What a girl's gotta do: The labour of the biopolitical celebrity in austerity Britain

Introduction

One of the perceived symptoms of societal decline in recent years in Britain has been the alleged lack of aspiration in its youth and specifically its young women, who have been customarily (ab)used as a moral barometer at least since Victorian times. The tabloid media have developed nothing short of an obsession documenting and berating the misguided ambitions of British girls, who only dream of becoming "WAGs" ('Wives And Girlfriends' to premier league footballers), or get famous fast by appearing on reality programmes or open call talent shows, such as *The X Factor* (Chapman 2008; Wintour and Lewis 2011), the British versions of which are well known for making a spectacle out of the incompetence and self-delusion of their contestants (Revoir and Thomas 2012). At the same time, there has been a rising, largely media-fuelled concern over the allocation of limited government resources and, particularly, the amount of benefits received by the most vulnerable. Contemporary British neoliberalism has been both supported and driven by a discourse of free market individualism and entrepreneurialism, according to the values of which "strivers" always succeed and those who don't, don't deserve to. Just as poverty has been feminized, so has real and, principally, perceived reliance on essential welfare services. In this polarised economic and cultural context, with creeping privatisation, the welfare state under threat and citizens divided into "strivers" and "scroungers", we consider how young female celebrities do not in fact avoid work but, in recognition of the limited opportunities available to them, opt for a kind of labour for which no qualifications are required other than a willingness to make their bodies and "life force" available to the public and subject them to a collective hegemonic will, through the skilled mediation of mass and, increasingly, social media. We argue that not only is the work of celebrity real work but that it requires significant media

savvy, commitment, and performance skills that extend beyond acting and into embodiment. What is more, such work is subject to the precarisation of all labour in neoliberal economic settings.

We begin by defining neoliberalism and its contribution to British austerity as not merely a package of economic measures but a hegemonic force field. We then consider how tabloid journalism, reality genres, celebrity culture and the relationship between celebrity and its audiences have changed under neoliberal pressures. The biopolitical labour of celebrity will be illustrated through notable examples of representations and practices, followed by a case study on Josie Cunningham, a young woman who has quite literally come to embody the vicissitudes of contemporary celebrity and, in doing so, personifies a host of tensions and anxieties around class, gender, sexuality, ambition and (lack of) opportunity. Thus, recognising the fundamentally political character of young female celebrity (Dyer 1979 and 1986), we consider her “role in testing dominant social norms” (Holmes and Negra 2011, 3) and, more specifically, her ideological deployment in the dissemination of neoliberal agendas.

Fixing Subjects

Neoliberalism has become an increasingly popular signifier of a range of contemporary economic social, political and cultural phenomena, from free market economics and crisis capitalism to privatization, free trade expansion, austerity measures and cuts to public spending. Prime Minister David Cameron declared that Britain was entering an "age of austerity" in his keynote speech to the Conservative Party on 26 April 2009 (Summers, 2009). Austerity, he claimed, was necessary to reduce the deficit and end what he saw as excessive government spending. From other political perspectives, it meant the reduction of the welfare state both in principle and as a means to privatization, which has emerged as the

most pronounced manifestation of neoliberalism in the British context. Austerity measures include cuts to benefits, either through new punitive requirements and conditions imposed on the unemployed, new stricter tests for disability claimants, the creation of single universal credits or otherwise the capping of other benefits in terms of duration or amounts. In addition to introducing such measures, much of their administration and management was outsourced to recruitment consultants and other private companies.

In addition to such economic policies, pop cultural forms and recurrent themes are also included in some analyses of neoliberalism (Couldry and Littler, 2008; Skeggs and Wood, 2008; Holmes and Negra, 2011; Tyler, 2013), such as the celebration of the entrepreneur, tabloid scare stories about abuse of dwindling resources, and new reality genres. In these new media genres, a similar stock scenario is incessantly replayed, in which social problems are foregrounded not to be solved through state intervention, let alone the welfare state safety net, but to rather be met with neoliberal solutions, such as Workfare, charity and private enterprise. While, as a concept, neoliberalism is originally rooted in political philosophy and economics, it has in recent years become increasingly evoked in research from a variety of disciplines and perspectives. In "Neoliberalism: From New Liberal Philosophy to Anti-Liberal Slogan", Boas and Gans-Morse argue that in the process, it has become a rhetorical device and has lost much of its meaning (Boas and Gans-Morse, 2009). "Neoliberalism is also used unevenly across ideological divides, rarely appearing in scholarship that is favorable toward free markets" (ibid., 156). In order to address these problems, the authors call for the establishment of a common definition through a return of the concept to its philosophical roots in liberalism and free market orientation (ibid., 156-7). However, such a return to origins would most likely obfuscate structural inequalities and the diverse systems, processes, media, forms and effects, be they economic, political, ideological, moral, social and (pop) cultural, that neoliberalism has on its gendered, classed and racialised

subjects. The emphasis on the philosophical roots and economistic approach not only ignores the social and cultural effects of neoliberalism in favour of economic functions and benefits but specifically remains blind to the ideological individualistic and moralistic disciplinary discourses and representations of the poor and vulnerable that is necessary in order to hegemonically "sell" such policies to the public. Acceptance of such policies rests on the public's willingness to assume responsibility for the economic crisis and mounting national debt, rather than blaming the free market economics, hedge funds, mortgage schemes, privatization, which actually precipitated the crisis. In recognition of these complexities, our frame of reference for neoliberalism will be profoundly interdisciplinary and include social scientists and cultural theorists.

In a historically nuanced article, "Publics and Markets: What's wrong with Neoliberalism?", Clive Barnett charts a history of the concept since its origins, starting with conservative economic theorists, from Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich von Hayek, and Joseph Schumpeter, to the Chicago School of economists and Milton Friedman, who was a significant influence on Margaret Thatcher, the Conservative Prime Minister (1979-1990) whose individualist ideology, opposition to the welfare state and collectivism, and promotion of privatisation in Britain, would be revived in the economic policies of David Cameron's Coalition government (2010-) (Barnett, 2010). Barnett argues that neoliberalism is characterised by a commitment to methodological individualism, principles of private property and an antipathy towards centralised state (ibid. 1-2). According to David Harvey:

> Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to

> create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. …. [If] markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary" (Harvey 2005, 2).

In agreement with Harvey, Barnett argues that neoliberalism has become part of the management and opportunism of crisis capitalism, in which economic crises provide the opportunity to deregulate, privatize and cut state social programmes and promote the free market as a matter of economic necessity, as opposed to an ideological "free market fundamentalism" (Barnett, 3). Originally borne out of the economic crisis of the 1970s, neoliberalism reasserted itself at the time of the economic crisis of 2008, flourishing in Britain under the Conservative-headed Coalition government.

