered by legislation, a 55 1/2 hour work week was mandated by 1902. Investigating the hours, wages, and conditions of women's work in the city of Birmingham in 1906, Edward Cadbury concluded that protective legislation had been generally beneficial: "[It] has shortened work hours by making women cease work earlier than they would have done, while they refused to start earlier. Excessive irregularity of hours especially was stopped."¹⁶

Suggestive as they are of a general decline in work hours in industry and manufacturing, the factory and workshop acts should not be read as evidence of an unqualified improvement for women workers. There is considerable debate among scholars over the issue of

protective legislation. Some interpret it as a progressive development, while others see it as a patriarchal strategy for keeping women in the home and subordinate to men's control. The concern here is whether or not the general trend to reduced work hours, of which protective legislation was one aspect, represented any real increase in free time for working-class women. To address this issue more fully it is necessary to consider women's work in a much broader sense, one which¹⁷ encompasses both wage work and domestic labour.

At the turn of the twentieth century, women comprised almost one third of the official workforce of England, Scotland, and Wales. Of the roughly five and a half million women enumerated in the 1911 census, just over half (54 percent) were semi-skilled manual workers employed in domestic service, retail trade, and agriculture. A further 25 percent were skilled manual workers. Of the remainder, 6 percent were employed in lower status professional occupations like schoolteaching, 5 percent were unskilled manual workers, and 2 percent were in some form of management. Most of these wage workers were young and unmarried, with only one in ten married women formally engaged in paid occupations. However, countless numbers among the latter group earned

small sums of money in semi-formal occupations which were underrepresented in census returns: for example, homework, food and drink preparation, street vending, charring, laundrywork, and keeping lodgers. These forms of work meshed relatively easily with married women's domestic tasks and responsibilities, and many were actually¹⁸ conducted within the home.

In short, the majority of women were not in forms of employment governed by factory legislation determining hours and other conditions of work. Most female wage workers were engaged in occupations like domestic service, food and retail industries, and homework, for which protective legislation was either unenforceable or non-existent. Consequently, while many groups of working men may have seen a general improvement in the terms of their employment by the end of the nineteenth century, a high percentage of women workers continued to endure exploitative and oppressive hours and conditions.

Even in regulated trades, protective legislation was not always effective and the laws regulating hours of work were easily and often broken. In the opinion of Elizabeth Hutchins, the position of women in industry at the beginning of the First World War was little better

than that of their grandmothers. Since the 1874 Factory Act, there had been no further significant reductions in work hours while the demands and strain upon workers had increased with the intensification of production.

Hutchins cited the case of a single, middle-aged woman, typical of many others, whose experiences were recounted in the reports of the Lady Factory Inspectors. "She left home at 5.15, walked 2 1/2 miles to the factory, stood the whole day at her work, and at 6, sometimes later, started to walk home again, and then had to prepare her meal, mend and do her housework." According to one factory inspector, the greatest number of complaints women workers made pertained to excessive hours of employment, and even in occupations covered by legislation, work hours were such that there was an "intolerable strain" on
19
employees.

In those occupations employing the greatest numbers of women, excessively long hours of work and low rates of pay were commonplace. Approximately one third of female wage workers were in domestic service, most in single servant households where they might be called upon to attend to an employer's demands at any hour: "Oh all the hours God Almighty sent, if they wanted you up in the middle of the night they did. Nobody had set hours in

service." In this, the largest (though a contracting) occupational category for women, towards the end of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, women struggled to achieve minimal concessions from their employers with respect to hours. For example, in 1897, the London Domestic Servants' Union attempted to limit the hours of female domestic servants to seventy per week, and by the end of the First World War, most domestic servants were still entitled to only one afternoon a week off and
 20
 alternate Sundays free.

Many of the trades and industries employing significant numbers of women fell under the rubric of 'sweating' which an 1888 Select Committee of the House of Lords defined as the payment of unduly low wage rates, excessively long hours of labour, and insanitary working conditions. Homework was the most notorious form of sweating, and it occupied "hundreds and thousands of women and children" in this period. Homework was often a last resort for women who were otherwise unable to provide for themselves or their families, but rates of pay were so low that they had to work scandalously long hours for a miserly wage. Depending on the particular trade, a working day in the sweated home industries ranged from 7 1/2 to 16 hours, but the average work day was around 12

hours. In some occupations, such as carding buttons and hooks and eyes, workers reported working "all day" or "all [the] time" for average weekly earnings of just over three

²¹ shillings. Homework was not restricted to women, but Clementina Black, author of one of several investigations into sweated industries, believed that that women were the most exploited homeworkers. To her, homework represented:

above all, a cruelly heavy burden resting on the shoulders of the woman who tries to be at the same time mother, housekeeper, and bread-winner, and who in return for her endless exertion seldom receives enough even to keep her properly fed, and never enough to satisfy her own very modest standard of comfort.²²

Sweating was characteristic of much employment in the retail trade and service industries, occupations which were drawing increasing numbers of women in this period. Shop assistants, waitresses, and barmaids were amongst the worst paid workers and their conditions of employment were often very oppressive. The 1894 Royal Commission on Labour reported that shop assistants in England worked between 53 and 79 hours weekly, while in Scotland there was evidence of as much as 102 hour work

²³ weeks. The length of the work week tended to vary with the shop's locality and clientele, as did the general conditions of employment:

on the whole [the female shop assistant] is better fed and more bullied in the West End [of London],

more starved and less interfered with in the East. She is always liable to arbitrary dismissal, and often to arbitrary fines, and her hours -- especially in sale-time -- know no fixed limit.²⁴

In London's West End, a 55 hour week with a half day on Saturday was standard, but in the poorer districts, shops stayed open until 9.30 PM on weekdays and even later on Saturdays. The terms of employment for one young woman seeking a position as cashier and book-keeper with a reputable London shop included working until 11 P.M. on Saturdays and 8 P.M. on other evenings for a weekly wage of 8s., 'living out.' After investigating the conditions of work in London in 1893, Clara Collet concluded that overly long work hours had the same effect on female shop assistants' recreation and leisure that it had on their level of unionisation. Only two per cent of the London membership of the United Shop Assistant's Union were women and "few shop assistants are to be found in any of the religious, social, or educational societies or clubs which are very numerous in London." In the food and drink service industries, a work week of over 100 hours for waitresses was not at all uncommon and 70 hours was
25
considered reasonable.

Sweated workers were the least able to secure decent conditions and wages, and were usually drawn from the most vulnerable sectors of the working classes.

However, it is important to recognise that poverty was not something which affected only the poorest, it was a spectre which haunted most working people in this period. Benjamin Rowntree's 1899 investigation of working-class life in the city of York underscored this. His study showed that every working-class male outside the ranks of the skilled elite could expect to spend at least one part of his life in deprivation and that most were caught in a cycle of poverty. The same was true for women, who were in poverty for most of their child-bearing years.

Material insecurity and uncertainty weighed upon all working people, even those who were relatively secure in their employment and who were in receipt of what were considered to be good wages. It bore especially heavily upon women, as Margaret Davies noted in her introduction to the Women's Co-operative Guild's survey of some four hundred of its members: "the whole burden is placed upon the woman who has to bring up a family on thirty shillings....She can only do it at all by incessant labour which inevitably cuts her off from every higher human activity."²⁶

Davies' reference here is to the unpaid labour which working-class women performed in their own homes. Domestic labour was as physically demanding and

debilitating as many forms of wage labour and there were no controls over hours or the conditions under which it was conducted. Many working-class homes were shoddily built and lacked amenities such as indoor plumbing and adequate facilities for storing or cooking food. Stone, tile, or wooden floors had to be scrubbed by hand, firegrates and (for those lucky enough to have them), kitchen ranges had to be blacklead, and doorsteps "donkeystoned." The family laundry could take two or three days to do, depending on available facilities. One woman who grew up in the Edwardian period recalled her mother washing clothes for a family of ten in a wooden "dollytub," the water having been heated in kettles on an open fire. She then stood for hours on end, ironing the freshly laundered clothes. The pressures of working-class housekeeping were such that women felt constrained to continue with their labour even under the most difficult circumstances. A respondent to the Women's Co-operative Guild's enquiry wrote: "I had a miscarriage....I then had to lie in bed for a whole month. I kept a small girl, and I used to do my own ironing and knead my bread in bed
²⁷
 unknown to the doctor." Clementina Black believed that the focus of reformist efforts should be women's domestic rather than industrial labour:

It is true...that the underpaid wives of underpaid men bear upon their shoulders a burden of combined household and industrial toil far too heavy for any human creature....But the portion of their toil which is most onerous, least productive and least in the line of modern development is not their industrial but their domestic work.²⁸

As Black's opening comments suggested, wage work was added to many women's domestic labour. In most parts of the country married women did not work outside the home, but when the family income fell, as it was liable to because of short-time, unemployment, sickness, or disability, then wives too sought paid employment. Most often the work was of a type that fitted in with domestic duties, or was itself domestic in nature. Taking in lodgers or laundry were common strategies which had the advantage of being based in the home. One study of Irish immigrants in nineteenth-century London has shown that there was a marked increase in the number of boarders taken in by families with large numbers of children, the rise coinciding with the mother's withdrawal from the wage labour market.²⁹ Rowntree calculated that three per cent of the average weekly income of working-class families in York came from payments received from lodgers. Domestic tasks performed outside the home also had an exchange value and the few extra shillings earned by charring in private homes, or cleaning shops and offices (estimated at

between 2s. and 2s. 6d. a week in one provincial town) could make all the difference to families in straitened circumstances. In some places with little industry, such as the university towns of Oxford and Cambridge, this typically informal, low paid, 'women's work' provided a more regular source of income than "the odd shillings brought in by the husband."³⁰

For most working-class women, then, free time was a luxury neither they nor their families could afford. If they were not wage workers, domestic labour in the home still placed great demands on their time and energies; if they were wage workers, domestic and paid employment constituted a double burden, and not just for wives and mothers. Few unmarried women earned enough to be able to live independently of their families and, as well as contributing wages to the household economy, they were often required to assist with domestic labour. In contrast, their wage-earning brothers were usually accorded the same rights to leisure that husbands enjoyed. "They [the men] used to sit back, wait for the meals to be done and then they were off out, out to the pub or the football match and so on. But they didn't think they were brought up to help in the house."³¹ This particular male privilege was part of a broader arrangement of

responsibilities and rights within working-class families which, in turn, connected with gender divisions in society more generally. Men's claim to leisure time within the home derived from their social status as wage-earners, as did their right to take a greater share of material resources such as food and to retain a proportion of their earnings for personal expenditure.

It is this latter privilege that has led Nicky Hart to conclude that "male workers systematically [deprived] their families to sustain their own personal comforts and addictions." In support of her thesis, she looks at the economic dynamics of working-class families, and especially at the distinction between primary and secondary poverty. The terms primary and secondary poverty come from Rowntree's 1899 study of working-class poverty in York. Rowntree collected detailed information on the total income and expenditure of every working-class family in the city and on the basis of this concluded that just under twenty-eight percent of the city's population lived in poverty. The status of almost ten percent of these he categorised as primary poverty, which he defined as having a total family income insufficient to maintain basic "physical efficiency." The remainder were in secondary poverty; that is, their income

was sufficient for maintaining physical efficiency, but some part of it was being spent on non-essential items. Rowntree's distinction between these two kinds of poverty was, therefore, based on their causes: "insufficiency of household income on the one hand, and sufficiency with wasteful expenditure on the other." In Hart's judgement, men were primarily responsible for wasting the family's resources:

Wasteful expenditure in working-class households lies in the personal expenditure of men. The female spends not for herself but for the whole household, and with her lies the responsibility to make ends meet. Only the male knows anything of the luxury of consumer choice.³²

Evidence from a variety of sources appears to support such an interpretation. Several autobiographies and studies of working-class life reveal a pattern of women scrimping and saving, and men spending which seems to have been fairly common. George Acorn recalls that his father gave his wife eighteen shillings a week for housekeeping when they first married and "never increased it. When work fell slack my mother suffered the loss of wages: when work was plentiful and overtime the order of the day, he would have days off, spending the extra money in drink." Robert Roberts, who grew up in an extremely poor part of the northern town of Salford shares a similar

memory of his mother's efforts to prevent his father from squandering the household's finances on drink.³³ Hart points out that many researchers believed that men's profligacy placed an unfair burden on working-class wives. The author of an investigation of working-class budgets during the Second World War noted:

Of the wife's share of family income, the far greater part is spent on necessities, i.e. on things which the whole family consumes and uses, and which they cannot without. The greater part of the earner's pocket money, on the other hand, is spent for the individual benefit of the earner on things which are not essential for subsistence.³⁴

The unequal distribution of resources within working-class families is documented in studies conducted by turn-of-the-century researchers. These show that it was common in certain parts of the country for men to allocate, or "tip over" a certain proportion of their weekly wage to their wives for housekeeping, and keep the rest for personal spending. As Acorn's autobiography attests, in some families, the housekeeping sum was fixed, despite any fluctuations in the cost of food or other essentials. Several investigators concluded that many working-class women did not even know what their husbands' actual wages were, though this does not appear to have been the case in the north western textile districts, where husbands handed the complete wage packet to their

wives who then gave them their "spending brass." While the amounts varied, both within and between individual families, the practice of men retaining a portion of their wages for personal use seems to have been fairly standard. Indeed, one study of London working-class families suggested that contributing the whole wage to the housekeeping fund was the mark of an "extraordinarily good husband."³⁵

Direct evidence of this uneven disbursement of money is somewhat equivocal. Rowntree provided particulars of the budgets of fourteen working-class families with total weekly earnings of less than twenty-six shillings. In five of these families, the husband routinely kept back for his own use a proportion of earnings which ranged from about eight to fourteen percent of the family's total weekly income. A study the Women's Industrial Council conducted of married women's work in 1909 and 1910 provides similar evidence. Approximately one third of the families who gave details of their income and expenditure reported that the husband retained between five and fourteen percent of the family's weekly income. In each case here, as the authors of the study pointed out, the family's diet was deficient in dairy products, fruit, and vegetables, and in one or two instances, no

allowances were made at all for fuel, lighting, or clothing. Magdalen Pember Reeves' study of a working-class community in London suggests that the practice was a general one there: in every case, the sample budgets offered in her account of life on "round about a pound a week" show that the male head of household kept between approximately eight and thirteen percent of his wage for personal spending.³⁶

Working-class families also customarily allocated more, and more nutritious, food to the male head of household. Bread and tea were the usual dietary staples of women and children, supplemented with small amounts of cheap meat or fish. Fresh milk, fruit, and vegetables (apart from potatoes) rarely appear in the itemized menus researchers collected. In many instances, the male head of the household consumed three daily servings of meat or fish while other family members subsisted mainly on bread with a little butter, jam, or dripping.³⁷ Reeves' description of practices in Lambeth probably speaks to a fairly widespread custom:

Meat is bought for the men, and the chief expenditure is made in preparation for Sunday's dinner, when the man is at home. It is eaten cold by him the next day. The children get a pound of pieces [scraps of meat of varying quality] stewed for them during the week, and with plenty of potatoes they make great show with the gravy. Bread, however, is their chief food.³⁸

Drinking was considered a major drain on a family's resources and several investigators offered estimates as to the proportion of alcohol they believed working men spent on alcohol. Rowntree thought that one sixth of the weekly income of the average working-class family was spent on drink, Charles Booth believed it to be a quarter while it was as much as one third in Burnett's estimation. Hart suggests that during the mid-1930s, some fifteen percent of the family budget went towards alcohol, and she argues that the figure was much higher for the early part of the twentieth century.

