

1: African Books Collective: Beyond Inequalities Women in South Africa

The Beyond Inequalities series has been updated based on the conviction (highlighted in the last series) that information is a strategic resource for socio-economic development.

Diane Reay Sociology [http: British Sociological Association](http://British Sociological Association) Additional services and information for Sociology can be found at: All too often in sociological research such psychic responses are individualized, pushed out of the wider social picture. However, in this article, I argue that there is a powerful dynamic between emotions, the psyche and class inequalities that is as much about the makings of class as it is about its consequences. In the article I draw on educational case studies to demonstrate some of the ways in which affective aspects of class – feelings of ambivalence, inferiority and superiority, visceral aversions, recognition, abjection and the markings of taste constitute a psychic economy of social class. This psychic economy, despite being largely ignored in both everyday commonsense understandings and academic theories, contributes powerfully to the ways we are, feel and act. Jackson and Marsden, They are also, I would argue, to be found in how individuals think and feel about those practices. In fact there is a circularity at play here. It could be argued that it is class thinking and feeling that generates class practices. At the very least there is a generative dynamic between thinking, feeling and practices. The focus of this article, then, is class thinking and feeling – what I term the psychic landscape of social class. In many ways this is a speculative piece of work. I want to retrieve the unretrievable, to uncover what is often denied, overlooked or buried in examinations of social class. The contemporary orthodoxy is that class consciousness and class awareness no longer exist. Yet class consciousness as articulated in earlier sociological theory has always been problematic, seen narrowly in terms of a politicized understanding of class location Marshall, ; Wright, Social class was abandoned as a category at precisely the point at which the working classes were seen to have sold out to the Right and therefore could no longer be said to have a class consciousness. As a result the emotional experience of being classed has never been satisfactorily addressed. Theories of class consciousness, which always focused on the working classes and apparently support working-class experience, could be said in retrospect to have failed to examine it at all. In contrast, I want to argue for a different kind of class consciousness, which, while often unrecognized, still pervades our inner worlds and outer practices; to recognize that class is always lived on both a conscious and unconscious level. My contention is that beneath socio-economic categorization, underneath class practices, lies a psychic economy of class that has been largely invisible in academic accounts and commonsense understandings. Emotions and psychic responses to class and class inequalities appear to lay firmly in the realm of individual psychology. All too often in mainstream sociological research such psychic responses are individualized, pushed out of the wider social picture. This work, all by educated working-class women, has played an important part in expanding understandings of social class to theorize class as implicit in everyday social processes and interactions. Such conceptualizations challenge some of the central grand narratives of sociology with their concern only for whether or not the working classes exhibited class consciousness in the sense of a politicized awareness of their social positioning. Drawing on this body of feminist theorizing and my own earlier work, I want to argue that emotions and psychic responses to class and class inequalities contribute powerfully to the makings of class. In contemporary British society social class is not only etched into our culture, it is still deeply etched into our psyches, despite claims of classlessness Pakulski and Waters, Reay significance of class allows us to map out a psychic landscape of class, one that joins socio-economic categorization, the static safe characteristics of social class, with far more dangerous mobile, affective aspects. He writes about the varying degrees of resentment, defensiveness, guilt and shame that characterize different class positions: However, there are other emotions – envy, deference, contempt, arrogance, pride, rage, satisfaction, embarrassment and pity that also contribute to the affective lexicon of class. Apart from the feminist work cited earlier, affective aspects of class – the place of memory, feelings of ambivalence, inferiority and superiority, visceral aversions and the markings of taste – have traditionally been ignored or downplayed in UK analyses of class. However, there does appear to be an important shift as a new sociology of social class Ball, ; Charlesworth, ; Lawler, ; Reay, ,

