**Ned Aesthetics in Contemporary Glasgow: Performing Classes,
Appropriating Races**

by

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ABSTRACT

Neds are a subculture of working class/underclass Scottish people that are both mocked and embraced by people of other classes and/or groups in Scotland. Neds have existed since the early 1900s in Scotland, but this project examines how current day Neds appropriate not just class but race in performances of their identities. Modern-day Neds perform identity through the consumption of various goods (alcohol, cars, fashion, footwear) that contribute to a certain Ned aesthetic, one that represents (mis)performances of both Whiteness and what it means to be an upstanding member of the working class/underclass in Scotland. Key themes at play in this dynamic are identity; subcultures; labeling; White Trash; performativity; class and classism; race and racism; Whiteness; Blackness; hip-hop and rap; consumption and aesthetics. These themes are all part of the ongoing, dynamic processes of Ned identity-building that both Neds and non-Neds participate in.

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CHAPTER I: INTEREST AND METHODOLOGY

Interest

My love affair with Glasgow began in December 2005 when I travelled to Scotland to visit friends on Christmas break during my undergraduate studies at the University of Guelph. The warmth, humour, and enthusiasm of storytelling that I encountered there made the interactions I had with people in Aberdeen and Edinburgh truly unique experiences in my travels. Needless to say, when I returned to Canada the desire to return and learn more was overwhelming. I immediately applied to do an undergraduate exchange for the 2006-2007 academic year in Scotland and was accepted to the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow to participate in their sociology program.

The Sociology program at Strathclyde allowed me to study areas affecting the social, economic and political climate of Scotland at that time – issues of Industrialisation, globalisation, identity, class, culture and social problems. These themes emerge in other areas of the developed world, but when immersed in Glaswegian culture for that year, I experienced firsthand how the themes discussed in undergraduate sociology programs manifest in a particular circumstance in ways I had never experienced in other cities. The formal education I received in that year was valuable; however, the informal education – my experiences and interactions with the people of Glasgow – was truly invaluable.

Glasgow has a vibrant culture all its own – the city is a frenzy of art, music, nightlife, history, architecture, comedy, and conversation. I had the pleasure of making many new friends in Glasgow and other areas of Scotland who introduced me to Glasgow's culture, and I am eternally grateful for being able to share these experiences with them. Among the most unique

things that I was introduced to was the concept of Neds. When I first visited Scotland, I was frequently in fits of laughter over discussions about Neds among my peers. Their imitations of Neds, adopting funny high-pitched, nasal voices and using colloquialisms I had never experienced, as well as their commentary and satirical portrayals of Ned styles, were a source of endless amusement. However, until I moved to Glasgow, I had not made a connection between these jokes and comments and an actual subculture. Simply put, their humorous stories and impersonations were objectively funny to me, yet I did not understand that these were connected to people.

Over the year I spent living in Glasgow, I had many interactions with Neds that ranged from frightening to entertaining to (very much) enlightening. I had never experienced a subculture similar to it in Canada. Needless to say, I developed a deep curiosity about Neds and, combined with the sociological perspectives I was exploring at Strathclyde, I developed a research interest in Neds. When I pursued an undergraduate thesis in my final year at the University of Guelph, however, there was a total lack of information on Neds in the social sciences. This led me to focus that thesis on Chavs (a topic which will be discussed in greater depth later in this work). There were several articles published about the rise of Chavs in England at that time which acknowledged regional variants that fell under that umbrella term. However, upon completion of my undergraduate degree, I still felt that there was a gap in research involving Chavs. Since 2008, there have been more publications addressing this phenomenon, but I still feel that there is a lack of literature that investigates just why there are so many regional variants of the Chav subculture. Furthermore, what did I observe in my experiences involving and discussions about Neds that made them unique, separate from the Chav phenomenon that is gaining more attention in sociology and anthropology? Although I

couldn't articulate it at the time, I've spent the last three years exploring not just what makes a Ned a Ned (the social, economic, political, and cultural factors that contribute to the emergence of a subculture or culture), but what makes Scotland's Neds unique in the landscape of the UK. With this thesis, I hope to begin to explore what I consider to be attributes both unique and integral to Glasgow and Glaswegian culture.

Methodology

This project consists of participant observation, interview data, and *thick description* (Geertz, 1973) of certain areas where Glasgow really comes alive (the bustling markets; housing estates; parties or pub discussions where Neds are present or a topic of conversation). The day that I landed in Glasgow could not have been more well-timed for this particular topic as Peter Mullen's film *Neds* had made the film circuit and opened to nationwide audiences at major theatres. Neds were the hot topic of conversation everywhere one went in Glasgow. They had moved out of the realm of neighbourhood gossip and trash mag fodder, and into the popular culture mainstream. Neds had made the jump from being *gossiped about* to being *discussed* critically and (for the first time) thoughtfully in mainstream media. Although Neds had been around in some form or another for almost a hundred years, they were finally having "a moment".

I stress the prevalence of Neds as a topic of conversation because it was integral to my recruitment of project participants (informants, interviewees, and those who otherwise granted access to Ned communities). During previous visits to Scotland, Neds had always been the subject of much mockery. When friends wanted to show "the Canadian" what Scottish culture was about, they'd mock Ned voices and Ned practices – joking about knife fights in a high-

pitched nasal whine, for example, which piqued my anthropological interest in Neds. But when my plane hit the tarmac in 2011, the tone had changed. In coffee shops and restaurants, those same people discussed the plight of isolated working class Scots over the ages and mulled over the creation of Neds as a purely Scottish response to deindustrialization and poverty. Behind closed doors, in the company of friends, these same people openly mocked Neds; all sympathy and intellectualizing abandoned when one was “safe”.

I emphasize the importance of Neds being a hot topic of conversation because I sincerely believe it contributed to the ease of recruitment of participants for the project. Virtually all of the people who participated in this work were recruited through snowball sampling. The friends and family I had in Glasgow and the greater southwest regions of Scotland were prepared for my arrival well in advance, and each had their own stories to share about Neds. They also each had a handful of contacts for me to follow up on throughout my fieldwork. Virtually every interview I conducted ended with the participant recommending that I contact a friend, relative or associate who may have a story to share or some input to provide; many of these contacts were (to put it gently) extremely enthusiastic to share knowledge. The legendary and celebrated generosity of storytelling that Scottish people are renowned for served this project well.

There were times when those I encountered, through word-of-mouth recruitment, were perhaps not best-suited to answer some of the more specific questions pertaining to this work. This is when more traditional forms of participant recruitment came into play. Online advertisements on sites such as Gumtree and Craigslist were effective for recruiting interviewees. While I met some great interviewees through these ads, some also provided further insight into how Glaswegians mock Neds. While the vast majority of responses were from Neds

or people who knew Neds with stories to share or connections to be made, there were a handful of responses to my ads from people impersonating Neds. For example:

R: Here mate al take part no? Cost ye a couple o bottle o buckie (*Translation: I'm here, I'll take part. It will cost you a couple bottles of Buckfast tonic wine.*)

S: (Sensing that this is a joke) Can you tell me a bit about yourself? Thanks!

R: Here mate a want ma buckie or ma team will be up and yer gettin it (*Translation: If I don't get the wine I asked for my gang and I will come after you.*)

Needless to say, the correspondence ended there; this person was using stereotypes about Neds to make a joke about them in response to my ad. This happened several times while the ads were posted, and it speaks loudly to the commonplace nature of joking about Neds in Glasgow. Some people (non-Neds) were writing as Neds with the hope of being compensated for their time, for example: “Aye al be your ned much ye payin email me n tell me am fae glesga born n bred in the scheem a stiy in maryhill says it awl ha hope tae here fae you (name redacted) x” (translation: Yes, I'll be your Ned depending on the price. Email me with an offer of compensation. I'm from Glasgow, born and bred on the council scheme. I stay in Maryhill [a notoriously rough neighbourhood, as evidenced in popular culture such as Uncle John and Whitelock's song “Maryhill Vibe”].) That says it all, I hope to hear from you.) While I did unofficially compensate interviewees in the form of coffees and snacks, every person I spoke with for this project was happy to provide their time and insight gratis. I weeded out some potential participants who were too eager for compensation because I was concerned that they would provide false information, or doctor information for a fee. While I do recognize that there is the possibility I rejected one or two genuine Neds, I filtered candidates as best I could given the time I had and believe that I obtained valuable information from those who did participate in the project.

Other people employed humour to try to prank their friends. This involved sending a contact for a friend who is not a Ned, with the hope that I would contact them suggesting they participate in this project as a Ned, something which many people would take offense to. For example: ““Hi there, ma mate is a ned. Like he is really neddy. His name is (redacted) but he doesnt have skype. I think find him on facebook and speak to him there. Here is his facebook...”

If I felt that this was a setup that could potentially offend someone and/or negatively affect the integrity of this project, I did not respond.

Organized interviews – premeditated interviews for which the participant and I arranged a time and place to meet, where I had a list of questions and topics to discuss within a period ranging from half an hour to 1.5 hours, took place in public spaces such as cafes and pubs and other locations around Glasgow. The less planned interviews and participant observation, particularly when working with Neds, took place in the homes and stomping grounds (such as markets, parties, bars) of Neds themselves. I gained access to these social spaces through a variety of means, and to be honest, pure stubbornness and dedication to the project on my part. Upon my arrival in Scotland, I lived in Partick, a lively neighbourhood in the west end of Glasgow rich with history, and conducted interviews in the city. I then moved to a council housing estate just outside of Glasgow, which allowed me to interact with other people who lived on the estate, Neds included. This allowed me to build trust and a repartee with youths and Neds there, as well as my neighbours who were eager to share their experiences on the estate, as well as contacts who participated enthusiastically. For the latter part of the project, I moved to Ibrox in Glasgow. Being near a football stadium and in a neighbourhood with a rich (but at times, troubled) past allowed me to immerse myself in Ned cultures and build trust with Neds I had met previously. This also allowed me to travel freely around the city on their excellent public transit

system to conduct interviews, participate in the goings-on of Ned life, and generally learn from all that Glasgow and its diverse inhabitants had to share. Neds who became accustomed to seeing me on a semi-regular basis in their own neighbourhoods and spheres of socializing found it easier to talk to me over time. I wasn't just some pampered academic who wanted to swoop in, ask questions then abandon them and use the information they'd provided for personal gain – I was The Canadian living in their neighbourhood trying to learn *from* them rather than merely *about* them.

There is a final item to note regarding recruiting genuine and enthusiastic participants, immersing myself in local cultures, gaining access to communities and building trust with participants (particularly those who had delicate matters to discuss, such as violent and/or criminal experiences). To put it bluntly, I feel that luck was on my side for a lot of this project. People were incredibly generous with their time and energy, sharing their stories, contacts, and even homes; at times, Neds approached me in the streets, and upon hearing about what I was in Scotland for, opened up to me in the street and even invited me into their private circles. But being “in the right place at the right time” isn't enough – I had to prove to Neds that I could be trusted and opened up to – and this was not always easy. This is largely due to the fact that I am in a position of privilege relative to them. I am a middle-class graduate student from Canada who (through much planning and legwork) was able to travel to Europe to study something I'm passionate about; Neds are the non-working poor of Scotland, living day-to-day on bleak council housing estates and in some of the poorest areas of the country. None of the Neds I encountered had ever attended college or university – the majority of them felt that that had not ever been a possibility within their lifetimes. For all intents and purposes, they had no reason to trust me or open up to me at all. I found that the best way to gain trust was to be as honest and open about

who I am and what I do as possible. I did not pretend to have grown up in a rough neighbourhood, but I did not brag about the relative privilege I'd experienced. I expressed genuine interest in the lives of Neds, and although that was novel and flattering to many of them, I believe that my enthusiasm and honesty went a long way in gaining trust from members of these communities.

CHAPTER II: THEORY

Performativity

Theories of performativity have been used to address constructions of gender and sexuality, of maleness and femaleness, and the inherent assumptions and problems with these constructions. Similarly, in recent years performativity has also been used to address race, such as constructions of Blackness and Whiteness and what performances of each suggest (and reveal about deep-seated assumptions of the person doing the performing). This section will explore how subcultural groups (such as Neds, Chavs, and White Trash) perform their conceptions of Blackness and Whiteness, and how these performances are interpreted and problematized by other groups in Britain. Similar to our understanding of performances of gender, Blackness and Whiteness are also performed differently by different subcultures and groups in different contexts. This section will examine performativity with a focus on consumption, understanding consumption as a form of expression of identity, or more to the point, consumption as a *performance* of identity. Through critically examining consumption as a performance, notions of Blackness and Whiteness are evident, and the underlying values and assumptions of the person doing the performing can be revealed (as well as larger notions of race and class among upper classes, and dominant notions of Whiteness and Blackness in society).

This work is structured into four related sections. First of all, "Understanding Performativity" will look at some key theoretical arguments that are relevant to discourse on Chavs, including aspects of Butler's theories of performativity (including aspects that draw on Foucauldian analysis). Next, in "Whiteness and Performativity: White Trash", there will be a review of literature on White Trash and Whiteness studies. White Trash performativity will be

examined with a focus on consumption as performance (and consumption as a form of expression of identity), examining how the fear and mocking of White Trash by other groups may be representative of racism and fear/mockings of Blackness. "Blackness and Performativity" will expand on this, reviewing fear of miscegenation, and looking at how the appropriation of perceived Black identities (such as hip-hop) may be considered a form of social miscegenation. Finally, there will be a brief discussion of Ned appropriation of Black identities in performances, arguing that some Ned performances can be deliberately subversive performances that have the potential to combat classism and racism (and the discrimination that Neds face) in Britain.

To understand how performativity can be used to address race and power relations, it is necessary to look at how performativity is used to address other aspects of identity. One of the founding writers on theories of performativity, Judith Butler, has examined at great length how gender roles and subversion of these roles can be explained and examined through an attention to the performative aspects of gender. In "Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions" (1990) one of Butler's main arguments is that sex and gender are not natural, they are both developed: "identity is discursively constituted" (91). Through the repetition of stylized acts associated with one's sex or gender, identity is created and maintained, becoming part of the discourse on sex and gender. It will be argued here that race (in particular, Blackness and Whiteness) are also performed identities, discursively constituted and maintained, passed on, and subverted through various performances, including the performance of consumption as expression of identity. Butler's work ultimately aims to combat essentialism in gender, which can be drawn upon with the hopes of combating racial essentialism as well:

Although this text does not answer the question of whether the materiality of the body is fully constructed, that has been the focus of much of my subsequent work, which I hope will prove clarifying for the reader. I would note here not

only that racial presumptions invariably underwrite the discourse on gender in ways that need to be made explicit, but that race and gender ought not to be treated as simple analogies. I would therefore suggest that the question to ask is not whether the theory of performativity is transposable onto race, but what happens to the theory when it tries to come to grips with race. Many of these debates have centered on the status of 'construction,' whether race is constructed in the same way as gender. My view is that no single account of construction will do, and that these categories always work as background for one another, and they often find their most powerful articulation through one another. (Butler, 1990: 95).

In Butler's analysis of the performativity of gender, drawing on Foucauldian theories, she stresses two key facets of performativity - "doing" and "being". With a focus on race, this work will draw on Alexander, a key theorist and writer on performativity of race (in particular, Whiteness), who discusses "A racism that is not always about crossing borders of racial divide but could also be accomplished within the boundaries of specified communities—based both in the *being* (of skin color) and the *doing* (of performing race)," (654). This understanding - the being of skin colour and the doing of race - will be carried throughout this work, focusing on White Trash, Neds, and understanding Neds (under the umbrella of Chavs in Britain) as Scotland's White Trash. Furthermore, Alexander's work utilizes Butler's performativity with a focus on particularities within situations and communities and contexts. Butler, as well as Foucault, stresses the need to look at particulars when discussing performance and identity - performances and identities unfold differently in various contexts, and attention to the minute details of performances is key to trying to unlock the implications for and representations of identity. In turning to performativity of race in particular, it is useful to examine works by Warren and Alexander that discuss the performativity of race. Warren's "Doing Whiteness: On the Performative Dimensions of Race in the Classroom" examines performances of whiteness through an ethnographic analysis of racial performances in the classroom, paying strong

attention to how Foucauldian notions of power and privilege underlie performances of Whiteness. Also similar to Butler, he stresses the need to focus on particularities when examining performances using the term "in situ" as well as using Elisabeth Bell's idea of "specific embodiments" of race (2001: 92). By looking situationally at White performances of both Whiteness and Blackness in context (that is, a largely White class that the school performing a variety of characters influenced by what Warren deems their understandings of Black and White identities), his work actively aims to locate and expose essentialism within racial constructions much in the same way as Butler's approach to essentialism with gender.

This focus on outward performances, such as expression of identity through what is worn or displayed on the body, can also be used to understand performances of race and class - the "styles of being" and "corporeal styles" presented by Butler and Foucault can be observed and studied by examining surface representations of identity, such as Chav consumption of products that express identity (such as fashion and music). Materiality is clearly central to this understanding of performativity and identity: this work will argue that through consumption of material goods, Chavs are performing expressions of identity (Miller, 2005). Butler addresses the material aspects of performativity and identity in focusing on how performances come across on the surface of the body:

According to the understanding of identification as an enacted fantasy or incorporation, however, it is clear that coherence is desired, wished for, idealized, and that this idealization is an effect of a corporeal signification. In other words, acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. (1990: 110; emphasis in original)

This passage demonstrates how signifiers on the surface of the body are representative of identity, and how a deeper reading of these visual cues is required to understand the underlying factors at play in the construction of identity. In discussing White Trash and Neds (and potentially considering Neds to be Scotland's White Trash), it is necessary to examine outward signifiers of identity, such as aesthetics based in consumption. This work will approach the performative aspects of Blackness and Whiteness as they relate to consumption of goods that are part of expression and identity - basically, consumption as a performance of identity. Theories of materiality offer a middle ground here, as it is argued in this work that consumption is an act of performativity for White Trash and Neds. Ned identity and Ned consciousness is rooted in consumption of goods that offer expression of identity; to consume is to express, and to consume is to perform. The consumption of material goods represents the immaterial aspects of Ned identity and expression (Miller, 2005). Specifically, addressing the material aspects of Ned identity will involve a critical analysis of Ned and Chav consumption, and the racial undertones and overtones (in particular, notions of Blackness and Whiteness) that underlie consumption as performance. Central to materiality and consumption as performativity is the Bourdieusian (1984) notion of cultural capitalism, recognizing notions of prestige and class-centric conflict that come into play in the politics of consumption. Looking at the position of Neds in Scotland with a focus on class-based conflict, it is clear that they are socially, economically, and politically subjugated. Approaching this problematic position requires the need to read the material aspects of performativity keeping in mind the system of cultural capitalism that is alive and well in Britain today (Bourdieu, 1984). Basically, the social and cultural capitals valued by Neds are devalued by the upper classes, contributing to the demonization and mocking of Neds in media and public policy. In comparing the capitals of various classes in Britain, it is clear by

examining discourses on underclass, lower class, and working class groups (Chavs/Neds in particular) that their capitals lack the prestige value of those of the upper classes. For example, as will be expanded upon later in this work, the valuing of hip-hop styles (perceived Black styles) by Chavs is frowned upon and mocked by other groups and upper classes in Britain.

In “Social Space and Symbolic Power” Bourdieu (1989) expands on some of the key points in his major works such as *Distinction*, and this work speaks to the power dynamics that factor into Ned performances. Bourdieu’s theory allows the actors agency, flexibility and change as time progresses, rather than relegating the working class to an opposed underclass in need of radical upheaval for social change. Furthermore, Bourdieu clarifies his position on the interplay between objectivism and subjectivism in academia, particularly sociology and anthropology, as “double structuring” (20). It is useful to keep this interplay between the subjective and objective in mind with regards to the anthropological consideration of labeling theories as they pertain to Ned culture. The application of the label “Ned” is accepted and perpetuated objectively and subjectively at the same time. “Ned” is a label that defines the deviant “other”, while at the same time being subjectively adopted by those who identify with what the label represents: “It is these thought objects of theirs which determine their behavior by motivating it,” (15). This can be linked to Bourdieu’s notion of the objective reification of rigid class structures that emerges in Marx’s work, as well as the reification of the Ned identity as created by mainstream media portrayals of Neds. Bourdieu also clarifies his link between titles of nobility and forms of capital, in particular educational credentials as symbolic property that indicates one’s belonging to a noble class. This is useful when considering condemning media portrayals of the Chavs and Neds as anti-nobility, deliberately lacking the cultural and educational capital to advance one’s position in society, instead choosing to embrace the powerful “anti-establishment” symbols of

the emergent underclass. It is also useful for examining how Chav and Ned performances may be deliberately subversive performances aimed to combat class and race-based discrimination in Britain.

Before discussing Ned performances in any detail, it is important to look at the negative responses to Ned performances that incorporate ideas of Blackness have very real repercussions for Neds by looking at similar themes among the related Chav subculture (Burchill, 2005). The labels that are placed on Chavs, and the negative treatment that Chav performances receive in the media (and in condemning public policy), contribute to the internalization of this mistreatment by Chavs (Scruton 2007). The labels that are placed on Chavs and Chav performances may be internalized by Chavs and incorporated into future performances, serving to further reify negative Chav constructions in the eyes of other groups and classes in Britain. From a sociological perspective, Labeling Theory has been used to address how Chav identity and Chav performances have been reproduced and recreated by other Chavs; however, drawing once again on Foucault and Butler, it is important to allow for agency. Class, race, and power dynamics in Britain are not static, and Chavs (and mistreatment of Chavs) is not inevitable or unchangeable. Similarly, Chav performances are not just automatic responses to the perceived values and capitals of the upper classes - again, some Chav performances may in fact be deliberate efforts to subvert the systems that oppress them.

Rather than being prescriptive in addressing these expressions of identity, it is argued here that Neds and White Trash may participate actively in asserting forms of non-prestige, using consumption as a performative act of rebellion to fight back against the domination, including the tastes, aesthetics, and performances of the upper classes. It is important to note that there is

not a distinct dichotomy between "natural" or "normal" performances and deliberately subversive performances, as distinguished by Butler:

I am not interested in delivering judgments on what distinguishes the subversive from the unsubversive. Not only do I believe that such judgments cannot be made out of context, but that they cannot be made in ways that endure through time ('contexts' are themselves posited unities that undergo temporal change and expose their essential disunity). Just as metaphors lose their metaphoricity as they congeal through time into concepts, so subversive performances always run the risk of becoming deadening clichés through their repetition and, most importantly, through their repetition within commodity culture where 'subversion' carries market value. (1990: 99)

This notion of performances (including subversive performance) becoming cliché is crucial when examining Ned performativity. Media portrayals of Chavs reveal clichés about Chav representations and performances which contribute to the idea of the Chav as a dangerous person, the scourge of Britain at worst and a pesky (but loveable and easily mocked) British icon, a phenomenon which is paralleled with Neds in Scotland. In "Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions", Butler's brief discussion of performances and clichés hints at the power dynamics inherent in the construction of the cliché. It is useful here to investigate whether portrayals of Neds (including Ned-perpetuated performances of identity and expression) are interpreted and modified by Brits of other socioeconomic backgrounds to further mock and subjugate Neds. This may have to do with the concept of projection: people (perhaps higher up on the socioeconomic ladder) forming a construction of another (sub)culture based on their own anxieties, insecurities, and self-loathing. As an example of how this plays out in Glasgow, consider the bleak job landscape:

Glasgow is a particularly striking example of how the de-industrialization of Britain has left continuing – but disguised – mass unemployment in its wake. The city houses more incapacity benefit claimants than any other local authority. The number of people claiming some form of disability peaked in

1995 at one in five of the working population, or almost three times the UK level. A group of Glasgow University and Glasgow City Council experts looked at how the number of recipients increased during the 1980s, and concluded: 'The main reason for the huge growth in sickness benefit claims was the city's rapid de-industrialization.' The number of manufacturing jobs in 1991 had collapsed to just a third of the 1971 figure. Staggeringly, Glasgow rose from 208th to tenth place among local authorities for economic inactivity levels in the decade following 1981. (Jones, 2011: 199)

Given this lack of working opportunities and strain on benefits, it's easy to understand the resentment and stress that the non-working working class in Glasgow is subjected to. It is not just a top-down treatment of Neds and Chavs as lazy, feckless poor by members of the middle and upper classes; mistreatment also comes from members of the working class and is directed at the subculture. This is what Wilson and Pickett refer to as the 'bicycling reaction' that occurs when there is that sort of tension between classes, a phenomenon "whereby people kick out at those below them in the hierarchy in order to feel better about themselves," (Craig 2011: 96). In Glasgow, although Neds are considered to be working class, they are the "bad" poor, the lowest of the low in that hierarchy. As previously mentioned, if this has to do with projection, non-Neds may be projecting their anxieties over a poor labour market, stress over money, and so on onto Neds. They may be kicking out at members of their own class who fail to perform that class properly (such as "happily" living off welfare or selling drugs to make ends meet rather than seeking out legitimate employment). Whether it's projection, the bicycling reaction, or both, these social theories do represent a very real issue: that these are not just offensive words and images that form what it means to be a Ned. Those who are deemed Neds (and those who perhaps self-identify as such) can internalize these insults and negative images: "Becker developed a notion of 'labelling theory', speaking not just about deviant social groups but also about the 'moral entrepreneurs' who judge them – who *label* them as deviant and so turn deviance into a kind of role that gets played out according to the label," (Gelder, 2007: 43;

emphasis in original). Simply put, if someone is told that they are a Ned, and that Neds are violent, unintelligent, and unwanted, they come to see themselves as all of these negative things. And as the label is central to their identity, they perform the duties attached to that label – smoking, drinking, swearing, stealing, fighting. As established above, Neds are at the very bottom of the hierarchy in Glasgow, and therefore may be particularly susceptible to processes like these. In *The Tears That Made the Clyde*, Carol Craig sums up the impact of these processes on those at the bottom of the hierarchy in Glasgow (including Neds):

Wilkinson and Pickett argue this is not about poverty as such but the ‘psychosocial’ effects of being at the bottom of an extremely hierarchical society where you feel that you are not as good as others. Various psychological experiments have now shown how stereotypes can have a negative effect on people’s performance. These stereotypes can be about gender (girls can’t do maths), race (black people have a low IQ), or social class (these children aren’t likely to perform as well. The important point is that countless experiments show that ‘stereotype threat’ affects how well people perform tasks. For example, an experiment in India earlier this decade showed that high and low caste boys (unaware of each others’ identities) were able to do puzzles equally well as one another indeed the low-caste boys did slightly better). But after they were asked to announce publicly their families’ origins and their caste, the performance of low-caste boys dropped significantly. Given the undermining impact of stereotyping it is not difficult to see how, if you were a poor Glaswegian and you felt that teachers looked down on you, your language and your community, it would affect your educational performance. (2010: 239)

Overall, while there may not be a Canadian or North American version of Neds, by examining some of the theories on projection and labels, some parallels can be drawn between Ned subculture and other subjugated cultures/subcultures. This thesis draws upon literature that involves White Trash performativity, intending to draw some comparisons (and contrasts) between White Trash performances and Ned performances, as the emergence of Neds is a uniquely Scottish phenomenon that does not have direct parallels for a North American audience.