The connection between a largely male leisure activity such as drinking, and the deprivation of women and children is easily made. Hart's criticism of working-class men's self-indulgence echoes sentiments expressed by turn-of-the-century reformers: "In order to give him enough food, mother and child habitually go short....We see the man go to the public house and spend money on drink; we do not see the children going supperless to bed in consequence." But Rowntree and other contemporaries were sensitive to complexities which modern scholars risk overlooking if they reduce the issue to one of patriarchal oppression. Two points are worth making in this regard. Firstly, while many men were selfish and profligate, many

others clearly were not. Pember Reeves' study of Lambeth, where judging by the sample budgets recorded, the practice of men retaining personal spending money was most generally observed, documents several instances of husbands who did not do so. Other sources provide similar testimony of men's care and selflessness. Secondly, the "pocket money" which many men kept for themselves was not spent solely upon leisure. A significant proportion went towards trade union dues, meals, tram fares, clothing, and the like, all of which contributed to the maintenance of the husband as the family's primary wage-earner.⁴⁰ Pember Reeves' comments on this matter are illuminating. She and her fellow researchers anticipated that they would find drinking to be a common characteristic of the families surveyed. However:

experience...went to prove that men in full work who keep their job on [a wage of between 18 and 26 shillings a week] do not and cannot drink. The 1s. 6d. or 2s. which they keep for themselves has to pay for their own clothes, perhaps fares to and from work, smoking and drinking. It does not allow much margin for drunkenness. A man whose wife declared him to be "spiteful" on Saturday nights was certainly the worse for drink on Saturday nights; but never once during sixteen months of weekly visiting did he omit to bring his wife her full allowance.⁴¹

Working people and sympathetic middle-class reformers recognised that many of the privileges accorded to men were necessary to ensure their viability as wage-earners.

Rowntree's investigation showed clearly that compromising the male wage-earner's capability for work rendered the whole family vulnerable to the most abject poverty: in some twenty-five percent of the cases of primary poverty among York's working classes, the immediate cause was the death, illness, unemployment or irregular employment of the chief wage-earner. Given such circumstances, depriving women and children of food could be seen as a rational strategy: when necessary, the wife and sometimes the children would go without, but "the importance of maintaining the strength of the wage-earner is recognised, and he obtains his ordinary share."⁴²

It would be inaccurate, then, to characterise the unequal distribution of material resources in working-class families simply as a case of men oppressing women, for it can just as reasonably be interpreted as part of a pragmatic response to a system which was exploitative of all working-class men and women. But that system did bear very heavily upon women. Defined primarily as wives and mothers, women were denied the compensations that male workers received for their labour, one of which was the right to and the means for leisure. Contemporary observers and reformers noted the disparities between the amount of leisure time of men and women, especially

married women. "Women are far more stay-at-home, and get far fewer treats than men," noted the Reverend Robert R. Dolling of his Portsmouth parishioners. Helen Bosanquet thought it "a pretty sight on Sunday mornings to see the troops of fathers and children, Sunday washed and Sunday dressed," enjoying themselves in London's public parks and pleasure grounds; meanwhile, East End wives and mothers stayed at home to prepare the Sunday dinner. Rowntree remarked upon the extremely limited and monotonous nature of life for the wives of York's skilled workers. Unlike the women of the poorer classes, for whom the communality of the slums offered frequent opportunities for gossip and other forms of (more or less pleasant) social interchange, the wives of artisans were isolated. Generally excluded from her husband's social life, the mother of a young family rarely ventured far from the home and "even when able to get away for a day's holiday, or to go out for the evening she [was] often obliged to take a baby with her."⁴³ Women who were not yet married and tied to the home were not necessarily any better off when it came to leisure opportunities, as a young milliner's recollections reveal:

You have no idea how you feel at the end of the week when you have been sewing every minute, as you may say....it is harder a great deal than most young men

work, I am sure. My brother George is a clerk in a warehouse in the City, and he begins at nine and comes away at six; and then in the summer he goes off to play cricket or rides his bicycle.⁴⁴

Not every young working woman endured the debilitating hours and conditions found in the millinery trade, and, as the next chapter will show, working-class women did manage to fashion their own forms of leisure, inadequate resources notwithstanding. But it is a fairly safe generalisation to state that they did not enjoy equally with men the late nineteenth century improvements in working-class living standards, conditions of employment, and expanding leisure. In the formal labour sector, occupations in which large numbers of women were engaged were either not regulated by law or were very inadequately controlled, and many women worked extremely long hours for low pay. Domestic labour was sheer drudgery and, unlike formal employment, was not contained within any clear boundaries of time or space. So, for most working-class women, a discrete, regular period of time for leisure was an impossibility. Women's access to leisure money was equally limited. One contemporary study after another showed that working-class women did not have the means to satisfy their most basic needs, let alone wants. In contrast, men's access to the necessary resources for leisure, while clearly not boundless, was

much less restricted; and, it was less restricted in large part because of the long established and commonly held belief that the working man, in earning the bulk of the wages upon which he and his family subsisted, also earned the right to leisure. Thus, productive and economic relations, material resources, and gender ideologies combined to form the matrix within which working-class women shaped and experienced their leisure.

ENDNOTES

1

W. Hamish Fraser, The Coming of the Mass Market, 1850-1914 (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1981), ix.

2

Peter Bailey, Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 80-91; Hugh Cunningham, Leisure in the Industrial Revolution c. 1780-c. 1880 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 140-51, 178; James Walvin, Leisure and Society 1830-1950 (London: Longman, 1978), 62-63.

3

Cunningham, Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, 58-59, 145-148; Elizabeth L. Hutchins and Amy Harrison, A History of Factory Legislation (London: P. S. King & Son, 1926), 44, 64-65, 96, 99-107, 120-149, 150-172; M. A. Bienefeld, Working Hours in British Industry: An Economic History (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972), 14-144.

4

Cunningham, Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, 59, 141-149; Hutchins, A History of Factory Legislation, 107, 120-171.

5

Cunningham, Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, 140-148; Bienefeld, Working Hours in British Industry, 143-144; Donald Reid, "The Decline of St. Monday, 1766-1876," Past and Present 71 (1976), 76-101.

6

Terence R. Gourvish, "The Standard of Living, 1890-1914," in Alan O'Day, The Edwardian Age: Conflict and Stability 1900-1914 (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1979), 14; Walvin, Leisure and Society, 60-64.

7

Fraser, The Coming of the Mass Market, 66;
 George J. Barnsby, "The Standard of Living in the Black
 Country during the Nineteenth Century," Economic History
Review 24 (1971): 22-39; Walvin, Leisure and Society, 26;
 Gourvish, "The Standard of Living, 1890-1914," 19-28.

8

Gourvish, "The Standard of Living, 1890-1914,"
 14-15, 31; Adrian Vinson, "The Edwardians and Poverty:
 Towards a Minimum Wage," in Donald Read, ed., Edwardian
England (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 75; Peter Thompson,
The Edwardians: the Remaking of British Society
 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 292-296;
 Standish Meacham, A Life Apart: The English Working Class,
1890-1914 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977),
 129-130, 140-143; Wray Vamplew, Pay Up and Play the Game:
Professional Sport in Britain 1875-1914 (Cambridge:
 Cambridge University Press, 1988), 51.

9

Ross McKibbin, "Why There Was No Marxism in
 Great Britain," English Historical Review 99 (1984), 129.

10

John K. Walton, The English Seaside Resort: A
Social History 1750-1914 (New York: St. Martin's Press,
 1983), 25-44.

11

Vamplew, Pay Up and Play the Game, 53.

12

Nicky Hart, "Gender and the Rise and Fall of
 Class Politics," New Left Review no. 175 (May/June, 1989):
 19-47; Ellen Ross, "Survival Networks: Women's
 Neighbourhood Sharing in London Before World War I,"
History Workshop Journal 15 (Spring 1983): 4-27.

13

Vamplew, Pay Up and Play the Game, 53.

14

John Clarke and Chas Critcher, The Devil Makes Work: Leisure in Capitalist Britain (London: Macmillan, 1985), 203.

15

The quotations are from, respectively, Charles E. B. Russell, Social Problems of the North (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1913), 17; Margaret Llewellyn Davies, Maternity: Letters From Working Women (London: G. Bell, 1915; reprint ed., New York: Norton, 1978), 3-5; Edward Cadbury, M. Cecile Matheson, & George Shann, Women's Work and Wages: A Phase of Life in the Industrial City (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907), 301.

16

Cadbury, Matheson, & Shann, Women's Work, 27, 37.

17

For progressive interpretations of protective legislation, see Hutchins and Harrison, A History of Factory Legislation; Cadbury, Matheson, & Shann, Women's Work; Jane Humphries, "Protective Legislation, the Capitalist State and Working-Class Men: The Case of the 1842 Mines Regulation Act," Feminist Review 7 (1981): 1-33. On the opposite side of the debate stand Harriet Bradley, Men's Work, Women's Work: A Sociological History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Employment (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989); Sylvia Walby, Patriarchy at Work (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986); S. Boston, Women Workers and the Trade Union Movement (London: Davis Poynter, 1908); Gail Braybon and Penny Summerfield, Out of the Cage (London: Pandora, 1987).

18

Thompson, Edwardians, 15; Leonorre Davidoff & Belinda Westover, eds., Our Work, Our Words, Our Lives: Women's History and Women's Work (London: Macmillan Education, 1986); Jane Lewis, Women in England 1870-1950: Sexual Divisions and Social Change (Brighton, Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1984), 8-74.

- 19
Hutchins & Harrison, A History of Factory Legislation, 183, 289-290.
- 20
The Women's Industrial News, no. 1, September 1897, 9; Thompson, Edwardians, 77; Woman Worker, July 1918, 12.
- 21
Edward Cadbury & George M. Shann, Sweating (London: Headley Bros., 1907), 1-4, 8-18, 25-34.
- 22
Clementina Black, Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage (London: Duckworth & Co., 1907), 3.
- 23
Ibid., 53, 58, 66.
- 24
The Women's Industrial News, no. 1, September, 1897, 11.
- 25
Black, Sweated Industry, 48-74, 71; Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1893-94, vol. 23 (Reports, vol. 1), Cmnd. 6894, "Report on Conditions of Work in London," 3.
- 26
Rowntree, Poverty, 117-151; Hart, "Gender and Class Politics," 28; John Benson, The Penny Capitalists: A Study of 19th Century Working Class Entrepreneurs (London: Croom Helm, 1983), 27 ; Davies, Maternity, 6-7.
- 27
Thea Thompson, Edwardian Childhoods (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 76; Davies, Maternity, 153.

28

Clementina Black, Married Women's Work (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1915; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1980), 8.

29

Lynne Lees, "Migration and the Irish Family Economy," unpublished paper, Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1975, cited in Louise A. Tilly & Joan W. Scott, Women, Work, and Family (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978), 125.

30

Rowntree, Poverty, 66; Clara Dorothea Rackham, "Cambridge," in Helen Dendy Bosanquet, Social Conditions in Provincial Towns (London: Macmillan & Co., 1912; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1985), 24; C. Violet Butler, "Oxford," *ibid.*, 63-64.

31

Thompson, Edwardian Childhoods, 79; Cadbury & Shann, Women's Work, 119-144.

32

Rowntree, Poverty, 310-337; Hart, "Gender and Class Politics," 28.

33

George Acorn, One of the Multitude (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1902), 5; Robert Roberts, A Ragged Schooling: Growing Up in the Classic Slum (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), 34; Rowntree, Poverty, 169.

34

C. Madge, Wartime Patterns of Saving and Spending (National Institute of Economic and Social Research, 1943), 52, quoted in Hart, "Gender and Class Politics," 29.

35

Black, Married Women's Work, 48; Pember Reeves, Round About a Pound a Week, 24, 133, 135; Rowntree, Poverty, 52.

36

Black, Married Women's Work, 257-269; Pember Reeves, Round About a Pound a Week, 80-87, 133-142; Rowntree, Poverty, 310-377.

37

Dripping is the fat and congealed juices left over after cooking meat. With salt and pepper as seasoning, it made a tasty spread for bread. Black, Married Women's Work, 10; Davies, Maternity, 159.

38

Pember Reeves, Round About a Pound a Week, 97.

39

Hart, "Gender and Class Politics," 42; Rowntree, Poverty, 176-177.

40

The quotation is from Rowntree, Poverty, 169; Pember Reeves, Round about a Pound a Week, 71, 107, 133, 143-145, 151-153; Davies, Maternity, 36, 38, 77, 80, 83, 96, 116, 121, 136, 144.

41

Pember Reeves, Round About a Pound a Week, 9-10.

42

Rowntree, Poverty, 83, 84, 154; Black, Married Women's Work, 10.

43

Helen Bosanquet, Rich and Poor, (London: Macmillan, 1908), 123; Robert R. Dolling, Ten Years in a Portsmouth Slum (London: Swan & Sonnenschein, 1898), 46;

Rowntree, Poverty, 108-109.

44

46. The Women's Union Journal, vol. 9, May 1884,

CHAPTER IV

BUT OUR LIFE WASN'T ALL WORK AND MISERY

If, as the title of one recent study suggests, working-class women of this period "worked all their lives," it would be wrong to assume that there was no place in their lives for play. Working girls and women used their often scanty resources to create leisure cultures which were interwoven with their day-to-day routines and social and familial responsibilities. Young, unmarried, wageearning females could draw on more expansive resources of time and money than could married women, and this certainly influenced both the extent and nature of their leisure. But even wives and mothers found the means, and probably more importantly, the will to carve out what Kathey Peiss terms spheres of pleasure in lives dominated by work and worry. Working-class girls and women learned to snatch brief moments of respite within the round of work, to turn work itself into a form of play, and, perhaps most significantly, to take their pleasures when and where they could. For some the latter simply meant enjoying the years of relative freedom associated with childhood and young adulthood; for others,

those who were not trammelled by cultural expectations of respectable womanhood or by material want, it was a¹ lifelong philosophy and habit.