In addition to inspiring and supporting new policies, neoliberalism gives rise to new articulations of social divisions and class and subject positions. While normalizing individualistic self-interest, entrepreneurial values, and consumerism, it also demonises those who depend on welfare, with women of reproductive age becoming a particular target. These subjects are deemed self-interested but not aspirational enough, active but irresponsible consumers, as they don't use their own money and have only debt rather than lines of credit, and often find themselves under- or unemployed, but without the necessary capital to become entrepreneurs.

> [T]he key feature of the neo-liberal rationality is the congruence it endeavours to achieve between a responsible and moral individual and an economic-rational actor. It aspires to construct prudent subjects whose moral quality is based on the fact that they

> rationally assess the costs and benefits of a certain sort as opposed to other alternative acts (Lemke 2001, 201).

Although numerically always in the majority, these “prudent subjects” are given minoritarian identities by being always represented as under threat, on the verge of being swamped by the imprudent who are out to rob them of their dues. “Notions of a singular collective public interest” are systematically undermined. “The public now appears as *tax-payers*, supporting a logic of curbing spending, curtailing entitlements and maximizing efficiency; as *consumers*, supporting agendas to maximize the responsive to user needs; as *citizens* concerned with collective values of equity and fairness; or as *scroungers* threatening to undermine public values of fair shares and equal entitlements” (Barnett 2010, 16). The economic crisis is retroactively attributed to a more profound socio-political and moral crisis, which had gone unnoticed and untackled for too long. “Narratives of neoliberalism therefore reiterate a common refrain about the decline of public virtues, collective solidarities, caring values, and common institutions” (ibid.). This allows the state to abdicate responsibility for its population while at the same time increasing its level and methods of surveillance, discipline and control. As Imogen Tyler points out:

> [T]he power of the state wasn’t shrunk […] Instead, modes of surveillance and control hybridized and multiplied. Power did not shift from state governments to the markets but combined in the form of the neoliberal maxim: ‘One must govern for the market, rather than because of the market’. […] As governments have come to govern for the markets they have come to govern *against* the people. (Tyler 2013, 6).

Such changes to the relationship between governments and the people can have a divisive and potentially devastating impact on certain portions of the latter. Neoliberal states are characterised by the creation of what Bauman terms 'wasted humans', created by three forms of symbolic and material violence: "labour precariousness, which produces 'material deprivation, family hardship, temporal uncertainty and personal anxiety; the relegation of people to decomposing neighbourhoods in which public and private resources are dwindling; and heightened stigmatization 'in daily life as well as in discourse'" (Waquant, cited in ibid., 8). It is in this later sense that tabloid subjects and reality TV stars function as the morality spectacle for a hungry (in both senses) public. State surveillance takes on a second, compounding form: benefits recipients are not only monitored and disciplined by the Department of Work and Pensions but now the media too lends a helping hand with sensationalist stories and voyeuristic images.

The production and maintenance of new subjects requires its own new mediascape. Representations of the poor, new genres of entrepreneurial TV, tabloid attacks on benefits recipients all contribute to the hegemonic supports of austerity policies. Neoliberal efforts to address the crisis do not simply target the deficit, but are also presented as *moral* responses to *immoral* subjects, who have failed as individuals, even though they are consistently stereotyped by group affiliation, as girls, working/underclass, black and minority ethnic, Roma, Travellers and Gypsies,[1] et al. What these groups of failed subjects share is that they have themselves been failed by the welfare state, which is now regarded as an enabler rather than a lifeline, and so too finds itself under attack. According to neoliberal narratives, the welfare state must be dismantled in order to liberate the poor, the unemployed and the non-aspirational from the state, and thus also liberate the hard-working taxpayers to the state from the burden of and responsibility for them.

The duty to overcome one's own disadvantages, whatever they may be, even including serious physical disabilities, through sheer personal determination and hard graft, is systematically reinforced in a great variety of media texts and images. The award-winning and critically acclaimed 90-second ad for the London Paralympic Games 2012 by Channel 4, *Meet the Superhumans,* was seen as a watershed moment in mainstream representations of disability (Nudd 2013). Set to the Public Enemy track "Harder Than You Think", the ad showcased the impressive abilities and strength, both physical and in terms of will power, of these British "superhumans", namely elite athletes participating in the Paralympics. Less than a year later, the government introduced changes to disability allowances, which required recipients to reapply for their benefits and made the application process longer, more complicated and stressful. According to disability charities, these changes could result in an estimated 600,000 registered disabled losing their benefits altogether (BBC 2013).

The iconic "Welfare Queen" of the 1980s Reagan era neoliberal cuts has re-emerged as one of several hate figures, and has been updated for the British public. The single mother, typically represented as black or white with mixed-race children and permanently dependent on benefits has been used historically to attack the welfare system – with single mothers as collateral damage. The image of the single mother works partially because of her powerlessness, her lack of conformity to the ideal capitalist nuclear family model and work ethic and, according to Alys Eve Weinbaum, the ways in which her own "maternal body [serves] as the repository of imbricated and racial and national identities" (2004, 16). Vicky Pollard, a character from the comedy sketch show *Little Britain* (2003-2006), created by Matt Lucas and David Walliams, quickly captured the tabloid, right-wing populist imagination, foreshadowing what was to come in austerity Britain at the end of the decade. She "is presented as a grotesque [white] working-class teenage single mother who is sexually promiscuous, unable to string a sentence together, and has a very bad attitude problem"

(Jones 2011, 127). Portrayed as an unequivocally negligent mother to an array of badly behaved, bi-racial babies of varying complexions, she is also assumed to represent all of her working-class peers (ibid., 129), and is evoked as the cause of everything from poor health and obesity to the lack of discipline and bad educational performance of herself and her children (cf. Tyler 2008 and Lawler 2005). Bad parenting and particularly single mothers, often Afro-Caribbean single mothers, were often blamed for the riots of 2011 (Prasad and Bawdon 2011; De Benedictis 2012). According to David Cameron, in a speech following the riots:

> Families matter. I don't doubt that many of the rioters out last week have no father at home. Perhaps they come from one of the neighbourhoods where it's standard for children to have a mum and not a dad... where it's normal for young men to grow up without a role model, looking to the street for their father figures, filled with rage and anger. So if we want to have any hope of mending our broken society, family and parenting is where we've got to start (Cameron 2011).