Whiteness and Performativity

It is essential to examine how whiteness is performed by Neds, which involves a review of some of the literature on the performativity of Whiteness in other subcultural groups. The literature of performances of whiteness reveals some interesting trends, mainly that there is a focus on the performativity of privilege. Warren provides the following critique of "whiteness studies" that mirror inherent privilege in these performances:

Most of the literature on "whiteness studies" tends to rest on two essential foundations. The first is that whiteness functions as a cultural and social privilege; whiteness provides fundamental advantages attributed to the "white" subject, which then work to give that subject unearned leverage over others... The second central theme in this research focuses on the invisibility of whiteness to white subjects; whiteness appears so normalized to white subjects they fail even to see its workings. (2001: 94)

Annalee Newitz analyzes some of the trends in case studies on Whiteness, acknowledging the prevalence of a different kind of privilege in these performances: "(Whites) are in actuality... amazed that they can be 'viewed' at all, since whites have tended to imagine themselves racially invisible. Whites are said to consider themselves a neutral universal category, hence non-racial and superior to 'racialized' others. Their self-image as whites is thus both underdeveloped and yet extremely presumptuous," (1997: 132). The notion of privilege in performances of Whiteness is interesting in that its presence is twofold: not only is privilege present in the idea that Whites have privilege over other races, but privilege also presents itself in the idea that whiteness is natural or neutral and that other races (and performances of other races) essentially deviate from this norm or axis. Simply put, Whiteness is understood to be pervasive; in the eye of the White performer, they may not be performing "Whiteness" at all, just what is neutral.

This presents a perplexing issue regarding privilege when one considers that not all Whites are necessarily equal, in the eyes of other races, and in the eyes of other White people, as will be explored here with Ned performances. It is imperative that we keep in mind that Whiteness itself is a construction, like Nedness, Chavness, etc. Though White privilege undoubtedly exists today, and literature on performativity of Whiteness reveals the notion that Whiteness is pervasive and neutral, not all Whites are in a privileged position in society. In looking at Chavs as Britain's White Trash, and more specifically at Neds as Scotland's version of White Trash, it is necessary to examine how Whites are oppressed in other contexts. In particular, what do Scotland's Neds (and treatment of Neds) have in common with America's White Trash? With a focus on performativity, it is necessary to look at performances of non-privilege, as well as performances of Whiteness that are not considered privileged by others. Focusing on the latter, White Trash performativity, similar to Ned performativity, can be observed by looking at consumption as it relates to expression of identity - or rather, looking at consumption as *performance*. White Trash consumption is held in disdain by upper classes, mocked in the media, rendering White Trash the butt of many jokes. White Trash consumption (and as we will look at later, Ned/Chav consumption) is problematic in two general ways: the goods consumed are considered vulgar and tasteless by other groups, and White Trash consume these goods in excess (vulgar quantities of vulgar goods purchased by those "undeserving" poor who, in the eyes of the upper classes, should not be spending what precious little they have in the first place):

Excess is meaning out of control. It inundates the 'needs' of the dominant ideology and controls, spills its tackiness out into the open and refuses to be ignored. Excess aggressively calls attention to itself: the excessive body refuses to be ignored. The White Trash body is, by definition, an excessive body... this ideological construction of wealthy and privileged groups as simple, spare, thin and understated equates the poor with the fat, the

undisciplined, and the unworthy. This kind of dialectic also designates New England and the Puritan aesthetic as plain and pure, while the South is vulgar, hot, sensual, overeating, overweight, lazy, poor, backward. We can assume that the message from the dominant powers is: those who have little consume much - indeed, much more than they deserve! (Sweeney, 1997: 255)

Neds fall into this category for many reasons. For example, as evidenced in the interviews from fieldwork, Neds wear flashy tracksuits, fake jewelry, and counterfeit luxury goods such as Burberry caps – all considered to be tacky and deserving of mockery. These are material examples of their failings as salt-of-the-earth, productive and respectable Scottish citizens. This demonstrates how White Trash performances, negotiated through consumption and expression, are perceived by upper classes to be vulgar and tasteless. However, there seems to be a gap in literature on White performances in that the Whites doing the performing (in this case, the White Trash) are not given a chance to speak about what they believe they are revealing through these performances. As mentioned by Newitz, Whites don't always understand their actions as performances of Whiteness - just performances, period, and Whiteness is understood by many to be natural or neutral (1997). But are the less-privileged (or non-privileged) performances of White Trash intentional performances? And what do White Trash intend to communicate through these performances?

There are many ways to examine these questions - for the sake of this paper and the issue at stake, White Trash performativity will be examined in terms of performance of non-privilege, or to put it simply, performance of rebellion/performance as rebellion. This is connected to social status, and the ability to rebel against social norms to gain status within a subculture when one is shut out of other parts of society. Hebdige (1979) has examined subculture at great length, particularly concerning punk subcultures in Britain. His discussions of White punks also draw some interesting points for comparison when considering Neds and White Trash. Though

Hebdige does not subscribe explicitly to theories of performativity, punk and other subcultures are described and analyzed at great length in *Subculture* and can be considered as subcultural performances. With regard to performances of non-privilege as performances of rebellion, research on punks reveals a great deal. The punk aesthetic (and consumption practices that are part of this aesthetic) runs contrary to the norms of society, valuing styles considered vulgar by other groups and upper classes. Some argue that punk performances (including punk consumption as expression of identity) are a deliberate act to be despised by others - by adopting contemptible styles, punks are performing a rebellious act, celebrating their non-privilege and how it is offensive to the upper classes. Rebellious performativity of non-privilege can be observed among other White groups in the United Kingdom, such as football hooligans (Hebdige, 1979: 97; Buford, 1991). Buford's work on British football hooliganism provides a great deal of insight into performances of class, power and Whiteness. In his ethnographic work, there is nothing innate or natural about the deviant and dangerous acts that football hooligans take part in. They are by and large White males, come from working- to middle-class backgrounds, who engage in criminal activities and riots, developing a devious group/pack mentality that revolves around football. When looking at riots and violence as rebellion - be it rebellion against boredom, alienation, socioeconomic circumstance, classism in Britain, or any other number of factors - their behaviour can be understood as a performance of rebellion, a desire to be feared and despised by others on the basis of these violent performances. These acts could also be viewed as attempts to establish control over others by creating a violent and chaotic atmosphere – it goes without saying that fear and the threat of violence are age-old, powerful control techniques. Neds, for example (and as we will see in the interview data) use threats of violence, even empty threats, to establish control of others (including non-Neds) and establish a

sense of power. Some who self-identify as Neds have, in a sense, reclaimed the label because it is attached to ideas of violence and masculinity – the very label implies a dangerous type of power. The "true" factors behind the violent performances of football hooligans remain up in the air according to Buford. However, it could be argued that masculinity, class, power, and lack of power all contribute to the performances of football hooligans in Britain, and through examining these White performances (and performances of Whiteness and racism on the part of football hooligans) are useful in drawing comparisons between White Trash, Ned, and Punk performances.

Furthermore with regard to the concept of rebellion, one must consider the ways in which Neds appropriate elements of hip hop culture (a theme that we will return to later in this work). As with other cultures and subcultures, hip hop fans appropriate styles that they identify with - one may identify with the struggles of a poor community and the messages that accompany that, and many members of that community may be Black, however there is not necessarily a direct link between appropriating that brand and identifying it with anything inherently "Black". It is necessary to look into where else race plays a role in one's use of hip hop fashions to establish identity. Hip hop appeals to a younger demographic - the fan base in North America and the United Kingdom is predominantly young (Kitwana, 2005; Asante, 2008). Hip hop culture has been a form of rebellion for Black youths in other areas before: "Youth subculture remains an important construct to situate stylistic resistance among subaltern groups like urban black youth that confront pressure to conform to dominant institutional norms with alternative cultural solutions" (Baxter & Marina, 2008: 93). Interviewees stated that older generations (generally parents and grandparents) did not necessarily "understand" hip hop - some older generations even harboured racist sentiments about what they perceived to be Black music (and therefore

inappropriate music for a young White person to listen to). Interview participants were optimistic that these negative attitudes were on the wane, and this was apparent during participant observation as well: a young Black female encouraged her White friend to buy a particular jacket at Norml, assuring her that it "wasn't a Black brand anymore - that shit is something your Grandma would say." However, it is necessary to acknowledge that hip hop is not celebrated by all people, particularly some older members of society (Venkatesh, 2006). Thus, hip hop style can be a tool of rebellion for younger people, similar to the way that such groups as punks, teddy boys, and mods appropriated styles that were associated with the underground and with Black rebellion and shocked their parents and older members of society:

This unprecedented convergence of black and white, so aggressively, so unashamedly proclaimed, attracted the inevitable controversy which centered on the predictable themes of race, sex, rebellion, etc., and which rapidly developed into a moral panic. All the classic symptoms of hysteria most commonly associated with the emergence of rock 'n roll a few years later were present in the outraged reaction with which conservative America greeted the beat and the hipster, and at the same time a whole mythology of the Black Man and his Culture was being developed by sympathetic liberal observers. (Hebdige, 1979: 47)

To return to the racial aspects of performativity, one of the emergent topics in the discourse on White Trash (which could help to inform the emerging discourse on Neds and Chavs) is the appropriation of Blackness in these White performances. As established above, it is important to keep in mind not just that White Trash performances are mocked and frowned upon by other groups and classes, but that White Trash performances may be deliberate and meaningful acts of rebellion to classist, racist systems in North America. The next section will focus on White performativities that incorporate ideas of Blackness, and the problems that arise from these arguments, as well as the idea that some Ned performances (particularly performances that draw on perceived aspects of Blackness) may be deliberate subversive acts.

Theorizing Class: Classing Working Class vs. Underclass Bodies

This theory chapter discusses how performativity (and related themes about materiality and aesthetics) are central when it comes to discussing Neds. Ned identity is something performed through many constantly evolving facets, including (but not limited to) speech and vernacular, fashion, food, dance, and socializing. These aspects of performativity are rooted directly in the material, in the tangible aspects, such as aesthetics and dress, and in particular in embodiment, in ideas around the actual form of the body. This section discusses how Neds represent the “bad”, “illegitimate” and “undeserving” working class/underclass, in opposition to the “good”, “legitimate” and “deserving” salt-of-the-earth working class in Scotland.

This project deals with both class and race, and it is important to delineate what I mean when referring to class in this work. It's easy to envision class in Britain as a three-tiered system consisting of the working class, middle class, and upper class, although when placing communities, families, cultures and subcultures within this system, it's clear that some detail is lacking. This section explores how even one stratus of this simplistic structure is detailed – the good/bad, legitimate/illegitimate, deserving/undeserving working class. Neds occupy part of the working class, but are frequently referred to (alongside Chavs) as constituting a part of the underclass, a sub-strata of the working class. Sherry Ortner states it well:

So what is class? There is, to say the least, no single answer... Broadly speaking, bourgeois theorists in one form or another treat class as 'stratification' – as a set of differential positions on a scale of social advantage – rather than as a set of fundamentally conflictual relations. Marxists, by contrast, work from a theoretical model in which classes are not merely sets of differentially successful people, but are derived from the specifically exploitative form of production that is capitalism, and are inherently antagonistic. (1991: 168)

In the case of this particular Ned project, the approach to class hangs in the balance between these two points of view. I am not arguing that working-class Scots are locked into the working class strata – far from it. More so, I am arguing that Neds occupy the lowest part of the ideas we have about being working-class in Scotland, in that they choose to exercise their rebellion by embracing and showing off their poorness. Neds have carved out an identity that lays bare the travesties of de-Industrialization and poverty that fringe communities in Scotland face. Still, it is my goal to avoid exoticizing Neds as a subculture, another point that Ortner mentions: “Besides for the most part ignoring class, anthropological studies of the United States have had a chronic tendency to ‘ethnicize’ the groups under study, to treat them as so many isolated and exotic tribes” (166). When drawing parallels between Ned performativity and appropriating Black and American styles, I want to exercise the utmost caution to avoid prescribing labels to the communities in question. These are not rigid communities; they are communities that feed of the styles of each other, and all are in a constant state of flux under the shifting constraints of social, cultural, and economic factors.

The difference between Ortner’s discussion of class in America and the shifting class categories in Britain (and in particular, Scotland) comes to a head when one looks at social mobility:

But if the constraints of class are real, so too, apparently, are the high rates of social mobility in the American system... What is unique about the American system is its ideology. Where European cultures have tended to emphasize traditional ranks and statuses, and to present themselves as more rigid in class terms than they really are, the United States has glorified opportunity and mobility, and has presented itself as more open to individual achievement than it really is. (1991: 170-171).

It has been argued that Scotland doesn’t share this social mobility, as discussed in other sections of this work, so essentially Neds look to American glamourization as a form of social

mobility within their own circles. Mobility for Neds may be limited – in fact, to many Neds that speak in this thesis, they very much feel that mobility is not available to them. They feel they won't become upper class, and don't want to, but they can and do gain power within their own circles by adopting certain styles and making certain moves for power within their social groups. Simply put, social mobility means something else to Neds. Ortner also shares this view:

This is particularly visible in the working class, where the class structure of the society is introjected into the culture of the working class itself, appearing as a problematic choice of 'life-styles' for working-class men and women – a choice between a life-style modeled essentially on middle-class values and practices and one modeled on more distinctively working- or lower-class values and practices... In sum, there is a general tendency for working- or lower-class culture to embody *within* itself the split in society *between* the working and the middle class," (1991: 172-173; emphasis in original).

Bourdieu has been one of the foundations for my work on Neds to this point; in particular, *Distinction* (1984) contains key ideas that are highly relevant to this work. Ned aesthetics and consumption centre on the consumption of goods which are considered vulgar and in poor taste by upper classes in Britain; put simply, Ned cultural capital is devalued by the upper classes, and the mocking of Ned (and their Chav relatives) materiality in mainstream media images is evidence of this. Consider Bourdieu's notion of the dual nature of taste: taste as it relates to sensory experience, and taste as it relates to culture and class-wide preference for certain things (in this case, preferred foods, ways of eating, body shapes, beauty standards, sports and so on): as crystallized by Bourdieu, "Taste, a class culture turned into nature, that is, embodied, helps to shape the class body." So what are we looking at when we're discussing the Ned body? Speaking of the literal body, Neds have come to be material embodiments of what the upper classes deem to be poor taste and low-brow cultural capital. Furthermore, alongside Bourdieu's discussions of gendered practices (such as eating and dressing), "vile" Ned bodies reflect their own low-brow maleness and femaleness.

The male Ned is understood to take one of two forms: thin, wiry, wiley, underworked, pale, small, malnourished, ravaged by drugs, a portrait of apathy; or on the other hand fat, lazy, excessive, loud, alcoholic, useless, disgusting, offensive (Pilrig & McGlinchy, 2005). These may appear at face value to be polar opposites; however both represent failure, an emasculated shell of a once-celebrated blue-collar, salt of the Earth British working male. Female Neds are similarly relegated to the realm of the utterly useless and offensive – overweight, ridden with stretch marks and cellulite, caked on makeup, slack jawed, and perpetually pregnant (see Tyler, 2008).

But what do these images say about Neds, or more correctly, what do they say about those who construct the image and utilize it to both create and condemn Neds? First, turning to the image of the Ned male, both images conjure up ideas of failure. The majority of work on Ned culture and identity involves an inherent subscription to Marxist notions of class culture and class conflict in Britain, acknowledging that the emergence of Chavs in Britain is representative of the emergence of an underclass; some authors and academics go so far as to propose that Chavs (and their counterparts, including Neds) are representative of Britain's lumpenproletariat (see Jones, 2011; Hayward & Yar, 2006). In general terms, academia has looked at recent British history and the class system, with the general understandings that in the post-Thatcher years, a decline in traditional masculine manufacturing jobs and an increase in service sector work (accompanied by the increasing feminization of labour) (Craig, 2010). Their exclusion from "celebrated" working class economic pursuits in Britain relegates them to the role of undeserving (versus deserving) poor. Furthermore, their refusal to participate in the "legitimate" economy, preferring instead to leech off the state or participate in "illegitimate" criminal enterprises, indicates that Neds are "bad" poor (as opposed to "good" poor). Utilizing

Bourdieu's understanding of how the body represents class, derogatory images of the Ned male can be understood in a new light. The first image, that of the thin, pale, drug-addled male, indicates class-based fears – basically, this male has tuned out of “legitimate” economic systems in Britain, opting to scrounge off the state by going on the dole, preferring a life of drug use, the very portrait of apathy. This image is based in an unwillingness to improve one's health, alongside an unwillingness to contribute to the State and thus, a threat to Britain. More to the point for this particular project, it showcases Neds as people unwilling to fulfill the role of the “good” working class – working a 9 to 5 job, supporting one's family, and so on – instead rebelling and forming the “bad/illegitimate/undeserving” working class/underclass.

The other side of this coin, the second image mentioned earlier, does not stray that far from this notion either. The overweight, alcoholic, lazy football hooligan Ned is equally despised, if not more, and this can be understood through Bourdieu's approach to food, class and class culture. Similar to the first image, this Ned is understood to have tuned out of the system, preferring to drink and eat excessively rather than get healthy and improve the figurative health of the state (Pilrig & McGlinchy, 2005). Consider Bourdieu's discussion of the working class meal:

Plain speaking, plain eating: the working class meal is characterized by plenty... ‘Elastic’ and ‘abundant’ dishes are brought to the table... This impression of abundance, which is the norm on special occasions, and always applies, so far as is possible, for the men, whose plates are filled twice... is often balanced, on ordinary occasions, by restrictions which generally apply to the women, who will share one portion between two... a girl's accession to womanhood is marked by doing without. It is part of men's status to eat and to eat well; it is particularly insisted that they should eat, on the grounds that ‘it won't keep’... (194-195)

This picture of the working class meal differs from Bourdieu's notion of bourgeois meals, where restraint is key, foods are carefully selected, are complimentary and high end, and enjoyed

in a leisurely, drawn out manner. The overweight, underworked Ned male image must be considered alongside the underclass meal, a variation on the working class meal conceived of by Bourdieu. This Ned male, far from the picture of virility Bourdieu proposes, is representative of overconsumption. The main difference between the “good” working class meal and the “bad” Ned underclass meal is the notion that one has earned their keep – that through masculine manufacturing jobs in Britain’s factories and dockyards, these labourers will work off the food, that this food contributes directly to the health and well being of the state and economy. This is once again an example of the deserving/undeserving poor dichotomy: the Ned male consumes food to excess, yet has not earned the right to do so, adding another layer of offensiveness to this image.

From this understanding the problematic Ned female form can also be addressed. These women are understood to not contribute to the modern, feminized work force, opting (alongside their male counterparts) to leech of the state or participate in illegal, criminal enterprises to earn money; they too have not “earned their keep” so to speak. Bourdieu speaks of the idealized female form as one that indicates restraint, a delicate body that serves men first when it comes to food and otherwise. From a classic working-class perspective, the female ensures that the male will be healthy and well fed so that he may be a successful worker, a successful contributor (and a successful contribution) to the state. The overweight female Ned is clearly not in line with this image. This bleak picture is made worse by the sexualized meanings behind images of Ned females – that their sole purpose in life is to procreate, bringing more Chavs into the world. The satirical (and in the eyes of this student and Ned-enthusiast, vile and spiteful) work *Nedworld: The Complete Guide to Ned Life and Living* is an excellent example of how female Neds are portrayed as sexually voracious, unclean and undesirable “white trash” (see Pilrig & McGlinchy,

2005). Kylie Pilrig is the quintessentially Nedette: constantly getting pregnant, fighting, disease-ridden, tacky and the like. In this ugly image, women are not given a chance, nor are their children and future children – a disturbing concept when one considers the role of labeling in one’s self-creation and self-perception. There is no question that this image is a powerful one in Britain: one need not look further than the infamous and now internationally-recognizable image of Vicky Pollard from *Little Britain*. Furthermore, excerpts from the previously popular but now defunct anti-Chav website “chavscum” show just how powerful these negative images and associated labels are in inciting hatred and potential violence from others. In response to a story about a teenage mother who has become pregnant for the second time by a black immigrant father are some of the following comments, via Imogen Tyler in her piece “Chav Mum Chav Scum”:

...“Good God, They should sew her fanny up, and then hit her in the face with a pick axe.”... “She left school at 12 to have some scumbag fella’s baby, and will probably have babies every year for the rest of her life. And what work do you expect she will do? Absolutely bugger all that’s what. Well, if YOU think that’s an acceptable life and ambition for a young girl in this day and age of supposed equality, you might as well just lie in the gutter and open your legs right now you daft bint. Have a nice life being a baby machine.” (2008: 29).

In conclusion, in all three images presented here, understandings of Ned bodies accompany ideas that they are failed bodies of people failing at their duties to the state (legitimate work, for example), and thus Ned bodies, and Neds themselves, are reviled. Consider Bourdieu’s assertion that “the body, a social product which is the only tangible manifestation of the ‘person’, is commonly perceived as the most natural expression of innermost nature,” (192). When Neds bodies/aesthetics are conceived of in such negative ways, it becomes easier for one to justify demonizing and abusing Neds as the “bad/illegitimate/undeserving” less-than working class.

White Performances: Appropriating Blackness?

Discourse on White Trash inherently involves "otherness" - comparisons between the White Trash and "other" social classes, and White Trash and "other" races being two frequent themes for discussion. In terms of performativity, what are the "others" that come into play during White performances by White Trash? In addressing this question here, it is useful to examine how the appropriation of Blackness factors into White performances, and how disdain for White Trash performances (and Ned performances) can be representative of deeply rooted racism and fear of Blackness among other groups. Looking at White Trash and miscegenation is one way of broaching the subject:

As scientifically minded researchers, eugenicists were chiefly interested in constructing empirical descriptions and analyses of many if not most of the social ills of their time. They sought the origins of social and economic problems like poverty, unemployment, and crime in human biology and heredity. They posited the existence of 'degenerative germ plasm' - bad genes that carried unwanted social traits such as pauperism, laziness, promiscuity and licentiousness, inbreeding, restlessness ('vagabondage' and 'nomadism'), and delinquency. (Wray, 2006: 71).

The source of the 'degenerative germ plasm' and negative social traits that accompanied it was associated with poor Southern Whites mixing with racially and socially inferior Blacks - a racist and essentialist belief of the time that still has repercussions today. Examining Neds and White Trash today, in focusing on performativity it must be noted that miscegenation is a concept that carries over from biology and (pseudo)science to the social sphere. Sweeney articulates this concept very well in her work on White Trash aesthetics, in particular the valuing of Elvis among White Trash:

I would speculate that much of the disdain held for White Trash by the dominant society may be bound up in the foggy racial histories of such

peripheral people and in a fear of miscegenation and contamination from mixing with them.... When Elvis adapted Black music, dress, and style, he also appropriated some of the sexuality and scandalizing power of Black bodies. (1997: 253)

This demonstrates how White Trash consumption of lowbrow culture, such as Elvis, can be understood in terms of racist ideologies. Not only is Elvis a figure who represents excess (frowned upon by the upper classes), but Elvis's rhythm and blues, rock 'n roll musical aesthetic draws upon hypersexualized Black music and dance that was (and in some areas, still is) disapproved of by Whites. This can be understood as social miscegenation, and miscegenation that is passed on through consumption and performance.

It is unclear whether this concept of miscegenation is recognized/deliberate on the part of the performer. This raises the question of what these White performances of Blackness represent in the eyes of White Trash. While there is no direct answer to this question, there are other White performances that appropriate Black styles that speak to the intentions of the performer. With regard to Ned consumption and Ned aesthetics, it is important to look at how similar aesthetics are employed in other White performances. White Trash have appropriated musical stylings and icons associated with Blackness, which is similar to the appropriation of Black hip-hop aesthetics by White youths in America (Kitwana, 2005). Investigating this is useful to examining Ned performances, as Neds are understood to be a White subculture with racist undertones that appropriates hip-hop aesthetics with Black roots. In approaching hip-hop culture as a performance, again the issue of consumption as performance (consumption-based expression of identity) must be kept in mind. White people appropriating Black hip-hop aesthetics can be understood as a performance by focusing on consumption of hip-hop goods and hip-hop *lifestyle*.

For the purposes of this paper, the following discussion of hip-hop from Kitwana will be employed as a working definition:

Hip-hop culture has its roots among young Blacks in urban communities throughout the northeastern United States. The Black subculture that emerged in the South Bronx in the early to mid-1970s began as what hip-hop pioneer Afrika Bambaataa called the five elements - graffiti art, break dancing, rapping, deejaying, and 'doing the knowledge'. What is popularly known as hip-hop expanded beyond that definition by the early 1990s, mostly due to the commercialization of rap music. So today, when we speak of hip-hop culture, we are also referencing a hip-hop-specific language, body language, fashion, style, sensibility and worldview. (2005: xii)

Hip hop is first a foremost a musical genre: this is evident both in interview data from this project, as well as the wealth of material in discourse on music and style. As a musical genre, its roots stretch far back through history, incorporating elements of African histories apparent in the music today (Asante, 2008). Reflecting on more contemporary history, much of the contemporary subject matter draws on themes of Black struggle date back to slavery and systemic racism in North America (Szatmary, 2004). This history is complicated and complex, and ever-evolving, and to draw out a detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this project, however Baxter and Marina provide an excellent synopsis of this notion:

Hip-hop emerged from the bankrupt urban landscape of post-industrial New York City in the mid-1970s. In this context, class polarization and the concentration of poverty were framed by ever more commodified images of wealth and consumption. The embrace of capitalism and consumption is one dimension of hip-hop... hip-hop also provides young black people with an alternative path to identity and social status that creatively combines fashion, music and language to confront a dominant cultural frame that limits these youth to a life of concentrated poverty, crime and loss... in important ways, hip-hop is a culture of resistance and insurrection of subjugated knowledge acquired by members who grow up in conditions of violence and destitution. Hip-hop provides a clear conduit of commerce and consumption that can carry resistant musical and stylistic messages. (2008: 99)

Hip hop and its subgenres in Canada and the United states are widely understood to draw upon larger urban areas where the movement started, such as New York City, Chicago, Baltimore and Boston (Szatmary, 2004). As larger urban centres, these areas have diverse populations that reflect a multitude of ethnic and racial backgrounds, as well as a disparity between the rich and poor which is frequently drawn across racial lines (Kitwana, 2005). Content in hip hop music reflects the frustrations that follow from disparity and discrimination along class, racial and ethnic lines, and hip hop fashions and styles reflect the content of this music.

In subcultures that value hip hop, such as within the Ned subculture, identity is something performed. These performances rely on a material aspect - in this case, hip hop fashions as symbols that relay certain meanings (articulated by the wearer) to observers both inside and outside of hip hop communities. The material entities themselves are another point of focus in this study; the fashions - or as it emerges, the brands - represent different forms of capital for the wearer as well as others within the community (the observers) (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu's concept of capital is integral to understanding hip hop fashions among Neds in Glasgow, particularly consumer choices that both depend on and shape cultural capital. As will be discussed throughout this work, certain fashion choices and brand choices signal a value in relation to cultural capital. One's peers in the Ned community recognize these signifiers of cultural capital, and as a result, that consumer can potentially build and improve their social capital within that scene. Academic literature on brands acknowledges their powerful role as symbols, signifiers of associated understandings and assumptions. As such, they not only represent, but institutionalize and reify the values and beliefs of a group (Asker, Benet-Martinez & Garolera, 2001). This relates to the concept of "brand identity": consumers have strong

understandings (whether well-articulated or not) of what the brands they chose to wear and what messages these styles relay to others. This is in line with work on "brand personality":

Referred to as *consumption symbols* or *cultural icons* (McCracken, 1986), commercial brands have significance that goes beyond their physical properties, utilitarian character, and commercial value. This significance rests largely in their ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning... (which) typically resides in the more abstract qualities of the commercial brand that provide primarily symbolic or value-expressive functions to the individual (Shavitt, 1990), what are commonly known as "brand personality" attributes. (Asker, Benet-Martinez & Garolera, 2001: 430)

Hip-hop as a facet of White or Black performativity can then be understood to extend past simply appropriating musical styles - in dress, language, and ideals, hip-hop proves to be a pervasive force. Venkatesh (2006) has explored how young, marginalized Blacks in the US (in particular, through his ethnographic work in Chicago) adopt hip-hop aesthetics because they associate it with glamour. He theorizes that these marginalized Black performativities value consumption of hip-hop goods (expensive sneakers, designer jeans, sports jerseys) because they are signs of the glamour, excess, and success that hip-hop stars embody. Simply put, by adopting hip-hop fashion as a form of consumption-based performance of identity, the aesthetics of these Black youths are a way of displaying to the world that they have value; that they are *worth* something in the face of systemic oppression and socioeconomic disadvantage.