Whatever the particular enabling circumstances of their individual lives, working-class women made and enjoyed their leisure in ways and measures which were crucially influenced by the material and ideological factors discussed in the previous two chapters. This chapter focusses on some of the forms that leisure took.

Gender at Play

Both the general lineaments and more specific particulars of working-class women's leisure can be seen in childhood patterns of play. According to James Walvin, by 1914 the British child was "incomparably better cared for than its grandparents had been." The 1908 Children's Act consolidated earlier legislation concerned with the protection of children and, in the words of one government spokesman reflected "a quickened sense on the part of the community at large of the duty it owes to children." Despite both the increased attention that public and private bodies paid to child welfare, and the general improvement in living standards, most working-class children of the period knew no little hardship. Young girls, as they watched and shared in their mothers'

struggles, learned how closely their lives would be circumscribed by material want and cultural limitations, but they also learned important lessons in living -- and playing -- within those constraints.²

The "little drudge" or "little mother" is a common figure in contemporary accounts of the Victorian and Edwardian working classes where she often appears as a stereotypical device for evoking the privations they shared. In an 1898 essay, for example, Helen Dendy Bosanquet conjures up "Sarah Ann" who has been helping out at home since "she first toddled out at four years old to buy mother a 'ha'porth o' blue' at the chandler's shop." The child continues as her mother's helpmate throughout her school years until, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, her father decides that "it's time Sarah Ann was bringing something in." If big and strong enough, she might be taken on as an errand girl, able to earn as much as four or five shillings a week; if not, she will probably earn less than a third of that amount childminding for a neighbour. Or, she might be taken on to learn one of the typically low paid, sweated trades open to female workers: "making boxes at 3d. a dozen, or gentleman's ties at about the same price, or curling feathers, or machining." But most likely, "Sarah Ann" will go into domestic service

where as a general servant she will earn three or four shillings a week by washing, scrubbing, and cooking for a household of five or six. "Poor little drudges! It is hard work and small pay, and not always enough to eat, and very often sharp words."³

Autobiographies and oral histories offer more prosaic and, for that, all the more compelling testimony of the early age at which working-class girls were initiated into the ranks of female labour. Annie Wilson, born into a family of ten in 1898 remembered that as soon as she and her sisters were capable of performing them, their mother assigned household tasks. In her family, the children helped with household chores such as washing and drying the dishes after meals. Annie's older sisters also performed more arduous tasks like blackleading the kitchen range and scrubbing the red quarry tile floors. In addition, they helped their mother with the homework she took in and which was the family's major source of income. Other childhood labour might include fetching coal or water, chopping wood, emptying slops and waste water, or caring for younger siblings. Errand running was a common chore. Lilly White, born in Vauxhall, South London in 1904, remembered her mother sending her to the neighbourhood butcher shops to buy cheap dinners of offal.

Another recalled leaving home at four o'clock in the morning to wait in line outside bakeries in London's wealthy West End where she and other children scrounged stale bread and cakes. When children ran errands of this nature, they helped their mothers eke out the family's food budget. When they performed other domestic chores, they released women from some of their many household tasks, perhaps freeing them for wage work, or simply providing them with a brief respite from work.

Furthermore, children may have not been able to earn more than a few shillings, or even a few pennies, but their informal labour had an exchange value and contributed something to the family economy. As Robert Roberts observed, in communities where "many breadwinners, if they didn't settle in a pub at Saturday dinner time, brought home eighteen shillings as a weekly wage, even farthings⁴ had their value."

Economic pressures led many parents to encourage their offspring to pay their way and children themselves were keenly aware of the need for everyone in the family to bring in a wage as soon as they could. Consequently, despite the 1870 Education Act and child labour laws which significantly reduced both the availability of and demand for child labour, many late Victorian and Edwardian

children began working for money long before they left school. Citing a 1908 study which revealed that almost 10 per cent of the country's two million schoolchildren worked outside school hours, Carl Chinn notes that this figure did not include half-timers or those employed in the informal economy, such as street traders, beggars, and petty thieves. In her autobiography, Kathleen Dayus, born and brought up in one of the poorest districts of Birmingham, described her first experience of the formal work world. At the age of eleven, she began working as a cleaner in the local elementary school, a job which her mother found for her: "Mum wanted to make me useful so she asked Mrs. Morton, the caretaker's wife, and it was agreed I should get half a crown [two shillings and sixpence] for Friday night and Saturday and of this Mum would be given one and sixpence." Francie Nichol, born in the northeastern town of South Shields in 1889, literally and figuratively couldn't wait to leave school and start working. On her own initiative she was hawking herring, shellfish, herbs, and vegetables in the streets by the age of nine, and through hard work and, what she termed brazeness, built up a successful enterprise. For both these girls, childhood set a longterm pattern of struggle against extreme poverty which was compounded by the

violence which they suffered. In Dayus' case this was at the hands of her mother and in Nichols' at the hands of her father and husbands. The daughters of the more prosperous, and/or more respectable working classes were less likely to endure such rigours, and so were able to reap the benefits which Margaret Loane ascribed to the 1870 Education Act: "It would be no exaggeration to say that it has nearly doubled the years of permitted childhood, and added incalculably to its interests and pleasures." Several historians argue that working people, whose economic viability depended on contributions from all family members, bitterly resented the state's intervention through this and other child-centred legislation, but not everyone shared this attitude. Dorothy Scannell's parents exerted no pressure on her to work before leaving school: "My friends....were always talking about the day they would leave school, 'and get some money for their mum,' but my mother had never asked me for money." Younger siblings and especially children from better-off families were most likely to enjoy such circumstances. For example, Annie Wilson's older sisters wouldn't hear of her helping their mother with the homework she took in; instead they encouraged her to go out and play with her friends while they did so, and this

after they had already put in a full day's work. But, even for the hardest worked and most neglected girls, life
5
was not all drudgery.

Indeed, much of the work and money-making which occupied young girls merged imperceptibly with forms of play, and some found real pleasure and fulfilment in their labour. Recollecting her young working days, Francie Nichol acknowledged that the job was hard and could be unpleasant, but she also attested to the happiness it brought her. As a fish seller, she took great pride in her appearance and membership in a distinctive and evidently esteemed female work culture. "People said we were very bonny....Ye used to feel really proud with your shawl and fisherwoman's petticoat with folds right down to the feet, and scrubbed clogs clicking along the cobbles....My, I used to really look the part." Nichol's work entailed starting at dawn to buy freshly landed fish on the quayside, gutting, cleaning, and setting out the wares, and then carrying a heavily laden basket through the streets, but she knew "some happy times, chattin' to people who seemed to like me." Girls who did not have to work for a wage derived similar pleasures from domestic tasks such as errand-running, and delivering their father's midday meal to his workplace. Ada Terry clearly

loved her forays into the West End of London for cheap bread and cakes, and others share similar memories. For example, Scannell's account of Chrisp Street, the busy thoroughfare in which she ran small errands for her mother, describes a busy, bustling street culture in which business mixed with pleasure, and in which young girls found vibrant and accessible leisure forms. Along with grocers, butchers, drapers, and dry-goods shops, Chrisp Street boasted traders, pedlars and entertainers of all kinds: "the barrel organ playing outside the public house, the man playing the violin with his eyes closed, the Indian man with his head and legs all bound round with cloth....the noise, the smell, the music and, oh, the life!"⁶

Similar scenes were to be found in working-class districts throughout urban England, and young girls made good use of the services itinerant entertainers provided for a penny or so. An elderly man's memories of the East coast seaside resort of Skegness in the early years of the twentieth century describe streets full of the music of barrel organs, hurdy gurdies, German, and one-man bands. The barrel organ was a frequent and favourite attraction, playing as it did the latest music hall tunes and providing the accompaniment for the "spirited pavement

ballet[s]" danced by local girls.⁷ Urban centres and resort towns such as Skegness (a popular destination for miners and other workers from the industrial midland counties) were well provided for in terms of leisure entrepreneurs. But itinerant entertainers also found their way to more rural parts, albeit much less frequently. For most of her life, Grace Richardson, born in 1888, lived in a small Lincolnshire village which little of the "outside world" penetrated. However, street pianos and hurdy gurdies, "usually played by Italians," were regular visitors who gave good value for a penny. Occasionally a German band would also pass through the village, more than likely while en route to a resort town; this, too, Richardson remembers as "a source of wonder."⁸

Work and play were also intertwined in rituals associated with seasonal holidays. In the period leading to such festivals as Christmas and Guy Fawkes' Night, groups of children banded together to go carol-singing or collecting "Pennies for the Guy." As part of the Christmas festivities in the east coast village of Humberstone during the 1870s and 1880s, girls went from house to house with a box decorated with coloured ribbons and papers in which they carried a doll to represent the infant Christ. As they went, they wassailed, "sang their

old song," and collected pennies which the villagers had put aside specially for them.⁹ In working-class districts throughout London, grottoes were a popular May sport for girls which required industry, business acumen, artistry and a degree of aplomb. Scannell recalled:

Sometimes we would have a grotto-season. Someone would build the first grotto and then on every street corner a grotto would arise....[They] were a work of love and squirrel-like searching for stones, leaves, broken ornaments, texts and pictures from magazines....Winnie and Amy would place their grotto near a public house -- clever Winnie, for they might catch a reeling man whose thriftiness was befuddled by an extra pint.¹⁰

Springtime customs could be found in urban and rural areas throughout the country. For example, young girls in Salford, Lancashire decorated home made maypoles, chose a May Queen, and processed through the neighbourhood streets, collecting "coppers" for a tea party. These holiday rituals evoked the popular recreations of the past and their centrality to the culture of working-class girls supports Hugh Cunningham's insistence that significant connections remained between traditional leisure practices and those of the modern, urban world. They illustrate, too, the very fluid boundaries which might exist between work and play even in a society increasingly segmented by public/private, economic/ affective, and gender divisions. Scannell's phrase "a work of love"

suggests this as does the flow in the use of neighbourhood space; streets, alleys, and yards were alternately, even simultaneously, workplace, playground, and classroom. Leisure forms like carol singing, grotto-building, and springtime processions blended several elements: the mundane, workaday world (the work of making costumes, searching out decorative items), the sombre reality of leisure-making in a culture shaped by privation (the need to solicit cash to pay for holiday feasts and treats), and the sheer pleasure of an escape into a world in which the "little drudge" could transform herself, however
¹¹
 fleetingly, into a queen.

Robert Roberts and others who lived their young lives within working-class cultures attested to the creative spirit which enabled them to seize such moments. In even the poorest districts "people laughed easily, whistled, sang on high days and jigged in the street --
¹²
 that great recreation room." Neighbourhood streets, alleys, and courts offered a wide range of amusements which cost little or nothing. Girls drew on a rich heritage of chanting, singing, and skipping games which they, in turn, passed on to younger generations: "Ring-a-Ring-a-Roses," "Here We Come Gathering Nuts in May," "Poor Mary Sat a'Weeping."
¹³
 "Sometimes one girl would have an

enormous thick tarred length of rope which stretched right across the road, then it was a mass effort, boys as well....'Allee in together girls, never mind the weather girls,' we would chant."¹⁴ They played games of chance and skill: "we used to play hopscotch or we used to have the marble, or four or five little stones and play button goal, you'd sit on the kerb and you had to pick them up. And we had dab stones and iron hoops, knock you off the pavement!" On chilly days, chasing and catching games such as the many variations of "Tag" (the southern name) or "Tiggy" (the northern name) were popular. On dark nights, both girls and boys delighted in "Knock Down Ginger" (in the south) and "Spirit Rapping" or "Knocky-Door Neighbour (in the north and north east): "we all done it...tie[d] a bit of string" on the door-knocker, pulled¹⁵ on it and ran away.

But the material circumstances of working-class life imposed very real constraints and some children had a keen sense of their privations. Annie Wilson felt that in some ways she had been cheated, especially when she compared herself to children who were materially better¹⁶ off. Catherine Cookson's account of Christmas in her north-eastern home captured some of the unhappy contradictions inherent in the festivities of the working-

class poor.

I longed, as every child longs, for Christmas. Yet as it came near my feelings were always tinged with apprehension....I always hung up a sailor's bag [as a Christmas stocking] and this bag was always full to the top. But half-way down the parcels would turn out to be turnips, or cabbages, or vegetables of some kind done up in paper....but I went on unwrapping, right to the bottom of the bag just in case I might be missing something nice.¹⁷

On the other hand, Dorothy Scanell whose family fortunes were quite similar, did not have the same kinds of experience. Despite her family's poverty, she never felt deprived. Like many other working-class girls, her most important leisure resources were imagination and ingenuity.

We made up our own games and never missed not having toys. The boys played 'Barbers,' and I was always the one to have my hair cut or even be shaved. I was always the prisoner in the 'Wars.' We played 'Sewers,' and turned all the kitchen chairs upside down for the steps, obviously we didn't really know what sewers were, for I am sure we wouldn't have squelched and splashed about so happily.¹⁸

Because of their limited means, working-class girls' toys and other implements of play and games were generally either homemade (a rag doll fashioned out of a woollen stocking stuffed with straw) or were bought cheaply from local tradesfolk. Around Shrovetide each year, the barber in Annie Wilson's Nottingham neighbourhood made traditional toys which he sold for about a penny: wooden

battledores and "shillycocks" for the girls, and whips and tops for the boys. Gifts of toys handed down from more prosperous relations or donated by philanthropic strangers were remembered in detail, even by those who did not feel especially deprived. For example, Scannell was so enchanted by the doll's tea-service which a wealthy benefactress gave her that she seems to have been unable to bring herself to play with it: "The little tea-set was very pretty with Japanese ladies on it....so lovely I put it away in the bottom of the musty little cupboard in the kitchen, inspecting it occasionally like a miser¹⁹ inspecting his gold."