Economically and socially vulnerable young women are routinely blamed not only for their own vulnerability but for the state of the nation, and it is the allegedly woeful state of their own families that connects the two. This social group is particularly defenceless since its disenfranchisement extends to a lack of political involvement, a lack of access to mass media, and risky participation in social media. Young women are amongst the most adversely affected by the economic crisis and austerity measures: "Two separate analyses have found that women are bearing the brunt of austerity measures introduced by the Coalition government. One analysis, by the House of Commons Library, calculates that nearly 75 per cent of budget savings since 2010 have primarily hit women's incomes." (PSE 2012).

The neoliberal state of affairs exacerbates an already difficult situation of sexual inequality, limited opportunities and unemployment, whose impact can be readily measured in reality celebrity culture. “Girls know that in a society that devalues women’s talents and likes to watch them embarrassing themselves and showing off their bodies, this is what they’ll need to do in order to be a success” (Redfern and Aune 2010, 190). It is thus unsurprising that young women are willing to collude with neoliberal media agendas, using them as a launching pad to become famous and/or, at the very least, (precariously) employed. Scenarios vary from the young woman opening her heretofore private life on a council estate to public scrutiny, to the aspirational teenage wannabe glamour model who finds an opening as a public “demon”, to the has-been teenage star, now living a “normal” family life, until it gets derailed. Reality television shows and tabloids often focus on work and employment, with job seekers typically placed under coercive, disciplinary surveillance by the Department of Work and Pensions as well as by journalists, cameras, directors and producers. This new reality/tabloid subgenre devoted to the undeserving poor fits quite smoothly into the existing canon of narratives and images of “do nothing” celebrities. Since the “democratisation” of media exposure through the emergence of *Big Brother*, the first British series of which aired in the summer of 2000, academic and popular debate has centred on “normal” people becoming celebrities without having any particular talent, skills, accomplishments or aspirations beyond getting famous (Biressi and Nunn 2003). The face of this kind of celebrity, somewhat dismissively termed a “celetoid” in academic discourse (Rojek 2001), is young and female, due to the stereotypical association between girls and the aspiration to be rich and famous by cashing in on their sexual capital, as in the gold digger stereotype. Ironically, the fact that appearing on television or the tabloids normally constitutes *paid* employment is all too often missed. In terms of skills, celetoids need to be entertaining and,

in the case of scripted reality shows such as *The Only Way is Essex*, also require some acting skill.

Against the assumption that celebrity isn't work, the sub-genre of reality television that reflects on capitalism and labour often portrays characters on the job (*One Born Every Minute, The Hotel, Cops, Passport Control, The Fried Chicken Shop*), making investments (*Secret Millionaire, Dragon's Den*), and fixing failing businesses (*Ramsey's Kitchen Nightmares, Hotel Inspector*), including celebrities working in and starting businesses (*Kim and Kloe take Miami/NY, Jade's Salon*). Although not everyone appearing in these shows becomes a celebrity or even a celetoid, and while some participants have risen to fame through their professional achievements (e.g. celebrity chefs like Gordon Ramsey and Jamie Oliver), many fall under the category of the seemingly idle. While capitalist /labour reality television is designed to promote the neoliberal ideal of the entrepreneur, it also provides a job opportunity and chance at redemption for the failed reality star, as a rule female, young(ish) and a "failed subject" according to neoliberal social divisions. Other of these shows focus on rendering unemployed youth employable (since it's assumed that they are unemployed because they're unemployable) and finding them jobs (*Jamie's Fifteen*, and the evocatively titled *Invasion of the Job Snatchers*); it is telling that employability as it is portrayed here rests more on the attitude and moral fibre of the participants than education and training. Yet others, branded as "poverty porn", survey and discipline the jobless, simultaneously shaming them, holding them up as examples to avoid and using them to bolster neoliberal hegemony.

The Biopolitical Celebrity

The largely feminized labour of celebrity has not been wholly misrecognised. In addition to "the labour of transformation" (Skeggs and Wood 2008) and as part of "the sheer grind of maintaining a celebrity persona" (Nunn and Biressi 2010, 52), celebrities, especially female ones, have to work on their relationship with their audience, a relationship experienced by the latter as fundamentally authentic. The contract of on-going intimacy between the reality celebrity and her public necessitates a continuous performance of emotion, including notably the expression of remorse and suffering on behalf of the celebrity if she fails to honour her public's trust (ibid.) Nunn and Biressi draw on the concept of Hochschild's theory of "emotional labour", developed in the context of deindustrialization, the shift from traditional 'male' working-class manual and skilled labour to an emergent service economy and the so-called 'feminisation' of labour (Hochschild 1979; Strangleman and Warren 2008, 285-289). Taking the example of airline cabin crew, Hochschild examines the ways in which workers are required (through prescription or supervision) to manage and perform emotionally in prescribed ways, or by suppressing or exaggerating emotion, in order to elicit a response from customers and relate with others, including customers, colleagues and management, in particular ways. Although Hochschild does not address celebrity, her theory relates well to our subject matter, especially since, in the context of a recession, service sector jobs are particularly badly hit, while celetoids are also called upon to perform emotion in order to allow the public to form an attachment to them, and be prepared to accept abuse. In her survey of feminist approaches to changing gendered labour through late capitalism, Linda McDowell brings together Hochschild's "emotional labour", Wolkowitz's "body work" (Wolkowitz 2002, 2006) and Brush's "high-touch work" (Brush 1999), to outline an emergent female worker, for whom embodiment and performativity are both qualifications and equivalent to her means of production (McDowell 2014, 7). However, for McDowell, embodiment and performativity, the combination of which foreshadows biopolitical celebrity

labour, are marked features of the implicitly gendered "labour of caring" (ibid.), whereas for the biopolitical celebrity, "caring" becomes either misguided (in the vain and obsessive care of the self) or failing (in the images of unravelling celebrities, under the influence, over-weight, ill in body and mind, or inadequate as mothers).[2]

The nature of celebrity labour, however, includes but is not limited to a convincing performance of an exaggerated and condensed life narrative that is either envied or dreaded by the public. In the case of female reality celetoids, their labour consists of not merely performing but experiencing in the flesh, extreme or ordinary challenges (from charity marathons to giving birth), transitions and transformations, including plastic surgery, rehab and weight fluctuations. Therefore, a celebrity's employment conditions and requirements extend beyond superficial performance into what Foucault describes as the "anatomopolitics of the human body" (1979, 139) or Agamben refers to as "bare life" (1998). Theories of biopolitics do not accept any strict separation between the person as citizen and as human living body, but rather assert that the exercise of governmental control extends to both: political power exercised on whole populations in every aspect of human life (Foucault 2007). Furthermore, in neoliberalism, political power is "modelled after the principles of a market economy" (Foucault 2008, 131). It follows that many contemporary theorisations of the biopolitical stem from and are fed into an ongoing analysis of neoliberal transformations in labour and labour relations.[3] "The key to this transformation has been the ascendance of immaterial labour, powering the service and experience economy, to a hegemonic position" (Dimitrakaki 2011, 6). Another move has been towards the precarisation of labour (Federici 2008), whose impact has been so profound as to result in the emergence of the "precariat", a new global class living and working precariously, without recourse to stable occupational identities or careers, no stable social protection and usually no protective regulations relevant to them (Standing 2011). Considering labour conditions in the art world, cultural critic