If one accepts this analysis, it must be questioned what the appropriation of glamorous hip-hop aesthetics by White youths means. Hebdige's (1979) line of reasoning sheds some light on White Trash and Ned youths that appropriate hip-hop stylings in their performances of identity: perhaps marginalized White youths are aligning themselves with the plight of Black youths, identifying with the oppression that they feel Black people face. With regard to performativity, this is an interesting concept: if a marginalized White youth adopts the glamour

and excess of hip-hop in their performances of identity and expression, there is perhaps another layer of meaning to this performance, as many aspects of hip-hop identity is rooted in Black history.

Drawing upon Bourdieusian notions of capital, the idea of marginalized peoples from a lower socioeconomic bracket utilizing material items from a certain subculture to gain leverage is an interesting one (1984). Sociological work on young Black youths in marginalized areas of the United States reveals that these people may not have a surplus of economic capital with which to make major investments towards future goals. Rather than investing what little economic capital they do have into an abstract investment (such as college tuition or a real estate investment), a way to gain leverage and respect within one's own community may be to purchase goods that are understood to possess or represent cultural capital (Venkatesh, 2006). Put another way, a young person with disposable income tends to save up for several weeks and make a major purchase, such as designer sunglasses. This idea is apparent in literature on hip hop icons and fashion: "One important message delivered by local street rappers like Juvenile and Lil' Wayne is that they are successful, and wearing what they wear is a sign of success" (Baxter & Marina, 2008: 100). To someone outside the hip hop scene, this would be a purchase that warrants little excitement; to someone within the hip hop scene, this pair of sunglasses represents a great deal of prestige, and brings about envy and admiration from others in the community. Research on marginalized youths reveals that this is a fairly common occurrence - putting what economic capital one does have into a product (a sign of cultural capital) that is recognized as valuable by one's social group provides a kind of social capital that they may otherwise feel that they are unable to achieve in their socioeconomic circumstances (Bourdieu, 1984; Clay, 2003).

In this sense, purchasing a luxury good is not just an assertion of identity, but an assertion of wealth and value among one's peers, who may be marginalized in larger society.

The reasons why White youths, socioeconomically marginalized or not, appropriate Black ideals are as unique and varied as the backgrounds of the youths in question themselves - in looking specifically at how Neds as Scotland's White Trash appropriate Black hip-hop ideals, current racial politics in Britain must be kept in mind. Kitwana highlights the problematic nature of hip-hop and identification in her work *Why White Kids Love Hip Hop*: "If white youths are emulating the same young Black men our society has vilified for two centuries, are the pathologies and immoral behaviours deemed to be 'Black problems' now going to infect the young whites who fall under the spell of hip-hop music and culture?" (2005: 1). Referring to the earlier discussion on miscegenation, this fear over the protection of White youths against the Black problems associated with (and frequently, the subject of) hip-hop. This fear of social miscegenation is based in essentialist notions of Blackness and Whiteness; using Butler's theories of performativity, this essentialism can be unpacked and critiqued. In moving on to a discussion of Ned performativity, it is crucial to keep in mind how the appropriation of Black styles by White youths may be feared by other classes as a type of miscegenation understood to bring a plethora of essentialist, race-based "problems" along with it. Ned (and on a larger related scale, Chav) portrayals that incorporate hip-hop aesthetics are frequently mocked in the media, also accompanied by terrifying headlines that serve to perpetuate the labeling of Neds and fear of Neds by other classes and groups. Keeping this fear mongering, labeling and blaming in the media in mind, it can't be ignored that Blackness and Whiteness are integral parts of Ned performance, and thus, we must look critically at these portrayals in order to reveal and combat these portrayals of Neds that are inherently racist (and representative of racism in Britain).

Consumption as Performance: Neds and Hip-hop

White Trash privileges prints over solids, animal over vegetable, full over empty. White Trash wears lime green stretch pants, leopard-print tube tops, pink curlers, too-tight flared jeans... White Trash defines the self by display... White Trash lives in a trailer, but aspires to a deluxe double-wide with purple shag carpeting, red crushed velvet sofas, and gold foil wallpaper... White Trash knows what it likes and it likes big, bright, and excessive. The construction of White Trash in popular culture is of total consumer and non-producer: White Trash is separated from the working class by their lack of connection with work or production, hence 'lazy' and 'shiftless' as common descriptive adjectives (compare to stereotypes of Blacks). (Sweeney, 1997: 250)

Current popular discussion of the 'chav' focuses not on the inability to consume, but on the *excessive* participation in forms of market-oriented consumption which are deemed *aesthetically* impoverished. The perceived 'problem' with this 'new underclass' is that they consume in ways deemed 'vulgar' and hence lacking in 'distinction' by superordinate classes. Thus, as we shall elaborate in detail later, 'chavs' and 'chavishness' are identified on the grounds of the taste and style that inform their consumer choices. Recent popular discussions correspondingly focus upon: clothing (branded or designer 'casual wear' and 'sportswear'), jewellery ('chunky' gold rings and chains), cosmetics ('excessive' make-up, sunbed tans), accessories (mobile phones), drinks ('binge' drinking, especially 'premium lagers' such as Stella Artois), and music (R&B, hip-hop). (Hayward and Yar, 2006: 14).

The two passages above about White Trash and Chavs (and by extension, Neds) offer working definitions of both groups, and pose some interesting points for comparison when examining the two subcultures. As an aside, it is necessary to note one of the main problems I've experienced in working on Chav and Ned cultures from North America (for a North American audience at this time) is that there is no subculture here that can be directly compared to Neds. In approaching this British phenomenon with a North American audience in mind, establishing a common ground to develop a working definition/working understanding of Neds is proving to be a difficult task. There is no direct comparison between Chavs in the United Kingdom, or specifically Neds in Scotland, and a subjugated white, working-class culture or subculture in North America. However, as previously stated, when considering the construction and

subjugation of White Trash in the United States, many similarities arise between White Trash and Neds/Chavs. In their performances (expressions of identity), both groups appropriate what are perceived to be Black styles that are frowned upon and even feared by the others, a point which is evident particularly when examining consumption as a mode of expression of identity. Through examining performances that show the embracing of Black styles by White Trash and Neds, and how these dangerous cultural "choices" and performances are devalued and demonized by the upper classes, we can understand the backlash to emergent Chav culture in the United Kingdom (and in particular, Ned culture in Scotland) as a form of classism and white-on-white conflict implemented through contemporary public policy and media portrayals of Neds and Chavs.

As established in this work, understanding and interpreting Ned performances is based in looking at consumption as performance, as well as consumption as expression of identity. The focus here is on Ned performativity, as Scotland's White Trash, focusing on what consumption says about the performances of Blackness and Whiteness. One of the key styles discussed earlier is the appropriation of Black hip-hop aesthetics by Neds and their counterparts (Chavs, Scallies, etc.). Heavy gold (or gold-tone) jewelry, counterfeit versions of glamorous upscale brands, and brand-name trainers (Adidas, Nike) are all popular consumer goods among Chavs, and are a key part to performances of Chav identity (Hayward and Yar 2006; McCulloch, Stewart, & Lovegreen, 2005). They are also symbols of prestige and success in the hip-hop world (Kitwana, 2005). In "The 'Chav' Phenomenon", Hayward and Yar provide an excellent overview of academic opinion on what Chav performances that appropriate hip-hop culture and aesthetics could suggest:

The key thing to stress here is the way that, within socially excluded urban environments many individuals tend often to *over identify* (from a normative perspective) with consumer goods in an attempt to create a sense of identity. As Carl Nightingale (1993) outlined in his superb ethnographic study of black ghetto life in Philadelphia, one of the central paradoxes of contemporary urban America is that members of the 'underclass' (a term disliked by Nightingale and many others) are often in the same moment both socially and economically *excluded* yet culturally and commercially *included*. In other words, while black youths in the areas studied by Nightingale experienced tremendous feelings of alienation and exclusion from traditional employment and educational opportunities, at the same time they were also overexposed to American mainstream culture via advertising, television, music and other forms of mass media that demand their 'participation' (see Bourgois, 2003; Young, 2003: 396–9). Paraphrasing Zygmunt Bauman (1987: 149–69), one might suggest that these individuals are at once 'repressed' *and* 'seduced'. Augmenting the classic material analyses of Robert Merton (1938), Nightingale thus claims that the tension caused within ghetto culture by this divisive combination is resolved by a warped 'overcompensation' with many of the symbols of American consumer culture – both mainstream and subversive... (2006: 20-21; emphasis in original)

Chav and Ned style, compared to the pared-down, refined stylings of the upper classes, is one of excess and overcompensation. Importantly, however, one must question who is defining "overcompensation". Could it not be argued, perhaps from a Chav perspective, that the upper class aesthetic is a flawed or vulgar performance? Questions such as these are interesting to ponder given the cultural capitalism that operates in Britain today (Bourdieu, 1984). Other areas of this work investigate prestige value and Bourdieusian notions of cultural and social capital (and cultural capitalism); in looking here at performativity, one must keep in mind how race (such as notions of Black appropriations by Neds) factor in to this capitalism. Hip-hop aesthetics popular among Neds that are considered vulgar or excessive compared to other groups must be examined in greater depth to discover *why* they are considered vulgar - what may appear on the surface to be a matter of *taste* may in reality be a matter of *race*, reflecting racist notions of Blackness and Whiteness in Britain.

Concluding Thoughts

"In six months, no one will say 'white trash'... it's the last racist thing you can say and get away with." - John Waters (in Wray & Newitz, 1997: 1)

This section has examined theories of performativity as they relate to performances of race, of Whiteness and Blackness in particular among White Trash, Neds/Chavs, and Neds as Scotland's White Trash. The appropriation of notions of Blackness by subjugated White groups reveals a great deal about their assumptions about race, as well as racism among the upper classes and society as a whole. Fear and oppression of White Trash and Neds can, in some cases, be understood as representative of deeply entrenched racism in the US and UK - put simply, the mocking of White Trash and Neds and their appropriations of Blackness in performances may be representative of racist ideologies in these places.

Whiteness is still positional, dependent on context and particularities, historical particularism, and how Whiteness and Blackness are performed (and how these performances are perceived) is very much situational. Performativity is a useful theoretical paradigm to understand subjugation of Neds and White Trash, as well as racial notions that underlie their performances of identity. Future work on performativity should look at performance of race, of Whiteness and Blackness, in greater depth, as well as performativity of class. In academic literature, Chavs are approached as Britain's emergent underclass; it is clear in ethnographic work on Chavs that they also understand themselves to occupy the underclass, lower class, or working class, as do Scotland's Neds (Nayak, 2006). By looking at how gender is performed, as well as how race and class are performed, future work involving performativity can investigate how different forms of oppression relate to and influence each other, such as how performances

of race and class interact in Ned performances. Through attention to the performativities of subjugated groups, we can start to understand how oppression is performed by the oppressed.

CHAPTER III: TALKING ABOUT NEDS

Matthew: Community Roots

Matthew is heavily involved in a variety of initiatives that involve youth in Ayrshire, Scotland. Among these positions, he is a member of the department of Community Learning and Development within that part of Ayrshire. He orchestrates and participates in a variety of programs targeted towards youth in and around the council estate in Kincaidston. Of particular relevance to this project is the Kincaidston youth cafe program, which Matthew helps to coordinate. These youth cafes are funded through Alcohol and Drugs Prevention and Target Leisure, as well as mainline funding, and are open several nights a week to youths in Kincaidston. The youth cafes allow young people – particularly those entering or already in secondary school – to have a safe, supervised space to socialize and have access to educational resources that deal with many issues (such as drugs, alcohol, and violence) that the youth may deal with in their community: “The whole idea was that we allow a space for young people to come in – I know this sounds really weird, but – off the street, to somewhere they can feel safe, secure, nurtured... begin to develop some kind of a program for themselves. So from those two (Chill Nights)...the young people are free to just come in and chill.” From time to time, through discussions with young people at the youth cafes, particular needs or areas of concern/interest to the youths in Kincaidston are identified:

M: Usually on a Tuesday and Wednesday, from those Chill Nights, the discussions that they have with young people, start to identify separate needs and more often than not those needs are recurring so that every year we’ll probably find that we have a boys group and we’ll tackle issues around alcohol, around drugs, possibly crime, antisocial behaviour, relationships, health issues, things like that. We also have at the moment a girls group running and they’re doing a thing called Girls On The Move, and it’s to encourage young girls to take part in activities and start to lead a bit more of a healthy life. And they’ve

just finished a program called TOTS, which is Truth on Teenage Sex, and I think it was a six or eight week program and they look at different aspects of relationships, how alcohol can affect relationships, possibly leading to pregnancy, STDs, things like that... And we hope it changes some young peoples' behaviour...

When asked which issues frequently arise that are Kincaidston or Ayr-specific, Matthew emphasises violence, in particular violence often associated with gang cultures in the area and its moderate level of social deprivation. However, he is careful not to use the term "Ned" to describe or label some of the more troubled youths in the community, which indicates that he recognizes the potentially offensive or labelling nature of the term. He does acknowledge that there are attitudes among the people of Ayr that Neds do exist:

M: I wouldn't say there's a definite Ned culture in Kincaidston, but you can see within the young people in Kincaidston, there are one or two young people that you would – I suppose if Ned is a recognizable type of person – you could say yeah, they're a Ned... People (in Ayr) will say 'oh, he's a Ned' or 'she's a Chav' or 'he's a Chav' and they get it from TV and Neds – it's usually a physical look that they'll associate with those labels. (If) you look at the label Ned – Non-educated delinquent – (there) are quite a few young people in the Kincaidston area that will not achieve very much in the way of education, and they will be delinquent, and so by the term, yes they would be non-educated delinquents. They don't always dress that way but quite often they'll act that way just that they don't know any better.

Without prompting Matthew about aesthetics, he raised the notion of Neds being identifiable based on what how they look – in particular, what they are wearing. As with other interviewees, he noted that Ned classic fashion preferences tend to include tracksuits, shellsuits, trousers tucked inside socks, white trainers, and hats "either on squint or very well folded, molded to a certain shape". He also noted that there are some Ned styles that are widely recognized but do change with seasons or over time, much in the same way mainstream fashion develops and changes over time. At the time of fieldwork, he said that he had seen a lot of people who may be identified by some as Neds wearing grey sweatpants (perhaps due to the fact

that it was winter in Scotland) and a trend in wearing clothing with a yellow V symbol on it, which he said may be an appropriation of the popular Lyle of Scot clothing chain's eagle symbol. Matthew also stated that some of these items of clothing were not inexpensive, which suggests that it takes a certain amount of economic capital to own something that represents cultural capital to the person wearing it.

Matthew also shares the idea that Neds and Ned aesthetics are not a recent phenomenon:

M: I think it depends on the time. I mean I'm in my fifties now and I've seen the same type of behaviour but with a different dress code. In the 70s the Neds were so smartly dressed... they would (wear) pressed trousers, Pringle Scotland jumpers, Burberry shirts... but their behaviour was that of a Ned, you know?

SP: Like still antisocial behaviour?

M: Yeah, mmhmm. Ah, but there was a kind of offshoot to that that attached themselves to football clubs so that they were all the sort of gangs you'd have found that attached themselves to football clubs. They would go to away matches just for a fight. And the football didn't really matter. I think – at the moment, to my mind – Neds are not, they don't have an established sort of code of conduct. There's the dress code. You couldn't say "oh look, there's a bunch of Neds." And that may well be just down to economic climate. There's not the money to go about, you know, creating a sort of uniform look but the behaviour is still there. So it's harder to recognize, I think, because you don't have those tags of dress. You've still got young people hanging about in groups, doing antisocial things within the community, but I don't think it's as bad at the moment as it has been in the past. I think the 60s and 70s probably were the strongest time for this...

These discussions about identifying Neds through their style makes two things clear: there are commonly shared concepts of what Neds look like and how Neds act in Kincaidston and Ayr, and that Neds are understood to be problematic or undesirable, if not always threatening. To return to the idea of labelling that was addressed briefly before, Matthew acknowledges that these opinions can manifest negatively in attitudes about the people who utilize the youth programs that are designed ultimately to help the community:

SP: What you mentioned earlier, particularly with the youth cafes, do you find that there's a hierarchy with the people that utilize that, basically is there a hierarchy with vulnerable youth that utilize these programs where "at least I'm not a Ned"?

M: I think yeah, there is, from the youth cafe there's a definite perception that the youth cafe is for Neds. Or for the – not the lower order, but some people won't let their children go to the youth cafe because it's full of undesirable people, and yet there are several young people in there that it is a godsend to them because they're not going to end up Neds because of the work that they do in the youth cafe. You've got a whole range of people using it, but the perception from outside is that it's only one type of person (Neds) that uses it. You know, and that's kind of hard to address... Last summer, the youth cafe put on a gala day for Kincaidston. We organized it and it was in the big square up by the shops and on the grass, and it was a great success! But I can guarantee if you go and ask people in Kincaidston "what do you think of the youth cafe?" they'll go "Oh, it's full of Neds and that, absolutely no hoppers, no use..." and if you were to say to them that you do realize that they put on that gala day last year, (their response would be) "oh no, they wouldnae have done it, someone has done it for them." You don't recognize that young people, given the chance, can channel their energies into something positive for the community.

The attitude in the general community is that Neds are flawed persons incapable of personal or community betterment, and there is an overwhelming assumption that Neds are a social product of endemic hopelessness in Scotland that stems from the ills of de-Industrialization. Matthew elaborates on the latter when asked why Glasgow and Neds are different from other former major industrial British cities and the social issues and subcultures they encounter (for example, Chavs):

M: Basically I think it's down to industrialization and the demise of it. If you have a look at those cities you mentioned (Liverpool, Manchester), there is the very strong shipbuilding or industrial, making things. It doesn't happen anymore, so these young people that would normally go down the mine or go to the shipyard or go to the steelworks, they're just not anymore. But they still need that – maybe that's the wrong thing to say, they don't *need* it – but it seems to be a learned behaviour, that you do have a job, you go out and have a hard weekend, you get into a couple of scrapes, you take half of Sunday to recover, then you go back again on Monday to your hard job and you know, for so long in Scotland especially that's been the culture. The working man came home with his pay on a Thursday night or a Friday night and handed it all over

to the wife so that she could pay the bills. He got his pocket money to go out and drink. And because we don't have that anymore I think young people are left in a kind of social vacuum. They've got – young people have got a lot of energy and that energy was expended previously in hard work and it's not expended anymore so what do they do with that energy? They go running about... and they don't see it as creating trouble, they just run about and have fun! But that fun is perceived by someone else to be troublesome.

Matthew is speaking firsthand on how people get caught in what he refers to as a “social vacuum” in a period of de-industrialization, underlining much of the theory and history discussed in other places in this project. Indeed, politicians have expressed concern over decline in this area of Scotland: “‘The decline of the British manufacturing and industrial base has decimated communities up and down the country,’ says Labour MP Katy Clark. ‘If you just talk about the constituency I represent [North Ayrshire and Arran], we used to have large-scale industrial and manufacturing industries which employed on occasion tens of thousands of people. All those jobs have gone and in their place, low-paid usually service-sector and public-sector jobs have come.’” (Jones, 2011: 36).

Matthew and I began to discuss some of the ways in which those deemed Neds by others are excluded from leisure activities that are legitimate/socially appropriate. Matthew provided an excellent example of how the nation's game, football (soccer to North Americans), was once the people's sport, but has grown increasingly unaffordable and thus inaccessible to the working class:

M: In football, it was so much more attended in the 60s and 70s because it was cheaper to get in. So now young people really can't afford to go and blow off steam at a football match shouting abuse at the referee and cheering their team on. So again, there's the frustration of 'I don't have the money to be able to go out and do that.'

However, as he continues, he elaborates on how the chaos that emerges from displacement and de-industrialization may be blown out of proportion by the media, thus creating what he cites as being folk heroes:

M: So it's reported more and I suppose newspapers and TV coverage now is more instant that everything's a big deal, you know, and if papers aren't selling, find the smallest disturbance that you can, and blow it out of proportion... Like yesterday... there had been a shooting incident at an East Ayrshire school!... It was only an airgun, but that never would have made the national news twenty years ago. It would've made the local papers and the culprit probably would have been found and not publicly flogged, but in real terms he would have been ostracized by the community. But you know sometimes, instead of ostracizing people like that, they're almost made into folk heroes.

Matthew raises a very interesting point with his final words about Neds as folk heroes. It appears that he is alluding to the idea of deviant behaviour (such as shooting an air gun) as being blown out of proportion by the media, contributing to a moral panic – basically, creating a flurry of attention and concern over an isolated or rarely-occurring event to make it seem like a large-scale crisis. Cohen popularized the concept of the moral panic with the subcultural war between Mods and Rockers in Britain and defines these key concepts as follows:

One of the most recurrent types of moral panic in Britain since the war has been associated with the emergence of various forms of youth culture (originally almost exclusively working class, but often recently middle class or student based) whose behaviour is deviant or delinquent. To a greater or lesser degree, these cultures have been associated with violence. The Teddy Boys, the Mods and Rockers, the Hells Angels, the skinheads and the hippies have all been phenomena of this kind... Groups such as the Teddy Boys and the Mods and Rockers have been distinctive in being identified not just in terms of particular events (such as demonstrations) or particular disapproved forms of behaviour (such as drug-taking or violence) but as distinguishable social types. In the gallery of types that society erects to show its members which roles should be avoided and which should be emulated, these groups have occupied a constant position as folk devils: visible reminders of what we should not be. (1972: 1-2)

As evidenced in other interviews in this project, it is a widely-held belief that Teddy Boys were (unlike other subcultures as rockers and greasers) the direct predecessors to the Neds of today. Considering Cohen's definitions above, Neds are a subculture that can be discussed alongside previous generations of folk devils – it's quite apparent that no parent wants their child to be a Ned, and many non-Neds frown upon the subculture. Matthew's mention of Neds becoming folk heroes is valid though, particularly when moral panics (such as an act of violence at a school) are glamorized to younger people. Simply put, violence equates power in many societies, and Scotland is no exception. The youths responsible for this individual act of violence will no doubt be held in high regard by some other people, prized for the fear and respect that they command through some actions, and thus may become folk heroes in a way. They may only be genuinely respected and celebrated for their actions by a few people, but the message is powerful nonetheless. As we will observe in the next section, Neds may also be considered folk heroes when one examines their presence in popular culture as a funny, celebrated facet of life in Glasgow as opposed to a dangerous subcultural threat.

Noah: Impersonating Neds

Noah is a young performer in Glasgow. Among his many talents, including (but certainly not limited to) music and comedy, he is well known in Glasgow for portraying a Ned character – a character that people even go so far as to refer to as a “persona” or alter-ego of Noah's. The character has become a celebrated and widely-recognized representation of Glasgow's Neds; Noah's character has received a good deal of media attention in Scotland and was frequently cited by other interviewees for this project as being a prime caricature of Ned culture. Dressed in Burberry garb, ballcaps, dirty white sleeveless tops, over-the-top fake gold jewellery, speaking in

a nasal whine, and with an infamous “Glasgow Smile” scar painted across his cheek, Noah flawlessly embodies the stereotype of a modern Ned when he’s in his Ned character.

The foul-mouthed, Buckfast-swigging, rapping, misogynistic, antisocial Ned character is a far cry from Noah himself. The character that he cultivates over the years is a product of sociocultural observations of life in Glasgow – a thoughtful, honest, evolving, and often hilarious composite of Glaswegians’ perspectives of what is often (mis)understood as the plight of society. He says he’s been developing the character since around 2006, and it has changed from a stage performance to a YouTube phenomenon to a forum for, at times, expressing his own social and political opinions through a different medium.

Speaking with other Scottish acquaintances who are familiar with this Ned character, it’s clear that his comedic portrayals are very well received by many Glaswegians as a sort of satirical folklore that draws attention to (and at times, makes light of) the place of Neds in Glaswegian society, and that this is a thing of value to them. However, Noah notes that he does not always receive such a warm reception. In particular, he emphasises Neds and class lines/class conflict when recalling an experience in which he was interviewed by a right-wing daily newspaper. A picture of Noah himself was placed alongside a picture of his Ned character in the article, which Noah described as “...the tone was very much emphasizing my most middle-class qualities, focusing on all of them, very much ‘he’s one of us, making fun of one of them,’ very condescending.” Again, citing the evolution of the character since its early days, he notes that “there are more self-reflexive references... (in live performances) there’s a couple of lines that refer to poking fun at the underclass for cheap laughs and that, and I would never do something like that.” It is clear that Noah is aware of class politics in Scotland and the position of both himself and his Ned character within this tension, and plays with these concepts through

his performances as a Ned: "...a lot of me being that character has given me a licence to get away with saying things that I wouldn't normally as well... it's pretty aggressive, it's lecherous."

Noah and I chatted about my curiosity regarding Neds as I could not identify a similar subculture in North America. As with other interview participants, he indicated that the council housing schemes and tenement building structures of Glasgow correlate to class structure, and that Canadians in particular may not deal with the same social issues as we do not, in his opinion, have the same structures of housing schemes on the same large scale: "It's like a battery farm, basically... That's a possibility I think, it's got something to do with it (Neds). The most comparable kind of thing I can think of in North America is like, the trailer park, the hillbillies." Noah had touched on an important hypothesis for this work: that there may be some similarities with how Neds as a subculture are treated and how White subcultures such as White Trash in the United States are treated. When asked about what being a Ned has to do with being White (if anything), Noah hesitated to answer, taking a moment to ponder the topic and place it within the context of his performances as the Wee Man:

S: If that's too loaded a question, then we can move on...

N: No, it's... a real pertinent point... If there's one thing I've noticed actually doing standup, um, when I'm in that character, if I even kind of broach subjects of race, um, like even in a subtle (way)... sometimes people don't know how to react because I've put on a character that they kind of expect me to be racist. Which is one of the trickiest things about doing that character, the like, kind of negative connotations... it is definitely kind of an interesting thing because you can understand why people might think that, but it's possibly more likely for White Neds to be just kind of "naturally" racist, do you know what I mean? Possibly not even in a malicious way. But just in a non-understanding kind of way, the way they've been brought up.

Noah then shares a story about walking through the Gorbals with a Black friend and encountering a group of young Neds who hurled racist abuse at him. He chuckles and indicates

that they were able to laugh it off because the Neds seemed that they “couldn’t believe there was anyone (Black) like that there!” This is interesting as it suggests that Neds do not encounter many non-White people in certain neighbourhoods in Glasgow, although given Noah’s lighthearted tone, it’s clear that the Neds in question may have just been looking to get a rise out of passerby (a common Ned pastime, as indicated by multiple informants). From this story, Noah raises another interesting point central to the theory and background of this thesis: “...(This encounter) is a strange thing, sort of, as well because a lot of the kind of feeling of Ned culture is, like, influenced by hip hop culture and stuff... a lot of Neds are kind of wannabe rappers and stuff. Because they’re kind of exploited a bit.” Similar to his mention of subjugated North American White subcultures and similarities to Neds, it’s important to note that Noah also mentioned connections to hip hop culture and feelings of exploitation without being prompted. He elaborates:

S: Neds and hip hop artists, yeah...