Gender compounded the limitations which socio-economic circumstances imposed on working-class girls' leisure in different ways. To begin with, while expectations about children contributing their wage or non-wage labour to the family extended to both sexes, girls had considerably more domestic responsibilities and consequently much less free time than boys. Boys "seemed always to come first with [mothers]. If there was any inconvenience, it must not fall on the boys; if there was a limited quantity of anything, the boys must still have their full share; the boys' best clothes must be brushed and put away for them; their shirts must be specially well

ironed, and any tit-bits must always be saved for their luncheon."²⁰ Not only were daughters usually denied such favours, and called upon to help around the house more frequently, they were also expected to perform domestic labour in their brothers' service. Hannah Mitchell found this particularly hard to bear. After days spent performing physically demanding farm and household work, she recollected that

on winter evenings there was sewing by hand, making and mending shirts and underwear. At eight years old my weekly task was to darn all the stockings for the household and I think my first reactions to feminism began at this time when I was forced to darn my brothers' stockings while they read or played cards or dominoes. Sometimes the boys helped with rugmaking or in cutting up wool or picking feathers for beds and pillows, but for them this was voluntary work; for the girls it was compulsory.²¹

Several fundamental messages about gender were implicit in these practices. They proclaimed that the free time of girls was vulnerable, that the demands of others were always liable to encroach upon it, and that their own needs and desires were secondary to those of the males in whose service they were expected to work. Protest as they might (and as Mitchell often did) at this differential treatment, the lesson which it taught was that even when it came to leisure, "girls must keep their place."

Girls learned to keep their place in several ways, one of which was through gendered forms of play. Many games and other play activities were common to both sexes but girls and boys had a clear understanding that certain practices were appropriate to one or the other. Robert Roberts, for example, noted that it was girls who participated in May Day processions and danced around maypoles; the maypole itself, however, "had always to be carried by a little boy -- an unconscious admission, perhaps, of its early phallic significance."²² Grotto-building, which was probably a vestigial, urban form of rural customs, was similarly restricted to girls. Flora Thompson's description of May Day festivities in an Oxfordshire hamlet in the 1880s reveals a rather different pattern. In 'Lark Rise' all that remained of the old customs of Maypole, May games, and May dances was the May garland. This was a light wooden frame in the shape of a bell which the children covered with flowers and greenery and carried through the parish. Both girls and boys participated in every stage of the proceedings, but the procession was constituted along clearly gendered lines. Accompanying the May Queen was her consort, the King, four maids of honour, a footman and his lady, a boy with a flag, a girl with a money-box, another boy called

'Ragman,' and a girl known as 'Mother.' "The 'Mother' was one of the most dependable of the older girls, who was made responsible for the behaviour of the garlanders. She carried a large...basket over her arm, containing the lunches of the principal actors."²³

Children also segregated everyday games along gender lines, and some of the most popular ones reveal a process of de-skilling through gender distinction which corresponded to the process by which women's work was de-skilled in numerous trades and industries. "Bobber and Kibs," or "Gobs and Bonsers" (regional names for jackstones) were recognised as girls' games which boys never played, though the latter did play a similar game of "Five Stones." The critical difference between these games was that girls played with a large marble which bounced, whereas boys used a fifth stone which did not. This probably made the boys' version of the game more difficult and thus, according to common wisdom, beyond the capability of girls, but even with this modification, the game seems to have been too closely associated with girlish play for some: "proper boys won't touch a marble that bounces from the ground....But most of them don't care about these things anyway...rotten games, I call them, fit for silly little girls." "Whips and Tops" were

popular with both boys and girls but, again, specific types of tops and the games played with them were seen as requiring more skill or dexterity and these were
 24
 understood to be for boys only.

Descriptions of imagination and make-believe forms of play provide interesting testimony of this gendering process. In Dorothy Scanell's account of the "Barber" and "War" games noted above, the girl took on or was assigned the subservient roles, while the boys assumed positions of authority and action. Some of these games were quite clearly a rehearsal for the hierarchical social and familial roles of adult life. In the tense months before the outbreak of the First World War, for example, Robert Roberts recalled that he and his friends "formed a 'battalion' and, wearing anything that gave the military touch, marched around with a stretcher and a girl dressed
 25
 as a Red Cross nurse." Probably the most widespread and enduring of these pretending games was "Mothers and Fathers," a description of which appears in A. S. Jasper's autobiographical account of Edwardian childhood in the Hoxton district of London.

If we could get in an empty house and play 'Mothers and Fathers' it was our delight. Usually I would play the drunken husband....Some girl would be mother and all the smaller kids would be our children. I would come home and want to know why the dinner wasn't ready

and start to clump the kids and be the tyrant
father.²⁶

The singing, chanting, and acting games which
were a central element of childhood play were also
inscribed with common understandings of gender. For the
most part these forms of play seem to have been restricted
to girls, though Norman Douglas describes a few chanting
and ring games in which both girls and boys

participated.²⁷ Flora Thompson's commentary on the
gendering of these games is instructive, reinforcing as it
does the very process which it appears merely to describe:

The boys of the hamlet did not join in them, for the
amusement was too formal and restrained for their
taste, and even some of the rougher girls when playing
would spoil a game, for the movements were stately and
all was done by rule.²⁸

The various forms of singing and chanting games -- mating
games, wedding games, and "mother games" -- all spoke to
cultural expectations about either relationships between
women and men or the roles they were expected to play.²⁹

The following is one version of a rhyme which accompanied
a popular wedding game:

Choose the one you love the best,
Choose the merriest of the lot.
Now you're married I wish you joy --
First a girl and then a boy.
Seven years old and
Play and cuddle and kiss together --
Kiss her once, kiss her twice,
Kiss her three times over.³⁰

In mother games, such as "The White Shirt" and "Sheep, Sheep Come Home," one player (representing the mother), directed the others or attempted to protect them from some threat. This description of "The White Shirt" is from Douglas' survey of London street games in the first couple of decades of the twentieth century. Like seasonal rituals, this acting game incorporates elements of the supernatural and imaginary while speaking to familial and gender roles.

You have a lot of girls standing against a wall, one of them being the mother of the others. She tells them to go and see if father's shirt's dry (the shirt being a girl in white, standing at a distance). They go in turn to see if it is dry & [sic] each time the "ghost" in father's shirt catches one. At last the mother alone is left, she goes and is caught; then another "shirt" is picked, and so the game goes on.³¹

Douglas also detailed a number of girls' rhymes and chants, and his commentary on these is illustrative of the penetration of serious, adult women's concerns into childhood play. "You'll not find much talk in these songs about sunshine and flowers and things like that -- except in the older ones....the girls [are] matter-of-fact; they sing about clothes and food and money."³²

The diffusion of adult women's concerns into the playworld of girls underscores again the role that 'non-serious' cultural practices played in reinforcing gender relations and identities, for as girls acted out the roles

of sweetheart and mother, they anticipated the roles that the dominant culture expected them to assume later in life. This seems to have been generally common to all working-class girls' play, but in one other respect, there were significant intra-class differences. Just as understandings of gender led to the definition of certain amusements and customs as inappropriate for either girls or boys, so too did working-class parents' sense of their families' status render some practices beyond the pale for their daughters. Robert Roberts attested to this in his account of Salford springtime customs:

Nearly every street of any length had its own gay totem, the event being organised almost invariably by the daughters of labourers, artisans' children being forbidden by parents to go 'begging'. These girls had their own maypole in a backyard; but compared with the public emblem it was a pretty dead affair.³³

London girls' grotto-building carried with it the same disreputable air. "It's just a dodge for mumping halfpennies," commented Norman Douglas in his assumed role of guide to the street culture of Edwardian working-class youth. Dorothy Scannell's mother shared the same opinion and though her older sisters for a time ignored their mother's prohibitions -- "Mother was against what she thought was begging" -- ultimately, they were forced to submit to maternal authority. Significantly, it was an

older girl's compromising of one of the most fundamental measures of working women's respectability, her moral character, which put an end to the grotto enterprise.

"Winnie was found out because a man gave her a lot of money for one kiss. This monstrous act was reported to Mother....After this, how could us younger ones start up in business?"³⁴

Similar concerns do not appear to have prevented the children of the more respectable rural working classes from participating in such rituals. Flora Thompson's family were set apart somewhat from their neighbours, their father being a skilled craftsmen and therefore better paid than the agricultural labourers who made up the majority of the hamlet's population.

Nonetheless, Flora and her younger brother joined in the May processions and received their share of the money collected. But before the First World War in many rural communities, and certainly in 'Lark Rise,' paternalistic social relations persisted and the labouring people expected the local gentry to provide for their traditional recreations. In such societies, May day processionists solicited money not as a dole, but as a customary right and, therefore, they were able to do so without compromising their respectability one whit. Furthermore, by the late nineteenth century, popular festivals

associated with seasonal holidays had been significantly altered, or (to use Alan Howkins' expression), tamed, and children's celebrations such as those described by Thompson evidently posed little threat to propriety and decorum.

Leisure in the Making of Working-Class Womanhood

The recreational habits and customs of young women, however, were a matter of serious concern. The phase of life between leaving school and marrying and setting up one's own household was generally viewed as a transitional phase from girlhood to wifhood. Most working-class girls expected to marry and they were probably very aware of what marriage, and more importantly, motherhood brought with it. Consequently, as young adults, they looked forward to and worked towards marriage and full adult status; but they also treasured the relative freedoms associated with their unmarried status. In these four or five years young women enjoyed some of the material resources necessary for unconditional, 'real' leisure. They had some money to spend on clothes, comestibles, and visits to the theatre or music hall; and if they did not have very much money of their own, they could probably find a young man willing to treat them. Their status as wage-earners also gave them

grounds for asserting more independence in the family and for claiming some free time for themselves.

Such freedoms could be, and were, seen as potentially threatening to the unproblematic transformation of girls into good wives and mothers and so educators, employers, and social reformers subjected young women's recreational habits to careful scrutiny. They advocated intervening in young women's leisure in order to ensure that it would tend to reinforce rather than undermine hegemonic gender relations, and they attempted to effect that intervention in various ways. Middle-class conceptions of appropriate models of women's leisure corresponded closely to those of the 'respectable' working classes. They also clearly departed in several important respects from the kinds of practices and attitudes which enjoyed a wide currency among the late Victorian and Edwardian working classes. In the examination of young working-class women's leisure which follows, this conflict between two opposing models of recreation, and what each implied for working-class gender relations and ideologies are central, continuing themes.

Upper- and middle-class sources are replete with commentaries on what their authors considered to be the unwholesome and socially damaging aspects of young working

women's leisure. To some -- Walter Besant is one example -- working-class youth enjoyed a troubling, and dangerous, abundance of leisure time. According to his calculations, including the evening hours from 7.00 to 11.00 PM, Saturday half-holidays, Sundays, and seasonal and state mandated holidays, fully one third of the young East Ender's year was free time. Reformers who were more familiar with the lives of working women generally did not share Besant's opinion on this matter though there were even among their number those who could write in blissful ignorance of "idle poor amusement hunters...idling away their time in a factory or workshop." For the most part social reformers knew that what many, if not most working women had was not an abundance but an "absence of leisure."³⁶

There was a much stronger consensus about the dangerous possibilities of leisure. Naturally high spirited, irresponsible, flighty, and easily distracted, once released from the control of parents, teachers, overseers, or employers, young working women were believed to be easily seduced by dubious amusements. Besant's descriptors of "Liz," the stereotypical factory girl in his East London imply an animalistic vitality that is not easily contained: she has "quick and restless" eyes and

"mobile" lips; she is full of fun and "quick to laugh," "ready-witted and prompt with repartee and retort;" she can not walk sedately, but must dance along the street; she is "an impudent, saucy bird, always hungry, always on the lookout for something more."³⁷ Compounding these inherent characteristics which made working girls tend to seek out the sensational and tawdry, were environmental and cultural influences, or rather, from the perspective of upper- and middle-class critics, the absence of the latter. The lack of adult supervision and unwholesome influences of working-class homes were perceived as fundamental problems. Far from teaching young people to enjoy simple, rational amusements, many working-class families evidently nurtured an unhealthy appetite for sensational pleasures in their offspring:

If you look closely you will see that London children are always tired; the dark rings under their eyes tell of the nervous strain which is breaking down their health, and their very restlessness is the restlessness of fatigue and nervous exhaustion. They begin to share the life of their parents so early that they often seem to have no real childhood....Not long ago I counted between thirty and forty infants-in-arms at the Britannia Theatre, and there cannot have been fewer than a hundred present.³⁸

Even if parents did not lead their children into unwholesome habits, many poorer homes were so cheerless that it was not to be wondered that young women would

choose to spend most of their evenings out. The hustle and bustle of the streets, the tawdry glitter of the theatre and music hall, the conviviality of the public house were strong counter-attractions to such homes. Young adulthood was a particularly perilous time for those who had grown up in such circumstances, and in "young [lives] just freed from school, free too often from all parental control, surrounded by examples of lives unregulated by any form of restraint," the discipline of the workplace might be an important counteracting force.³⁹ However, the circumstances under which young women worked, and the influences of the workplace itself might also work in a way that critics found less desirable.

The tedium and monotony of particular (probably most) women's occupations was liable to prompt an unfortunate reaction once the working day was done. In lives spent "sitting day after day in the same place, by the same table, surrounded by an unchanging number of people with whom speech is forbidden, labelling bottles, making buttonholes in men's coats, or rolling cigarettes," it was perfectly understandable that pleasures should be siezed and enjoyed with abandon. Working-class street culture had a "perilous fascination" for girls who were becoming young women: "The glare of the gaslamps, the busy

thronging to and fro, the wild, free intercourse among acquaintances and strangers alike, are irresistible attractions to these excitable young creatures after the monotony of the day," observed Helen Bosanquet. "I have seen a letter from a girl of [fourteen or fifteen years of age] describing the delights of the street dance and the meeting of friends, which, though perfectly simple in expression, was almost passionate in its intensity of feeling."⁴⁰ In addition, while the factory bell or whistle might signal a release from discipline and dullness at the end of the working day, it by no means shut off the flow of popular customs and influences at its beginning. And both within and outside the workplace, critics found many features of that leisure culture disturbing.