Diedrich Diederichsen (2008) argues that, in the contemporary labour market, workers no longer sell their labour in the sense of their time and energy conditioned and augmented by their talents, training and experience, but their very “life force”; unsurprisingly, porn provides the economic model for this transformed labour exchange. In some ways, many of these new theorisations have been pre-empted in feminist thought and social movements, which drew attention to the anomaly of women’s largely embodied “labour of love”, including housework, sex, child-bearing and childcare and emotional labour, none of which could be accounted for in Marxist and other established political economic models of labour analysis (Federici 2008; subRosa 2010).

The labour of female celebrities is first and foremost feminine biopolitical labour, both physical and affective, and always embodied in the most literal sense. What these girls have to do includes looking (not too) thin and pretty and striving to stay that way, performing sexually, giving birth to and caring for children, forming and maintaining relationships, and suffering when they fail at any of the above. One of the most extreme cases of the biopoliticisation of celebrity labour has been the highly mediatised premature death to cervical cancer of reality celebrity Jade Goody (1981-2009). The broadcasting of the act of dying had already been envisaged as the dystopian apex of celebrity culture and media in David G. Compton’s novel *The Continuous Katherine Morton* and its film adaptation *Death Watch* (1980, dir. Bertrand Tavernier). Remarkably, in the context of Jade Goody’s career as a reality celebrity, her broadcast death appears less extreme, which is a measure of the intensity of her biopolitical labour since the beginning of her employment. Goody first broke into public consciousness as a *Big Brother* contestant in its third year (2002), while the show was still enjoying great popularity among UK audiences. She quickly became a figure of amusement, ridicule and hate, scorned for her body shape, her ignorance and naivete, and morally condemned for unpaid debt and petty crimes to which she admitted on air and the

fact that her father had been incarcerated. Despite a media campaign of shocking vehemence to have her evicted ('Vote out the pig' and 'Ditch the witch') and failing to win Big Brother, Goody's subsequent media engagements saw her become the first millionaire Big Brother alumna thanks to a number of successful business ventures, including launching her own collection of scents (BBC 2009). A regular on reality TV, she was even given her own show *Jade's Salon* (Living TV, 2005), one of the first in the entrepreneurial reality subgenre, following the daily goings on in her own beauty salon, Ugly's. Her participation in the 2007 Celebrity Big Brother led to a major media and public outcry and an all-time low in her career. In a row, she racially abused the Bollywood star and fellow housemate Shilpa Shetty, calling her "Shilpa Fuckawallah, Shilpa Durupa, Shilpa Poppadom." Despite denying racism, not least on account of being biracial herself (albeit visibly white), the incident resulted in her eviction from the Big Brother house, an indictment against Channel 4 and Endemol, the show's broadcaster and producer, and a public apology to the Indian people from the Prime Minister at the time Gordon Brown on an official visit to India (Jeffries 2009), all in an effort to show Britain as a diverse society free from racism, which is sadly not accurate. Consequently, Goody became unemployable in the world of celebrity for a while, and marked her cautious and apologetic return by participating in India's version of Big Brother in 2008. Furthermore, Goody's role as 'working mum' had to be re-invoked in her temporary retreat from her work as a celetoid. The announcement of Goody's illness, of which she was informed on air on Big Brother India, and "the management of her media career in its wake, helped to revise the conditions under which she had been labouring" (Nunn and Biressi 2010, 51).

Goody's emotional and physical suffering was documented in a variety of ways, including in a published personal diary, media coverage of a campaign to promote cervical screening to

young women, and selling the rights to her wedding, a mere few days before she died, to *OK!* magazine. Having lost most of her fortune, Goody's determination to take financial care of her two sons was almost universally applauded, notably by public figures including PM Gordon Brown. While most of the public were moved by the last chapter to Goody's life-career and were supportive of her decision to die as she had lived (Jeffries 2009), others were troubled by the exploitative dimension of her biopolitical labour, fearing that she had become "media chattel" (Sir Michael Parkinson cited in Nunn and Biressi 2010, 62, n. 2).[4]

By focusing on her mediatised death, however, there is a danger for the public and media critics alike to forget (or misrecognise) that all of Goody's labour and that of her peers is inherently biopolitical. Interviewed by Jacques Peretti for *The Men Who Made Us Thin* (BBC 2, 2013), photographer's agent Danny Haywood mentions Goody in the context of what he describes as an extremely widespread celebrity media practice:

> We worked with various celebrities, one of them being the late Jade Goody, and we staged campaigns with her that were six months planned in advance to do with weight issues and weight loss. So, if it's in the beginning of the year, we'd probably go for a lot of weight on over Christmas, you know 'Look how big we are', and then we'd go into the middle of the year, taking the weight off. And we'd just literally go up and down, and then go on the journey of a woman and her weight. […] That's the soap-opera, it's the yo-yo. If they stayed the same, then it wouldn't be interesting. […] Celebrities used to sleep with footballers to keep their fame going; now they get fat. And get thin again, and then get fat. And then get thin again and then sleep with a footballer, and get fat and then cry over it and get thin.[5]

"The journey of a woman and her weight", the real/reality soap opera *planned as many as six months in advance*, constitutes a big part of the labour that young female celebrities do. Another dimension of this kind of labour, just as important and often related to weight loss and weight gain, is emotional suffering: "suffering is to us what sex was to Victorians" (Illouz, 2003, 119). In fact, in the midst of accusations of promoting body dysmorphia and disordered eating in young women, celebrity media appear to have increased the coverage of female celebrity suffering as a safer option. The aestheticisation of the death and suffering of women has as long a history as patriarchy (Bronfen, 1992) but its intensified currency in contemporary celebrity visual culture should perhaps be interpreted as a more nuanced anti-feminist backlash, the quieter sister to the extremes of neoliberal economic and ideological sexism. "Shattered from Pregnancy", "Heartbroken over Danny", and "Destroyed by Bankruptcy", are the three headlines from *Closer Magazine*, 13-19 July 2013, serendipitously charting an updated trinity of womanly suffering in contemporary Britain: the challenges of childbearing and care; romantic heart break; and poverty through debt. These garish headlines are illustrated by photographs of celebrity women's faces, some honest-looking, some vacuous, all overworked.