N: But I mean, that’s definitely quite a common thing, like um... hip hop... but you’ll find that sometimes a lot of them are a bit racist! (laughs a bit) But, they kind of take some bits from Black cultures that they think is cool and... but still, it goes back to some White supremacy stuff and things like that but it’s still fairly White. Genuinely, even physically, (Neds are) just like, the Whitest people. (both laughing)

Noah introduced an interesting possibility of White Neds performing (if not necessarily legitimately holding) racist attitudes while simultaneously celebrating and even appropriating identities that they may typically understand as being Black. When asked about what may attract Neds to hip hop or “Black” cultural aspects, Noah offers great insight into the aspirational nature of hip hop culture and how that may appeal to Neds in a subjugated socioeconomic situation:

N: The more kind of stereotypical view of hip hop is like 50 Cent and gangster rap and the like, glamorizing drugs and that, prostitution and that, and like

that's definitely kind of... Eminem as well, it's a huge influence with Neds... I suppose with hip hop it's the most kind of – it does undeniably kind of glamorize that sort of thing... it refers to that kind of lifestyle... the kind of violence, a lot of swearing and stuff, so I think the kind of aggressiveness of it is possibly what attracts Neds to it... I'm not doubting that Neds come from a kind of hostile thing or a violent background and stuff. But definitely not so glamorous as it's made out in hip hop culture... I can't imagine there's drive by (shootings) and stuff like that, but it's definitely more glamorous than getting stabbed outside a chip shop, do you know what I mean? (laughs)...

Noah is touching on a very interesting idea here, that of an “aspirational” subculture. It would appear that Neds are both aspirational and non-aspirational at the same time. They are non-aspirational in that they don't possess the same work ethic and desire to climb up the socioeconomic ladder as hardworking, upstanding middle- and upper-class citizens, as highlighted by Jones: “Everything is to be judged by middle-class standards because, after all, that is what we are expected to aspire to. The working class is therefore portrayed as a useless vestige made up of ‘non-aspirational’ layabouts, slobs, racists, boozers, thugs – you name it.” (2011: 137). Alongside the notion of Neds being the “bad” poor who opt into “illegitimate” ways to finance their lives, like drug dealing and relying on the welfare system, Neds are non-aspirational in their desire to not participate in productive economic activities (Venkatesh, 2006; Jones, 2011). However, Ned performances, such as wearing lots of fake gold jewellery and counterfeit designer brands, are aspirational in that they signify a desire to possess and portray capital. This accompanies the idea that Neds have a “hive mind” (which is discussed in other areas of this work) and appropriate styles that are valued by members of the upper classes to assert their own value, and that they are “...a sub-class of people who – because they have no broader class allegiances – are easily led by the bourgeoisie (just as gangs might throw their numbers behind certain politicians on election day)” (Gelder, 2007: 36).

When asked about how Neds appropriate the styles that they find glamorous, Noah elaborates further on Neds as an aspirational White subculture:

N: Yeah, (there is) definitely a kind of Americanization... this kind of Americanization of culture... their appropriation of hip hop culture and that. Actually, I've seen a lot of videos on YouTube as well, like Scottish south-siders, Asian gangs and that, and that's interesting as well. There's the P word (Paki) used and that, used kind of the same way that the N word is used in America... I don't know if you'd call that (use of language) Neddy, or call them Neds because it is kind of generally White... if you've ever seen racial accusations stuff like, they're saying that the people using those words (Neds) are mostly White.. The Hip Hop Shop down near Central Station, you should go there (for your project) as well! I've been in there buying props and costumes and stuff... a massive baseball cap and that. One thing that I've never understood people wearing... t-shirts and that with cannabis leaves. Wearing stuff that is promoting that and kind of glamorizing that culture. But it's like, a sure-fire way to identify someone that isn't a gangster. A real gangster wouldn't walk around with like, an advert of that...

Noah raises a fantastic point about the Americanization of Ned style. This is not a new concept – in his memoir on growing up in the deprived Glasgow slum of the Gorbals, Colin MacFarlane reflects on how the lower class tried to appropriate American styles which they perceived as status symbols: “Certain (Gorbals residents) resembled the old American gangsters in the movies, with flash suits, colourful ties, highly polished shoes, neat haircuts and gold rings,” (2009: 176). Carol Craig echoes this sentiment, citing how, in her lifetime and beyond, Glaswegians have always been interested in American popular culture, particularly fashion, Hollywood movies, and styles of speech (2009: 170).

As discussed in the theory section of this work, it's clear that by valuing hip hop cultures that are understood to be glamorous, Neds may be seen as an aspirational subculture. All informants expressed no doubt that the everyday experiences of some of these people may be dire, or at the very least mundane, and that by appropriating what they understand to be the glamorous aspects of another subjugated subculture, they find a form of escapism from their own

circumstances. Noah and I discussed this in greater depth, turning first to his own heritage which includes Jewish roots. His Ned character often wears a massive fake gold Star of David pendant around his neck in live shows and YouTube videos. This is both an inside joke and nod to his family (his father is also a comedian) and roots, and part of the performance of a Ned, as Neds and Chavs are understood to wear a good deal of tacky counterfeit gold jewelry. While many audiences understand it to be a silly part of a Ned outfit, part of a satirical act, Noah also states that it does incite controversy at times: "...In terms of the YouTube videos, the first one, the most kind of famous one, I wasn't wearing the Star of David in that. But in the subsequent ones, like in the last one anyway, I was wearing the Star of David, and it's amazing... how quickly YouTube comments for videos basically just degenerate into pure racism!" He cites that because of the anonymous nature of the Internet and YouTube comments, it is difficult to tell if this racism has direct or meaningful ties to the Ned phenomenon, but it does prove that his Ned character does bring about controversy over race and ethnicity in some ways.

Specific to Scotland, Noah raises some issues of identity and religion that are tied into bigotry. As with other informants, the Celtic/Ranger football divide in Scotland - and the religious conflict associated with these struggles - is also something that he encounters in his performances as a Ned character:

N: Constantly people are asking you if you're a Celtic fan or Rangers fan... it's sort of almost like they're trying to claim me! Depending on my character, they're trying to claim me or they're trying to pass me on as like, 'He must be a Celtic, look at the state of him!' (laughs) That's an interesting thing about this... it's definitely not just limited to, but is more prevalent among Neds - bigotry between Protestants and Catholics. It almost seems like White people try to appear cool by being a race... there's a certain amount of glamour in having a struggle, I can understand, no one wants to be just a plain, ordinary cracker!... they try to identify themselves like just, not typical... there's a certain amount of glamour with being identified as something other... but it's

definitely a way of identifying yourself as something different, something cooler like that, something exotic even...

Noah raises an excellent point about aspirational subcultures here and the desire to be different or exotic when surrounded by so much that is similar to you. He notes that while there are many diverse neighbourhoods in Greater Glasgow, he does not feel that he experiences a great deal of racial or ethnic diversity within the city centre, a notion shared by other interview participants. When he travels with work, performing educational plays at different schools, he encounters refugees and asylum seekers and notes that he has experienced some hostility from Glaswegians to these “outsiders”: “You don’t see it as much when you’re downtown... you can’t compare the differences as much as you can in other places, especially other places in Britain... I’ve overheard chat in those areas about like, ‘they’re coming in and taking all the houses,’ but you see the state of those houses and you’re like, ‘really? That’s horrible that they’re taking that fucking crumbling, piece of shit flat?’” Again, this shows that concerns over economics and class intersect with concerns over race and origin of people who are perceived as outsiders to some undefined “core” Glaswegian population.

This raises the question of what constitutes the “normal” or “core” Glaswegian population as opposed to some “other” – does it have to do with race? Class? Whiteness? To broach this difficult question involving what constitutes a “genuine” Glaswegian versus an “outsider”, I asked Noah about his encounters with people he would consider to be genuine Neds, and how Neds react to the Wee Man. People frequently ask him if he’s ever been “battered”, meaning beaten up by Neds, perhaps for making fun of them, but he insists that the reaction from Neds is overwhelmingly positive: “I can understand why they might expect that... Neds tend to have a much better sense of humour about it than anyone else though. They just appreciate the banter and appreciate the laughs.” When asked about people who respond less

positively to the character, he says that they tend to be middle class people disappointed because they see his act as making fun of Neds. However, as previously indicated, this is not his intent: “When I kind of started doing standup, I was so fed up with watching the stuff – every other Scottish comedian at the time on the circuit had a bit of material about slagging Neds off, and it was kind of cheap, a cheap reaction.” When he meets Neds, he stresses that part of the reason he gets a positive reaction is because he does not come off as patronizing – he is honest about what he refers to as his relatively middle class roots, coming from Motherwell and living in the Gorbals, and does not try to alter his personality to fit in with Neds, which they seem to appreciate.

Again, the conversation steered to what constitutes a genuine Ned for a Glasgow veteran like Noah. As someone with an interest in linguistics and etymology who has studied English at the university level, he believes that Ned is a far more appropriate term than Chav for the subculture in Glasgow. He does not believe the term necessarily stands for “non-educated delinquent”, but says that “it’s possible it came from the 1950s, the precursors to Neds could have been Teddy Boys, so maybe Teddy got dropped to Ted and then Ned. Possibly again, because of the voices, like (adopts nasal whine) Teddy Boys just became ‘Nnnneds’, (laughing).” When asked about the nasal whine, Noah raises an interesting point about masculinity, toughness and performing a nasal whine:

N: People have said that the voice is ridiculous and stuff but honestly, some of the voices I’ve heard, I’m like, ‘You must be putting that on!’... But it’s one thing I’ve always noticed contrary to the rest of the world, it seems that in this country like, the higher you speak, the tougher you are! Usually it’s the other way around, like the more bass in your voice, that means you’re a tough guy!... The higher you talk and the smaller you are means the harder you are (in Scotland)... it’s almost like a badge of honour how high your voice is and how much it comes through your nose... they kind of desire it!

Again, Neds are connected to the celebrated members of the underclass in previous generations, even going back as far as the mid-twentieth century Gorbals: “(The speech) technique was part of the secret of communication in the Gorbals, which sounded completely alien to anyone outside of the area. It was like having your own language within a language...” (MacFarlane, 2009: 100). The way that Neds speak is widely celebrated in recent examples of popular culture, such as in the popular comedy Chewin’ The Fat and currently, Limmy’s show, and again dates back to earlier examples of Teddy Boys (predecessors to Neds) in popular culture:

Some TV shows (in the 1960s) even featured Glasgow’s favourite patter merchants... The comedians Rikki Fulton and Jack Milroy dressed up as teddy boys and turned oan ra patter. Their catchphrases, such as ‘Helloer, china’, became everyday greetings between local people... Glaswegian is the lingua franca of Scottish comedy. Everybody in Scotland laps it up and it is perhaps for this reason that the biggest names in Scottish comedy have been from Glasgow.” (MacFarlane, 2009: 33-34)

This further links to Neds today and the importance of ways of speaking properly among members of the underclass when one considers MacFarlane’s statement on speech and survival in the dangerous Gorbals:

To survive in the Glasgow street culture, it was essential to pick up the lingo. It was always very important to choose phrases that made you sound as streetwise or as aggressive as the next person. The language used was a great signifier that you were a true product of the Gorbals. This was a completely different form of communication from that used by the middle classes who lived only a few miles away in other parts of the city... For example, if you were threatening to beat someone up, you said... ‘Ah’m gonnae kick yir heid in’. A friendly greeting to a male was ‘Awright, big man?’. (2009: 99)

As evidenced in other interviews for this project, the nasal whine and expressions used by Neds (both towards other Neds and with members of the general population) are often one of the

first things a respondent mentions when asked to describe what Neds are to them. It's clear that speech style has been a key factor to surviving life in Glasgow's underclass for quite a long time.

Overall, the conversation with Noah was an exceptionally enlightening one, as he provided a lot of information about how Neds appropriate other subcultural traits to perform their subculture identity – particularly insightful given the fact that Noah is a performer himself. Through his social commentary and comedy as a Ned character, he is opening new forums for discussing Neds as well as issues of race, ethnicity, class and disparity, proving time and time again that comedy may be the best icebreaker for opening these difficult areas for conversation: “You know how I was saying, like, the forms of bigotry and racism? Constantly people are asking you if you're a Celtic fan or a Rangers fan... but yeah, I'm neither, I'm part Jewish, I feel a bit shite. Already got beat by Germany six million nil.”

Nate: English Perspective on Chavs and Neds

Nate (20 years old, White, male) is from Newcastle, England and had been living in Glasgow for two and a half years at the time of fieldwork. Nate contacted me when he heard that there was a student doing a thesis involving Neds because he had a specific story to share about a prior encounter with them. Through sharing this story, the two of us were able to begin a dialogue that stretched beyond his frustrations involving Neds to some of the similarities between Chavs and Neds and the circumstances that contribute to the emergence of these subcultures, as well as the traits and circumstances that make Neds unique to Glasgow. Previous to moving to Glasgow for academic pursuits, Nate had not encountered Neds. Rather, growing up in Newcastle and spending time in different parts of England, he had a great deal to say about

encounters with Chavs, as well as insight into how Neds compare to Chavs. At the beginning of our interview, Nate was asked how he would describe Neds in Glasgow:

N: (In Newcastle) we have kind of the same... but they're referred to as Chavs... You can usually recognize them from what they wear. Usually tracksuits and stuff like that, shaven head, scowl, stuff like that... they used to be regarded with Burberry a few years ago, but that's dying out a bit now. But there is a kind of Ned fashion that goes with that. Since I've moved to Glasgow, like, you'd regard them a lot with Buckfast and stuff like that.

Aside from Buckfast (which will be elaborated upon further in interviews with Kevin and Arran) and Burberry, early in the interview Nate isn't sure exactly how to articulate how he feels Neds are different from Chavs, just that he feels they are different. As we talk, he shares a story of a jarring encounter he had had with some Neds when he first moved to Glasgow. As with other stories that many informants shared, the confrontation began with a group of people described as Neds by the victims antagonizing a person or small group of people with little to no provocation. For safety, the details of Nate's story will not be shared here, but it proved to be a useful starting off point for determining what a non-Glaswegian feels are identifiers of Neds.

SP: Were (the assailants) Neds?

N: Yes.

SP: How did you identify them as that?

N: Well, they were drunk or on ketamine... the clothes they were wearing, you know, we saw straight away that they were Neds. The way they were speaking, they were drinking Mad Dog 20/20. So you could tell straight away... one of (my friends) today, when I mentioned I was doing this (interview), and he said 'what's your experience with Neds?' and I was like, 'Well... (shrugs) we got stabbed!' (laughs)

Earlier in the interview, Nate had identified some visual cues associated with Neds, such as Burberry and tracksuits. Now it's clear that they are also associated with a certain way of speaking (the nasal whine), a preference for cheap alcohol and illegal drugs, and of course, the

ubiquitous knife crime. When asked about how Neds differ from Chavs, he stated that “(Neds) could be more violent... there’s more reports of knife attacks up here... but it could be easily skewed by the media.” It is important to mention here that while Neds are understood to be a regional variant of Chavs that is Scotland-specific, there may be some sort of historical precedent for a division between the terms. As pointed out by MacFarlane, the Neds of Scotland (once termed “Jocks” were understood in the 1940s to be better than gangsters from other countries: “The ‘Jocks’ were respected by gangsters... because they were thought to be harder and more vicious than most of their English counterparts,” (2009: 181). This could be used to explain why Neds can be compared to Chavs, but are truly unique and not just a regional synonym for the phenomenon. Again, as with other interviews, Nate cites that Neds are associated with knife crime and violence, however it’s important to note that even though Nate had experienced this stereotypical violence firsthand, he still felt that representations of Neds as perpetrators of knife crime may be blown out of proportion in the media, creating a sort of folk devil.

When asked about what, if anything, being a Ned had to do with being White, Nate indicated that he had experienced people “acting Neddy” who weren’t White, but that he wouldn’t necessarily classify them as “true” Neds:

N: I was walking just along my street. Actually, maybe they... no... they kind of, they acted Neddy but they didn’t dress Neddy. Different dress style and it wasn’t the same kind of accent but I think they were Asian, and they tried to start a fight with me... If someone had said like, ‘what are these people...’ I would’ve referred to them as Neds but I just referred to them as people. And they’re not proper Neds. They were kind of the same (as Neds) but different. They didn’t have the same identity and you wouldn’t – I wouldn’t – have called them Neds if they hadn’t started on me.

Nate felt that he was not able comment on the performative aspects of being a Ned; when asked about why Neds act and dress the way he indicated that they did, he was not entirely

certain. He comments on the desire to be a certain type of working class, which does not seem to be the type of working class that Neds embody:

N: I guess it could be a class thing. I have met people that are very like, you know... the whole class definition of if you're pursuing manual labour then you're working class, if it's not manual labour, if it's like office (labour), then you're not working class. And I've met people that have said they're working class but I mean their parents are teachers, or working in a bank, and you'd say 'well, you're not really working class, are you' and they'd go 'no, I am working class!' You do meet people that want to be working class. Want that working class identity, so they could portray that identity... Here, Robbie Burns could be a working class hero. He's a working class hero and people kind of rally around it.

This is interesting because it shows that perhaps regardless of class, there is something glamorous or desirable about being a certain type of working class, but that Neds are not that type of successful working class. Put another way, while British people in Nate's experience celebrate and desire to be proud members of the working class (at least by title, if not circumstance) they do not desire to be Neds, and perhaps Neds are the failed working class.

As a closing thought, Nate revealed that Neds emerged as a topic in a sociology class that he had taken in university. In my own experience studying sociology at Strathclyde from 2006-2007, the topic had been broached in different classes but was not part of the official curriculum for any class; rather, it was discussed alongside topics that were current at the time, such as antisocial behaviour orders. I asked Nate how the topic was addressed in 2011: "I don't think it was criminology, I think it was more (alongside) identity." This is very important as it could be an indicator of shifting attitudes in approaching Neds over the last few years. Perhaps rather than being a pesky buzzword or a temporary public issue in Glasgow, people are beginning to approach Neds as a symptom of deeper social, economic and political problems that need to be addressed.

Gary: A View From Glasgow's Markets

Gary is a middle-aged man who hails from Clydebank and has lived in Glasgow since his teenage years, mainly in the West End. He is a traveling salesman who demonstrates and promotes products in markets across Britain, and has worked in the notorious Barras Markets in Glasgow for many years. Though he says he doesn't encounter Neds as often in the undeniably more upscale West End of Glasgow as in other areas, he nonetheless has a strong and well-articulated opinion on what Neds are:

G: I'd characterize them as probably... their most predominant characteristic would be their stupidity... Poor educational background – which isn't the same thing (as stupidity) of course. Their bigotry. Neds belong to a certain subgroup, whether it be a football team supporter, or a group that likes a particular brand of music, or a particular form of fighting. Also, they tend to have, it seems to me, a short fuse when it comes to anger management repression... they have fairly low self esteem... They become part of a group so easily and so it's become part of a hive mentality which requires you to think very little of yourself.

Gary's initial assessment of Neds is unique in that, unlike many other respondents, he cites behavioural, emotional and mental issues rather than visual cues of what it is to be a Ned. In his experience, he could recall Neds from his childhood when he watched rival gangs from Clydebank and Drumchapel participate in knife fights outside his tower block. He recalls the excitement of watching the fights, but notes that rarely were people ever hurt; rather, the Neds seemed to enjoy the performance and spectacle of the chaos. Since that time he has identified Neds as a subgroup – other respondents similarly identified Neds as a culture or subculture – with a cohesive way of thinking and acting.

SP: You mentioned bigotry. What do you mean by that in this case?

G: Well, I guess it's somebody who has a belief without any evidence... Most Neds, I would guess, have a connection with... one of the two Glaswegian

teams. So, for example, if you're a Celtic supporter, then you'd hate the Rangers supporters and hate everything that's connected to the Rangers supporters, for example Loyalty or (Protestantism) or anything else in between...With the hive mind that Neds, I think, mostly have, the social mores are dictated by the strongest in the group and fallen in with by the rest of the group just to be part of the group, then that kind of bigotry is more or less essential. If the group hates things then you must hate things, and you come up with reasons to hate things, and the reasons will be nonsensical.

Gary seemed to strongly believe that Neds had a "hive mind", but it was unclear how one would come to be a Ned and thus share in this mindset. When asked about this, he indicated that there are older Neds as well as young Neds, and that one is not born that way, rather they learn antisocial behaviours growing up in certain lacklustre environments. Furthermore, he suggested that the antisocial behaviour exhibited by Neds may possibly come about as a coping mechanism for dealing with social deprivation: "If you look at a TV show like *The Wire*, in Baltimore... kids are brought up on the corners selling heroin or crack or whatever... They see (these circumstances) as normal! And if you're surrounded by a normal situation that's not normal to the rest of the world, if you have a closed mindset, all you need (are) closed opportunities..." Gary is discussing how coping mechanisms (not unlike the illegitimate/legitimate economies discussed elsewhere in this work) that are atrocious to members of other classes or cultures may become normalized and attractive to members of a subculture dealing with deprivation.

When asked about Ned aesthetics, Gary's description of a Ned was similar to those of other informants – adopting a speaking voice with the infamous nasal whine, carrying a knife, wearing white trainers and tracksuits in loyal football colours, regardless of the weather: "Stupid use of clothes... inappropriate clothing for the weather (is a Ned thing), but also the shellsuits are forever associated with Ned culture." I asked Gary if this was much different from how Neds carried themselves previously, since the Neds he remembered in his childhood: "Well, it's kind of... shell suits and that. Tracksuits were always... associated with Neds' thinking... Back in the

70s... there were plenty of Neds with long hair... and when the punk thing came in and long hair kind of became unfashionable (because long hair) was associated with being a hippie and violence was at the other end of it.” What Gary is saying here is that since the 1970s, Neds have adopted stylistic cues that align them with certain ideals, such as violence over pacifism, or even movements, such as the dissatisfaction and anarchy that came with the punk movement (as discussed elsewhere in this work, such as with Hebdige and subculture). However, when asked about the aspirational dynamic of adopting such styles to perform an identity, Gary explains that the hive mind inhibits full expression through aesthetics:

G: People who are easily led are more likely to buy things (or brands) because they’re told to buy them... (as a salesman) they buy the things for a number of reasons. But I lose respect for the people who buy something just because it’s Adidas or because it’s Reebok... back in the 70s Adidas were very low status. I remember my mom buying me Adidas because they were cheap, but then all of a sudden Adidas became expensive and better because they were more higher up... Neds, being not especially known for their self-awareness or independence of mind, would be more prone to that hive mind (purchasing) thing.

It became clear quite quickly that Gary felt the hive mind was essential to the Ned subculture, and that Neds were not born as such, but developed out of various circumstances that result from socioeconomic deprivation. Asking Gary to elaborate on this, he indicated that education (or lack thereof) was an issue, that there was a “peer pressure to fail” from other Neds once one felt they were systemically shut out of the system, a point that was also addressed by Michael Boles in his experiences with the education system. He also briefly cited that Ned culture was a particularly macho culture and that racism was a key factor that the subculture organized around, although it was not limited to the subculture:

G: I think racism is endemic to the whole culture to be honest. I don’t think that racism can be said to be exclusively Neds’ characteristic – I would guess that it’s a lot more preponderant... Since I’ve worked in markets and shows

amongst the general population here, (there has been) a huge amount of racism and homophobia. It's almost as though if you don't tell a racist joke, you're foreign, do you know what I mean?... So that's why I say it's endemic to our culture. And Ned culture is part of that (larger culture).

This conversation with Gary was peppered with comical stories about his encounters with various Glaswegian characters – Neds certainly not underrepresented – during his many experiences selling goods in the Barras Markets. When I revealed to him that I had been doing participant observations at the Barras Market and West End Market in Partick, he affirmed my choice of field sites, saying with a great and appreciative belly laugh, “For a social or cultural anthropologist as well, the Barras Market must be fascinating! I've worked the Barras Market hundreds of times over the years and it's a toilet, it's a horrible place, it really is... (laughing appreciatively) it's a little bit of anarchy still running in the UK.”

Interjection: Investigating Glasgow's Markets

Glasgow has many unique indoor/outdoor market areas that operate throughout the year, drawing locals and visitors alike. At the time of fieldwork, in the wet winter of 2011, the character of Glaswegian markets was very special – as it was still very much an off-season for tourists, a walk through a market provided a great insight into not just the spending habits, but the socializing of locals in various areas of Glasgow. In the summer, the (in)famous Barras Markets are abuzz and exceptionally lively. Stalls range from local food and souvenirs, to drug paraphernalia and leather fashions, to counterfeit cigarettes and imposter luxury goods, to ripped DVDs and CDs. There is a carnivalesque atmosphere as marketgoers swap tins of beer, cigarettes, candy floss – the market is very much a social outing more than a simple place of commerce. However, in the winters in Glasgow, the atmosphere is different, but nonetheless unique.

A weekend walk through a central market in Glasgow is a truly revealing experience. Trotting through the rain in wellies, the sidewalk outside the entrance to the market is pockmarked with old gum, cigarette butts, broken bottles and other remnants of a wild night previous. The market exterior is illuminated with neon signs – Open Late, Arcade, Shirts Made Here, Cheques Cashed – a chaotic mish-mash of colour and light, even on a quiet afternoon. Pressing through the glass double-doors and shaking an umbrella off onto the linoleum floor, one is faced with several choices for a path through the market. Several long, crooked lines stretch out in different directions, each lined with vendor stalls of different sizes and heights, forming jagged cubicles throughout the cavernous fluorescent-lit room. There is no rhyme or reason to the locations of specific stalls; rather, each vendor site is transient and each site can be filled by another vendor the very next day. The stalls are more or less collapsible, composed of plywood, paper, cardboard, tape, staples, anything to section it off from adjacent stalls and provide a sense of privacy and individuality in a place where the various wares and services otherwise blend into the same landscape of light and sound.

The first shop on the right is a ramshackle stand dealing in rather dicey looking furniture. The shelving units and bookcases are advertised on signs and by an enthusiastic salesman as “top-quality”, “imported” and “last-chance”, but a quick glance by a sceptical onlooker may describe it differently. Most of the furniture is composed of painted particleboard panels held together with flimsy nails, but well-lit and accompanied by pictures of glamorous apartments to suggest an heir of success and excess. Any furniture purchased from that stand come in flat-packed boxes, not unlike IKEA, and all sales are final upon one signing the receipt of purchase.

Strolling along the central thoroughfare, the next shop is what is described by marketgoers as a “card shop”: it sells greeting cards and gifts for various occasions. The things

on display in this stand vary from the wares available at the other card shops on the high street in that the goods available at the market stall are geared towards the edgier (or perhaps raunchier) celebrations, such as bachelor/bachelorette parties. Gifts geared toward fairly innocuous celebrations such as sweet sixteen birthdays are encrusted in rhinestones and feathers, such as tiaras and angel wings for a birthday girl to wear to an extravagant party. Wares that aim for the bachelorette set are similarly extravagant yet affordable – wife-to-be sashes, tartan garters and comedic sexual aids done up in the royal colours are on offer.

Heading toward the central hub of the market, there is a noticeable improvement in the quality of the stalls in that they appear to be more permanent than the stalls closer to the entrance. They have illuminated signs (still, they plug in to the wall or floor sockets and can be moved) and glass cases crammed with organized products. The booth that sells phone wares has a semi permanent desk in the centre of it, staffed by a salesperson. They sell cases and covers for mobile phones and, not unlike the “You Bring It, We Bling It!” stand, can affix rhinestones of various colours and in various patterns to any mobile phone. While they do not officially sell mobile phones, and certainly do not connect to any service providers in the United Kingdom, they do unlock phones, “no questions asked”. This implies in no subtle way that found or stolen mobile phones which are secured by passwords can be brought to this stand to have them unlocked and thereby used and/or potentially resold on the black market.