a; Savage, , ; Skeggs, , has begun to carve out a space for affective dimensions in analyses of class. There is a long history of developing psychoanalytic insights into relations of race and ethnicity, which illustrate how racialized identities are formed in a relational dynamic of fear, power and desire Fanon, , but very little scholarship on the workings of the psyche in relation to social class although see Lucey and Reay, ; Walkerdine et al. All too often this is seen as a micro issue, the concern of sub-disciplines of psychology such as psychotherapy, if it is viewed as a concern at all. I want to argue and make a case through my data for broadening out conceptualizations of class and establishing the psychic economy of class as a legitimate concern for sociology. We need more understanding of how social class is actually lived, of how it informs our inner worlds to complement research on how it shapes our life chances in the outer world. Similarly a varying combination of resentment, envy, pride and anger constitute the solidarist fractions of the working classes while their more individualist peers are characterized by a different set of emotions. Downloaded from soc. This is not to assert that other emotions are not at play for all these groupings, of course they are. Rather, following Sayer, I have tried to identify the predominating psychic responses that characterize the various positions in the social class field. This is a theoretical mapping of the emotional life of class and one that Sayer addresses in his book *The Moral Significance of Class*. My purpose is slightly different – to begin to uncover the psycho-social dynamics of class by drawing on data from a number of recent research studies that I have worked on. I understand psycho-social dynamics of class to be the complex, difficult and nuanced ways in which class thinking, feeling and practices both generate and are generated in and through each other. *Emotional Dynamics of Social Class in Schooling* My area of specialism is sociology of education and all my empirical data relates to schooling. However, I would argue that the educational system is a social context where the workings of class are not only concentrated and made explicit but are also heavily implicit. Schools are the repositories of all kinds of fantasies, fears, hopes and desires held by individuals and social groups Shaw, and consequently schooling is a fertile ground for exploring psycho-social and emotional aspects of classed identities Lucey and Reay, , In the rest of this article I draw on six case studies from over 10 years of researching social class in education in order to attempt to bring to life some of what I term the psychic economy of class. In particular, I focus on fear and shame, what Jacqueline Rose At the same time I recognize the inadequacies of my efforts – that this is an incomplete mapping – a sketch of part of the terrain that loses much of the richness, depth and detail of the broader psychic landscapes of social class. These case studies are merely pointers towards different types of class thinking and feeling that characterize different positions within the field of social class. We can also trace a class consciousness that, while rarely recognized in academic texts, nevertheless still has real effects. When Wilhelm Reich considered the formation of class-consciousness in children and it is extremely rare to consider it as a learned position in this way he dismissed Downloaded from soc. Reay envy as a usable motivational force, despite knowing that poverty, which naturally gave rise to envy is never absolute but always relative to those who have more. Simon, a year 6 pupil at Overbury, school is one of two middle-class children in a discussion group, which also included three working-class children: What do you like about the local area Simon? Not much, not much at all. It makes it very crowded in the morning and noisy and things. Your street is very quiet. Once you get down my street it is. This short piece of interaction, while never mentioning class, is infused with class symbolism and class envy and antagonism. None of the three working-class children in the group had ever been to the theatre, apart from a school visit the previous year. Rather, he is not articulating his own more privileged relationship to local spaces and places and they all interject to modify his version so that it reveals rather than elides his privilege. If such responses were only visible when issues of relative advantage and disadvantage were raised, then a case could be made that social class only has intermediate and fluctuating efficacy in daily interactions. We have an accepted, acknowledged script of racism and sexism within education but classism has never been part of the agenda. However, reflexive practitioners in schools as well as researchers who have spent any concerted time in classrooms and playgrounds Hey, ; Mac An Ghaill, ; Walkerdine et al. While the history of working-class schooling in the UK Hurt, ; Jackson and Marsden, ; Vincent, has recognized, although often unsatisfactorily, the lived experience of class, it was two American studies that first charted the powerfully affective dimensions of social class Rubin, ; Sennett and Cobb, Both studies demonstrated in different ways that Downloaded from soc. In the

next case study I focus on injuries of class that are enshrined and perpetuated through policy. There has been a long history of regulative and interventionist education policy aimed at raising the achievement of working-class children David, ; Tomlinson, ; Vincent and Warren, However, this surveillance has continued apace under the New Labour government. They also have powerful emotional consequences of anxiety and discomfort for all children. However, the paradox of our contemporary English assessment regime is that, while the stated aim is to raise the achievement of all children, one consequence of the growing preoccupation with testing and assessment is the fixing of failure in the working classes. In the two quotes below we can see the panopticism of every day Foucault, So if Stuart gets a six, what will that say about him? And if you get a level two, what will that say about you? Um, I might not have a good life in front of me, and I might grow up and do something naughty or something like that. Sharon is talking about herself and one of the middle-class boys in her class. She provides a poignant summation of class destinies and how they are tied to academic achievement, illuminating how class has entered psychological categories Downloaded from soc. Reay as a way of socially regulating normativity and pathology see also Plummer, Both white working-class girls have already internalized an understanding of their low achievement as pathological. As their quotes illustrate, at the micro-level of the classroom there are regular glimpses of the normalizing and regulatory function of testing on children. However, although children expressed anxieties across class differences, it was not the white middle-class boys panicking about being exposed as no good through the new assessment procedures. And the risks of finding they have very little value are disproportionately high for such working-class girls. As Annette Kuhn These working-class girls, at age 10, have already internalized the judgements of a pernicious, inequitable educational system; one that flaunts its elusive meritocracy while continuing to reward those who already have the educational resources the system is meant to provide Bourdieu and Passeron, The Petty Mundane Everyday Humiliations and Sights of Social Class The examples above are perhaps extreme cases illustrating the depth of the psychic damage social class inequalities can inflict on both working and middle-class children. However my data was also permeated by the petty mundane humiliations and slights of social class that infuse both interactions between teachers and pupils and those between pupils. Class recognitions, visceral aversions and feelings of inferiority and superiority are routine everyday aspects of school life. In the two excerpts below a group of ethnically mixed working-class students talk about their teachers: Some teachers are a bit snobby, sort of. And some teachers act as if the child is stupid. Like they talk without innits and Downloaded from soc. Those teachers look down on you. I just prefer to talk to my mum and dad and my brother. You can tell them stuff. They look down on you. Below we glimpse the contempt, arrogance and sense of being better of a group of white middle-class girls in a social mixed classroom: They do it for their benefit not our benefit. And if they are going to waste like half our time that we could be learning, helping someone else, then we are just like, we might as well be the teacher then and not do anything. Why should we help the dumb kids?

2: Beyond consciousness? The psychic landscape of social class | Diane Reay - www.enganchecubano.com

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*Beyond Inequalities Women in South Africa [Mary Hames, Karin Koen, Patricia Handley] on www.enganchecubano.com
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