If Jade Goody represents an astonishingly intense – perhaps, extreme – manifestation of biopolitical celebrity labour, in the next section we explore the transformation and expansion of this kind of labour in more recent, neoliberal times. In austerity Britain, female celetoids are more or less assumed to be public property, tasked by the implied tax payer, with the goading mediation of the tabloid press, to an ongoing performance of girlhood gone astray, for which they are promptly censured and punished, as images and as bodies. As the story of Josie Cunningham shows, this sense of appropriation and/as punishment for impropriety goes as far as challenging established women's rights over their bodies, particularly in their reproductive capacity.

'You're paying for Josie's Boobjob': A Morality Play[6]

Casting celebrity narratives as morality tales is not a new idea (Marshall 1997, 106), and has recently been reinforced as a sobering antidote to the notion that young and impressionable audiences who consume celebrity media are likely to simply emulate celebrities in their own personal lives (Allen and Mendick 2013). Celebrity narratives may therefore provoke disidentification as well as identification. We would argue that an outraged disidentification through condemnation is the intended audience response to female celetoids, whose life choices are voyeuristically scrutinised only to be denounced and then punished, within professional media discourse and, yet more violently, in related social media interactions. Young women are disproportionately represented in this emerging genre of punitive reality media (Redfern and Aune 2010, 190), in which transgressions are ritually dramatized only so that the (moral, social, economic) order may be more emphatically restored (cf. Pinseler 2010; Gies 2011).

Josie Cunningham is a young single mother of two and aspiring glamour model from Leeds who received a breast augmentation on the NHS (National Health Service)[7] after claiming that she had suffered serious mental health issues and bullying because of her chest size. According to media reports (Nelson 2014) , Cunningham, whose modelling career failed to take off even after her surgery, started working as an escort until she fell pregnant and is currently (May 2014) said to be selling phone sex (Brooke 2014)There is sadly nothing particularly exceptional about Cunningham's aspirations, nor about her more pragmatic employment choices, in an economic climate in which youth unemployment remains high and, on average, the minimum wage falls short of the living wage by well over a pound per hour (The Living Wage Foundation 2014). What makes her case worthy of attention is the toxic entanglement of gender politics, celebrity culture and cuts to public services, in which

the objectification of gendered and classed bodies (twice: in the form of images and as titillatingly narrated experience) goes hand in hand with a tactical undermining of public services. Cunningham's story demonstrates once more that not only are women the principal losers of neoliberalism, but also how some media collude in the simultaneous vilification of young working-class women and the undermining of public services, smoothing the way for further cuts. The tabloid press, weekly magazines featuring real-life stories and social media (Facebook and Twitter) emerged as allies not only in abusing Cunningham for allegedly wasting precious NHS funds but also in using her as a front for a covert attack on the NHS for being vulnerable to such abuse. This troubling alliance was encapsulated in the glib dubbing of the National Health Service (NHS) as "New Hooter Service" in *The Sun* (Sky News 2013). Whilst panned as an undeserving user of the NHS who has been called upon by an allegedly outraged public to refund the cost of her cosmetic procedures, Cunningham herself has gradually become public property: firstly, as a celetoid who has forgone her privacy and whose life is subjected to constant public scrutiny and moral judgement, and subsequently – and more literally – as a person whose surgically enhanced body, and specifically her breasts, are claimed by the (male, heterosexual) taxpayers who "paid for" them. In this sense, and before even embarking on sex work, Cunningham was turned into a public woman. Ryan Oddy's tweet on 27 March 2013 is typical of such proprietary entitlement: "After all the tax I've paid in my life I feel like #JosieCunningham owes me a titwank" (Oddy 2013).

Cunningham's gratitude for the publicly funded operation that she could otherwise never afford has been casually ridiculed in the tabloid press ("I don't know hooter thank first: Wannabe Josie so pleased with taxpayer-funded op") and turned on itself to become its opposite: since this hasn't been a willingly offered 'gift' from the taxpayer but a purloined and misused public service by a canny, selfish and thoughtless 'wannabe', Cunningham's

thanks only fans the flame of journalistic and soon public outrage. In a characteristically cynical move, *The Sun* illustrated its first articles on Cunningham with topless photographs and a video of her exclusive photoshoot for the newspaper, even while her fresh surgery scars were still clearly visible. In addition to revealing its hypocrisy, *The Sun* risked undermining its own dismissal of Cunningham's modelling ambitions (her lack of success in the glamour business is something of a refrain in relevant press coverage) by offering her lucrative work as a glamour model. Yet this was a small price to pay for being able to construct a slippage between canny Cunningham and her gullible victims, the wasteful and careless NHS doctors who granted her wish, and for having them both share the blame. In some publicity photographs, the NHS logo was physically overlaid on Cunningham's surgically augmented body, either printed on a strip of material worn as a cross-front halter neck bra (Wright 2013), or digitally superimposed on her nipples in the familiar manner of blackout tabs that cover nudity (JD 2013).

In July 2013 the next installment in Cunningham's story was published, with the explicit intention of causing further controversy through headlines like 'Warning, this interview will make your blood boil' (Foster 2013). Mere months after her surgery, Cunningham was reportedly unhappy with her new breasts which she found to be too big, she blamed them for her stagnating modelling career and expressed the wish to have them reduced. According to some articles, she also threatened to sue the NHS for bad practice, specifically for rushing her consultation and giving her unsuitably large implants (Sinmaz 2013). In its relevant 'news report', *Closer* magazine included two sidebars, one in which the mother of a two-year-old cerebral palsy sufferer, who was refused an operation that would help him walk, conveyed her frustration at the NHS for not having its priorities straight, while the other listed essential services for which £4,800 could have paid, had this sum not been so irresponsibly squandered on Cunningham's augmentation. Lisa Burrow's editorial in

the same issue proclaims: "You're paying for Josie's boob job!" and points out that the case is far from exceptional, instead "highlight[ing] the crazy use of taxpayers' money".

In a redemptive twist three months later, it was widely reported that Cunningham had an epiphany following a cancer scare, and vowed to pay back every penny that was spent on her previous operation (Closer Staff 2013). Her plans were originally praised, by Lisa Burrow among others ('Boob job regret' editorial) but were thwarted once more, just like her modelling career. In January 2014, a new story (Nelson 2014) broke that Cunningham, unable to save enough through her day job and the few modelling engagements she managed to get, turned to sex work in order to fulfil her self-imposed obligation to the NHS. Caught in a vicious circle of debt that can never be paid off, Cunningham's predicament was described in a breezily impish tone, aimed to mask the grim reality of crippling debt for many other girls like her.