Continuing down the path to the centre of the market, one encounters more prestigious goods as they walk down the aisle. Booths full of counterfeit shoes and jewellery are well-lit and draw a good deal of customers. They boast cheap high heeled shoes that don’t quite match up, but are covered in Chanel symbols and, at the same time, are painted with the iconic Louboutin red sole. Most pairs are adorned with multiple rhinestones, chains and baubles that are not

associated with the original styles the shoes have been based on, but serve to embellish the product. Faux leather Louis Vuitton knockoff handbags line one shelf, adjacent to displays of forgeries of Thomas Sabo charms to attach to the trendy cluster charm bracelet. Under the scratched glass of the counter display lay ceramic plates, mugs, teacups and other memorabilia depicting the images of William and Kate, the glamour of the impending wedding fetishized and glamorized under the neon lights.

At the hub of the market, the spokes of the lines of stalls meet in a large open area. Benches and tables line the centre of the floor where patrons perch, drinking tea out of Styrofoam cups and sharing chips off paper plates. Food vendors circle this area, selling sandwiches, rolls, sweets and tea, and (although difficult to ascertain through the signage) tins of lager and red wine in white cups. The entertainment vendors also operate in this area, catering to old and young marketgoers alike. For the younger set, flashing lights and electronic music pound from the videogames that line the area. Points can be racked up and prizes can be won from the variety of games that beckon to those not old enough to gamble. Quiz machines call out to those old enough to win meagre cash prizes in a leisure atmosphere on a rainy afternoon. Groups (young and old alike) form around specific machines when someone is on a lucky streak, and dissipate to gather at the tables and socialize when the luck is down. It's at the hub of the market that people can consume each other – what they wear, what they say, what has happened through the week – in the centre of the spokes of consumption that the market presents.

The hub of the market is a place where young Neds show off recent purchases from the market. Girls sport fresh piercings – multiple ear piercings, nose rings and belly rings and fresh tattoos are shown off despite the chilly, wet weather. There is a tattoo and piercing booth in the market that to my eyes looks less than sanitary, but does cheap and quick work on patrons.

Young females can also visit stalls for cheap imported makeup and hair extensions, both staples for the Nedette (as evidenced in later parts of this work when talking with Neds). Male Neds can pick up discounted (and often counterfeit) football club wear such as jerseys, hats, and scarves for a fraction of the price of official Rangers and Celtic stores on the high street (more popular for tourists with money to spare).

Moving outward once again from the busy hub of the market, more interesting stalls emerge. Perhaps the most unique one I experienced personally during fieldwork is the “Your Face In Glass” stand. Early on during this trip, some friends had pooled their money to purchase a gag gift for another friend for his birthday. They decided to go to the market and buy a “trashy” gift as an inside joke: a particularly awkward looking portrait of his face laser-engraved onto a heavy pint glass. According to them, the gift was decidedly tacky and below them (a “really Neddy prezzie”), yet just expensive enough for a group of students that he’d feel obligated to keep it for years to come (and for the record, the gift was very well received). Visiting this stand on my own, it was fascinating to see the work that the owner did in general. People had all kinds of events memorialized through this service: family pets enshrined in paperweights, sports achievements preserved in glass bookends, deceased family members. My peers mocked the fact that for a Ned, this present is (in their opinion) something very valuable, but for those above the Neds, the gifts are tacky and to purchase one is an ironic and mocking act. That being said, they unironically adored the man who ran the stall: “He had all the banter!” His storytelling and dry sense of humour combined with the pride he took in his work were a wonderful combination, and I very much enjoyed talking to him. He is wary of titling people Neds: “A customer is a customer,” he shrugs. “People of all stock from this neighbourhood get gifts here. Your mates put their friend making a daft face on a mug – that’s funny for them and

for him. If someone wants their dog's face on a teacup and that makes them happy, who the fuck am I to judge them? Or anyone else?" he laughs. "But maybe I'm a Ned too, a wee bit at least. Maybe I just like trashy things. But the people that shop here, see? They put down their coin for something that's going to be special to someone, and that's not a bad thing, especially for me (winks)."

Nearby is a Ned staple in markets – the hilariously titled "You Bring it, We Bling it!" stall. There's something inarguably Neddy about this particular service, however the name alone implies that those running the stall are in on the joke (at least to some extent). The premise is as the title suggests: one can bring virtually any item to the stall, and they cover the item in patterns of rhinestones. Chatting with the woman who was working the stall that day was a treat. She's cheerful and upbeat, with glittery rhinestones on her nails and mobile phone. When asked what kind of people utilized her service, she looks me dead in the eye and says "Neds." She then bursts into laughter before elaborating that "all kinds from the neighbourhood" pop by. Their demographic is mostly young, or people looking for gifts for the teenagers/youths in their life. "Neds love this kind of shite. The bigger, the brighter, the heavier, they go mental over it. But everyone likes a bit of colour, don't they?" According to her, female Neds or male Neds looking for gifts for the females in their lives bring in a great deal of business. Playboy bunny emblems, nicknames, red lips, phrases such as "bitch" and "wicked" are popular sellers – if the recipient is male, Celtic or Rangers football club logos or initials are hot ticket items. This is important to make note of because one could assume that titles such as "bitch" or logos such as the Playboy bunny are insulting or imply low class (or at least, low self-esteem). But there is something undeniably bold and rebellious about not just claiming these symbols, but putting them on your belongings in glittery colours. For Neds, perhaps blinging out one's phone, shoes, or hat is a

sign of rebellion and not just decoration. The woman behind the counter at the Bling It stall directs me to the next stall to get a look at another place where, in her opinion, Neds purchase gifts or gifts are purchased for Neds.

It sells wares of all kinds – mugs, t-shirts, jewelry, framed photos, rugs... all manner of accessories and household goods. Each piece is emblazoned with a famous figure, be it Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Audrey Hepburn, or (bizarrely) Che Guevara. As far as I could tell while inspecting the items, none of the images were licensed (in other terms, these are technically counterfeit goods in the market yet again). The vast majority of the goods were marketed toward adults rather than children, which seems like a fairly innocuous assumption until one considers the only non-human figure which graces so many surfaces: that of the Japanese cartoon character Hello Kitty. The character's picture appears on bras, keychains and cocktail glasses – an image marketed to children sprayed across adult goods. These goods suggest that the buyer participates in celebrity worship but can also be infantilized.

A walk through a Glasgow market shows a lot about what lower-income youths in these areas find appealing, and speaking with vendors reveals what Neds like. Discovering why Neds like what they like, and the meanings that these goods hold for them, is something that I move on to tackle in the next chapter of this work, *Talking With Neds*. Although an identical sordid array of stalls may not be here next week, the themes and symbols will remain the same.

Arran: Celebrating Neds

Arran is a Glasgow artist who is gaining fame for his Ned-centric artwork. His art is unique in that it reflects warmly on Neds, not as a threat to Glaswegian society or as a subculture that is trivialized, but rather in a warm and lighthearted way. Arran relates to Neds in a variety of ways, and as will be discussed later, has experimented (and has had family members

experiment) with Nedism at various points in his life. To understand where Arran's perspective comes from, he shares a bit about his general perspective:

A: ... Part of the thing that I liked about the whole Ned thing was that it's not all just about fighting and stabbing each other, there's actually a lot of humour... they can kind of laugh at themselves, you know? There's something quite intriguing about it just because it's the level of humour involved. And the language, like the way that they talk, the crazy words they make up, all that kind of thing is just... it's definitely a culture, a real culture which is – lots of people turn their nose up at them... (The artwork has) more to do with that it connects with peoples' sense of humour and what they already know about (Ned) culture.

When asked about how Neds respond to Arran's artwork, he says that the response has been not just positive, but self-reflexive even:

A: The only times that I've been directly in touch with Neds as such has been things like, you know, I'd occasionally do things like paintings on the railings where you hang your work and people come and buy it. I've had Neds walking past and going (to each other) 'Oh, there's a picture of you!' and sort of laughing at it... when I first had some Ned artwork I actually had a few people saying 'You're going to get your head kicked in, you know... some wee Ned's going to say 'what are you doing, you're taking the mickey', but that's never happened. It's always been that they think it's funny and they embrace it... it's been largely positive and I've had some fairly strange responses from some sort of more middle-class people who say it's irresponsible to do pictures of this kind of thing.

This is interesting in that it shows that Neds recognize the visual cues associated with their subculture in Arran's artwork, and that, at least in his experience, they enjoy the representations. However, looking at responses from people of other classes, Arran's experiences mirror the comments made by Noah in that there is a certain amount of criticism or snobbery involved in these judgments. Arran has faced criticism for the content of his artwork in the press before, and hints that this may be due to the fact that his artwork provides some sort of legitimacy to the subculture.

Turning the interview towards Ned symbols, Arran elaborates on how Buckfast tonic wine has become associated with Neds:

A: The sort of brushes that I've had with Neds and, like, my little brother, who's not a Ned now but kind of laughs at his past self – they do drink a range of drinks, but there's something really iconic about the purple bottle with that label on it... I wanted to give them a wee trademark (in the artwork)... I'm not sure if (earlier) it was necessarily The Ned Drink, but I think over the years it's become more and more. It's a part of the class thing... this crazy situation where it's actually made by monks or it's derived from this kind of village source and I'm sure that they never intended it to be what it's become. And I feel sorry for them that they're now in this position where they're making a fortune from something that's become slightly negative.

Arran raises an interesting and recurring point about Buckfast as a Ned symbol here – a notion that we will return to again in this work. The association of Buckfast with Neds and antisocial behaviour will also be discussed with Andrew, who explored the phenomenon in his mini-documentary about the social implications of Buckfast.

The Neds in Arran's paintings usually wear tracksuits and ballcaps, which most other informants also indicated are understood to be the Ned outfit of choice. He joked that for a while, toughness or clout in the Ned world “correlated with the angle of your hat!” and also referenced the affectation of a nasal whine as key Ned identifiers (“I think you'd be hard pushed to find any other culture where boys are encouraged to talk in that way,” he stated, similarly to Noah's statement about the nasal whine and masculinity). In particular, he cited the “ridiculous look” of all-white tracksuits that he has seen some Neds wearing. When asked about why he thinks this is a popular look among Neds, he indicated that

A: I'm sure it's a Hollywood celebrity culture, that somewhere there was a, maybe through like gangster rap or something, there was... a phase where people like maybe David Beckham were wearing crazy tracksuits that then became somehow acceptable as a fashion even though they're ridiculous, you know?... Neds are quite aspirational and their styles... they wouldn't wear any

old tracksuit, they'd wear a tracksuit that cost a bit of money, and they would slag off anyone that had a Dunlop tracksuit or whatever, you know? So they kind of aspire to things and think that certain things are classy then the rest of society think they're just (shakes head).

As with other interview participants, Arran posits that Neds wear certain things – ascribe value to certain fashions – because they are an aspirational subculture. There is a meaning and a value attached to certain goods, particularly those associated with success, such as tracksuits worn by a football hero, which may not be seen to have the same value by other members of society, particularly members of middle and upper classes. Furthermore, Arran says he once encountered a Ned mother on a bus with children called Versace and Armani: “It’s aspirational, but it’s fallen so short, you know?” This could contribute to Neds being mocked by these people for wearing such fashions or emulating what they consider to be of value in the wrong way. When asked about what icons Neds might idolize or try to emulate, Arran indicated that Eminem was popular with younger Neds, while Oasis was popular with older Neds. Liam Gallagher, a member of Oasis, was cited as being “quite mouthy and Neddy... he was a Ned when he was younger.” This is in line with Julie Burchill’s (2005) documentary on Chavs, in which she identified celebrity Chavs such as the Gallaghers and the Beckhams. When asked why Neds identify with certain figures such as these musicians, Arran explained: “It’s often maybe not so much to do with music... it could be gangster rap, it just depends on, you know, if someone’s standing up being all callous, then they kind of align themselves with it – now it’s definitely, I’m sure it’s all American music, you know... basically, probably music that’s quite negative in (its) tones.” Again, hip hop is cited as something that Neds identify with, in this case hip hop (or music in general) with negative tones that perhaps Neds feel expresses their frustrations with their place in Glaswegian society. When asked why he thinks Neds identify with music or musician icons with a negative tone, he elaborates: “Your Neddishness as an individual is based

on how you look to your peers... the more of the kind of negative things they can display in front of their mates, the bigger the man they are. And obviously if the music they listen to has those messages in it, then Neds are going to like that kind of music.”

Over the course of the hour that Arran and I spoke for, it became clear that he felt Nedism was something that one performed, at least for a time. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is through the stories that he and others shared about their own experiences, or experiences of other close people in their lives, with experimenting with Nedism. At the beginning of the interview, Arran shared a story about his younger brother: “I have a younger brother who became a Ned for a wee while... it just became something that I really wanted to illustrate... We had a very strict (religious) upbringing and then for literally, like, in the space of a year and a half my wee brother started to go like (adopts nasal whine) ‘aye, man!’, adopting a completely different culture from the way we’d been brought up. And it’s just fascinating!” He also spoke of his own experiences flirting with Nedism, which he indicated were fairly commonplace things for young males in Scotland to do. While he couldn’t speak for the female side with any specifics (“I’m sure girls go through the same misery that boys go through”), he indicated that young boys in Scotland will adopt certain fashions and the infamous nasal whine that Neds speak in for a period. But there is a certain degree of “toughness” that separates true Neds from those merely experimenting. As with other interviewees, participation in more serious crime, such as theft and violent crime, as well as a propensity for fighting and violence in general characterise genuine Neds. Simply put, some youths cannot commit to the more dangerous activities they associate with genuine Neds, and the stage ends there. However, Arran also raised an interesting point about how easy it may be for some people to resist these activities as opposed to others. Youths who are surrounded by dire circumstances such as poverty and violence may have a more

accepting attitude of these activities because they are normalized in some ways, whereas others – particularly youths from middle and upper classes – may not be “pulled into this world where it’s quite easy to be pulled”. While Arran believes Nedism can be a phase that young people go through, he also cites that there are those who stay Neds as they get older, almost as though it becomes a chronic condition:

A: It is a phase... you basically have these sort of formative years... where there’s a percentage in school that are adopting Neddy type linguistics or whatever... they say the majority of young guys in gangs, they’re all certain age, and then it all tails off when you get older. Neds, I think, are generally about sixteen or seventeen years old and then you’ve gotta be really scared of the older ones because they’re just... it’s not something they’re doing to look cool... it continues and they end up in a bad place.

However, in general, Arran’s view of Neds is sunny and optimistic rather than fearful and condemning:

A: I think that Ned culture... I think it represents the best elements of Scotland in many ways! You look at all of the culture in terms of comedy, humour, all the things that most people think are funny about Scotland and it’s usually got a Ned slant. You know, so all of the comedies that have come out of that – things like *Chewing the Fat* or *Limmy’s Show* which is current – they all dig into Ned culture... people love the banter! They love the callousness of it! So it is celebrated! It’s celebrated at a cultural level that then... on the ground it is intertwined with the more negative sides of Ned culture, but it’s still something that’s quite... it’s positive... I don’t think it’s so much to do with White Trash because I think that a lot of people across Scotland’s classes have an appreciation for the kind of Neddy banter... it’s part of their identity, you know?

This point of view is unique in that he is the first person who does not draw parallels between Neds and subjugated North American populations such as White Trash. However, Arran does think that Neds are subject to a good deal of class snobbery, exemplified by such phenomena as the banning of Ned symbols (such as Burberry) from certain public settings, such as music festivals: “...It’s like discrimination where you’re just saying ‘you’re dressed a certain

way...' Looking at something like Limmy's show... he's had junkie pals for example... now he's creating something that is of cultural value. So I think it's too cut and dry to say Neds are bad, Ned fashions are bad. It's just stupid." Here he is acknowledging that there are shared cultural notions of what it means to be a Ned, or to look or perform like a Ned, and while it may be frowned upon in some circumstances, the other side of the coin is that in other examples, they're celebrated (such as in contemporary comedies). In this case, whether Neds are a problem or a source of entertainment and agreed-upon identity, it really is in the eye of the beholder.

Rosie and Daniel: Opposing Viewpoints

Rosie and Daniel are a married Glaswegian couple in their forties who have each lived in two of the most infamous housing estates in Glasgow, Castlemilk and Easterhouse. Despite having very similar experiences with life on the housing estate and the poverty and deprivation that many claim to encounter there, on the subject of Neds, the two have very different opinions. When asked to tell me what Neds are, Daniel feels that they are "gangs of inadequates that hang out... if you get a Ned on his own, he's nothing..." who spend much of their time intimidating people. Rosie somewhat agrees with this, feeling that Neds can be groups or individuals who use drugs, commit crimes, pointlessly harass and intimidate random people, and come from poor neighbourhoods. They also both believe that Neds are a product of bad parenting as well, and that "scum" parents often produce the type of children that become Neds. Daniel in particular stated that "We're (as parents) a minority. We're bringing up children with respect." However, their shared viewpoints start to diverge when they discuss their daughter's brief stint with Nedism. Rosie said that even though she was brought up to be "respectful" she had a phase where she "acted like a Ned" which included adopting a certain parlance and wearing casual gear (another term for track suits). She says that her and her partner disagree about Neds as "(he)

things you have to be doing something criminal to make (you) a Ned, really, and I don't. You just have to hang about on a street corner..." She feels that Neds, while they can be violent and disrespectful at times, are characterized first and foremost by a sort of laziness, a satisfaction with simply hanging out and occupying public space when they could be doing other productive activities (for example, she feels that these youths could be "playing games" outside rather than "just hanging out"). Daniel feels that the reality is far more dire, and that if Neds are being "lazy" and hanging out on street corners it is because of a lack of options:

D: They don't always have something to do! I grew up around Easterhouse and there was nothing, there were no clubs, there was no swimming pool, there was nothing. They built all these housing estates, (they) were built so that they could get rid of the slums, and then around the city centre. So they built a lot of houses and a couple shops and a few schools and expected people to be happy. Well, the kids had nothing to do whatsoever... it became gangs. Just fighting against each other, basically, for something to do...

It's clear here that Daniel believes Neds become Neds for many reasons, some of them personal (such as poor parenting/bad upbringing) and some of them systemic (lack of opportunities for socialization and development in the council housing environment). To explore the roots of the beliefs he holds, I asked him to elaborate on how the Neds of today may be similar or different from the Neds he encountered growing up:

D: ...in the 60s was when it became sort of fashionable to become a Ned. Before that there was razor gangs and all that but they weren't Neds because they used to work for a living. Most Neds tend not to work for a living. They want everything for nothing. They expect everything for nothing. They don't show respect to anybody, and it's like – I've been spoken down to because I've always worked... I've been told by at least six people I'm crazy for working... Back in the 60s and 70s they were Neds and they would fight with other gangs, gangs of Neds, but they still had respect for older people and respect for the police... Now... they've got no respect for anybody. I think it's just a complete lack of respect and upbringing – bad upbringing, or no upbringing.

Daniel's take on the evolution (or perhaps, devolution) of Neds is interesting in that it is a personal experience that mirrors the bulk of academic literature on Chavs and Neds. To begin with, he acknowledges an association between Neds and the razor gangs of Glasgow in the earlier parts of the 20th century (such as the main characters from *No Mean City*). He also links a lack of respect for others to the idea that Neds of today have no work ethic, although he doesn't expressly introduce the possibility of mass unemployment due to a lack of job opportunities in the crumbling economy over the past few years. Daniel relegates Neds to the realm of the "undeserving poor" - and Rosie tends to agree - when they discuss Ned style and aesthetics. Rosie states that Neds wear the clothes they do ("better tracksuits" and "expensive trainers") as "a bit of bravado... it's a statement about money."

D: ...it's been too easy to be unemployed and get everything for nothing and then bring your children up like that... these (Neds) are fourteen or fifteen years old saying 'I'm not working!'... They want everything but they don't want to work for it. They want a nice car... they want a nice lifestyle, but they're not prepared to work hard for it.

Both Daniel and Rosie agree that Neds value certain styles (such as cheap, souped-up cars like Subarus or Vauxhalls) that non-Neds mock for being tasteless. They feel that the disgust that non-Neds have for Ned aesthetics is that Neds refuse to work legitimate jobs to earn the money for such flashy displays of wealth: "They're proud of getting something for nothing... and the more they can get for nothing, the better it makes them feel." Interestingly, Daniel and Rosie believe that displays of "low-class" wealth (such as driving a relatively inexpensive car such as a Subaru and having it modified with blue underlighting and rims on the tires) are valued among Neds as opposed to displays of "high-class" wealth (such as driving a more expensive vehicle, such as a brand-new BMW). They explained that this is because the latter suggests one had to work very hard at a legitimate job to afford such a nice car, while the former indicates one was

perhaps able to save up their unemployment benefits and opt actively out of employment to enjoy their leisure pursuits. Put another way, Neds place value on goods that represent a lack of legitimate employment and eschew goods that indicate one is hard-working at a “legitimate” job. According to Daniel, “If a Ned gets a job, he generally stops becoming a Ned, and is rejected by other Neds,” and symbols that indicate one has a job may cause people to question if that person is actually a genuine Ned, causing damage to one’s reputation within that subculture.

This interview also further confirms my claim that Canada does not have a subculture that is comparable to Neds – one of the initial things that sparked my interest in the topic, as outlined in the introduction to this work. The couple says that when they visited Vancouver and Toronto, the absence of a Ned-like population stood out as being an exceptional part of their visit. Daniel states that he never felt safer because, among other things, “you don’t have Neds in Canada.” Rosie added that Canada has poor people, homeless, drug addicts, “all the plights of big cities,” but that larger cities in Canada do not have “deliberate dole-scrungers who actively seek trouble and violence.” When asked how one could spot one of these dole-scrungers on visual cues alone, Rosie insists that Canadians don’t have people who look like Neds: “Well, you may have young people who are up to no good, but they’re just not the same as Neds... You have young men who dress like they’re in rap videos, no respect for how they actually look, because every country does, don’t they?” Rosie believes that Neds dress like the glamorous rappers and television personalities they see on American television because they seek to approximate that type of value and power, but that they don’t have British stars to appropriate. According to her, the footballers that many young men look up to do not have the style and scandal associated with their job that hip hop stars do with theirs, and Neds who “have some money or are from better neighbourhoods” appropriate these styles accordingly.

Kevin: Buckfast and Ned Symbols

Kevin is a Glaswegian male in his twenties who works in the film industry. Several years ago, he produced a short documentary on Buckfast tonic wine for a college project, and the video gained a decent (and very much unexpected) following on YouTube. The 8-minute project examines the association between Buckfast and antisocial behaviour in Glasgow. It looks at how the wine, made by Benedictine monks in Buckfast Abbey, has become a symbol for social ills in Scotland in the media – “a serum for boredom”, as described in the film. Interviewees in the film associated the drink with Neds and go so far as to not drink the beverage in their own homes, opting rather to drink it in a park, because friends and neighbours associate that specific drink with being a Ned. These same people describe Neds as violent and “naturally aggressive” people who are born and raised as Neds and can’t escape the cycle. Even though it was a short project for a film class (and something that Kevin never expected would reach a wider audience) it underlines the role of Buckfast as a Ned symbol, and something feared by non-Neds because of its association with the dangerous and violent subculture. This is perhaps best highlighted at the end of the film when the owner of an upscale restaurant that had to change the name of their Buckfast Pie to “Abbey Pie” to circumvent negative connotations held by patrons. The film also notes that certain stores have stopped carrying the wine entirely in order to distance themselves from the negative associations people have with Buckfast.

To backtrack slightly, the conversation with Kevin began with his initial intentions with the Buckfast documentary. As mentioned previously, he did not anticipate the film developing a following outside of the film class it was made for. The class involved producing “something that was relevant to Scottish culture or Glasgow’s culture, so I thought, what’s more relevant than Buckie?”

Another documentary (which Kevin was not involved with) was produced by BBC Scotland and premiered in early 2010. Entitled the Buckfast Code, it elaborates on some of the topics Kevin's Buckfast project addressed, and is useful for framing how powerful a symbol Buckfast has become in Scotland for a North American audience. The Buckfast Code examines how the drink is not just linked to, but synonymous with, irresponsible drinking in Scotland – binge drinking, antisocial behaviour, and violent crime in particular. While the problem drinkers in question (a group which is never clearly defined in this documentary) were understood to consume beer, vodka, cider, and other alcoholic drinks, Buckfast was singled out in particular as problematic (for example, it was estimated in the film that Buckfast bottles account for almost half the littered bottles in the Cumbernauld area). In The Buckfast Code, the Glasgow Centre for the Study of Violence confirms what other interviewees for this project have stated: that the drink is popular because it is inexpensive, widely available, high in alcohol content at 15%, and caffeinated (a bottle contains as much caffeine as 8 cans of Coca Cola at 281 mg). Given these factors, it is easy to understand how Buckfast became a favourite of “street drinkers”: a representative from the Glasgow Centre for the Study of Violence stated that “It does have the reputation as the drink of choice of, for want of a better word, Neds.” The film raises many salient points about the dangers of consuming so much sugar, alcohol and caffeine so quickly and frequently, which on a scientific level influences aggressiveness in drinkers and is linked to violent crime in Scotland (for facts and figures, the film is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfBaGZD9DIU>).

In The Buckfast Code, several points are raised about the pervasiveness of Buckfast as a symbol on a cultural level in Scotland. On a cultural level, Buckfast is everywhere in Scotland – on classic comedy shows such as Rab C Nesbitt to the hundreds of videos on YouTube of “The

Buckfast Challenge”, in which one must consume an entire 750mL bottle in as little time as possible. (For the record, Kevin said the best time he observed while making the documentary was a seven-second chug and notes that the Ned who set this record gained great respect from his peers, while non-Neds left taunting and derogatory comments on the video.) A Strathclyde Police representative declared that Buckfast emerged as a factor in 5,000 crime reports in the previous three years, and that one in ten of these cases was a violent crime. In many assault cases, the Buckfast bottle is used as a weapon, to cut or club a victim, and has become a symbol of violence and intimidation stemming from these crimes. Finally, with regard to Buckfast on a symbolic level, a representative from Buckfast raises another interesting point. He felt that the portrayal of Buckfast as a Ned drink in the media fetishises the beverage, in that the media criticises the drink and the social ills it is associated with, which results in youths and Neds consuming Buckfast because it is a symbol of rebellion.

Buckfast first piqued Kevin’s interest while he was in college. His assignment for a filmmaking class was to produce something that was relevant to Glasgow’s culture, and according to him, “I thought, what’s more relevant than Buckie? It’s gained a life of its own.” His documentary would not have been complete without acknowledging how Neds have become synonymous with Buckfast. When asked to comment on the link between Neds and Buckfast Kevin states that:

I think (the appeal for Neds) is just the fact that it’s cheap and it’s strong and obviously it’s high in caffeine, too, so it totally messes you up... it’s got this reputation of being a Ned drink, but... there are so many other products in the grand scheme of things that are similar but this one seems to be labelled as being “The One” which isn’t fair... It’s become a status symbol, in a way... the speed you can drink it at, the amount you can drink, and the like. The kind of statuses attached to it.

Kevin is referring to the Buckfast Challenge, as mentioned previously, but also the amount one can consume. During the time I spent with Neds over the course of this project, it was very clear that the ability to consume vast quantities of strong alcoholic products such as tonic wine and strong beers gained a Ned much admiration and success from other Neds. Perhaps this is nothing new when it comes to machismo, bonding and one-upmanship among young males – over the years in Canada, I’ve seen many young men (and sometimes women) take great pride in how many cases of beer they’d consumed over a long weekend of camping. But what I’d observed was different and notable about Ned consumption was that drinking to the point of excess – to the point of getting in fights, engaging in risky behaviour, and making oneself physically ill – was often touted among Neds as being glamorous. Some of the Neds I spoke with compared heavy consumption of iconic alcoholic drinks such as Buckfast and Frosty Jacks to the consumption of 40s of beer and/or high end beverages such as Courvoisier and Hennessy (refer to the “East End Party” section of this work). The argument can again be made that they are imitating glamour within their own means: young Neds can’t afford luxury products celebrated in the rap videos, so they adjust the image with their own status symbols.