Drinking and gambling were high on the list of pastimes believed likely to degrade rather than ennoble. Alcohol was an important element of working-class leisure and, despite legislation and customs which tended to restrict women and children from partaking of it, the culture of drinking was not exclusively male. For example, in the 1880s in working-class districts of London one might find "in [public] house after house...little groups comprising a grey-headed old lady with a glass of

neat gin, a buxom young woman with a baby and ditto, and a burly young fellow with a big pewter."⁴¹ By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, laws had been passed which prohibited children from entering premises licensed to serve alcohol, but drinking was a common feature of domestic working-class leisure and it was at home, at an early age, that some enjoyed their first taste of beer, porter, or even spirits. Catherine Cookson's autobiography is not singular in its depiction of a home in which alcohol was regularly, and in her judgement all too frequently, excessively consumed. She deftly conveyed both the strong appeal and the sometimes unhappy associations of drink: "There were nights when I'd be bathed before the fire....and when later, clothed in my nightie, I would stand between me granda's knee having sips of beer from his pint pot, I would experience a happiness bred by a fleeting sense of security." Yet many times, she also "longed for such poverty that there would be no money left for drink."⁴²

Given its centrality to much working-class life and leisure, and the difficult circumstances in which many lived, the attraction of drinking to young working women was understandable. "Is it any wonder," wrote one middle-class reformer, that "as she drags her weary way back to

comfortless rooms [the working woman]...should linger at the swing door of the public-house, with its glaring lights, its warmth and glow on winter nights, and yield to the seductions of strong drink which, for a time, brings a forgetfulness of sorrow, and drowns the gnawing sense of longing for something different?"⁴³ Some occupational groups were reputed to be especially partial to drink; laundry workers were one: "many of them are married, women whose husbands are more or less failures, and many find it thirsty work, and succumb to the temptation to drink." Barmaids were also believed to be vulnerable. But even beyond these specific occupations, alcohol and pleasure were so closely connected in working-class culture that to some, giving up the one must have seemed to mean giving up the other. "Ah, Missus!" was the response of one young factory worker to a reformer's advice that she should forgo her drink, "if you once knew the pleasure of getting jolly well drunk yourself, you wouldn't ask me to give it up!"⁴⁴

Indeed, in some factories and workshops, drinking was a central element of women's work and leisure culture. Specific customs varied from one workplace to another, and what was a common, long-established practice in one establishment or trade might be unheard of

elsewhere. Edward Cadbury's 1906 study of the city of Birmingham provides invaluable insights into this aspect of working women's culture. "Sometimes the custom prevails of treating the forewoman on pay day in the hope of propitiating her, and influencing her distribution of work in the coming week."⁴⁵ Party clubs were another variant of workplace drinking practices. They were comprised of groups of workers who organised themselves in order to raise funds to celebrate Christmas, other seasonal holidays, or an individual's birthday. For several weeks in succession, club members subscribed 1d. or 2d. into a common fund and on the appointed day the foreman or forewoman stopped work early and the whole group enjoyed "cakes and tea," the latter liberally spiked with rum or gin. On particularly special occasions, wedding parties, for example, a contribution of 6d. or 7d. would be paid in one sum and the supply of alcohol might be supplemented by a gift from an employer or manager. An enterprising local publican might also donate a bottle of gin or rum, anticipating that his generosity would be amply rewarded later when the drinking party adjourned to his establishment. Gipsy parties were a similar means of organising and funding outings. Anyone wishing to join in the party paid however much they could afford for a

specified period before the trip. If, at the end, any one person had paid more than the amount needed, the difference was returned to them.

Party and gypsy clubs were part of a much larger system of self-help and ingenious financing which working women used to stretch their meagre budgets to accomodate a modest self-indulgence. What was beyond one's means if paid for in a lump sum became affordable when paid for in regular, incremental amounts. Young women frequently bought clothes, boots, and, when they were preparing for marriage, household goods such as linens, through similar clubs. They were also the means for acquiring the cheap finery with which working women were reputed to be so enamoured. "Between sixteen and eighteen or twenty is the blossoming time, and at that age no extreme of poverty will keep the flower or feather out of the hat, or the gay colour out of the dress."⁴⁶ These clubs were run by a more senior worker who usually acted as an agent for local shopkeepers who gave discounts to the club-holder depending on the amount of business she managed to secure. The system as described by Cadbury was simple and evidently ran smoothly: "fifteen girls wanting boots will agree to pay 6d. each for fifteen weeks. Each pay-day they draw lots, and the fortunate one takes the 7s. 6d.

and gets her boots." Appealing as it was, the practice had its drawbacks, as one woman explained: "The [shopkeeper] knows you're a club member, and you have to buy from what he chooses to show you, and he puts away his best things; if you save your money you can look around elsewhere and get the clothes you like best."⁴⁸

Boot, clothes, and drapery clubs also incorporated an element of gambling, a custom which, like drinking, was mostly associated with men's leisure. Still, reformers anxiously noted gambling's strong, and apparently growing, appeal for women. Given the difficulty of finding hard evidence for the prevalence of what was prohibited by law, contemporary impressions of the extent of women's gambling were necessarily that. Cadbury asserted that it was "well known" that the betting craze was increasingly common among working women. "A widespread evil exists," he wrote, and, in addition to the element of gambling attached to their party and clothes clubs, "many girls bet on coming out of the factory."⁴⁹ Benjamin Rowntree was similarly vague in his assessment of women's gambling in York, though he was able to cite police records which provided some indication of the numbers involved in one case. Police observation of a cottage-based betting establishment in a working-class

district in that city showed that, it was patronised by 534 people over five different days in June of 1901. The vast majority were men but forty-six women and girls were among those observed entering the betting shop.⁵⁰

The popularity of gambling amongst young working women, apart from that which characterised the party system, is a moot point; the broader appeal of other recreational pursuits is clearer. In their scant leisure time, young working women enjoyed music halls and theatres, outings, dancing, clothes and food, friendships, literature, and -- above all -- men.⁵¹ Distinguishable on workdays by "the freedom of her walk, the numbers of her friends, and the shrillness of her laugh," the pleasure-seeking London factory girl was to be found on Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons:

promenading up and down the Bow Road, arm in arm with two or three other girls....On those occasions she is adorned and decked out....She wears a gorgeous plush hat with as many large ostrich feathers to match as her funds will run to -- bright ruby or scarlet preferred....She goes to penny gaffs if nothing better is offered her; she revels in the thrilling performances at the Paragon or the music-halls; and only too often she can be seen drinking in the public-house with a young man with whom she may or may not have been previously acquainted.⁵²

Even while disapproving, respectable and reform minded individuals recognised the attraction that these vibrant and rowdy working-class leisure practices had for

young women. "Our girls," wrote one in a commentary on popular theatres and music-halls, "seek...reaction from the monotony of the workshop life. The garish lights and dresses, the impure atmosphere of these places of amusement, seem to intensify that subtle experience of passion, which the girls call life, and in which they revel."⁵³ Avowed temperance advocate that he was,

even Rowntree was not insensitive to the pleasures of the public-house. "The rooms are, as a rule, brilliantly lit, and often gaudily, if cheaply, decorated. In winter they are always kept temptingly warm."⁵⁴ The entertainment (where it was provided) was well suited for the tastes of a clientele comprised largely of young women and men. Most of these, Rowntree noted, drank, but not heavily.

At intervals one of the company is called on for a song, and if there is a chorus, every one who can will join in it. Many of the songs are characterised by maudlin sentimentality; others again are unreservedly vulgar. Throughout the whole assembly there is an air of jollity and an absence of irksome restraint which must prove very attractive after a day's confinement in factory or shop.⁵⁵

Similarly, a working woman's tastes in literature might be less than elevated, but they accorded with her natural inclinations and environmental influences:

She enjoys the police news in the papers because that deals with phases of life with which she is familiar. Books, politics, music, belong to a kingdom of which others hold the key, and consequently they do not interest her. The novelette is exciting. It

describes impossible passions so minutely, that they appear real to the working girl. At least, they carry her into a different world, and it is with actualities alone that she is at war. Artificial emotions offer her an escape from reality; they amuse her [my emphasis].⁵⁶

Amuse they might, but young women's recreational habits were, nonetheless, a serious matter. They influenced not only the physical and moral well-being of the individual woman, but through her the health and vitality of the working classes as a whole and, ultimately the nation. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, national concerns about the condition of the working classes, national physical efficiency, and race suicide reached a climax. The Edwardian period saw increasing state intervention into aspects of working-class life that were previously considered the concern of the individual family (the provision of school meals and medical inspections in schools, were early examples); this intervention was rationalised on the grounds of national and racial advancement. A central component in the drive to improved physical and moral well-being was the promotion of a particular model of working-class womanhood, one which elevated and glorified maternity.⁵⁷

In the context of these concerns and currents, working-class women's leisure was understood as an area of life in which intervention was also necessary. The

problems of some practices -- party clubs and gypsy parties, for example -- were evident: "the girls may or may not get partially intoxicated, but at least they are engendering a vicious habit, and in many cases young girls dare not refuse to join, and they thus start the taste for a dangerous indulgence."⁵⁸ Clara Collet thought that drinking was one of the most discreditable features of women's workplace culture and she was harsh in her criticism of employers' "wilful blindness....[to] a danger which they must know exists."⁵⁹ The party system was also liable to encourage young women to gamble -- "as the girls say, 'You may get your things before you've paid for them'" -- and to contribute to an improvidence which was seen as a major problem. Drinking and gambling were commonly understood as contributing greatly to poverty, and women's predilection for these habits was of particular concern because of their primary responsibility in managing the home. The inability of working-class women to adequately fulfil their domestic responsibilities was a major issue. From the 1890s through to the inter-war period, policymakers and practioners in the growing state welfare and education systems proclaimed the need to educate working-class girls and women out of their ignorant and feckless ways, and into the roles of good

wives and mothers; and this impetus extended to all aspects of young working women's leisure, not simply those which obviously inclined to the intemperate or the
 60
 immoral.

Sensitive to working women's need for recreation, but censorious of the manner in which it was often satisfied, social reformers set themselves the task of providing wholesome alternatives. They did this with a clear sense of purpose: to arouse young women's "social consciousness by teaching them...the possibilities of mutual helpfulness and the joys of service"; to supersede the dissolute and degrading by sharing the "pure joy" and "real pleasures" of nature, art, music, good literature; to persuade young women that "wifhood and motherhood [are] woman's best estate"; and, to urge them "to try to
 61
 make their homes and workshops places of righteousness."

The means to achieving these ends were diverse: working-girls' clubs, evening classes, lectures, lantern-shows, socials, entertainments, and outings. All entailed persuading young working women to adopt rational, improving forms of leisure which would help to make them exemplary wives and mothers. Most combined an element of philanthropy with an insistence on the importance of self-help; for example, a middle-class sponsor might have borne

the cost of hiring a lecture hall, but this would be offset by charging admission fees. Girls' clubs were a popular form of social intervention. The Reverend Robert Dolling's account of his efforts in a slum district of Portsmouth provides a good illustration of the impetus underlying these clubs, the way in which they were conducted, and the manner in which young working women responded to them. Robert Dolling began his work in the Landport parish in 1885 at which time a girls club, "The Social" had already been established by his predecessor. Two circumstances in particular impressed upon him the importance of continuing the club. First, most of the young female parishioners were employed in a local stay factory where they were exposed to "great temptation." "Many of the workers were positively bad, and even amongst those who were not leading bad lives there was great vulgarity of speech and manner, and a want of all true refinement."⁶² The town itself was an even greater concern. As a commercial and naval seaport, and military garrison, Portsmouth offered young women many inducements to stray.

The Commercial Road and the Southsea Common were a perpetual menace. Those places, in which the girls delighted to walk, were full not only of rollocking, good-natured, thoughtless soldiers and sailors, but of those most hateful of all living creatures, the older

profligate. Many of these girls, too, see sin continually in the streets in which they live. They see other girls who have no work to do -- would to God they knew more plainly the awfulness of the work they do do! -- able to dress well and go to places of amusement continually, while they themselves too often are unable to earn enough to keep themselves in the actual necessities of life.⁶³

Dolling believed that "The Social" was a worthwhile endeavour, as it shaped the most unprepossessing material into "ladies in appearance and manners, in mind and in heart." The claim may be somewhat self-delusive, but with its games and sermons, carefully chaperoned dancing classes and socials, and above all the refining influence of the Reverend Dolling's sister, "The Social" managed to persuade some hundred or so girls and young women away from Portsmouth's dangerous amusements at least once a week.⁶⁴

Similar initiatives were advocated or taken elsewhere. For example, Nottingham, which by the mid-1890s, had become a town "thickly populated with women and girls employed in factories, 'the devil's mission of amusement' forces its way with special temptations fostered by the public-house system." To counteract this influence, a system of "Girls' Evening Homes" had been set up in which "educated girls meet factory girls on common ground, and, by kindly intercourse and unselfish service,⁶⁵ do much to raise the tone." Rural districts and

villages provided another field for reformist recreational endeavour. Itinerant potato and hop pickers were "a class of women and girls...sorely open to the temptations of intemperance," but even they could be reached through outdoor lantern exhibitions and uplifting talks. Middle-class girls who had left school and were "looking longingly around for something to do," were urged to "use their talents by 'looking out for dull people and making them cheerful.'" ⁶⁶ Kathleen Townend provided a suitably inspiring account of the happy results of such efforts.

A number of girls joined together in a country village and started a Girls' Club, which they invited the tradesmen's daughters and the working girls to join. They meet once a week during the winter months -- work, play games, sing, or read, have their occasional guest nights, and give entertainments to their friends and relations. When it was started, some people prophesied failure and evil as the result, but the evil has not appeared, whilst the good has been very apparent. Amongst other things promoted has been a healthy tone of friendship, unselfishness, and thought for others, and girls with a tendency to run wild have been kept in safe companionship.⁶⁷

Some girls and young women were less amenable to the refining influences of their social superiors and reformers frequently found that to continue to attract club members they had to alter the activities offered. The Reverend Dolling discovered that older girls stopped attending "Social" evenings once they began to "walk out" with their young men. The solution was a

social evening to which both young women and men were invited, but finding appropriate entertainments presented another problem: "we tried games, but they always ended in horrid romps. All games seemed to end in kissing, and forfeits brought forth witticisms which were not always conducive to propriety." Eventually, Dolling instituted a dancing class which proved to be a success, at least on his terms: "It has given one the most happy opportunity of enabling our boys and girls to meet naturally together, and I am more and more convinced that one of the greatest causes of sin, in places like ours, is this want."⁶⁸

Social reformers at an Anglican settlement house in Bethnal Green, London also found that reaching the wilder elements of young working-class womanhood demanded accomodation from both parties. The quieter girls of the district attended a club which devoted its time to "games and dancing, musical drill, and the like. Part-singing and brush-drawing [were] also popular with the members and the preparation of a play for performance at Whitsuntide gave interesting occupation for the winter months." But many of the neighbourhood girls were too wild to be amused by such tame fare and so a "rough girls' club" was formed. It took some time for the club leaders to effect any improvement in the behaviour of the club members whose

favourite amusements at the beginning "were swinging from the gas-pipes, fighting, rolling on the floor, and singing songs of an order not suited for the drawing-room, or any other respectable place." Evidently, but to what extent and by what means it is not clear, these "rough girls" were persuaded that quiet, womanly amusements such as needlework, reading, and listening to educational lectures were an attractive way of spending one's free time: "What a triumph this was can only be known by those who have
69
done similar work."