Taking its cue from governmental austerity measures, it would appear that the tabloid press has tacitly declared a state of emergency, in which previous "indulgences" have to be quashed to allow for the survival of the "moral" subjects of neoliberalism. Disturbingly, a slippage has also been established between wasteful uses of resources and wasteful users, who are not simply condemned as exploitative 'freeloaders' but are themselves found to be a waste of space. As soon as Cunningham's pregnancy was announced, it was also reported that she was planning to use her NHS entitlement for free dental care, available to all pregnant women and new mothers in the UK for a year after giving birth. While the pregnancy offered fresh fuel for an attack on Cunningham's character, because she conceived while working as an escort and is allegedly unsure of the identity of the father, the prospect of further NHS treatment, even basic dental care, is what incensed the tabloid media anew: 'Pregnant Josie cashes in', *The Sun* exclaims (Sims 2014). But Cunningham's pregnancy

was to cause yet more controversy when it appeared to undermine an employment opportunity as a Celebrity Big Brother contestant:

> Channel 5 were keen to shortlist me then they found out I was pregnant. Then they suddenly turned cold. That was when I started considering an abortion. After the operation I will be going back to them and asking if they will still consider me. (Aldridge 2014a)

Horrified at the prospect of being regarded as the driving force behind such an important life choice, and one which, albeit lawful under conditions in the UK, has been under attack in the midst of growing social conservatism (Perez 2011), Channel 5 hastened to announce that they wouldn't be considering Cunningham at all. The suggestion that not only do celebrity workers have no maternity leave entitlement but that a pregnancy might even threaten to have its carrier blacklisted by potential employers, may well have been unintentional but was nevertheless clearly conveyed. Instead of simple derision, Cunningham's social media following, which radically expanded overnight, responded much more violently, with threats to her bodily integrity (e.g. throwing acid on her face) and even to her life. Unsurprisingly, Cunningham had another change of heart and change of fate, turning from "shameless" to "desperate" Josie in the headlines, and decided to cancel her planned abortion in the last minute after she felt her foetus kick. By then, the pregnancy had already been visually documented by Cunningham herself when she posted an ultrasound scan on Twitter and by the tabloid media, reproducing the scan image with the caption "Doomed" when she still intended to have a termination, and also publishing posed photographs of Cunningham sporting a growing bump, with her arms and hands framing it differently, either covering (Aldridge 2014a) or cradling it (Aldridge 2014b), thus illustrating examples of both good and

bad pre-birth mothering respectively.[8] The cycle of infraction – indictment – punishment – rehabilitation was now complete.

For someone slated as a non-contributor, entirely talentless, lazy and lacking the attributes of what she aspired to be, Cunningham appears to have worked hard for her money and notoriety after all. Not only did she share with the people of Britain the surgical results of her publicly funded cosmetic procedure on the infamous page three of *The Sun*,[9] among other platforms, but she also expertly played the leading part in a neoliberal austerity drama, in which welfare is eroded alongside a woman's right to choose, and girls are kept firmly in their place, forever censured and punished for the lack of aspiration that they're not allowed to have.

It would be tempting but unwise to dismiss Josie Cunningham's case as exceptional, yet on the other hand, it would be even more problematic to view it as representative of a certain kind of girl, something which the tabloid readers were actively encouraged to do, after both enjoying the results of her breast augmentation and being outraged by it. As we have sought to reveal, the vicissitudes of austerity Britain are played out in the contradictory pressures and demands with which its subjects are met in everyday life. The figure of the biopolitical celebrity embodies these contradictions in ways that aren't merely metaphorical. Simultaneously exceptional and ordinary (if not common), influential yet vulnerable, threatening and at risk, privileged enough to have escaped anonymity but belonging to the underclass, tabloid fodder and protagonist in an unfolding morality play, the biopolitical celebrity invites urgent reconsideration of both the meanings and performances of gendered celebrity and its implicit promises of aspiration and success. She is both the supplement (namely the structural opposite)[10] of the ideal neoliberal subject and its (his?) negative image, in the flesh.

REFERENCES

Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Aldridge, Gemma. 2014a. Video: NHS boob job girl Josie Cunningham plans to have abortion so she can star on BIG BROTHER. *Mirror*, April 20.

http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/video-josie-cunningham-plans-abortion-3434350. Accessed April 23 2015.

Aldridge, Gemma. 2014b. See Josie Cunningham interview on her abortion u-turn: 'I felt baby kick and couldn't go through with it'. *Mirror*, April 26.

http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/josie-cunningham-abortion-felt-baby-3464103. Accessed April 23 2015.

Allen, Kim and Heather Mendick. 2013. Young people's uses of celebrity: class, gender and 'improper' celebrity. *Discourse* 34, 1: 77-93.

Anthias, Floya and Nira Yuval-Davis. 1990. Contextualising Feminism – Gender, Ethnic and Class Divisions. In *British Feminist Thought: A Reader*, ed. Terry Lovell. 1003-118. Oxford: Blackwell.

Barrett, Michèle. 1980. *Women's Oppression Today: The Marxist/Feminist Encounter*. London: Verso.

Barnett, Clive. 2010. Public and Markets: What's Wrong with Neoliberalism?. In *The Sage Handbook of Social Geographies*, eds. Susan Smith, Sallie Marston, Rachel Pain, and John Paul Jones III. London and New York: Sage.

http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/emergentpublics/publications/barnett_publicsandmarkets.pdf.

BBC. 2009. Jade Goody: A life in 10 headlines. *BBC*, March 23.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7928199.stm. Accessed April 23 2015.

BBC. 2013. Disability Living Allowance changes begin. *BBC*, June 10.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-22804563. Accessed April 23 2015.

Biressi, Anita and Heather Nunn. 2003. The especially remarkable: Celebrity and social Mobility in Reality TV. *Mediactive* 2: 44-58.

Boas, Taylor C. and Jordan Gans-Morse. 2009. Neoliberalism: From New Liberal Philosophy to Anti-Liberal Slogan. *Studies in Comparative International Development* 44:137–161. DOI 10.1007/s12116-009-9040-5.

Bronfen, Elizabeth. 1992. *Over Her Dead Body*. London: Routledge.

Brooke, Chris. 2014. 'Model' with £5k NHS implants is now a call girl, three months pregnant and doesn't know who the father is!. *Daily Mail*, March 25.
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2588847/Wannabe-glamour-model-NHS-boob-job-PREGNANT-just-months-starting-work-escort-thinks-father-one-clients.html. Accessed April 23 2015.