S: That’s interesting, this idea of Buckfast as a Ned symbol and not just a Scottish or Glaswegian symbol. So you can spot a Ned by what they’re drinking?

K: Well clothing obviously is the number one way to spot a Ned, isn’t it? Like, certain brands, certain types of clothes, and I guess, I don’t know, possibly accents and dialects. There’s a load of generalizations, the pitch of your voice and that kind of stuff... The idea of rebranding is actually really interesting. I think especially when you’ve got Buckie. With other brands, such as Burberry, you are able to rebrand for interest. With Buckie, it’s made by monks in Buckfast Abbey... if they want to improve the brand they’re in a bind with this traditional product. It’s almost impossible for them to rebrand with this because it’s so traditional... I spoke to a lot of representatives from the company and they’re constantly trying to improve the image and get away from this whole Ned sort of thing. For example, they actually came up with this idea where they were trying to produce it in plastic bottles so they could get away from it being used as a weapon in crimes. But the monks rejected it and said they wouldn’t do it... sort of conflicting interests there.

Indeed, Buckfast representatives have expressed a desire to distance the traditional brand from the violent crime and gang culture it's becoming associated with. This is similar to alleged efforts by Burberry to rebrand itself in order to place distance between the iconic tartan print and Chavs/Neds (Burchill, 2005). The theory chapter of this work discusses hip hop communities in North America, and it is important to look at branding/rebranding in these communities if we are to make comparisons (or even draw parallels) with Ned communities. International recording artist Jay-Z hailed Cristal champagne as iconic, the best of the best, a symbol of success as far back as his 1996 recording "Can't Knock the Hustle" in which he states, "My motto, stack rocks like Colorado/Auto off the champagne, Cristal's by the bottle." The managing director of the company that produces Cristal responded that he "...viewed the affection for his company's champagne from rappers and their fans with 'curiosity and serenity.' Asked by (The Economist) if the association between Cristal and the "bling lifestyle" could be detrimental, Rouzaud replied, 'That's a good question, but what can we do? We can't forbid people from buying it. I'm sure Dom Perignon or Krug would be delighted to have their business,'" (available at <http://www.economist.com/node/6905921>). Jay-Z alleges these comments are racist, and began boycotting Cristal in his own restaurants, as well as spreading his message about Cristal and racism on his multi-platinum selling *The Blueprint* (from "On To The Next One": "I used to drink Cristal, them fuckers racist/So I switched gold bottles on to that Spade shit)." While Cristal did not make an attempt to "re-brand" per se, the rap community felt insulted by these comments and abandoned the brand as a symbol of wealth and success. With Chavs and Burberry, they continued to embrace the iconic print after the company tried to improve its image and break the Chav association, perhaps to spite the brand, or perhaps because they simply

did not care about the insult. While Black males in the hip hop community broke the link between Cristal and hip hop style, Chavs (and their Scottish cousins, Neds) continued to embrace Burberry as an identifier of Chav/Ned style. Perhaps the reason Neds and Chavs did not drop Burberry in response to their rebranding was because they were not as insulted by class-based slight as the hip hop community was by race-based insult.

Overall, the relationship between a brand and a phenomenon would not be a problem if the phenomenon was not growing. Kevin believes that Nedism is becoming glamorized in Scotland, not among the public but among disenfranchised White youths in Glasgow's poorer areas: "The term Ned has definitely become something to be proud of, not something to be ashamed of, within that poor youth category". These youths do not see viable options for gaining respect and value outside of their communities, but they see Nedism as a relatively easy way to gain respect and value in their own communities, so they adopt the symbols (Buckfast, Burberry) and the behaviour (violence, drinking) to fall into this roll.

Scott: A Bleak View of the Future

Scott is a man in his late fifties, born and bred in the south side of Glasgow. I met him while staying in the Ibrox area of Glasgow, an area of the city which is known to be a prime example of the collapse of traditional industry in the city. The streets are lined in row after row of tenement housing, and the neighbourhood is home to the famous Ibrox football stadium – all in all, Ibrox characterises both the gritty decline yet fierce spirit that Glasgow has become known and celebrated for. Scott notes this as our conversation commenced and he provided a general overview of what Neds are, in his opinion:

Neds are a product of the Glasgow society and culture... What I've found is, it was a circle... Neds were created from their own society. You find that a lot of

them are actually educated. To call them non-educated delinquents is wrong. It's just that they use their brain in the wrong way. But then... I find that because of the circle of... basically, abuse... Obviously there are still problem areas – you'd have seen the likes of that down in the Ibrox area yourself... What happened in the film (Neds), you saw the brutalization of children by the system... these children grow up to something, and then they repeat the cycle... they're not non-educated, they're just ill-educated... It's disillusionment that creates Neds, really. Well, that and social factors, obviously.

What Scott is saying here relates to the discussion of labeling theory and in particular, the bicycling effect discussed in the Theory section of this work. In his opinion, Neds are a product of systemic brutalization of young people – through work, through economy – as well as a more personal demonization of those who are considered different. He cites problem areas, such as Ibrox, which are well-known areas in Glasgow, yet are considered by some to be the lowest-of-the-low . According to the bicycling effect, working and lower class people in Glasgow may “kick out” at those they consider to not be pulling their weight equally by deeming them “Neds” and projecting all the negative qualities associated with Neds onto these people (see Craig, 2010).

Scott believes that Neds are a product of their surroundings, in particular, the negative, violent and brutal aspects of occupying a lower socioeconomic sphere:

When you come from a poor community, you get no real goals to aim for. You become disillusioned. You think that – it's a mindset that you get into where you're stuck in that rut. And you don't see any way out of it, so what happens is you fall deeper into the rut... As well as the brutalization, there is a social element. If you're getting brought up on a big housing scheme that's hardly got a shop on it, never mind many other amenities... it's just despair and disillusionment.

What he is getting at here is that, simply put, depressing living situations contribute to a depressing existence, and vice versa – this cycle can form the rut that Scott discusses. However,

this links to what Carol Craig was discussing with the culture of hopelessness that exists in some areas and among some groups in Glasgow:

...(Council estates) were built for a specific group, often on the periphery, rather than evolving organically. They were built to cater for a specific social group which meant that others often looked down on the inhabitants. Thus it was all too easy for residents in surrounding areas to 'stigmatise' those who came from estates. Once these areas had a bad name then anyone who could, moved out. The continual creaming off of people who were the most successful was also disastrous. These were the people who could have been role models in the area; 'the Joneses' that neighbours may have tried to emulate. As they leave estates it reinforces the sense of being cut off from normal society and aids the downward spiral. International research shows that as outsiders' opinion of an area becomes more negative then the worse it becomes as only the desperate will agree to go there. (Craig, 2010: 298-299).

This passage from Craig provides some insight into what Scott was getting at with the exclusion that those who live on housing estates face, including Neds. As previously discussed, Glasgow's council housing estates generally lack community-building amenities such as public parks, shops, and spaces for socialization and forming bonds with neighbours and a general sense of belonging. This results in a sense of alienation that is worsened by the exclusion those on the estate face from those who live off estate – the notion that the very place they call home is never good enough and is looked down upon by other members of Glaswegian society. On a personal note, this is a theory that I experienced the reality of during my last night of fieldwork in Glasgow. I attended a retirement party for a friend of a friend in Glasgow's upscale Jordanhill area. When introduced to the hosts of the party before other guests arrived, an acquaintance informed the hosts that I was currently "studying anthropology abroad, working on Neds." This elicited uproarious laughter and feigned pity from the hosts – a very well-to-do couple in their early sixties. When I elaborated on the focus and goals of the project, they were fascinated and asked sincere and interesting questions about my interest in Neds, class, and race in Glasgow. However, whenever I was introduced to another guest upon their arrival to the soiree, I faced the

same immediate laughter and jokes about the subject matter, to the point where inwardly, I began to feel upset and angry – not over any personal insult to the work I’d been so invested in, but rather insult to the lower-income populations (Neds or otherwise) that I’d grown so close to over the course of my time in Scotland. The snide remarks on “what happens over *there*” and how “horribly *they* behave” cut even more close to the bone given the incredibly beautiful house and posh, safe, secure and friendly neighbourhood that the gala was held in – a very far cry from where myself or many of the other research participants were living at the time. Personal investment aside, the majority of people I met that night who rubbed me the wrong way were explicit in stating that these people – these Neds, to be exact – were very much relegated to, and a project of, council housing estates. And these partygoers were very happy to be nowhere near such vile areas; in fact, they prided themselves on (what they believed to be) working harder and being smarter than those who lived in such deprived areas. It felt clear that they believed they deserved to occupy a high socioeconomic standing, and that they felt those on council housing estates put themselves there and should stay there, thus avoiding any miscegenation with undesirables. Surely, given that it was my last night of fieldwork, emotions were running high; however, the class divide and ability for the upscale guests at this fancy party to laugh at those that are experiencing extreme deprivation and poverty left a sour impression with me that should not be ignored, and I’m certain I’m not alone in experiencing polarization of this kind.

To return to the interview with Scott, many times throughout he references the movie *Neds*, which as previously mentioned was a hot topic among Glaswegians during my fieldwork. Scott distinguished between the Neds of the 1970s (those portrayed in Mullen’s film) and the Neds of recent years. Unlike many other interviewees, Scott did not reference fashion or aesthetics as a defining factor, focusing instead on communication and socializing. Scott

believes that the Neds of the 1970s differ from modern Neds in that the Neds of today have more opportunities to participate in the legitimate workforce as well as the illegitimate workforce. They have more opportunities (as do other Scots) in that they are able to find jobs in Britain's increasingly service-oriented economy. However, Neds of today are defined by their savvy and independence, according to Scott. While legitimate job opportunities may be available, even to those with limited educational capital, they are also very aware of opportunities (including opportunities they can create for themselves) in the illegitimate economy (Venkatesh, 2006). In fact, Glasgow has a rich history of people who dwell in poor areas carving out moneymaking opportunities for themselves: "The Gorbals was a hive of commercial activity and apart from the many legitimate businesses making money, there were numerous illegal ones as well. At weekends, people left the pubs and headed for illicit drinking dens called shebeens," (MacFarlane, 175). But the ways Neds make money are not celebrated the way those of the "good" poor are. The opportunities they believe Neds participate in – such as robbery, shoplifting, drug dealing – are in Scott's opinion made easier, more streamlined, and more organized through the information technology available to Neds, such as the Internet, social networking sites, and affordable mobile/smartphones that allow for multiple forms of communication at once. This is an interesting observation on Scott's part as many contemporary portrayals of Neds, including satirical portrayals, indicate that mobile phones and mobile technology is ubiquitous among Neds.

Compared to the 1970s, the Neds of today have a great deal more mobility with socialization and organizing of activities (including illegal activities that they are constantly affiliated with): "Back in the 1970s there was nothing at all. You were lucky if there was a youth club or anything," says Scott. Drawing from the interview with Matthew, who worked with

youth cafe programs on a council housing estate, it's interesting to observe how those who do not participate in these programs (or for that matter, are not in a place to access them) draw assumptions about the (poor) character of the youths that utilize them. On the subject of community leisure programs for low-income youths, Scott was quite adamant that "(Youths) are probably better off avoiding those things because it saves them getting sucked into that culture! That's what I mean about it repeating, going in cycles." He feels that a lot of Neds use these programs to convene and organize as Neds, rather than as youths looking for a safe space to foster bonds with other members and strengthen a sense of pride in their community. In particular, he feels that the Neds of today who utilize these programs, which were not (according to him) available for previous generations of Neds, use these well-intended social spaces as a place to share information and access to drugs and alcohol (again, in particular, Buckfast is cited), which ultimately fuel violence among youths.

Scott feels that Nedism is indeed passed on generationally. The tracksuited, mobile-phone toting, Buckfast-swigging Neds he identifies today are, according to him, the modern day result of Glaswegian hooligans from a long time ago. Scott draws a distinction between how the Neds of today dress, identifying their aesthetic as lowbrow in comparison to the fashions preferred by Neds as far back as the 1920s (in particular, those identified in *No Mean City*): "They spend a fortune on clothing, but I wouldn't say (they're) better dressed now. Back in the days of *No Mean City* they had suits that they wore... they tend to dress now as, like, a uniform. And yet they say they're being independent... these days they rebel against wearing a school uniform yet they all go out like clones... the football colours, things like that, it's the herd culture really..." He identifies particular brands, in particular Burberry and Lacoste, as being popular among Neds today. When asked about why these brands are popular, Scott elaborated on the

herd mentality he believes Neds have as opposed to the prestige value of such brands, stating that “...they are wearing the exact same (thing) as the one that’s at the top of the pecking order. They’re living in fear of being outcast.” This fear of being rejected by peers, for Scott, is the driving force behind why Neds become Neds across generations, and aesthetics (including Ned clothing and alcohol preferences) are symbols demonstrating this pack mentality. This raises the question of what the inciting force(s) are for one becoming a Ned, however – why would one initially be compelled to subscribe to a “herd” mentality? Throughout the interview, Scott cites low self-esteem, depressing council housing schemes, and general deprivation in many areas in Glasgow as the reasons, as well as exclusion from the education system, as expressed in Peter Mullan’s film *Neds*. Overall, Scott believed that Neds throughout the ages are defined by a “herd” mentality and that poor socio-economic landscapes in Scotland produce the conditions that Neds reproduce under.

CHAPTER III: TALKING WITH NEDS

Chris and Donny

Standing outside a bar on an uncharacteristically bright, clear February afternoon near Glasgow Central train station, I'm deeply involved with my mobile phone, confirming an interview with a couple about their experiences with Neds on council housing estates. I'm wearing a pair of my favourite trainers - a limited edition black leather pair decorated with stripes of green, gold and red, emblazoned with the words "GET MAD" across the tongue and embossed in the back. A self-confessed sneaker geek, I take great pride in finding bizarre (but to fans like me, beautiful) pairs, and frequently converse with otherwise total strangers on the street, in malls, in bars, even in libraries over the finds we are wearing that day. Standing on the street in Glasgow today, they drew attention from a different sort of trainer aficionado. Immersed in my mobile phone with headphones in my ears, I don't realize the two young men laughing loudly and trying to draw my attention. One of them pokes me in the arm and points to his ears. I yank out my headphones to hear a hearty "fucking brilliant sneakers pal!" from him. I laugh and thank him, and he and his friend proceed to fawn over them. "They're pure rasta! I love that shite! Smoke weed man, we love that shite!" Even though I don't share their enthusiasm for drugs, we all introduce ourselves. They invite me to "come back to ours - we've got spliffs and tins (marijuana and cans of beer)", but I politely decline. They offer to buy me a pint in the pub and we head inside.

Donny and Chris are both Glasgow natives in their thirties who have lived there their entire lives, save for the odd trip to an away game for their beloved Celtic football club. They continue to gush over my shoes and jacket, a Harrington-style number with tartan lining, like the ones

they wore in Peter Mullan's Neds. "My da' had one just like it! Pure old school Ned coats, man," laughs Chris. We spend the afternoon in the bustling downtown pub, swapping stories about Glasgow. They animatedly discuss football and family and are fiercely loyal to Celtic and their families – it's clear that the two are inextricably linked for Donny and Chris. Both have Catholic roots (although neither is practicing) and they support Celtic because their fathers, grandfathers, and grandfather's fathers supported the team. Many family history events they rehash over this visit are tied to Old Firm games between Celtic and Rangers - a big win or loss for Celtic, a particular riot or fight that began over football - linking family history to events in football not unlike how others attach a song to a memory.

I tell them about school in Canada and what I find so intriguing about Glasgow (sparing no detail about my fascination with Neds) and they listen eagerly. They are perhaps most fascinated with my assertion that Canada, in my experience and personal opinion, does not have a subculture that compares to Neds. Donny's not surprised – he's heard that Canada is "dead nice" and wouldn't have such people. Chris laughs and feigns pity: "so yous don't have cunts like us! It's a shame!"

Both Donny and Chris identify as Neds, or have at one point. Donny feels that he's "too old" to be a Ned and he's "a casual, if anything", but that he was a Ned in his younger years, and that many people still identify him as a Ned now. When asked about what the difference is between being a casual and a Ned, Donny says that "Neds don't give a fuck. They just don't. They walk around wearing anything and just get drunk and high every night. Whereas casuals wear jeans and care about how they look, like in a slightly more way, and they just get drunk/high at the weekend." As Donny raised the point of visual distinction between casuals and Neds before I could bring up aesthetics, I asked him to elaborate on this point. For him, casuals

were football fans who opted for gear in their team's colours and often wore jeans and took care of their appearances to some degree. Neds, on the other hand, "wear tracksuits and trainers – Lacoste these days, mostly - because everyone else wears them," in line with what other interviewees call a "hive mind" or group mentality of Neds. When I ask him if people ever get Neds and casuals (the term being a reference to casual sportswear, and not to casual participation in Nedism) confused in his area, he says:

D: Not really. Where I live much of the time – you know Paisley? Near Glasgow? I live there some of the time, and I grew up there, left when I was done with school. Anyway, there it was easy to see. They don't get it confused. A casual won't be a mouthy little cunt on the street corner when you're just trying to go about your day. A Ned will step in your path, ask you for cigarettes when you don't smoke, follow you on your way home just to wind you up and that. That's why I outgrew it when I changed schools. Here, yeah, in Glasgow, I look like a Ned to a lot of people, but fuck them man, they're snobs if they need to be calling people shite like that. Chris doesn't care but I find it offensive to me sometimes. I don't know.

Chris identifies as Ned, although he's more passive about it and not nearly as passionate about the title as other Neds I interviewed. I inform them that some of the people I had spoken with to this point felt that some people were just born Neds, an idea which both scoffed at.

D: No one is born a Ned, man. You can grow up that way and learn it from other Neds, but you can't be born Emo or Goth as a wean (a baby).

C: I wouldn't say I've been a Ned from birth. It's more to do with the social environment I grew up in – the east end of Glasgow. I wouldn't say I went out my way to become a Ned. It just sort of happened as all my friends, family, all those lot are.

S: Are you saying your family and friends are Neds?

C: No, man... more like... my Ma isn't a Ned. Her and my old man aren't together, but we all stay in touch, we're all in the same neighbourhood. My Dad isn't a Ned, but he was when he was younger. But I learned the way I am from them, actually probably more from my friends, my friends are Neds man, we have been since we were wee. My folks never stopped us, so I feel like

maybe it's okay that we're Neds with them, you know? What do they say at your uni? I'm a product of my surroundings (laughs).

It's clear that Chris feels he learned to be a Ned at a young age. I asked Chris and Donny to clarify what they meant when they used the term "Ned". Donny simply stated that "The word Ned means, to me, someone who drinks, takes drugs, is involved in gang fighting, talks in slang and wears the typical Ned clothing, such as tracksuits and trainers and a skip hat." Chris nods along with this description. When I ask what other thinks Neds like, Chris continues: "Most of my friends and I growing up would drink Buckfast and Frosty Jack (inexpensive, sugary cider), smoke dope and eat lots of takeaways. Pizzas, burgers, Chinkies (a racially-charged term used by some to refer to cheap Chinese food), and lots of cakes and biscuits for when we hit the munchies," he says with a wink, alluding to the strong desire to eat that accompanies being high off marijuana. According to Donny, when Neds get old enough to drive, cars also become an important part of the aesthetic: "Like I said, I'm not much of a Ned now. Before, like, I've never drove, but the typical cars my friends would drive would be Fiestas, Corsas, Astras, G.T.s. They'd have their cars fitted with the loudest sound systems, exhausts and have bright stripes on their cars to make them stand out."

The non-Neds I spoke with tended to describe Ned aesthetics as uniform, indicative of a hive-mind, a tendency to go along with the pack mentality rather than stand out as an individual. Discussions with people like Chris and Donny make an argument for the opposite. While a view from the outside in suggests a desire for Neds to fit in among other Neds, information from Neds about their own aesthetics and symbols of value reveal a desire to stand out from other Neds. The brightest stripes, shiniest jewelry, or ability to consume the most alcohol may be frowned upon or undervalued by non-Neds, but in fact they give power and bring positive attention from other Neds.

Chris has been rolling cigarettes and toying with his phone throughout our afternoon together. He calls Andy to join us Andy is “a pure proud Ned, man, brilliant style”. They suggest I speak to Andy about Ned fashion and aesthetics. They joke that at the very least, he needs to see the shoes I am wearing that contributed to our chance introduction: “Andy will blow his fuckin’ top, man!” says Donny. I’m curious as to why they are such fans of my shoes, so I press them to speak further about their earlier comment about them being “rasta” shoes:

S: Why do you like my shoes so much?

C: They’re fucking sick, pal!

S: (Laughing) You mentioned that. Earlier you said they were rasta shoes. Can you tell me a bit more about that? Like, why you said that?

C: Rasta man, you know like the Black guys, the Black hippies? From Jamaica and that, Bob Marley and the like. Reggae and grass (marijuana) and that!

S: So you were talking about Rastafarians then. What do you know about them over here in Scotland? And maybe, do you kind of relate to them in a way?

C: The rasta guys, man, we don’t get that type around here, but like, they get us, you know? I said about the smoking weed thing earlier, but you thought I was joking, you were giggling like a wee Canadian (laughs). But they are a lot like us... like Neds, I guess, yeah! I think like... they want to hang out, listen to tunes, meet girls aye? Maybe they’re not so flash –

D: (interrupts) You wouldnae catch a Ned with poofter hair like that man, with the braids and shite... but they’re cool, man. They want to hang, they don’t want to work too hard, because it’s fucking pointless, pal.

C: Aye. Smoke weed, enjoy your mates, and if the government wants to throw you a few quid because you live in a shithole and cannae get a job and that, well, fuck it, that’s (yours) too.

D: Aye. We don’t live on a beach in the sun – (our estate) is a far cry from that (laughs) – but we’re the same. We want to have fun but we get a bad name, same as the rastas and that.

Without turning our chance encounter-turned-interview into a full-blown anthropological investigation, I'm eager to explore this connection between race and Neds. It's the first time during this fieldwork that someone who identifies currently as a Ned has brought up the connection I hypothesized over months previously. Chris and Donny keep splitting their attention between the sports recaps on the television and our conversation, which has been punctuated by beers all afternoon. I can tell it's perhaps not the best time to be proposing questions about identity and race – the pair are several beers deep in a crowded Glasgow pub, in little mood to ponder their upbringing, identity or subjugation in society, and rightfully so. I put a mental flag on this topic to return to later. Chris sends several text messages to Andy over his mobile phone, asking him if he'd like to join us for a pint and meet a nice Canadian girl (although I'm not certain he used those words precisely), but to no avail. Our banter returns to the sports on television, as the two are only too pleased to provide a newcomer with a Celtic football education.

As the sun starts to fade, I know it's time to turn home, although I'm anxious that all the help Donny and Chris have offered to provide in terms of future interviews and introducing me to other Neds may expire after our unexpected afternoon together. When I suggest it's time for me to head back to the place I'm staying in Ibrox, they protest and again invite me back to their neighbourhood for beers. I politely decline again, but would be more than happy to join them another time. It's at this point that Donny pulls out his phone to check the time, insisting that I'm being "soft" for going home so early. His smile fades as he passes the phone to Chris. "Are you fuck, man..." mutters Chris. I ask if everything's okay, as the tone of conversation has changed quickly. Donny and Chris thank me for a fun afternoon and make a hasty exit from the pub, but not before I jot my phone number down for both of them to try to make contact again in

the future. Bewildered, I watch the two of them make a hasty retreat from the pub, walking quickly with caps pulled down over their faces.

I get what appear to be drunken texts from Chris and Danny over the next couple nights. Invitations to various impromptu parties come in left, right and centre. Some friends (“Neds from the estate, but people like you shouldn’t be calling them that right from the get go, no offense,” as I was told by Donny) – are curious about the new Canadian friend they’ve made. While I eagerly pursue almost any opportunity to gain access to Ned communities, I think I’m starting to understand why non-Neds describe them as being incredibly unreliable. I encourage the Neds I meet to share my contact information with other Neds (or anyone else they think may want to talk to me, have a story to share, or provide insight in some way). Frustration mounts as several scheduled meetings with potential informants end with me at a Costa coffee shop, staring into an empty mug and deciding when to cut my losses (usually around the 45-minute mark, to be honest). People who had been so enthusiastic about sharing their experiences and contacts with colleagues whom they believed would be eager to speak were simply not coming through; promises from nights before were not being held up in the mornings after. To this point, I’d met many people who were eager to provide opinions of and experiences with Neds – some of them, as previously indicated, had flirted with Nedism themselves at various points in their lives – but those who currently identified as Neds seemed to lose excitement over meeting with me as quickly as they’d gained it. Waiting for interviews scheduled via word-of-mouth was clearly not working for me; it was time for a different plan of attack.

Networking with Neds

As I scanned through text messages from Chris and Donny, I realized I had to initiate a connection that went beyond a simple request to answer some questions pertaining to my thesis. As a developing Anthropology student, a researcher-in-training of sorts, it was difficult to negotiate the tricky balancing act between adhering strictly to ethics protocol and developing trusting, open bonds with those in the field – a conundrum that all graduate students of anthropology face at one time or another. The only thing I was certain of as I grew increasingly frustrated (and the weeks of my fieldwork abroad peeled away) was that I needed to be more assertive in the Ned communities I encountered in Glasgow. I texted both Chris and Donny and asked them if they wanted to have lunch that week. As it was difficult to arrange meeting times with some participants, I promised to come around Chris's apartment for a chat later that week.

Bearing fish and chips, I arrive at the estate tower block where Chris lives with his on-again-off-again girlfriend. At the time of writing, the two of them weren't together, but as Chris says with a wink, "she'll always be my burd," ("burd" being a regional pronunciation of "bird", a term for a romantic/sexual partner who is a girl) Several friends are over this day, watching sports recaps and drinking cider. I can tell right off the bat that any chance of a more formal interview today is probably gone, although the atmosphere of the day provides more insight than I could have imagined. The estate they live on is not unlike the one I lived on for part of my fieldwork, although this is the first time I've been in a council estate tower block. The tower itself is a sad sight: constructed in a Brutalist architectural style, it's a thick, cold grey building. Many of the units appear run down on the exterior, with peeling paint, chips out of walls, and graffiti in many areas. The unit Chris stays in is very basic: two bedrooms, a kitchen, a common area with a television. It's sparsely furnished but decorated with Celtic paraphernalia, DVDs,

and takeaway food containers. Empty bottles are scattered over most of the surfaces and the apartment is well-worn. All in all, it's not unlike some of the dwellings on the BAFTA award-winning documentary/reality series "The Scheme" which follows the lives of several families living on a council housing estate in Kilmarnock. However, as a former broke undergraduate living in student slum apartments, I fail to see how this apartment is much different from the accommodations of many of my friends from my early twenties.