The task of providing for the leisure of young working women was one which upper- and middle-class women intent on civilising the lower orders and educating working-class women in a particular model of womanhood took upon themselves. In directing their concerns about the sorry condition of the working classes to the deleterious effects of unwholesome leisure practices, however, recreation reformers misdirected their zeal somewhat, as Cadbury's inquiry into women's work and wages in Birmingham showed. In the early part of 1904, a period in which trade in the city was depressed and wages low, Cadbury asked eleven young working women to keep a record of their expenses for one month. Their wages were between 5s. 6d. and 9s. a week, and out of that all paid 5s. a

week to their mothers for board and lodging. The women were all unskilled workers and most had to forgo some meals during the period in question. Nearly all the rest of the wages were needed for clothes, most of which were purchased through the club system. Out of the 11 women, 7 paid between 5d. and 1s. 6d. per week into boot clubs; 6 paid between 2d. to 1s. 6d. into drapery and dress clubs; 5 paid between 1s. and 2s. 6d. into money clubs. No one paid into a party club, it not being the season for party clubs. After all this necessary expenditure, only a few pence were left for recreation and treats such as sweets and fruit. As Cadbury points out, the latter could not really be considered a luxury when the poor quality and monotony of many working-class diets was taken into account. Beyond this, "there [were] a few tram fares, an occasional twopenny visit to the music hall, and one or two spent as much as 6d. in an Easter outing." In total, the eleven women between them spent 16s. 7d. on recreation in one month, the single largest items of expenditure being sweets and fruit. This is hardly a picture of young women headlong in pursuit of dissipation: rather it shows that low wages and debilitating working conditions acted as effective controls on the recreational habits of many working women.

Arguably, the work and leisure habits of higher status women workers gave more grounds for concern. Both Collet and Cadbury commented on the greater spending power that the working daughters of skilled artisans enjoyed. "If the girl's parents are in very comfortable circumstances," wrote Collet, "she frequently pays nothing towards the home expenses, and spends all she earns on dress and amusement."⁷¹ Because of their higher standard of living, these young women had higher expectations; "they have more resources in themselves, but on this account they feel more need for change and pleasure."⁷² Altogether better off than their lower paid counterparts, skilled workers had more vitality which sought its release at the end of the work day in the pursuit of leisure. Much of this, Cadbury lamented, took them out of their homes where they might have been better employed in acquiring proficiency in the domestic skills necessary for married life.

They are too restless to stay indoors....Some of these better-class girls pay occasional visits to theatres and music halls, and a few join dancing classes. For others, the churches and chapels find the recreation, and choir practices, Bible-classes, and missions fill all available time. An objection to this form of spending leisure is that the girls are seldom or never at home, except on Friday evening. That is 'candlestick night,' or the universal night for housecleaning, leaving the Saturday half-holiday free for marketing and outings with friends.⁷³

Clearly, even the most rational and respectable forms of leisure could be problematic when they tempted women into spending too much time away from home and hearth.

Again, it was the fear that young working women's lifestyles unfitted them for their primary social responsibilities that underlay criticisms and interventions such as these. For reformers, the answer to the question of how the improvident and ineffective working-class wife and mother was produced was clear. To begin with, her employment in shops, factories, and workshops provided her with no experience or training in domestic skills. Then, despite her lack of preparation for it, she rushed into an imprudent marriage, the demands and circumstances of which, after the hustle and bustle and companionship of her working days, seemed tame and monotonous in comparison.⁷⁴ Uninterested and unschooled in the domestic duties which should have filled her days, the young working woman became thus the indolent, ignorant working-class "woman of leisure" who passed her time gossiping in doorways, drinking, gambling, and raising a future generation of similarly inept mothers and unemployable sons. Helen Bosanquet, a leading advocate of the need to reform the moral character of the working classes understood what marriage and motherhood meant for women

who had learned to enjoy the pleasures of their youth.

The young men and women meet at the theatre, the music hall, often at private parties; they become acquainted...and when they marry they keep up the same constant round of evening recreations. Then comes the time when the young wife has to choose between husband and child....To stay at home with the child is to lose one of her strongest holds upon her husband -- is to cease to share his leisure with him.⁷⁵

Those married women who chose not to give up this shared leisure were castigated by unsympathetic commentators for their neglect of domestic and maternal duties, and for nurturing unhealthy leisure habits in their offspring. But those who did make what ideologues such as Bosanquet considered the proper choice, faced the prospect of lives of unrelieved boredom and monotony.

Rowntree's observations on the extremely narrow and tedious life of the wives of the skilled, respectable artisan class of York were echoed by other investigators.⁷⁶ Cadbury's inquiries in Birmingham supported the claim that for many working women, marriage and motherhood brought an end to any real leisure. In only one chapter of an extensive examination of working-class women did the author discuss "social life" as a discrete topic, and that was one which focussed exclusively upon young, unmarried women. For the married women and mothers in Cadbury's study, their leisure

horizons extended only as far as housework, childcare, reading, and sewing. These were the activities which one third of the authors' married women's respondents gave to the request that they describe their primary forms of leisure. Significantly, almost a quarter of those married women who did not work outside the home were not able to state how they spent their leisure time, which might suggest that the very concept of leisure had no meaning in lives passed in a weary round of domestic and other
 77
 chores.

Magdalen Pember Reeves' investigation in Lambeth reinforces the impression of lives so full of domestic labour as to leave little latitude for anything else. At Reeves' request, five of the mothers involved in her investigation kept accounts of a typical day, (they did not consider washing day to be typical: "You'd expect ter be a bit done-like washin' day"); even so, the routine that these women ordinarily followed was all-consuming of
 78
 their time and energy. One example, that of a young women with only one baby and her husband to care for, represented, "as Lambeth mothers' days go...a very easy one":

6.00 -- Get up and light fire.
 6.15 -- Wake husband...get his breakfast.
 6.30 -- Give him his breakfast, and while he eats it, nurse baby.

7.00 -- When he has gone, put baby down and eat breakfast.
 7.30 -- Wash up; do a little washing every day for baby; air bed; carry down dirty water; bring fresh up from yard (second floor).
 8.30 -- Baby wakes; give her a bath and dress her; nurse her; let her lie and kick while sweeping room and blacking grate and scrubbing stairs; make bed; carry baby out, and do shopping for dinner.
 11.00 -- Come in and nurse baby; get dinner ready.
 12.15 -- Husband comes in; give him dinner. He leaves a few minutes to one o'clock.
 1.00 -- Wash up and nurse baby; take her out for a walk, if fine, for as long as can bear it. She is heavy. Come in when time to nurse her again, and sit down to sew. Make all her clothes and most of own, and mend husband's.
 4.30 -- Get tea ready and cook relish.
 5.00 -- Husband comes in; give him tea, and help him clean himself in warm water; wash up and carry down dirty water, and bring up clean water.
 6.00 -- Nurse baby and get her to bed; husband not strong, and likes to go to bed early; sit and sew till time to nurse baby at nine o'clock. Get everything ready for morning.
 9.30 -- Go to bed.79

A 1912 examination of boy life and labour in Birmingham provides an illuminating contrast to this material. The seventeen year-old youths in Freeman's enquiry enjoyed a regular daily and weekly round of trips to the music-hall and cinema, football (playing, spectating, talking about, and wagering on), billiards, music, reading, and socialising at work and in the streets.
 80
 The female labour which in large part enabled this leisure runs as a hidden text through extracts such as these:

H. V....Engaged in learning a trade:

Monday -- I got up at 7 o'clock. Breakfast at 7.30. Work starts at 9.0...I go home to dinner and start back at 1.40 then we have a game at foot ball for ten minutes with the other lads...Finish work at 7.0. Came home and washed myself cleaned my boots then went up to one of my school mates then we went to the Picture Palace.

Friday -- I got up at 10 to 7. Breakfast at 7.20. Made rings for Cup Mounts. And a few other odd jobs. Came home to dinner. Played Football. In the afternoon did the same as the morning (etc). Came home and cleaned myself then went up to my friend's house for an hour.81

M. R. [unskilled hand]:

Tuesday -- I got up at 6.15 and went to work at 6.50....I do hingemaking and Grinding on Emery wheel....Not so hard but very monot. Dinner time 1 till 2. I have ten minutes walk home, have a wash, twenty minutes to have my dinner, a talk my mother or a tune on the Banjo, till ten minutes to two and then back to work. Arrived home at 8.10. Had a wash, a cup of tea and pancakes. After that I took up some old music and practiced on the banjo for an hour and then bed.82

How typical or otherwise these glimpses into the daily and weekly lives of working people are is not the major issue, though there is enough consistency among different sources to suggest that they are probably quite representative. What is most significant is the compelling evidential impression that for sons, husbands, brothers, and fathers, a discrete thing called leisure was commonplace; whereas for many girls and women, and especially for wives and mothers who dutifully discharged their domestic responsibilities, it was exceptional. Again, the issue of respectability and within-class status

is an important one. It is clear that women of the more prosperous, artisanal classes were more likely to be home-centred in their leisure and less likely to share in their husband's social life. Women of the poorer working classes were more inclined to frequent public houses, to participate in the leisure culture of the streets, and less likely to feel bound by material want or ideological strictures in their pursuit of leisure. Rowntree's observation on working-class patronage of public houses pointed to significantly different habits among various sectors of York's working classes, for "in the more...respectable districts," far fewer women frequented pubs than in the slums. There is support for this in working-class autobiographies and oral histories. One example is Kathleen Dayus' Her People, an account of the author's girlhood in the slums of Birmingham which is punctuated with descriptions of her mother's and other women's hedonistic escapades in which drinking invariably played a part. Again, as was often the case for working-class people and especially women, the boundaries between work and leisure were blurred. On Mondays, Dayus' mother and several neighbours did their washing. This was a labour intensive task which took all day, but which the women enlivened with gossip and songs. At day's end, the

workers pledged the freshly laundered and ironed clothes at the pawnshop, and retired to the local public house with the proceeds of their labour to "wet their
83
whistles."

According to some disapproving reformers, behaviour of this kind was widespread among certain sectors of working-class women. M. B. Blackie commented sourly on the habits of the married "women of leisure" of the poorer working classes.

You may see them any day, and at any hour, as you pass through the poorer districts of our cities. There they are, hanging with head and shoulders out of the windows, gazing idly down into the street, or gossiping in pairs by the hour together in the close or entry, or sitting about in groups on the door-steps, passing remarks that are not always [original emphasis] friendly on those who go out or come in.⁸⁴

Blackie noted that even in more respectable districts, married women were disposed to organise drinking clubs. "Several women club their money together, each subscribing so much, and one goes out to buy spirit. Then they sit
85
down to drink it in company." Flora Thompson's account of a gathering such as this in her childhood hamlet shows that the practice could be quite innocuous. One of the less sedate matrons of Lark Rise would on occasions invite a few neighbours in for a communal beer-drinking session. "They none of them got drunk, or even fuddled, for there

was not very much each, even when the can went round to the inn a second or a third time. But there was just enough to hearten them up and make them forget their troubles."⁸⁶ Another observer was more censorious of the drinking practices of working-class women in Manchester in the first decade of the twentieth century:

The women of Manchester claim one day in the week when the public-houses are their domain. Monday is Woman's Day in the Manchester taverns, and on that day you may see every gangway blocked with bassinettes. Perambulators overflow into the street. Within the bars, amidst the crowds of noisy women, under the fumes of tobacco smoke and alcohol, tiny fingers may be seen in convulsive agitation.⁸⁷

Clearly, some working-class women were able to defy dominant notions of what was appropriate behaviour for a wife and mother, but the opprobrium attached to such disregard of hegemonic values is apparent in Helen Bosanquet's comments:

By force of circumstance and disposition [some women] maintain the reckless jollity of their girlhood to the end; in others self-indulgence has so brutalised the face as to make it incapable of any expression at all; while in some few the love of husband, home, and children shines out victorious through all traces of care and trouble.⁸⁸

For other women respectability meant, among other things, avoiding such behaviour, at least in public. For those women, mothers meetings, church socials, and the occasional evening out to the theatre or music hall might

be the extent of their recreation. While this might have constituted limited leisure fare, at least it left no shame behind, and to those who were concerned with their standing in the community that mattered a great deal. This is not to suggest that women who eschewed the recreational culture of the public house or the street were enslaved by cultural norms, or that quiet domesticity and respectability were incompatible with leisure. Robert Roberts, who was not inclined to romanticise the lives of the urban poor nonetheless provided glimpses of a cosy and comforting domestic leisure culture which his mother played a major role in creating. One summer afternoon, the two of them together made hay from the wild grasses growing on a piece of spare ground nearby. "The whole operation charmed me," he remembered. "I loved to be alone with her like this: she seemed young then, and said funny things and made me bubble with laughter."

In Roberts' home, as in many others in the neighbourhood, Sunday evenings were spent with the family, taking tea. "A week's labour done, a wife in her best clothes, if she possessed any (though a symbolic white apron would do), had removed newspaper covers off certain articles, laid the rug and polished fire-irons and furniture, which shone now in the flames of a heaped coal fire." ⁸⁹ Jerry White's

study of Rothschild Buildings, a tenement block in the East End of London provides similar testimony of mothers sharing informal domestic pleasures with their children -- "taking the children to Victoria Park on a sunny day in the long holidays, walking arm-in-arm with her daughters in the evenings admiring the naphtha-lit stalls of the Whitechapel Rd and gazing in bright shop windows." But White also describes families in which mothers were so burdened with work that they only rarely could they sit down to eat a meal: "No, my mother was too busy serving us, and preparing. We never knew when she ate....Her efforts and her energy were directed to make sure that we were fed."