Brush, Lisa. 1999. Gender, Work, Who Cares?! Production, Reproduction, Deindustrialisation and Business as Usual. In *Revisioning Gender*, ed. Myra Marx Ferree, Judith Lorber and Beth Hess. 161-189. London: Sage.

Cameron, David. 2011. We are all in this together.
http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2011/08/David_Cameron_We_are_all_in_this_together.aspx. Accessed May 30 2014.

Chapman, James. 2008. 'Barbie doll' girls only want to be WAGs or win the X Factor, complains Culture Minister. *The Daily Mail*, October 15.
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1077444/Barbie-doll-girls-want-WAGs-win-X-Factor-complains-Culture-Minister.html#ixzz33D7SgCES. Accessed May 30 2014.

Closer Staff. 2013. Josie Cunningham: I will pay back the NHS for my boob job. *Closer*, October 16. http://www.closeronline.co.uk/2013/10/josie-cunningham-i-will-pay-back-the-nhs-for-my-boob-job. Accessed April 23 2015.

Couldry, Nick and Jo Littler. 2008. The Work of Work: Reality TV and the negotiation of neoliberal labour in *The Apprentice*. In *Rethinking Documentary: New Perspectives and Practices*, eds. Thomas Austin and Wilma De Jong. 258-267. Maidenhead: McGraw Hill.

De Benedictis, Sara. 2012. 'Feral' Parents: Austerity parenting under neoliberalism. *Studies in the Maternal* 4, 2. http://www.mamsie.bbk.ac.uk/back_issues/4_2/documents/DeBenedictis_SiM_4(2)2012.pdf Accessed May 31 2014.

Diederichsen, Diedrich. 2008. *On (Surplus) Value in Art*. Berlin: Sternberg Press.

Dimitrakaki, Angela. 2011. Labour, Ethics, Sex and Capital: On Biopolitical Production in Contemporary Art. *n.paradoxa* 28: 5-15.

Dyer, Richard. 1979. *Stars*. London: BFI.

Dyer, Richard. 1986. *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Federici, Silvia. 2008. Precarious Labor: A Feminist Viewpoint. *In the Middle of a Whirlwind*. http://inthemiddleofthewhirlwind.wordpress.com/precarious-labor-a-feminist-viewpoint/. Accessed May 30 2014.

Foster, Jill. 2013. Warning, this interview will make your blood boil: Josie had £5,000 breast implants on the NHS. So why does she now want YOU to pay to remove them?. *Daily Mail*, 15 July. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2364692/Josie-Cunningham-5-000-breast-implants-NHS-wants-YOU-pay-remove-them.html. Accessed April 23 2015.

Foucault, Michel. 2007. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78*, ed. Michael Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell. London: Palgrave Macmillian.

Foucault, Michel. 2008. *The Birth of Biopolitics*,ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gies, Lieve. 2011. Stars Behaving Badly. *Feminist Media Studies* 11, 3: 347-361.

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hochschild, Arlie. 1979. Emotion work, feeling rules, and social structure. *American Journal of Sociology* 85, 3: 551-574.

Holmes, Su and Diane Negra, eds. 2011. *In the Limelight and Under the Microscope: Forms and Functions of Female Celebrity.* London: Continuum.

Illouz, Eva. 2003. *Oprah Winfrey and the Glamour of Misery: An Essay on Popular Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press.

JD. 2013. Don't Thank Me You Tit. *JD's Musings*, March 29. http://jdsmusings.wordpress.com/2013/03/29/dont-thank-me-you-tit/. Accessed April 23 2015.

Jeffries, Stuart. 2009. Jade Goody. *The Guardian*, March 22. http://www.theguardian.com/media/2009/mar/22/jade-goody-obituary. Accessed April 23 2015.

Jones, Owen. 2011. *Chavs: The Demonisation of the Working Class*. London: Verso.

Kokoli, Alexandra. 2014. From Public Services to Public Women: A Morality Tale for the Age of Austerity, *The F-Word*, April 7. http://www.thefword.org.uk/features/2014/04/from_public_ser. Accessed December 2 2014.

Lamm, Kimberly. 2011. At the Pivot of the Biopolitical: Seeing Sex and Racism in Lorna Simpson's You're Fine. *n.paradoxa* 28: 88-93.

Lawler, Stephanie. 2005. Disgusted subjects: the making of middle-class identities. *The Sociological Review* 53, 3: 429-446.

http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/sore.2005.53.issue-3/issuetoc. Accessed December 2 2014.

Lemke, Thomas. 2001. The birth of bio-politics: Michel Foucault's Lecture at the College de France on neo-liberal governmentality. *Economy and Society* 30, 2: 190-207.

McDowell, Linda. 2014. Gender, Work, Employment and Society: Feminist Reflections on Continuity and Change. *Work, Employment & Society*, 28, 5: 1-13.

Marshall, David. 1997. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Nelson, Sara C. 2014. Glamour Model Josie Cunningham Is Selling Sex To Pay Back 36DD NHS Breast Enlargement. Huffington Post UK, January 28. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/01/27/glamour-model-josie-cunningham-sex-escort-36dd-nhs-breast-enlargement_n_4673566.html. Accessed April 23 2015.

Nudd, Tim. 2013. Paralympics Ad Meet the Superhumans Powers to Film Craft Grand Prix: Tom Tagholm's gritty triumph. *Ad Week*, June 22. http://www.adweek.com/news/advertising-branding/paralympics-ad-meet-superhumans-powers-film-craft-grand-prix-150593. Accessed April 23 2015.

Nunn, Heather, and Anita Biressi. 2010. 'A trust betrayed': Celebrity and the work of emotion. *Celebrity Studies*, 1, 1: 49-64.

Oddy, Ryan. 2013. After all the tax I've paid in my life, I feel that #JosieCunningham owes me a titwank #nhsboobs. @van_rodders, Twitter, March 27. https://twitter.com/van_rodders/status/316879725891043329. Accessed April 23 2015.

Perez, Adriana. 2011. Abortion and Sexuality, Under Attack. *The F-Word*, October 27. http://www.thefword.org.uk/features/2011/10/abortion_sexuality. Accessed May 31 2014.

Pinseler, Jan. 2010. Punitive Reality TV: Televising Punishment and the Production of Law and Order. In *Trans-Reality Television: The Transgression of Reality, Genre, Politics, and Audience*, eds. Sofie Van Bauwel and Nico Carpenter, 125-147. Maryland: Lexington Books.

Poverty and Social Exclusion (PSE). 2012. Women 'hit worst' by austerity measures. PSE. http://www.poverty.ac.uk/report-gender-tax-benefits-government-cuts-government-policy/women-%E2%80%98hit-worst%E2%80%99-austerity-measures. Accessed April 23 2015.