Over the course of the afternoon, we talk about football (far and away the favourite topic of these men) and they walk me through all the social happenings of the week. I'm introduced to the people coming in and out of the flat throughout the day. Chris's partner has informed him that she's not thrilled about my presence – an issue that is commonplace over the course of fieldwork. Her female friends also come in and out of the apartment throughout the afternoon, but they acknowledge me only with steely stares. The warmest acknowledgement I received from the women that day was when Chris's partner popped her head into the common area from the kitchen to ask if "that one wanted a cup of tea," as I was not drinking alcohol that afternoon. When I accompanied Donny to the corner store to buy cigarettes, he told me not to take it personally: "The burds don't trust you. They don't trust anyone new. They think like we did at first that you're just a posh American after their men. It's like fucking school here, all over again, when you're dealing with the burds. And they don't think much of you calling our crew Neds, even though we get to say it." Why not? "You're not a Ned. They think you're better than us. No – they think you think you're better than us. Like that lady who studied all the chimps! (laughs)"

Back at the apartment, a lot of the sports-related chat goes over my head, the stories the boys swap about socializing over the last few days are both entertaining and informative. In the

middle of one story, I interrupt the guest telling the story to ask Donny if that was the day we met at the pub. Indeed it was, Donny demands that his friend restart the story. It had to do with young Neds, and he feels my attention is crucial.

To make a long story short, Donny and Chris had left the pub so swiftly because Andy let them know there was trouble brewing back on the estate. Andy's younger brother is a member of a young team. According to the popular website Urban Dictionary (available at <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=young%20team>), a young team is best described as

...(A) term originally used by the East End razor gangs of interwar Glasgow. Sectarian and fiercely territorial, groups from different areas would engage in everything from casual one-upmanship to open street warfare. Best-known and most feared were the Tongs, the Toi and the Cumbies. Smaller groups from other parts of the city identified themselves as the Anderston Young Team, Drumoyne Young Team and so on. This latter form... is now used by neds solely to give group identity to their immediate circle of friends.

This relatively informal definition harkens back to other descriptions of youth gangs in Glasgow, such as those in the Gorbals in the 1940s. MacFarlane provides a personal account of a memory of a young team from his youth: "The YYC were all young guys in their late teens, the best fighters of their generation. They had gallus personalities and wore superb clothes which made them look like the most fashionable teenagers in Scotland. They wore Levi's Sta-Prest trousers and Doc Marten boots and had their shirts personally made by tailor Arthur Black in the towns's St Enoch Square" (2009: 154). The Neds of MacFarlane's youth were certainly better dressed and more admired among other youths than the trainer and tracksuit wearing, council estate dwelling Neds of today. However, this quote serves to demonstrate that the young teams of today do have roots in Glasgow's history and are part of an evolution, and that style is integral to

the identity of members. The 1970s Neds of Peter Mullan's film *Neds* sport a similar style to these 1940s Neds, however they are reviled by other Scots from that time period, perhaps making a shift over time towards Neds being despised rather than celebrated by agemates.

The first description from UrbanDictionary is in line with my experiences with younger Neds, particularly on housing estates. The estate I lived on and the estates I visited through the course of research shared common features, as previously discussed, and graffiti tags marking the territory of gangs were a strong feature in these estates. The gangs themselves have varying levels of organization – some are more like social clubs, some deal drugs, some actively seek violent conflict with rival gangs. On the day of my first meeting Chris and Donny, the young team in question – that of Andy's younger brother Reggie – had gotten into a conflict with a team from another neighbourhood. Rumours over the severity of injuries circled quickly via text messages and drew Chris, Donny, Andy and others back to the estate. Luckily, save for a few cuts and a superficial stab wound, no one was seriously injured. Naturally, I was eager to meet with members of these young teams – the majority of them who embraced the term "Ned" – although that evening, I didn't want to pry with too many questions, particularly when so many rumours were flying around. I left my contact information with the people at the apartment and requested that they share it with anyone who might be interested providing some insight into Neds for a school project. Although it had been a good afternoon/evening for storytelling and some degree of participant observation just hanging out on the estate, I was disappointed that I couldn't delve into certain subjects in greater detail given the flurry of activity and visitors coming into and out of the apartment. My digital recorders had been in use for much of the day, but sifting through the conversations for new and useful information would prove to be a long task, and I was dreading it. As I was getting ready to leave, Donny stopped me: "Andy's just

texted me! He's coming by after the pub!" Eager to meet the elusive but reportedly stylish Ned Andy, I weighed my options. But it was getting late and I was alone on the estate facing a long ride back to the city that night. I called a taxi, but urged Donny to pass my information to Andy.

The next morning, I woke up and turned on my phone. There were text message from both Chris and Donny, filling me in on all the going-ons of the previous night. Drinking, drugs, video games, and "lots of great Ned stuff for your paper!" There was also a text from an unrecognized number. Much to my surprise, it was Andy. He informed me that the boys at the apartment filled him in on who I was and the project that I'm doing, and that he'd be happy to help. I called him back immediately and left a voicemail thanking him for making contact and suggesting that we meet sooner rather than later. Putting down the phone, I went into the kitchen to make tea and breakfast. Opening my laptop to check emails, I was astonished to see a series of new emails had arrived over the course of the night. As a preface to these emails, they were from members of various young teams who identified as Neds. After contacting Donny and Chris, I was informed that those at the apartment the previous night had shared my email address and mobile number with others, and they too were surprised that some had made contact so fast, but Donny insisted (flatteringly) that "good news travels fast around here". Examples of these emails read as follows, with details about members and specific gangs/teams edited out and/or changed:

**From: Reggie (Andy's younger brother)
YER LOOKIN IT THE FINEST THUGS IN TOWN !
YOUNG TEAM RANGERS 1
FUCK THE POLIS 210%
GLASGOWS FINEST NEDS !**

Attached is a photo of Reggie. He wears a blue zippered track jacket and black track pants. His hair, like that of the other Neds I speak with, is kept short and gelled. A pink arc of a scar protrudes from his lip across his cheek – a Glasgow smile scar that he is quite proud of.

The scars one receives from knife or razor fights can be a sign of prestige among Neds: “The Gorbals was full of people bearing scars and it was an accepted part of life. Most guys showed off their scars rather proudly and recounted the hair-raising stories behind them. Having a ‘Mars Bar’, as we called it, could be a form of social prestige... I personally thought that a scar was the emblem of a loser and I could certainly live without one,” (MacFarlane, 2009: 134).

The next email reads as follows:

From: Pauly
YOUNG TEAM RANGERS 1
2ND TO NO CUNT !
GLASGOWWS FINEST THUGS ON TOP !
EZPZ ! YEEEHAAAAAAAAAAAAA

Pauly also attaches a photo of himself, as well as a link to his website (which will be discussed shortly). The photo he sent me was one of him holding a bottle of Buckfast and posing in front of a wall sprayed with graffiti tags of his gang. He’s wearing a Lacoste jumper and coordinating tracksuit pants, a Ned uniform of sorts.

From: Devin
happnin muckerrrrr if yeze ur lookin fur the west side a scotlands finest nedz
en look nae further fs we run the show n let nae cunt take control ! aww these
ere teems ur mad trippers fs ! wed take um oot ae gem any fukin day bro !
anyhow am off troops n troopets ! F.T.POXY.SYSTEM !

Loosely translated, the email reads as follows:

What’s happening, friend. If you’re looking for the West side of Scotland’s finest Neds, then look no further. For sure we run the show and let no cunt (rival) take control. These other (rival) teams are full of crazy people for sure. We would take them out any day. Anyhow, I’m off with my gang members. Fuck the cursed/broken system!

A second email from Devin followed in the very early hours of that morning:

YOUNG TEAM FUCKIN BOYS!

no contest the we'z the best fs !

if in doubt daggers outttttttttttttt yeeehaaaaaa ! ASC

Attached to the latter email from Devin was a photograph of his entire young team posing in a basement, all dressed in sports casual wear, tracksuits and Lacoste particularly well-accounted for. He references daggers in this correspondence, and there are knives and bottles of Buckfast in the hands of some of the young men in the photograph.

From: Gavin

Yassssssssssssssssssss

Young Team! No other

Fuck The Renfrew Polis

Fuck The Paisley Polis

Fuck The Govan Polis

Fuck The Strathclyde Polis

Fuck The System!

He showed me a photo of his team. They're all appear to be a bit older than the Neds in the photographs attached in other emails – from 16 to 19 years old, as opposed to 12-15. This was the only photograph I was sent in which the subjects weren't wearing tracksuits and other Ned-style clothing. Instead, they were wearing jeans and polo-style athletic shirts, which I made note of to ask as I began responding to these new emails.

The majority of the emails I received from Neds (those who I met through snowball sampling of sorts, as well as those who responded to online advertisements about the project) shared some characteristics. Each person responded as a Ned and thoroughly identified as a Ned, and they seemed to be very proud of the title. Attention to spelling and grammar were largely absent, and colloquial spellings and slang were used widely. Some attached photographs of them and/or their friends/Young Team decked out in Ned fashions such as tracksuits,

Burberry and Lacoste. Some also provided links to their websites, which provided fascinating insight into the social networks of young teams.

There are hundreds of young team websites out there, as any internet search will reveal. In general, a Ned who is a member of a young team may have a site that operates almost as a social networking profile (a rudimentary version of Facebook or the now largely-defunct Bebo which was previously very popular in Scotland). They are created using free hosting services such as Tripod and have very basic (yet objectively garish) layouts. Happy hardcore and rap music accompany some homepages. Many links are defunct. All in all, these are not professional websites. Content tends to include photographs of young team members and local girls (“burdz”), usually posing like strong gang members and bragging about drinking, smoking, doing drugs, cars, and inside jokes. Interestingly, unlike the sites owned by males, those run by females rarely (if ever) referred to themselves as Neds or Nedettes. They celebrated the young teams and their male Ned counterparts, but were not actively involved in the teams – rather, they were friends or girlfriends of the male Neds.

East End Party

Few of those who reached out via email ever followed up to my responses, but Andy’s brother, Reggie, invited me to a party to help me out with my research. The party took place in the east end of Glasgow, and he said it would be largely attended by Neds. I agreed to attend but requested that we meet up earlier for an interview, and he was more than happy to oblige. That Friday afternoon, I hop a bus to a pub in the east end of Glasgow to meet Reggie. He is wearing a navy blue Nike tracksuit with a black Lacoste polo shirt underneath. I notice that the Lacoste crocodile is facing the wrong direction, indicating that the item may be a counterfeit. Reggie is

an 18 year old Ned who is currently unemployed, but he indicates that he “makes money on the side when he needs it,” with a wink. He has identified as a Ned his entire life and feels like he was born into it: “I’m just being myself. This isn’t an act, I’ve always been like this. Maybe I’m wilder with my mates but I’ve always been this way.”

SP: What do you mean by “this way”?

R: I mean like, a Ned. You call it that, we do, everyone does. Always been a Ned, man.

SP: I guess I want to ask like... what do you mean when you describe a Ned? What is being a Ned about?

R: We just chill, listen to music, play video games and generally just have a laugh with each other...yeah, we do have a drink and a smoke too.

Reggie’s laid-back comments about Neds seem to clash with the aggressive statements he’d made about the young team in our email correspondences. While it’s true that a lot can get lost in translation when corresponding by text or email as opposed to phone or face-to-face communication, our conversation was already the opposite of what I was expecting.

SP: What about the young team stuff?

R: What about it?

SP: I don’t know. Your brother’s friends, the guys I met early on, they gave me a different impression of you. I’m sorry I don’t know more about this stuff – it feels like it’s really different in Canada. I know some of these questions are going to sound really dumb to you. I guess... can you tell me what being a Ned has to do with the whole young team thing?

R: Yeah, like... I guess it’s that not all Neds are in teams, but all teams are full of Neds, you know? There’s a math to it like that. I’m talking to you today as just be but I’ll tell you anything you need to know about the fucking boys, man. Young Team for life. We grew up together man, we fight, and when someone wants to fuck with our life in our neighbourhood, like... that’s it, that’s over.

SP: I'm not sure what to ask about it, honestly. I'm not judging you, I just am not sure what to ask about gang things."

R: (Laughing) Gang things?! Man, most of what we do is drinking, partying, hanging out with the girls. We fight, but look down Sauchiehall on a night out, everyone fights. It's about territory and shit, yeah, but it's not as intense as when we was young, when I was leaving school and that. We like cars, girls, grass and that.

SP: I hear you. So it's kind of changed over time?

R: Aye. Like now... We tend to hang about in each others' houses or in the pubs these days. But when we were younger we hung about the streets and up closes and so on, we were outside a lot.

SP: And you said you've always been a Ned? Do you think your friends would say the same thing?

R: We don't call ourselves Neds all the time. Like it's not necessary. Like... you're a brain, but you probably don't call yourself a student all the time with all the folks you meet all the time, when you're doing regular things. Going to the store or going to a party or going to your job if you have one. It (the term Neds) can be like a stigma for the way we are, and the way we come across. Like, how people who aren't Neds see us. When they say it, it's different than when we say it. It's almost like the N-word like that! Like Blacks can call each other that and a White guy or a Ned can't call them that (laughs).

S: I'm curious about this link – a possible link, anyway – between Neds and being White and Neds and being Black. Do you know what I mean?

R: Aye, I read it in your email, but you're using some big words for a little girl there (laughs). What do you want to know?

S: I'm not quite sure how to say it yet. I guess I could ask, like, off the top of your head – and feel free to skip over anything you don't want to answer – do you know any Neds that aren't White?

R: (Pausing to think) That's a fucking weird question actually. No... I've still (yet) to come across a non-White Ned, to be honest.

S: Any idea why that might be? Again, take your time, I certainly don't have the answers myself (laughs).

R: Well... I think most Neds are White as the general population, like here, in the East end of Glasgow where a lot of Glasgow Neds come from too, is mostly White. In recent years there has been a lot of immigrants moving to

Glasgow. They tend to hang about with each other, not with people like us. I've got mates in other parts of the city, south especially, and I think they'd say the same thing.

S: So is it down to demographics? What I mean by that is, do you think that Neds are mostly White because Glasgow is mostly White?

R: Aye, exactly. Well, no! I mean, go to different estates, go to Ibrox where you're staying, there's Pakis and the Indians everywhere. They're perfectly nice, man, and they're definitely not Neds. You get the Orientals and the Asians driving swift cars like we do, fixing up pieces of shite, but I don't see them getting jibbed up the closes where they live... I mean, maybe they do, but the Neds I know and the people like don't see it, and it's not in the papers. Maybe it's a money thing, who knows man. And personally, I don't have any friends from ethnic backgrounds or near were there any at school with me so the only Neds I know are all White.

Reggie seems to be thinking through and forming his opinions about race and Neds as I introduce the topic; looking at his face, it's clear that the wheels are turning in his head. At 18 years old, he's one of the older members of his young team. Most of the members have known each other since they went to school, although most left school as soon as they were able. Not all of them grew up on the same estate, further lending to my belief that membership for these teams is more fluid than we are led to believe when looking at the fierce loyalty displayed on websites, through fights, and with graffiti. All members are White, however, and as Reggie suggests, this could be a product of growing up in areas of the city with large Caucasian populations from a variety of backgrounds. Reggie had mentioned Neds and the N-word – a comparison that had surprisingly come up in other interviews – and I wanted to know what he meant when he was talking about people of other races, or non-White Neds. He indicated that while in his opinion and experience, Neds were White, he had encountered people of Asian, Indian, and Middle-Eastern descent who “acted Neddy” – they wore inexpensive and uniform clothing, drove relatively cheap cars that they decked out, they organized in loose gangs along

neighbourhood territory lines, and they liked to fight with trespassers from other neighbourhoods. They were, however, not Neds. Why not?

R: I don't know man. You're asking tough questions, like... they're just not. And I'm not a racist!

S: Don't worry, I know that. Please take your time.

R: They're not Neds. Like... okay so in America (North America/Canada) where you're from, you probably get wee White kids who watch rap videos and dress up like gangsters. But they're not gangsters. They may look like them – except for the skin, right – but they may even fight and rap and sell drugs or do whatever it is they think gangsters do. Maybe they even keep doing that while they grow up and shite, like maybe in New York or some place that's rough, you know? But they're *not* gangsters. Not like the gangsters that they were *trying* to be like. And it's not just a race thing. So some Paki from across the river can roll up in a Corsa on the estate and act just like us, have a beer and a spliff and that, maybe we'll even get on, but he's just not a Ned. And I don't even, like, completely know why.

I could sense Reggie's frustration mounting as he tried to articulate an idea that neither of us was able to put a fine point on. When researching the demographics of Glasgow and Scotland as a whole, it was extremely difficult to locate data on race and ethnicity in Glasgow. The most recent census took place in 2011, and at the time of writing, preparations for publishing the data are still underway. There are large immigrant pockets in certain areas of Glasgow and the surrounding area, but it is difficult to determine the ethnic and/or racial demographics of various areas. Reggie was insistent that there were far fewer Black people in Glasgow than those of Asian, Indian and Middle Eastern descent. I tended to run into many people from these backgrounds in my day-to-day interactions in Glasgow, yet (perhaps naively) chalked that experience up to the areas of the city that I frequented. When asked more generally about demographics in Glasgow, Reggie's opinions were not far off base from that: growing up, the only non-White children he remembered at school were the offspring of recent immigrants. He had no Black friends, and as he moved through adolescence, the peers he spent more time with

were White, while the non-White schoolmates and neighbours he had tended to spend time in groups of friends closer to their own backgrounds. This sentiment was mirrored by many younger people I spoke with throughout the course of this project.

To ease Reggie's nerves, I bring our discussion back to the focus of Neds and aesthetics, and we move on to discussing topics closer to his recent experiences.

S: A few minutes ago I brought up how Neds dress. Can you tell me a bit about that?

R: Well what do you want to know?

S: Well, let's talk about the Neds that you know, or I guess the Neds that people have in their minds when someone mentions Neds. Like, your average Ned in the Glasgow area. What would they wear?

R: There are the basics, like we talked about. On a regular day, you've got your trainers and white socks, and a tracksuit and hat.

S: Are there brands that you prefer?

R: Yeah man. Right now Lacoste is dead popular. It used to be Burberry for the accessories, especially for the lassies. But Lacoste makes good sportswear and it matches with everything.

S: Why Lacoste though?

R: It's just fashionable, man. It's like anyone else's fashion. Some things are cool for a while, then they're not. It's a cycle.

S: Fair enough. Is there anything else? Any basics I need to know?

R: Well you know a lot of Neds obviously with your school and stuff. I guess like, we love the gold and that. Signet rings and big watches. Everyone's got a chain, right? I've got a D12 (a rap group) pendant that I wear when I'm going out – big fan of them. It's just jewelry that you like, and yeah, Neds like a lot of jewelry, the boys and the girls. I guess other than that, we keep our hair short and neat, none of this poofter Justin Bieber shite (laughs). Just gel it, man, maybe shave a pattern in the sides if you're swish. But plain hair on the boys usually.

On the topic of poverty and hairstyles, head lice were a plight of the Glaswegians who lived in poorer neighbourhoods through the twentieth century. During this time, it was commonplace to see children with shaved heads in deprived areas as a way to inexpensively eradicate the problem. As MacFarlane reflects on growing up in the notorious Gorbals, he states that “to me, a shaved head signified true poverty,” (2009: 39). The Neds I spoke with tended to agree that they kept their hair short because it was easy to keep it clean, which is not unlike the short haircuts of those in poor neighbourhoods previously. Furthermore, this may demonstrate a class (sub)division: Neds are lower than low class, a sub-working class, and a hairstyle can be a sign of such indignity.

Another indignity to do with cleanliness and class throughout Glasgow’s history has to do with the steamie (communal laundry): “It became a sign of self-respect to have an immaculate load (of laundry) in your pram as you headed home” (MacFarlane, 2009: 53). This could explain why the tracksuits and white trainers Neds wear now are pristine – it’s a sign of class on a sign of culture. Neds stress the need for one’s outfit – even if it is just a tracksuit – to be clean and crisp, trainers basic, bright, tidy. While their clothing isn’t black-tie ready, it is important to them to look clean and composed, and this cleanliness shows pride in what they wear and establishes that the wearer is a person of worth.

Reggie’s Ned basics are nothing new to my ears, but it’s interesting to hear the breakdown of the “stereotypical” Ned from one who identifies as such. When asked why they wear such things, he emphasizes utility over style: “Personally, I’m comfortable. Maybe the chains and watches and stuff express who I am, but mostly the clothes are comfortable. It’s wet and cold here, who wouldn’t want to be dry in a tracksuit and hat? (laughs).” Function has always been an important factor in dressing in Glasgow, particularly for Neds and poor people

who may need to stretch a single purchase (such as a pair of shoes) for several seasons.

MacFarlane also reflects on this growing up in the Gorbals:

The poorest children at the venny could easily identified because they wore wellies most of the time. Wellington boots became a byword for poverty. Many parents could not afford to buy their children shoes, so they were destined to live out their childhood in wellies. They were good for playing in puddles and tramping through the dark, dirty back courts but it was a ridiculous sight seeing a child wearing wellies at the height of summer. It was as though they had been welded into them. (2009: 87)

Interviewees that mentioned Neds wore trainers all year round, even in the rain and snow. Perhaps a functional pair of shoes is more affordable and must be worn year round, and thusly became part of the Ned style cannon over time. In Peter Mullan's film *Neds*, basic black Doc Marten boots were the choice for the characters because of their durability and usefulness when engaging in combat. Today, basic white sneakers are part of the Ned stereotype, but perhaps a comfortable, plain pair of shoes is an intelligent and versatile choice for someone on a very tight budget. Nevertheless, there is stigma attached to such trainers, and in my experiences a non-Ned wearing them will be mercilessly teased by their peers for wearing Ned shoes.

When we arrive at the party, there is certainly no shortage of tracksuits, trainers and hats. I nod and smile at the few familiar faces I remember from Chris and Donny's neighbourhood, and the atmosphere is similar. The front door is open and I can hear the music and conversation inside; several young men are leaning against cars drinking beer on the street. Reggie introduces me to his brother Andy, who embraces me in a hearty hug and familiarizes me with the friends in his group. All men in their early twenties, some laugh and shake their heads when he identifies them as Neds, although given Reggie's description, some of them do look the part. As Andy fetches a drink for me, I explain the project in brief to the group. As I don't want to disrupt the natural flow of the party, I make it very clear that I'll only be playing the role of the

anthropologist (recording conversations and asking pointed questions) if they actually want to be a part of it – otherwise, I’m just happy to be attending a party in a part of the country where I don’t have many friends. Again, honesty and openness were my keys to access to this group of people, as well as well-known and much-liked people like Andy and Reggie vouching for me.

When Andy returns, cold cans of cider in hand, he’s eager to know what his brother and I spoke about during our pre-party meetup. When I mention Ned fashion, there’s an undeniable spark in Andy’s eye, and he’s quick to confirm that he’s a man who puts effort and passion into his aesthetic. Tonight, he’s sporting a gunmetal grey tracksuit, black baseball hat with a gold New York Yankees logo and a wide, stiff brim, and black Nike low-top sneakers with the ubiquitous gold swooshes down the side. He proudly describes the meaning of each of the five gold rings he sports, including two gracing knuckles on his right hand studded with his initials in crystal. Andy admits that his personal style is over-the-top to some degree, but that he’s “basically the best-dressed Ned in the game!”

It’s apparent that not only is Andy sporting the pinnacle of Ned style, but that he is indeed very much integral to his group of friends (the majority of which, at this party, are Neds). Andy jovially takes me on his arm and brings me in to the house to introduce me to other partygoers. They exchange high fives, elaborate handshakes, and inside jokes as we progress through the home, and for the first time in my encounters with Neds in circumstances like these, I’m warmly received by the majority of people I meet – females included.

Andy and I take a seat side-by-side on the kitchen counter and he jokes that this is a great position to people-watch from as I set up my recorder. As fashion is clearly a major interest of Andy’s, I’m eager to ask him about his spectacular outfit.

SP: So, Andy. Can you tell me a bit about what you're wearing?

A: I feel like we're in a tabloid or something with that shite!

SP: (Laughing) Well, I really like your outfit. And you say you're a Ned, so I guess, is it a good example of a Ned outfit?

A: Aye! Best in the game, man! (Laughing) Got the silver suit on, it's basic but a bit dressier for a party night. These trainers are limited edition and the gold is flash for a night out as well. This hat matches the trainers, you're a bird so you get that! (Laughs) I wear my rings every day, I shower with them on. They all mean something so those are the things I wear every day.

SP: Well you look great! And I do love those shoes.

A: Thanks pal! Don (Donny) told me about those wee Rasta kicks you had on when they met you. Thought you'd be dead into these!

SP: Do you wear things like this every day?

A: No, I just said that. This is what I'd wear out. But it is like, a version of what I wear in the day. Obviously I'm not stepping out in gold and silver when I'm just around the home or away down at the shops or something. But yeah, I like the trackies, like most of the blokes here.

Looking around, he is correct in that observance. The majority of the males wear some version of a tracksuit, with casual bottoms and a hoodie or jacket on top, also sporting athletic shoes and hats. There are a few females at the party, sporting similar fashions to those that women in Canada would wear to a casual house party – jeans, sneakers, costume jewelry, tank tops. Some of the males are not wearing the “typical” Ned gear, opting instead for jeans and t-shirts or polo-style shirts, hair slicked into short spikes with gel rather than covered with a cap. Andy's friend Bill, one of the people from the circle in the driveway I met when we arrived, saunters up to our perch on the countertop wearing dark and baggy denim jeans with rhinestone-embazoned pockets and a cobalt blue polo shirt with the collar flipped up. Andy informs me that Bill is “a top-shelf Ned”, despite his not dressing the part in his current attire.

SP: Is this true, Bill? Are you a Ned?

B: (Laughing) you make it sound like it's a bad thing!

A: Nah man, she pure loves Neds.

B: Aye, I'm a Ned, or at least people call me one. There's nothing wrong with it.

SP: Andy and I have been talking about what Neds wear, what they like to wear normally and what they maybe wear on nights like tonight when they're out and about.

B: Aye! Andy would know! He's top shelf with the style!... Yeah, like, I guess I am a Ned and stuff. I'm 26, I'm too old for that shite now, but I like to get messed up with my mates and have fun. But I also work on cars and make some money now and that, I'm not a Ned like wee Reggie and his mates.

SP: Is that why you're dressed differently than them? Sorry to stick my neck out but I just want to know.

B: Aye, no, we can all see it, I'm not in trackies and socks and that shite tonight but it doesn't mean they're not on the floor in my room! (Laughs) I don't know what the others are telling you about Neds... they don't dress like that all the time. The young ones do, maybe, yeah, but not everyone who is a Ned or gets called a Ned does. You dress for the occasion, right? Like look what you're wearing tonight, you dressed casual but for a party. We all do that too, it's not just about stereotypes.

Bill describes his dress, and that of the other men he showed up with, as being dressed up for a "big night out the town". They came to the party to have a couple of drinks and socialize before going downtown to the bars and nightclubs. He points out his friends, and they are sporting similar outfits, wearing jeans and t-shirts or polo-style athletic shirts. When I press further about why they're wearing that particular style of clothing for tonight, Bill simply states "Look, you're not getting into the clubs we're going to if you're dressed in that Ned outfit. They ban hoodies and football colours everywhere, it's fucking crazy to show up in something like that and expect it to not kick off. Don't ask for trouble, it's fucking simple."

Bill indicates that he and his friends are dressed as they are in order to distance themselves from the infamous Ned gear of tracksuits and casual wear so as to draw less attention to themselves when they're at pubs and bars in cities like Glasgow rather than establishments near or in their own neighbourhoods. He says that wearing casual clothing (which means Ned clothing, as in football or athletic casuals) is all well and good at the neighbourhood pubs and house parties, but it carries less-than-desirable connotations outside one's own stomping ground. This confirms what I experienced living in and around the Glasgow city centre throughout the times I'd spent there – banning football colours (green or blue), hooded sweatshirts and ball caps is a phenomenon that many British city centres embrace. In Ottawa, for example, it's not unheard of for bars to enforce dress codes than ban scarves of colours that carry gang associations, casual footwear, and so on. The style Bill has adopted tonight aims to blend in to the city, but furthermore, our conversation indicates that the aesthetic they adopted for the night also has the goal of distancing themselves from the image they've cultivated on the estate because that “Ned wear” carries negative connotations.