90

It is apparent that some wives and mothers derived a great deal of satisfaction from fulfilling their domestic responsibilities and that pastimes such as sewing and knitting, while often a necessary part of managing on limited means could provide intrinsic pleasure. Shopping was one task in particular which seems, at least in the view of some commentators, to have been a source of pleasure and pride to working-class wives. Helen Bosanquet and Thomas Wright both provide lively descriptions of the working-class housekeeper in her element shopping for food and other necessities, and when

finances allowed, more frivolous items. Bosanquet opined that for any woman except the most impoverished, shopping combined "the practice of social interchange with the exercise of all their intellectual faculties; the keen zest of bargaining with the interchange of friendly amenities." For many working-class families, Saturday was pay-day and the afternoon and evening was the time for spending hard earned wages. London's East End housewives were often out until ten or eleven at night, "bringing in the Sunday dinner, and thoroughly enjoying the opportunity for chaffing, bargaining, and gossiping." Wright believed that though taxing, Saturday marketing was a labour of love for the working-class housekeeper, "for it is a bad time for the working man's family when, from the breadwinner being sick or unable to obtain employment, the mother has not the wherewith to go to market on Saturday." These and other aspects of aspects of domestic labour might be infused with enjoyment and provide a measure of release in an otherwise carefilled day. Equally, however, what might at first consideration appear to have been leisure pure and simple, often entailed considerable effort and bother for wives and mothers. Francie Nichol's account of a disastrous day-trip to the beach with her children captures the harassment which such outings might

entail for the wife and mother. The day began auspiciously enough, but with predictable labour for Nichol: "All mornin' I had baked and baked to make a picnic....I dressed them all up and everythin' was hunkydory." At the beach, however, one of the children misbehaved, a disturbance ensued and "all the picnic things were left [behind] and we'd never even sat on the sands." One wonders how many of the wives and mothers accompanying husbands and children on day-trips and longer excursions to seaside resorts had similar experiences.⁹¹

What emerges most powerfully from the descriptions and studies of the lives of working-class wives and mothers is the fact that their claim on leisure was so tenuous. Those who fulfilled their domestic duties assiduously, or who aspired to a degree of respectability, either snatched their leisure in small measures from a busy round of work and worry; or they injected leisure into their labour. Others might have been bolder in asserting their right to some of the pleasures men enjoyed, but the censure they incurred in doing so underlined the highly conditional nature of all working women's leisure in the period with which this study is concerned.

ENDNOTES

1

Carl Chinn, They Worked All Their Lives: Women of the Urban Poor in England, 1880-1939 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, c.1988); Kathy Peiss, Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 3.

2

James Walvin, A Child's World: A Social History of English Childhood, 1800-1914 (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1982), 23.

3

Helen Dendy Bosanquet, The Standard of Life and Other Studies (London: Macmillan, 1898), 175-77.

4

Thea Thompson, Edwardian Childhoods (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1981), 76; Mary Chamberlain, Growing Up in Lambeth (London: Virago Press, 1989), 38-39; Robert Roberts, A Ragged Schooling: Growing Up in the Classic Slum (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), 9.

5

Chinn, They Worked All Their Lives, 68-69; Kathleen Dayus, Her People (London: Virago Press, 1982), 188; Joe Robinson, The Life and Times of Francie Nichol of South Shields (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975), 15-19; Margaret Loane, The Queen's Poor: Life as They Find It in Town and Country (London: Edward Arnold, 1905), 69; Dorothy Scannell, Mother Knew Best: Memoir of a London Girlhood (London: Pantheon Books, 1974), 83.

6

Robinson, Life and Times of Francie Nichol, 19; Chamberlain, Growing Up in Lambeth, 38; Scannell, Mother Knew Best, 40.

7

W. J. Burnham, Lincoln, Lincolnshire Archives, Lindsey Old Peoples' Welfare Committee (hereafter cited as LOPWC), unpublished MSS, 1963.

8

G. M. Richardson, LOPWC, unpublished MSS, 1963.

9

Dayus, Her People, 43-47; E. Bagshaw, LOPWC, unpublished MSS, 1963; Flora Thompson, Lark Rise to Candleford: A Trilogy (London: Oxford University Press, 1945; reprint ed., 1979).

10

Scannell, Mother Knew Best, 48-49.

11

Roberts, A Ragged Schooling, 62-7; Cunningham, Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, 192-199.

12

Robert Roberts, The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1973), 124.

13

Jerry White, Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block 1887-1920 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 180; E. Skipworth, LOPWC, unpublished MSS, 1963; Chamberlain, Growing Up in Lambeth, 47.

14

Scannell, Mother Knew Best, 48.

15

The quotation is from Chamberlain, Growing Up in Lambeth, 47; E. Skipworth, LOPWC, unpublished MSS, 1963; Roberts, Ragged Schooling, 150; Catherine Cookson, Our Kate (London: Macdonald, 1969), 59.

16

Thompson, Edwardian Childhoods, 73.

17Cookson, Our Kate, 97.

18

Scannell, Mother Knew Best, 30; E. Skipworth, LOPWC, unpublished MSS, 1963.

19

Thompson, Edwardian Childhoods, 82; Scannell, Mother Knew Best, 73; Roberts, A Ragged Schooling, 38; E. Bagshaw, LOPWC, unpublished MSS, 1963; Dayus, Her People, 53.

20

Thompson, Lark Rise to Candleford, 159.

21

Hannah Mitchell, The Hard Way Up: The Autobiography of Hannah Mitchell, Suffragette and Rebel (London: Faber & Faber, 1947), 43.

22

Roberts, A Ragged Schooling, 62, 66.

23

Thompson, Lark Rise to Candleford, 196-204.

24

The quotation is from Norman Douglas, London Street Games, 2nd ed. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1931), 71, 69-72; E. Skipworth, LOPWC, unpublished MSS, 1963; White, Rothschild Building, 180. For a sense of the expansiveness and richness of children's traditional games, see Iona and Peter Opie, Children's Games in Street and Playground (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); idem., The Singing Game (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

25

Roberts, A Ragged Schooling, 157.

26

A. S. Jasper, A Hoxton Childhood (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1969), 94.

27

Douglas, London Street Games, 21-22.

28

Thompson, Lark Rise to Candleford, 135, 134-147.

- 29
Opie and Opie, The Singing Game, 121-147, 148-189.
- 30
Douglas, London Street Games, 48.
- 31
Ibid., 24. For other games of this type, see Opie and Opie, Children's Games, 304-307.
- 32
Douglas, London Street Games, 55.
- 33
Roberts, A Ragged Schooling, 62.
- 34
Douglas, London Street Games, 61; Scannell, Mother Knew Best, 49.
- 35
Thompson, Lark Rise to Candleford, 3-19; Alun Howkins, "The Taming of Whitsun: The Changing Face of a Nineteenth-Century Rural Holiday," in Eileen Yeo and Stephen Yeo, eds., Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590-1914: Explorations in the History of Labour and Leisure (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1981), 187-208.
- 36
Walter Besant, East London (London: Chatto & Windus, 1901), 288-9. The quotation is from Lady Laura Ridding, "The Relation of Amusements to Life," National Council of Women of Great Britain Handbook: The Official Report of the Central Council of Women Workers, 1902 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilm 458 P-135, 1980), 125 (hereafter cited as NCWGB, Report of Central Conference). For more sympathetic discussions of working women's leisure, see The Honourable Emily Kinnaid, "The Right Use of Leisure," NCWGB, Report of Central Conference, 1900, 138; The Honourable Lily H. Montagu, "Popular Amusements for Working Girls," NCWGB, Report of Central Conference, 1902, 145-155; idem., "The Responsibility of Leisure," NCWGB, Report of Central Conference, 1912, 112-27.
- 37
Besant, East London, 128-129; Montagu, "Popular Amusements for Working Girls," 148; Edward Cadbury, M. Cecile Matheson, and George Shann, Women's

Work and Wages: A Phase of Life in an Industrial City (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907), 241. Some social investigators acknowledged the effect that employment practices had on the putative natural inclinations of working women. See, for example, Clara E. Collet, "Women's Work," in Charles Booth, ed., Life and Labour of the People in London, vol. 4 (London: Macmillan, 1893), 312-13: "Among the dock labouring class can be found many girls with a low standard of comfort and with nomadic tastes...whose natural dislike to settle down to steady continuous work is stimulated by the fact that such work is never offered them."

38

Helen Dendy, "The Children of Working London," in Bernard Bosanquet, ed., Aspects of the Social Problem (London: Macmillan, 1895), 36.

39

The quotation is from Cadbury, Matheson, and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, 200. See also idem., 232; Besant, East London, 122-4.

40

The first quotation is from Montagu, "Popular Amusements for Working Girls," 148; the second quotation is from Dendy, "The Children of Working London," 42. See also Cadbury, Matheson, and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, 240; Montagu, "The Responsibility of Leisure," 125.

41

George R. Sims, How the Poor Live and Horrible London (London: Chatto & Windus, 1889; New York: Garland, 1984), 82.

42

Thompson, Edwardian Childhoods, 17; Cookson, Our Kate, 14, 62.

43Kathleen M. Townend, "Methods of Recreation as They Affect the Causes of Intemperance amongst Women," NCWGB, Report of Central Conference, 1894, 141.

44

Helen Dendy, "The Position of Women in Industry," in Bosanquet, ed., Aspects of the Social

Problem, 66, 70. The quotation is from Townend, "Methods of Recreation as They Affect the Causes of Intemperance," 139.

45

Cadbury, Matheson, and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, 195-196.

46

Ibid., 196-197.

47

The quotation is from Helen Bosanquet, Rich and Poor (London: Macmillan, 1908), 104. On working-class women's economic strategies, see for example, Chinn, They Worked All Their Lives, 57-83.

48

Cadbury, Matheson, and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, 197.

49

Ibid., 198.

50

Rowntree, Poverty, 178-179, 370.

51

Montagu, "Popular Amusements for Working Girls," 149.

52

Collet, "Women's Work," 322-323.

53

Montagu, "Popular Amusements for Working Girls," 151.

54

Rowntree, Poverty, 368.

55

Ibid., 368-369.

56

Montagu, "Popular Amusements for Working Girls," 151.

57

On the issue of working-class women's capabilities as wives and mothers see, Carol Dyehouse, Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 79-105; Jane Lewis, The Politics of Motherhood: Child and Maternal Welfare in England, 1900-1939 (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 61-88, 89-113. For a detailed examination of the connections between national efficiency, imperialism, and maternity, see Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood," History Workshop Journal, no. 5 (1978), 9-65.

58

Cadbury, Matheson, and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, 196.

59

Collet, "Women's Work," 316-317.

60

Cadbury, for example, lamented the fact that only fourteen per cent of the 3,000 girls and women he surveyed saved regularly. See Cadbury, Matheson, and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, 242, 244-246. On the link between drinking, gambling, and poverty, see Rowntree, Poverty, 178; Bosanquet, "Women in Industry," 134.

61

Montagu, "Popular Amusements for Working Girls," 154-155.

62

Robert R. Dolling, Ten Years in a Portsmouth Slum (London: Swann & Sonnenschein, 1898), 39.

63

Ibid., 40.

64

Ibid., 38-48.

65

Townend, "'Methods of Recreation as They Affect the Causes of Intemperance," 141.

66

Ibid., 140.

67
Ibid., 140-141.

68
Dolling, Ten Years in a Portsmouth Slum, 41-43.

68. 69Englishwoman's Review, January 15, 1900, 67

70
Cadbury, Matheson, and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, 232-233, 237-239.

71
Collet, "Women's Work," 319, 320-322.

72
Cadbury, Matheson, and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, 241.

73
Ibid., 242.

74
Townend, "Methods of Recreation as They Affect Causes of Intemperance," 142; Collet, "Women's Work," 318; Cadbury, Matheson, and Shann, Women's Work and Wages, 233.

75
Helen Dendy Bosanquet authoured a number of studies on working-class life, both before and after her marriage to Bernard Bosanquet. For the sake on consistency, in the text I have referred to her married name. Dendy, "The Children of Working London," 36.

76
Rowntree, Poverty, 108.

77
Cadbury, Shann, and Matheson, Women's Work and Wages, 210-230, 231-247.

78Magdalen Pember Reeves, Round About a Pound a Week (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1913), 159-175.

79
Ibid., 160-161.

- 80
Arnold Freeman, Boy Life and Labour: The Manufacture of Inefficiency (London: P. S. King & Son, 1914), 113-120.
- 81
Ibid., 110.
- 82
Ibid., 112.
- 83
Rowntree, Poverty, 371-373; Dayus, Her People, passim. See also Cookson, Our Kate, 32-34.
- 84
Townend, "Methods of Recreation as They Affect Causes of Intemperance," 142-143.
- 85
Ibid., 143.
- 86
Thompson, Lark Rise, 102.
- 87 Robert Harborough Sherard, The Child-Slaves of Britain (London: Hurst & Blackwell, 1905), 101.
- 88 Bosanquet, Rich and Poor, 102.
- 89
Roberts, A Ragged Schooling, 31, 119. On the role of women in securing working-class respectability, and on the elasticity of the concept, see Ellen Ross, "'Not the Sort that Would Sit on the Doorstep': Respectability in Pre-World War I London Neighbourhoods," International Labor and Working Class History, No. 27 (1985), 39-59.
- 90
White, Rothschild Buildings, 155.
- 91
Robinson, Life and Times of Francie Nichol, 110-111.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study examined some of the ways in which class and gender shaped working-class women's leisure in late Victorian and Edwardian England. As industrial capitalism emerged as the dominant mode of production during the nineteenth century, it drew on and magnified sexual divisions of labour within the working classes. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the arrangement of social and familial relations according to particular understandings of gender roles and identities was well established.

Within this hegemonic gender order, working-class women were assigned primary responsibility for the domestic sphere. There, dependent and subservient, they were expected to provide the services necessary for both maintaining their husbands as productive, contented workers, and producing and rearing children to serve as the next generation of workers.

Corresponding to this sexual division of labour was a sexual division of leisure. Men's wage labour not only supported (theoretically, at least) their families,

it also granted men certain rights and privileges. This included the right to leisure and the means to enjoy it. Women, on the other hand, for whom wage labour was ideologically problematic, were not accorded an equal claim to leisure or leisure resources. In addition, women were expected to provide for and service men's leisure.

By the late nineteenth century, these forces had produced a set of material and ideological circumstances which significantly constrained working-class women's leisure. Consequently, during the late Victorian and Edwardian period, while some sectors of the working classes -- most notably, skilled, male workers -- enjoyed expanding leisure opportunities and resources, few women had either the means or time to fully participate in the burgeoning working-class leisure culture.

However, even within a structural framework which severely limited their possibilities, girls and women found the ways and means to bring leisure into their lives. They did this in various ways: by dissolving the boundaries between work and play, by developing creative approaches to financing their fun, and above all, by learning to take their pleasures when and where they could.

Some groups and individuals were able to negotiate or ignore the structural constraints placed upon their lives and leisure more successfully than others. Young girls, and unmarried, wage-earning women, for example, had more time and other resources for recreation than did married women. For the most part, the latter were confined by the demands of domestic and other forms of labour, and their severely limited material resources. Still, in so far as most working-class girls would ultimately marry and face similar constraints, it can be argued that class and gender crucially shaped all working-class women's leisure.

Within-class status was a source of greater diversity in working-class women's leisure. Nineteenth-century working-class leisure can be understood as a cultural struggle between at least two contrasting recreational models, one rational, elevating, and 'respectable,' the other hedonistic, rowdy, and 'rough.' By the latter part of the nineteenth century, the first of these had become dominant in the sense that it was the model which was most consonant with the needs of a patriarchal, capitalist hegemony. It was upon this model that respectable working-class women's leisure, with its emphasis on quiet, domestic, seemly recreational pursuits

drew. Those girls and women who did not aspire to the status of the respectable were more resistant to the ideological strictures which insisted that their leisure should make them, too, into exemplary working-class wives and mothers. In this respect they enjoyed a less constrained, though still culturally-bound, kind of leisure.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Archival and Manuscript Collections

York. York Oral History Project.