Prasad, Raekha and Fiona Bawdon. 2011. Don't blame our parents, say rioters. *The Guardian*, December 6. http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/dec/06/dont-blame-parents-say-rioters. Accessed May 30 2014.

Raisborough, Jayne, Hannah Frith and Orly Klein. 2012. Media and Class-Making: What Lessons are Learnt when a Celebrity Chav dies?. *Sociology*, 47, 2: 251-266.

Redfern, Catherine, and Kristin Aune. 2010. *Reclaiming the F-Word: The New Feminist Movement*. London: Zed Books.

Revoir, Paul and Liz Thomas. 2012. The X-rated factor! ITV show faces viewer backlash after sleaze and humiliation fill weekend's shows. *Daily Mail*. Sept. 11. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2201447/X-Factor-faces-complaints-viewers-sleaze-humiliation-weekends-shows.html. Accessed April 23 2015.

Rojek, Chris. 2001. *Celebrity*. London: Reaktion.

Skeggs, Beverley and Helen Wood. 2008. The labour of transformation and circuits of value 'around' reality television. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 22, 4: 559-572.

Sims, Paul. 2014. NHS boob girl gets £2k teeth … on NHS. *The Sun*. http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/5543262/NHS-free-boob-job-girl-gets-2k-teeth-for-free-on-NHS.html. Accessed April 23 2015.

Sinmaz, Emine. 2013. Wannabe glamour model who had £4,800 taxpayer-funded breast enlargement to SUE NHS because she claims they are now too big. *Daily Mail*, July 28. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2380390/Josie-Cunningham-SUE-NHS-breasts-big.html. Accessed April 23 2015.

Sky News. 2013. SUN FRONT PAGE: 'New Hooters Service' #skypapers. @SkyNews, Twitter, March 26. https://twitter.com/SkyNews/status/316325106257379330/photo/1. Accessed April 23 2015.

Smith, Anna Marie. 1994. *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Standing, Guy. 2011. *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Strangleman, Tim and Tracey Warren. 2008. *Work and Society*. London: Routledge.

subRosa. 2010. Common Knowledge and Political Love. In *Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism, and Technoscience*, eds. Beatriz da Costa and Kavita Philip, 221-242. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Summers, Deborah. 2009. David Cameron warns of 'new age of austerity'. *The Guardian*, April 26. http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2009/apr/26/david-cameron-conservative-economic-policy1. Accessed May 30 2014.

The Living Wage Foundation. 2014. The Calculation. *The Living Wage Foundation*. http://www.livingwage.org.uk/calculation. Accessed April 23 2015.

Tyler, Imogen. 2008. Chav Mum Chav Scum. *Feminist Media Studies*, 8, 1: 17-34.

Tyler, Imogen. 2013. *Revolting Subjects: Social Abjection and Resistance in Neoliberal Britain*. London: Zed Books.

UK Parliament Select Committee. 2004. *Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Thirteenth Report*, November 8. http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmodpm/633/63306.htm. Accessed December 2 2014.

Walter, Tony. 2009. Jade's Dying Body: The Ultimate Reality Show. *Sociological Research Online*, 14, 5, 1. http://www.socresonline.org.uk/14/5/1.html. Accessed May 30 2014.

Weinbaum, Alys Eve. 2004. *Wayward Reproductions*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Wintour, Patrick and Paul Lewis. 2011. X Factor culture fuelled the UK riots, says Iain Duncan Smith. *The Guardian*, December 9. http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/dec/09/x-factor-culture-fuelled-riots. Accessed April 23 2015.

Wolkowitz, Carol. 2002. The Social Relations of Body Work. *Work, Employment and Society*. 16, 3: 497-510.

Wolkowitz, Carol. 2006. *Bodies at Work*. London: Sage.

Women's Budget Group. 2012. *The Impact on Women of the Budget 2012*. London: Poverty and Social Exclusion. http://wbg.org.uk/pdfs/The-Impact-on-Women-of-the-Budget-2012-FINAL.pdf. Accessed May 30 2014.

Wright, Rebecca. 2013. #JustSaying: 'Cosmetic surgery on the NHS? Give me a break!'. *Best Daily*, September 10. http//www.bestdaily.co.uk/your-life/news/a514117/justsayingcosmetic-surgery-on-the-nhs-give-me-a-break.html. Accessed April 23 2015.

---

[1] The definition of this group is complicated and widely contested; see, for example, UK Parliament Select Committee, 2004.

[2] For a detailed and very up-to-date survey of feminist approaches *and* challenges to labour theory, see McDowell, 2014. What is interesting about these approaches is that they expand traditional definitions of labour by focusing on women's work, central to which has been the role of reproduction. For a discussion of early Marxist feminist debates about reproductive labour and women's work see Barrett, 1980, and Anthias and

Yuval-Davis, 1990. Imogen Tyler expands on Marxist frameworks through a critical discussion of the perceived dangers of reproduction in the underclass in the context of austerity (Tyler, 2013, 179-206).

[3] A significant contribution to the analysis of emergent forms of labour in neoliberalism has come from art practice and art theory. See, for example, the critical discussion of Lorna Simpson's *You're Fine* (Lamm 2011) and Tanja Ostojic's *Looking for a Husband with EU Passport* (Dimitrakaki 2011).

[4] There has been a number of insightful analyses of Jade Goody's career and especially her death in an array of journalistic and academic articles, including notably Rainsborough et al. 2012; Walter 2009; Nunn and Biressi 2010, to all which we are indebted not only for our approach to Goody but for our development of the notion of biopolitical labour in reference to celebrity.

[5] *The Men Who Made Us Thin*, BBC 2, episode 3 of 4, orig. broadcast August 22 2013, transcription by the authors.

[6] Parts of this section have appeared in an earlier version in Kokoli, 2014.

[7] The National Health Service has been the United Kingdom's free at point of use publicly funded healthcare system since 1948.

[8] On January 22 2015, Channel 4 broadcast the 40-min documentary *Josie: The Most Hated Woman in Britain?,* in which it is claimed that Cunningham and her agent have continued to be extremely strategic and profitable in courting controversy throughout and past her pregnancy, from the announcement that four golden tickets of £5,000-£10,000 would be sold to the birth of her third child to Cunningham's denouncement of breastfeeding as 'borderline incest'.

[9] *The Sun* tabloid newspaper has published a photograph of a topless model on its third page since 1970, against which feminists have often protested, most recently through the on-going No More Page 3 campaign (http://nomorepage3.org/).

[10] For a fuller consideration of how Derrida's notion of the supplement and supplementarity applies to the interpretation of social inequality, see Smith, 1994, 24.