Lincoln. Lincolnshire Archives. Files of the Lindsey Association for the Elderly (formerly Lindsey Old People's Welfare Committee).

Parliamentary Papers

Great Britain. Parliament. Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1867-8, vol. 17 (Reports from Commissioners). Cmd. 6867, "Report of the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture."

_____. Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1893, vol. 23 (Reports from Commissioners). Cmd. 6894, "Report of the Commission on Labour."

Reports

National Council of Women of Great Britain Handbook: The Official Report of the Central Council of Women Workers, 1894, 1902, 1912.

Autobiographies, Oral Histories, and Published Diaries

Acorn, George. One of the Multitude: An Autobiography of a Resident of Bethnal Green. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1911.

Burnett, John, ed. Destiny Obscure: Autobiographies of Childhood, Education and Family from the 1820s to the 1920s. London: Allen Lane, 1982.

- _____. Useful Toil: Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820s to the 1920s. London: Allen Lane, 1974.
- Cookson, Catherine. Our Kate. London: Macdonald, 1969.
- Dayus, Kathleen. Her People. London: Virago, 1982.
- _____. Where There's Life. London: Virago, 1985.
- _____. All My Days. London: Virago, 1988.
- Lovett, William. The Life and Struggles of William Lovett. London: Trubner & Co., 1876.
- Mitchell, Hannah. The Hard Way Up: The Autobiography of Hannah Mitchell, Suffragette and Rebel. London: Faber & Faber, 1947.
- Robert Roberts. The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century. Manchester, England: University Press, 1971; London: Penguin, 1971.
- _____. A Ragged Schooling: Growing Up in the Classic Slum. Manchester, England: University Press, 1976.
- Scannell, Dorothy. Mother Knew Best: Memoir of a London Girlhood. London: Macmillan, n.d.; New York: Pantheon Books, 1974.
- Sharman, Nancy. Nothing to Steal: The Story of a Southampton Childhood. London: Kaye & Ward, 1977.
- Stanley, Liz, ed. The Diaries of Hannah Cullwick, Victorian Maidservant. London: Virago, 1984.
- Thompson, Flora. Lark Rise to Candleford. London: Oxford University Press, 1945; reprint ed., 1979.
- Thompson, Thea. Edwardian Childhoods. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.
- Thompson, Tierl, ed. Dear Girl: The Diaries and Letters of Two Working Women 1897-1917. London: Women's Press, 1987.

Books

- Besant, Walter. East London. London: Chatto & Windus, 1901.
- Black, Clementina, ed. Married Women's Work. London: G. Bell & Sons, 1915; reprint ed., New York: Garland Publishing, 1980.
- _____. Sweated Industry and the Minimum Wage. London: Duckworth, 1907.
- Blatchford, Robert. Merrie England. London: Clarion Newspaper Co., 1895.
- Booth, Charles, ed. Life and Labour of the People in London. 17 Vols. London: Macmillan, 1893.
- Bosanquet, Bernard, ed. Aspects of the Social Problem. London: Macmillan, 1895.
- Bosanquet, Helen Dendy. Rich and Poor. London: Macmillan, 1908.
- _____. The Standard of Life and Other Studies. London: Macmillan, 1898.
- Bray, Reginald A. Boy Labour and Apprenticeship. London: Constable & Co., 1912.
- Butler, C. Violet. Domestic Service: An Enquiry by the Women's Industrial Council. London: G. Bell & Sons, 1916.
- Cadbury, Edward, and Shann, George. Sweating. London: Headley Bros., 1908.
- Cadbury, Edward; Matheson, M. Cecile; and Shann, George. Women's Work and Wages: A Phase of Life in an Industrial City. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907.
- Davies, Margaret Llewellyn, ed. Life as We Have Known It. Manchester: Women's Co-operative Guild, 1931; London: Virago, 1984.
- _____. , ed. Maternity: Letters From Working-Women. London: G. Bell & Sons, 1915.

- Dolling, Robert R. Ten Years in A Portsmouth Slum. London: Swann Sonnenschein, 1898.
- Douglas, Norman. London Street Games. London: Chatto & Windus, 1916; Detroit, Mich.: Singing Tree Press, 1968.
- Freeman, Arnold. Boy Life and Labour: The Manufacture of Inefficiency. London: P. S. King & Son, 1914.
- Higgs, Mary, and Hayward, Edward E. Where Shall She Live? The Homelessness of the Woman Worker. London: P. S. King & Son, 1910.
- Hutchins, Elizabeth L. Women in Modern Industry. London: G. Bell & Sons, 1915.
- Hutchins, Elizabeth L., and Harrison, Amy. A History of Factory Legislation. London: P. S. King & Son, 1926.
- Loane, Margaret. The Queen's Poor: Life as They Find It in Town and Country. London: Edward Arnold, 1905.
- Martin, Anna. The Married Working Woman: A Study. London: National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, 1911; New York: Garland Publishing, 1980.
- _____. Working Women and Divorce. London: David Nutt, 1911; New York: Garland Publishing, 1980.
- Mudie-Smith, Richard, ed. Sweated Industries: A Handbook of the "Daily News" Exhibition. London: Bradbury, Agnew, 1906; New York: Garland, 1980.
- Sims, George. How the Poor Live and Horrible London. London: Chatto & Windus, 1889; New York: Garland, 1984.
- Tuckwell, Gertrude M.; Smith, Constance; Macarthur, Mary R.; Tennant, May; Adler, Nettie; Anderson, Adelaide M.; Black, Clementina. Woman in Industry From Seven Points of View. London: Duckworth & Co., 1908.
- Reeves, Magdalen, S. R. Round About a Pound a Week. London: G. Bell & Sons, 1913.

Rowntree, Benjamin Seebohm. Poverty: A Study of Town Life. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1901; 2nd. ed., 1922.

_____. The Human Factor in Business. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1922.

Wright, Thomas. The Great Unwashed. London: Tinsley Bros., 1868; New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1970.

_____. Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes. London: Tinsley Bros., 1867; New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1967.

Newspapers and Periodicals

The English Chartist Circular and Temperance Recorder for England and Wales. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1968.

The Englishwoman's Review of Social and Industrial Questions. New York: Garland Publishing, 1984.

Notes to the People. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968.

Poor Man's Guardian. New York: Greenwood Reprint, 1968.

Women's Industrial News.

Women's Union Journal.

The Working Man: A Weekly Record of Social and Industrial Progress. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Reprint, 1970.

Secondary Sources

Books

Alexander, Sally. Women's Work in Nineteenth-Century London: A Study of the Years 1820-50. London: Journeyman Press and London History Workshop Centre, c.1983.

Bailey, Peter. Leisure and Class in Victorian England:

- Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885. London: Routledge, 1978.
- Benson, John. The Working Class in Britain, 1850-1939. London: Longman, 1980.
- . The Penny Capitalists: A Study of 19th Century Working Class Entrepreneurs. London: Croom Helm, 1983.
- Binfield, Clyde. Belmont's Portias: Victorian Nonconformity and Middle Class Education for Girls. London: Dr. Williams Trust, 1981.
- . Down to Prayers: Studies in English Nonconformity 1780-1920. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977.
- Bradley, Harriet. Men's Work, Women's Work: A Sociological History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Employment. Oxford: Polity Press, 1989.
- Braybon, Gail. Women Workers in the First World War: The British Experience. London: Croom Helm, 1981.
- Bulmer, Martin, ed. Working-Class Images of Society. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.
- Burnam, Sandra, ed. Fit Work for Women. London: St. Martin's Press, 1979.
- Burstyn, Joan. Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood. London: Croom Helm, 1980.
- Clarke, Alice. Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century. 3rd ed. London: Macmillan, 1982.
- Clarke, John, and Critcher, Chas. The Devil Makes Work: Leisure in Capitalist Britain. London: Macmillan, 1985.
- Condell, Diane, and Liddiard, Jean. Images of Women in the First World War, 1914-18. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987.
- Cunningham, Hugh. Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c.1780-c.1880. London: Croom Helm, 1980.

- Davidoff, Leonorre, and Hall, Catherine. Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Classes 1780-1850. London: Hutchinson, 1987.
- Davidoff, Leonorre, and Westover, Belinda., eds. Our Work, Our Lives, Our Words: Women's History and Women's Work. Basingstoke, Hampshire, England: Macmillan Education, 1986.
- Deem, Rosemary. All Work and No Play? The Sociology of Women and Leisure. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986.
- _____. , ed. Schooling for Women's Work. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.
- Dyehouse, Carol. Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.
- Fraser, W. Hamish. The Coming of the Mass Market, 1850-1914. Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1981.
- Gittins, Diane. Fair Sex: Family Size and Structure, 1900-39. London: Hutchinson, 1982.
- Glendinning, Caroline, and Millar, Jane. Women and Poverty in Britain. Brighton, Sussex, England: Wheatsheaf Books, 1987.
- Gordon, Linda. Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control. New York: Grossman, 1976.
- Harrison, Brian. Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971.
- Hiley, Michael. Victorian Working Women: Portraits from Life. Boston: D. R. Godine, 1980.
- Hunt, Felicity. Lessons for Life: The Schooling of Girls and Women, 1850-1950. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987.
- John, Angela, V. By the Sweat of Their Brow: Women Workers at Victorian Coal Mines. London: Croom Helm, 1980.

- _____. , ed. Unequal Opportunities: Women's Employment in England 1800-1918. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.
- Joyce, Patrick. Work, Society and Politics: The Culture of the Factory in Later Victorian England. Brighton, Sussex, England: Harvester Press, 1980.
- Lewis, Jane, ed. Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family, 1850-1940. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.
- Malcolmson, Robert, W. Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.
- Meacham, Standish. A Life Apart: The English Working Class 1890-1914. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Morris, Jenny. Women Workers and the Sweated Trades: The Origins of Minimum Wage Legislation. Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Gower, c.1986.
- Peiss, Kathy. Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986.
- Pennington, Shelley, and Westover, Belinda. A Hidden Workforce: Homeworkers in England, 1850-1985. Basingstoke, Hampshire, England: Macmillan Education, 1989.
- Pinchbeck, Ivy. Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750-1850. London: Frank Cass, 1930; reprint ed., 1969.
- Roberts, Elizabeth. Women's Work 1840-1940. Basingstoke, Hampshire, England: Macmillan Education, 1988.
- Schwarzkopf, Jutta. Women in the Chartist Movement. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991.
- Scott, Joan W. Gender and the Politics of History. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

- Taylor, Barbara. Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century. London: Virago, 1983.
- Tebbutt, Melanie. Making Ends Meet: Pawnbroking and Working Class Credit. London: Croom Helm, 1983.
- Thompson, Dorothy. The Chartists. London: Temple Smith, 1984.
- Thompson, Edward P. The Making of the English Working Class. New York: Vintage, 1963.
- Thompson, Paul. The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975.
- Tilly, Louise A. and Scott, Joan W. Women, Work, and Family. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978.
- Vamplew, Wray. Pay Up and Play the Game: Professional Sport in Britain 1875-1914. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Vicinus, Martha, ed. Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974.
- Walby, Sylvia. Patriarchy at Work. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989.
- Walvin, James. Leisure and Society, 1830-1950. London: Longmans, 1978.
- Walton, John, K. The English Seaside Resort: A Social History 1750-1914. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983.
- Williams, Raymond. Marxism and Literature. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Wimbush, Erica, and Talbot, Margaret, eds. Relative Freedoms: Women and Leisure. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986.

Articles

- Bailey, Peter. "'Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?' Toward a Role Analysis of Mid-Victorian Working-Class Respectability." Journal of Social History 12 (1979): 336-353.
- Benenson, Harold. "The 'Family Wage' and Working Women's Consciousness in Britain, 1880-1914." Politics and Society 19 (1991): 71-108.
- Bornat, Joanna. "Home and Work: A New Context for Trade Union History." Oral History 5 (1977): 101-123.
- Clark, Anna. "The Rhetoric of Chartist Domesticity: Gender, Language, and Class in the 1830s and 1840s." Journal of British Studies 31 (1992): 62-88.
- Davidoff, Leonore. "The Separation of Home and Work? Landladies and Lodgers in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century England." In Fit Work for Women. Edited by Sandra Burnam. London: Croom Helm, 1979.
- Davin, Anna. "Imperialism and Motherhood." History Workshop Journal, no. 5 (1978): 9-65.
- _____. "Mind That You Do As You Are Told." Feminist Review 3 (1980): 88-89.
- Dyhouse, Carol. "Working-Class Mothers and Infant Mortality in England, 1895-1914." Journal of Social History 12 (1978): 248-267.
- Gillis, John. "Servants, Sexual Relations, and the Risks of Illegitimacy in London 1801-1900," Feminist Studies 5 (1979): 142-173.
- Gourvish, Terence R. "The Standard of Living, 1890-1914." In The Edwardian Age: Stability and Conflict. Edited by Alan O'Day. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1979.
- Hall, Catherine. "Married Women at Home in Birmingham in the 1920s and 1930s." Oral History 5 (1977): 62-83.

- _____. "The Tale of Samuel and Jemima: Gender and Working-Class Culture in Nineteenth-Century England." In E. P. Thompson: Critical Perspectives. Edited by Harvey J. Kaye and Keith McClelland. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990: 78-102.
- Hart, Nicky. "Gender and the Rise and Fall of Class Politics." New Left Review, no. 175 (1989): 19-47.
- Land, Hilary. "The Family Wage." Capital and Class 11 (1980): 51-72.
- McCrone, Kathleen E. "Class, Gender, and English Women's Sport, c. 1890-1914." Journal of Sport History 18 (1991): 159-182.
- Ross, Ellen. "Survival Networks: Women's Neighbourhood Sharing in London Before World War I." History Workshop Journal, no. 15 (1983): 4-27.
- _____. "'Not the Sort that Would Sit on the Doorstep': Respectability in Pre-World War I London Neighbourhoods." International Labor and Working Class History, no. 27 (1985): 39-59.
- Roberts, Elizabeth. "Working Class Women in the North West." Oral History 5 (1977): 14-28.
- Seccombe, Wally. "Patriarchy Stabilized: The Construction of the Male Breadwinner Wage Norm in Nineteenth-Century Britain." Social History 11 (1986): 53-76.
- Taylor, Sandra. "The Effect of Marriage on Job Possibilities for Women and the Ideology of the Home: Nottingham 1890-1930." Oral History 5 (1977): 46-61.