As previously mentioned, Andy was a member of a Ned community who provided me with access to informants that I probably would not have had the privilege of learning from otherwise. Furthermore, the females who knew the Neds I interacted with – including any prospective Nedettes – were generally cold towards me. But tonight, with the recommendation of Reggie and Andy and the trust I built with Donny and Chris's crowd, I have the pleasure of meeting Claudine and Leona. When talking to Bill and Andy in the kitchen, I note that I haven't gotten to speak with many female Neds, a statement that elicits laughter from both of them.

SP: What's funny about that?

B: It's just like... how you say it.

A: Aye, you sound like a Canadian now, like you're not from here. Don't be sad about it!

SP: Well what should I call them? Nedettes?

Again, the statement is greeted by chuckles from both young men. Similar to previous discussions with other Neds, as well as young team correspondences and websites, the role of females in Ned communities is unclear. Andy posits that he supposes there could be female Neds, but that it's different from male Neds – Bill confirms this position. The girls that hang out with Neds are part of the Ned community, but are not Neds (or Nedettes) per se. Andy insists that “they're not Neds, they're our friends. They're friends of Neds.” When asked what the differences are, Bill stresses that “the girls don't fight the same way the guys do... they dress different, they don't chib each other, they don't all come down to the pub to watch football or race cars or any of that shit.” Andy jokes that the females who hang out with Neds are “WAGs really... except it's not glamorous and they're all chubby,” a jab that Bill punches him in the arm over (WAGs refer to the “wives and girlfriends” of famous footballers, known for being thin, rich, glamorous, kept women).

Bill takes me outside to meet his girlfriend, Leona. She has heard about my project and visit through the grapevine, and Bill assures her I'm “a sound burd.” He briefs her on our conversation about female Neds and assures me she can answer some of my questions (something that strikes fear in my heart, as he is implying I think she is a Ned and “Ned” is a loaded term). Much to my relief, Leona is happy to talk to me though, aware that her boyfriend and Andy have a special way of getting people wound up. Leona is 18 and out of school and her and Bill have been dating for several months. Although she has no plans to go to university, she is interested into getting into social work one day, laughing and adding “when I'm not still a kid

myself.” We are joined by her friend Claudine, who Leona claims was formerly a Ned when they were in school together. Both girls have long, straightened, black and blonde striped dyed hair, false nails and sunless tans, and are dolled up for the party in tiny tops and decorated jeans.

Leona believes that she might be what comes to one’s mind when they envision the term “Nedette”:

SP: Why would you say that you look like a Nedette?

L: Well like, maybe not so much tonight, but I don’t know. I mean more with what I wear everyday. Track pants, velvet, hoodies... I know what people say when they see my hair, my tattoos, my piercings. I dress how I like to dress and so do the other girls around here. It may not be posh but it’s cool and it’s what we like. But because we come from a certain part of town, like – maybe if we didn’t even hang out with these guys and yeah, a lot of them are Neds – I think no matter what I do they’d look at me and go ‘oh she’s a Ned.’ And yeah, that pisses me off.

C: We don’t look like Neds tonight! We’re away to the club after this with Billy and the boys.

L: Yeah, you’re the one she should be talking to, you were dead Neddy when we were in school!

C: I want to smack you but it’s true.

Leona and Claudine inform me that while they both had difficult periods growing up together, including experimentation with sex, alcohol, and drugs, Claudine had a definite Neddy streak. It involved spending most of her time with male Neds, dating several of them, and picking fights and threatening other girls. When she was threatened with expulsion from school, her mother threatened to kick her out of the home. With nowhere else to go as a young teenager, Claudine got her act together and managed to stop fighting and finish school. I ask if she was a Ned then, or was participating in Ned activities but wasn’t actually a Ned:

C: Yeah... I would say I was a Ned. But girls can't really be Neds. They can maybe, like if they try really hard (laughing) become a Nedette, I guess? But really, girls that would be called Nedettes are just the girls who shag Neds and date Neds and stuff.

L: I agree. The girls who go with Neds may talk like them a bit and dress like them and shit, like wear lots of gold like a Chav, like Vicky Pollard and that! But they're not the same. We don't stab each other in the face, it's not about gangs and young teams.

C: Well see I don't know there. I ran with (a young team) when we were in school.

L: "Ran with"? Is that what we're calling it?

C: (Laughing) I was seeing some of those boys on and off for a few years. Yeah like, I wasn't in the gang. I was one of their birds. But you can't be in that gang as a lassie. So I guess you can't be one of those Neds if you're a girl, then. Yeah... girls aren't really Neds, not in the same way.

This phenomenon is curious to me. From what Claudine and Leona are sharing, it sounds as though males are the main actors in the Ned scene, whereas females slip in and out of Ned groups and are more auxiliary characters than core members of Ned groups or gangs. As we are discussing young Neds (in their early to late teens) as opposed to older Neds, it's important to find out if age is perhaps a variable that makes a difference:

SP: Do you mean that if you're young, you can't really be a female Ned? Because you can't truly be part of a young team and things like that?

L: Nah... if you look at older Neds, like guys in their thirties and forties who are still Neds, just getting drunk and being on the dole and generally being kind of useless, there aren't woman Neds who are like that. So girls can basically be, like, Neddy, but they're not Neds in the same way.

SP: And what do you mean by girls being "Neddy"? Just to be clear.

L: Like, doing the stuff that Neds are seen in the papers for. Fighting, chibbing people, drinking, harassing strangers, trashing Subway sandwich shops and that.

C: Yeah, the stuff that the younger boys get into more than the younger girls. And then there are old man Neds who do that, but like, you just don't see

grown women doing that. So no, they aren't Neds in the same way – they're not really Neds at all.

SP: So with being Neddy, you mean the negative things that people claim Neds do? The things that Neds are treated badly for?

C: I wouldn't say that Neds are treated badly, more mis-judged as they talk slang, and so do we. We usually hang about in large groups and like to carry on. In my social circle of friends most outsiders actually grow to love us, even the boys, the Neds. They realise just because we dress and talk a certain way, us girls actually probably would do anything to help anyone. But there is a minority of Neds that do give us a bad name, they give the Neds and the girls who hang out with Neds a bad name. That's how girls get to be called Neds even when they don't do anything wrong. The Neds, those blokes, they steal, damage peoples' property and worse....we try to go out of our way to stop things like that happening if we have seen anything like it.

Speaking with females who spend time with Neds, it's clear that although they are an integral part of the Ned scene, females are not strictly speaking Neds/Nedettes themselves.

Shopping with Neds

In the week after the party in the east end, Andy holds true to his promise to take me out to explain more about Ned fashions. We meet in the afternoon and stroll past shops on the Trongate, not far from the Barras markets and Glasgow Green as we progress toward Argyle Street. The Green is infamous from such tales as *No Mean City* and is a poetic backdrop for the start of our day – tales of epic battles between Neds of the 1920s still echo in the pubs of Glasgow today. Similarly, the Barrowland markets and Barras area are reflected on warmly in Glasgow folklore: “At the weekends, families went to the Barras. The Barrowland market was, and still is, a centre for the hustle and bustle of Glaswegian life. It was held on Saturdays and Sundays, and had hundreds of stalls, both indoors and outdoors, selling everything imaginable. It was very cheap compared with the high-street stores and it was said that a lot of the merchandise was obtained by dodgy means” (MacFarlane, 2009: 116). This demonstrates that

my choice of the markets as a site for observation on my part was a good one, and that MacFarlane also maintains the character is still there today.

Our walk progresses to the Trongate area, another interesting part of downtown Glasgow. It connects to the bustling and increasingly upscale Argyle Street, now full of high street shops such as H&M and Topshop, as well as the Argyll Arcade which is home to the largest selection of diamond goods and diamond retailers in Scotland (see <http://www.argyll-arcade.com> for more information). However the stretch of the Trongate, only slightly to the east of these popular and upscale retailers, is crowded with pawn shops, discount retailers, and leather goods stores galore. Andy points out his personal favourite locations to buy discount sneakers, tracksuits and branded sportswear, pawned gold jewelry, and with a wink, “even furs for the special lassies!” A far cry from the sleek signs and expensive window displays of the high street stores only a few blocks west, many of the stores have bright, blocky posters covering their windows, advertising the sales inside the buildings. Window displays tend to have the goods folded or displayed on hangers and shelves with bold tags announcing the price of their wares. Andy warns me that one has to be careful about accidentally purchasing counterfeit goods in this area, unless that is one’s goal.

We continue onto Argyle Street, and Andy is critical of many of the displays of the windows. According to Andy, the menswear in the window of one upscale retailer is only fit for “poofers” (gay men) - no self-respecting Ned, or self-respecting straight man for that matter, would be caught dead in slim-fit jeans and a pastel deep-v-neck t-shirt. He is in fact judgmental of many of the stores carrying de rigueur fashions, even those carrying branded Celtic and Rangers wares, positing that they cater their pricey goods to tourists and rich people rather than the genuine Glaswegians that the teams represent. We brush past the people on the busy street

towards Andy's favourite store, and one mentioned by many Neds through the course of this project: The Hip Hop Shop.

The Hip Hop Shop is situated in the heart of downtown Glasgow. It is located in the underpass on top of which Glasgow Central Station, the hub of travel in and out of Glasgow, is located. The store is small, but packed with stock, and the staff in the Hip Hop Shop greet Andy as we come in. Rap music thumps out of the speakers as I take in the scene. Glass cases display jewellery, belt buckles and watches, with lights showcasing the rhinestones and bling that adorn many pieces. Shoes are lined up on display along a wall, one part of each unique pair on a small shelf, separated by brand and style. Shirts and jerseys hang on racks; hats are sculpted into fresh form and stacked along the wall proudly. At first glance, it looks like many other small, independent retailers in midsize cities like Glasgow, but when a Ned is directing your eye towards the items they find most desirable, it tells a different story.

The Hip Hop Shop website does an excellent job describing the styles they offer. It features many of their best-selling items, including replicas of jewellery (in particular, chains and pendants) worn by famous rappers, and shoes and clothing sported by hip hop fans. It also carries short descriptions, in laymen's terms, of some of the vernacular describing the articles carried at their store. They offer the following explanation for what they term "bling bling jewellery" (found at

http://www.hiphopshoponline.co.uk/images/www.hiphopshoponline.co.uk/html/bling_bling_jewellery.html):

Bling bling is a hip hop slang which is used to describe expensive and elegant jewellery. It not only refers (sic) jewellery which is very expensive but also refers to a lifestyle built around excess spending and ostentation. Basically this term bling bling refers to the exterior manifestation of one's interior state of

character... in very simple terms bling bling jewellery can be referred to as gaudy jewellery that if worn by somebody reflects its status of being rich... There is a wide selection and it includes all types of jewellery including earrings, bling bling watches, chains, pendants, hip hop bracelets, necklaces and lot more... The example of such kind are bling bling watches as they are all engraved with diamonds and precious stones making them look royal. It is a kind of flashy and gaudy hip hop jewellery sported mostly by African American hip-hop artists and middle class Caucasian adolescents. If you have got such bling bling jewellery then it's likely that you're cruising round the town in your Bentley dropping with diamonds and other precious and elegant stones. This type of jewellery reveals off (sic) your excessive wealth, style and attitude... So if you want to be the coolest person around your peeps, make sure you get some of such hip hop jewellery items which are sophisticated enough for any occasion, with enough sparkle to get you noticed.

There are several things to note in that passage. First of all, while the focus is on “expensive and elegant jewellery”, very little in the Hip Hop Shop is pricey. Andy states that one of the reasons Neds shop there is because it is so affordable – knockoffs of watches and pendants that costs tens of thousands of dollars in rap videos can be purchased for under 50 pounds, much more affordable for someone who is not rich. Next, it is clear that the jewellery is used to express one's character, but that the quality of that character is tied to wealth. If one does not possess wealth, at least in hip hop or Ned circles, they can give off the impression of wealth, thus raising their status. Third, they cite that the audiences for this jewellery are Black hip hop artists and middle-class White adolescents. Neds are lower/working class White adolescents who, as expressed elsewhere in this work, align with what they understand to be certain Black subcultures (such as hip hop or the Rastafarian movement, as discussed in the theory section of this work). Overall, the focus here is not on expressing one's worth to oneself, but rather expressing your value to those who observe you. They also elaborate on their selection of bling bling watches, again emphasizing the look of something over the utility or personal values aligned with it (available in full at

http://www.hiphopshoponline.co.uk/images/www.hiphopshoponline.co.uk/html/bling_bling_watches.html):

...(Bling bling watches are) often worn by the rappers as it also refers to obvious an appealing wealth. Bling bling watches is the most vital part of the hip hop jewellery which looks just like the ones worn by the hottest rap stars such as The Game and G-Unit but at a price even the modest person can easily afford... Such hip hop watches are manufactured by some of the best known watch houses such as Armani, Pulsar, Rolex, Seiko, Swiss Army, TAG Heuer, Tissot, Versace and many more. Iced out watches sells the latest hip hop gear featuring bling bling watches with diamonds studded in that and gives the sense of an amazing rich look... You need to get that bling look and with this platinum style hip hop watch with the iced out bezel you get it at a price that would make anyone smile... The iced out platinum style hip hop watch is a must have for any baller on a budget... So one can get such watches and place them on your wrist now and start making people's jaws drop.

Again, this is less about utility, and more about getting noticed. The appearance of wealth is of the utmost importance here, although they do stress the affordability of the products they offer. They mimic luxury goods and give the wearer the same value, but are geared towards those who do not possess the wealth of hip hop moguls (like Neds). The top selling watch on their website, decked out in rhinestones and on a faux leather strap, is available for 29 GBP (about 60 CDN at the time of writing). This is not a criticism of the product or the person buying it, rather it is meant to highlight the aspirational nature of the goods.

Andy points out things that he considers particularly Neddy, including items he and his peers have purchased. Goods adorned with pictures of cannabis leaves are popular; Andy himself has a small silver cannabis leaf adorned with “diamonds” (rhinestones) that he often wears on a chain around his neck. He’s also partial to hats and t-shirts adorned with the logos of American sports teams. This is of particular interest as in my experience, not many Glaswegians followed popular American sports such as baseball and basketball – Neds in particular are very loyal to their football teams. When asked why he liked a New York Yankees ball cap, he told

me that it's not about the sports, it's about the style. The teams that are popular in America become status symbols in other areas, suggesting that Americanization plays a role in what is in vogue for people abroad and Neds.

After perusing new merchandise and chatting away with the staff about up-and-coming styles and music, I ask Andy to guide me through the store and point out some of the items that, in his opinion, would appeal to Neds that he knows. I decide it's best to keep the digital recorders tucked away while we peruse the stock to avoid the risk of insulting the store owners or staff. After all, "Ned" is still a loaded term for many people, and I don't want to risk offending the staff or putting Andy in danger of being further labelled or criticized upon subsequent visits to the Hip Hop Shop. Instead, I jot down notes and questions about the items he points out to ask him after we leave the shop.

In terms of clothing, Andy isn't overly interested in much of the selection. Oversize jerseys, t-shirts, embellished jackets and hooded sweatshirts hang on the racks. He does point out relatively plain jeans that would be Ned-appropriate, lacking the elaborate decorative stitching, studs, and decorations that some pairs have on the pockets and seams, saying that they're appropriate for a night out on the town. He picks up a couple pairs of construction-style boots, testing them for weight and flex, but otherwise gravitates toward lightweight trainers in similar or solid colours. Andy picks up certain hats and accessories and comments enthusiastically about hip hop personalities who have visited the store while touring through the UK. More than any other type of stock in store, Andy gravitates towards the accessories at the Hip Hop Shop. Belt buckles, watches, chains, and pendants are the focus of much of his envy and admiration. He compliments the man behind the cash register on their new products and

promises he'll be back in as soon as his next cheque clears, and the pair joke and chat for a minute before Andy and I head back onto the street.

Andy and I retreat to a pub around the corner to discuss our adventure in Ned browsing at the Hip Hop Shop.

A: So how did you like that!

SP: It was great! The shoes in particular.

A: (laughing) Aye, Chris and Donny said you'd be well into that. Yeah, they've got all the good shit in there. Some of it's dear (expensive) so you can see why they don't want my kind in there, why they get all prickly and shit when wee Neds are running around.

SP: I didn't see that, but I only went in with you. Did you notice I kept my recorders in my bag?

A: I did! That was smart. They're top guys in that shop, but I don't want to cause a stir there, I go there all the time, you know? Wee Neds and thugs and the like give them enough shite. They read about these types in the papers, breaking windows and looting and setting fires and whatnot, doing it if the shopkeepers look at them the wrong way, or say something rude. And even if it's not true it's like... don't stir the pot, you know?

It turns out I was right to act as casually as possible in the store. When we entered, I swear that for the shopkeepers the sight of a Ned in a tracksuit with an "American" girl asking a lot of questions, notebook in hand, was strange enough to halt the music playing over the speakers, as it would in the movies. Eager to discuss the Ned items he'd pointed out to me in a rather hushed tone (particularly hushed given the high-pitched, nasal whine Andy generally speaks to me with), we start to pick apart the items I had written down.

S: We were looking at clothes first, when I started taking my notes. Do you want to tell me about that?

A: What clothes are we talking about?

S: Just in general there... pants, I mean jeans and trousers and whatever (Andy is laughing as pants refers to undergarments in Scotland).

A: Well love, some of those pants really are “pants” (laughing). I don’t like them.

S: Why not?

A: Too much going on. Maybe they work on the folks in the (music) videos, but they’re retarded for folk like me.

For Andy, the embellishments on some of the jeans at the Hip Hop Shop were over-the-top for Neds. Again, it’s because “they’re for poofters” – however, this reference to the suitability of the garment for gay men is abstract. Similar to referring to something as “retarded”, Andy doesn’t mean that something is actually for a particular person. Rather, he’s using such terms in a less than politically correct way, meaning that they’re something he frowns upon, something out of the fashion of what he and his peers like, something to be mocked. The embellished jeans are not something a Ned would wear out. He indicates that the simpler jeans are perfect for “a night on the town, when you’re going to pubs and clubs in the city centre. It doesn’t matter that they have a no-trackie (dress) code, it’s just that like... they want you to look nice. And if you’re out on the pull (trying to meet women) it just make sense to wear what the burds like. And they don’t want to pull a bloke dressed like a poofter.” This reminds me of the night I first met Andy, when I encountered Neds dressed in an atypical fashion (jeans and polo shirts rather than tracksuits and caps) who were heading downtown after the house party.

When I ask about the shirts and tops at the Hip Hop Shop, I am expecting an equally dismissive response, but get quite the opposite. Andy feels that the shirts are a bad fit for Neds for another reason:

S: So what’s the deal with the shirts in there?

A: What do you mean?

S: I don't mean "shirts" like people, like "the shirts" or "stiffs", I mean shirts like the things on your upper-body. The shirts like, the hoodies and t-shirts and jackets.

A: (Laughing) Aye! I thought you meant the police. Most of the stuff, like the clothes at the (Hip Hop) Shop, that's not for me. Not for us. Nah, man. Those aren't for us. The logos, the fit. Big and baggy. Those are straight up thug, rap and that. A Black guy or a Wigger White wannabe guy might wear it, but it makes no sense for one of us. The shirts, I'm talking about, is what I'm referencing to.

S: Can you tell me more about that?

A: Like, say you see a bloke in a rap video carrying off a Lakers jersey or some shite from the US. But you can't get away with wearing that thing around here – you look like you're trying to be one of them. Like... (pauses)... we have our own teams. Why are Rangers or Celtic not enough for you, you know what I mean? You must have teams like that that match up at home, fuck what sport it is. But if you love a team, you respect that.

S: And I do... we have teams that we're loyal to, but for different sports and for different reasons. Hockey, football, like American football, not the soccer. But I want to talk about what we were talking about before, if it's okay. So can you tell me a bit more about why American teams are in Scottish stores? No... Actually, can you tell me why they're in the store we just went to, and why Neds might buy shit with those logos on them?

A: Neds don't, that's what I'm trying to say. I guess like, given what we've talked about and shit, with t-shirts it's like, you can represent your music taste and your beliefs and that through logos, but don't fucking put it across your chest on a shirt. Shirts don't have to be so fucking obvious. Especially for our kind.

They were too fancy, too flashy for Neds – the opposite of his response to the accessories, which we will address momentarily. The shirts at the Hip Hop Shop were overtly related to rap and hip hop. Neds allude to hip hop and rap, but don't directly advertise it, and this has to do in some part with race. He says that "a Black guy may look totally normal in it, but he'll look like a wannabe. I'd rather look like a true Ned than a wannabe thug or gangster." He says that those items are "for the Black guys", and that he and his friends would "give shit to

a White guy” if they saw wearing one a shirt like that. He did like the cannabis and rasta shirts though, and he can relate to those things. You can allude to the glamour in more subtle ways, like pendants and hats worn occasionally, but it’s not okay to put it across your chest if you’re White, if you’re “not like them”. “There aren’t enough Blacks in Glasgow, the ones that there are would probably call your bullshit.” Andy indicated that in his opinion, which he shares with the other Neds in his life, there are certain styles that Neds avoid wearing because they’re “too hip hop” – they look as though they’re out rightly posturing as Black men, which is frowned upon.

When Andy tells me about the cannabis leaf and Rastafarian accessories he coveted in the shop, he acknowledges that he believes they’re “Black styles”, but that they are more legitimate choices for a Ned to make than, say, blinged out jeans and a New York Yankees jersey. Subtlety (to a degree) is key here: a Ned can adopt Black aesthetics in more underplayed ways, such as a cannabis pendant, a blinged-out watch or a Tupac hat, but to go with the full package is over-the-top and a betrayal of one’s Nedness. He keenly discusses footwear, citing that he likes the boots on display because they’re “like old school Ned boots. Heavy, man, you can kick someone’s head in with those! Like the Doc Martens they wear in the movie,” but Neds ultimately prefer trainers. The trainers should be more on the plain side, again, nothing flashy or for “poofers”. Monochromatic, basic sporting shoes from companies such as Adidas or Nike reign supreme among Neds. Overall, Andy insists that accessories seem to be the only area where Neds go wild, that when they see something glittery that they like, a Ned is “like a magpie”.

Over the course of our conversation, I don’t learn much from Andy about how Neds dress or why they wear what they wear that I hadn’t already learned during my time there. He is

astute in his summation of our conversation when I ask him if he has any thoughts or concerns about what we'd discussed.

A: Well, yeah, I don't want to look like I'm a mad racist or something.

SP: Of course not!

A: Okay. So basically with clothes and that, like... it is a race thing, not just at the Hip Hop Shop but with anything Neds buy anywhere else... At the (Hip Hop) shop White people and Neds buy stuff and maybe try to look Black or gangster because it's glamorous... but Black people who shop there are trying to look richer too. Do you know what I mean?

SP: I think so. Are you saying that maybe it's less about White kids trying to act Black and more about poor people trying to look like they have value too.

A: Fucking spot on!

SP: (Laughing) I know what you mean by that. And I know that it's not just a Glasgow thing, or a Ned thing. I just wanted to get your Ned take on it.

A: Aye! And Neds man, there is a reason that people give a shit about Neds. Maybe the White kids at the private schools aren't causing the same trouble even though they're dressed like wee thugs but really expensive at the weekend... But a Ned sets a Subway on fire and we're suddenly the thugs. So yeah we do get criticized more for what we wear.

SP: For certain things you wear?

A: Like what do you mean?

SP: I don't know. Your pendant, for example.

A: It's hip hop, yeah. And I love smoking weed! Neds love pulling girls and smoking weed. And like I said ages ago, the estate can be shitty and bleak, everyone needs a release like that. And rappers do too, and rappers love getting girls, and rappers are Black a lot of the time, but... I don't give a fuck if you're Black or White or blue, who wouldn't want that? (Laughs)

In a previous conversation, Andy had discussed how Neds and rappers, in his mind, have a lot in common – he says that while they deal with classism in Scotland, Neds being at the lowest level of power, Black people in urban centres in the States deal with racism. They're both

fighting struggles, and as a Ned he can relate to that. I ask him if some Neds adopt Black hip hop styles because they're aligning with those struggles, and he feels that some do, but it's on a case-by-case basis. I ask if this is a problem for other Scottish people (non-Neds, wealthier people, and so on) and if that's part of the reason Neds get such a bad reputation in the media:

SP: ...I guess I'm trying to ask if Neds are discriminated against because they're White kids acting Black in some ways. If they're bad at being White people, basically – they don't perform how White people in positions of power in Scotland do, so they're punished for it. I'm wondering all in all if Neds get a bad rap because they're misperforming Whiteness.

A: Aye.

SP: So... are Neds bad White people?

A: (Laughing) Nah, man. We're just bad people.

Overall, Andy, like some of the other Neds I spoke with throughout the course of this project, feels that race is definitely an important variable when discussing Ned identity and performativity. Neds are cognizant of the notion that they adopt hip hop styles and other styles that are influenced by African American artists, and that previous generations and those White people in power may frown upon some influences. But they do not embrace hip hop or Black cultural signifiers as a direct form of rebellion. Instead, they recognize and align with struggles and forms of escapism regardless of colour of one's skin. Overall, in the eyes of Neds, they are discriminated against because they are Neds, not because they misperform Whiteness by appropriating Blackness.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

At the inception of this project, the research question was stated as a hypothesis of sorts. The research and fieldwork sought out to examine how classism and racism intersect when looking at Neds. I was of the opinion that Neds appropriated Black cultural signifiers in their dress and demeanor – sneakers, clothing, music, vernacular – to express their struggle by aligning with struggles of other groups. Furthermore, I suspected that a large part of the reason Neds are discriminated against by other groups/classes in Scotland was because they misperformed their Whiteness by performing what they understood to be Blacknesses. After speaking with so many participants, Neds and non-Neds alike, I learned that while the race and class theories intersected at various points, the reality of the relationship wasn't exactly what I'd set out to examine.

The Interest and Methodology sections of this work lay out my initial intentions for the project and my infatuation with Neds in Glasgow. It was far easier than initially anticipated to recruit interviewees who were non-Neds to speak about Neds – friends and family recommended people to speak to, and local advertising brought out many great accounts of Ned experiences and thoughtful discussions on the subculture. The original techniques for recruitment of informants evolved beyond what was initially anticipated for this project, as snowball sampling and word-of-mouth recruitment proved more successful for recruitment of actual Neds. This is natural in fieldwork; as one spends more time and gains more trust in a community, more people come out of the woodwork with much knowledge to share.

The theory section of this work examined performativity from several angles. Drawing on Butler and Foucault, I looked at how race and class are performed, and furthered that analysis by drawing in Bourdieusian notions of cultural capital and how that is central to Ned

performances. This was placed in the context of deindustrialization and Glaswegian exceptionalism; simply put, how Glasgow's poorest-poor have not recuperated in the same way as those of a similar strata in other deindustrialized areas of Britain (such as Manchester or Liverpool). The discussion then moved to how Whiteness is performed (and perhaps more appropriately, misperformed) by Neds, while acknowledging that Whiteness is not the neutral "norm" from which other performances deviate, drawing on White Trash consumption examples from North America. This involved a short theory of class which aimed to show how class structures are not stringent (as in, not working-middle-upper class structure, but something much more dynamic and penetrable) and how Neds operate in the lower-to-lowest strata of the working/underclass in Scotland. Their rebellion against class rules and rejection of upper-class values through performance is discussed, drawing on Hebdige and his ideas of punk rock rebellion and Buford's hooliganism as rejection of the shackles of a deindustrialized society.

The theory section discussed adoption of Black performances by Neds with a focus on hip hop and African American struggles by appropriating dress and music from these realms. Neds (and their theoretical cousins, Chavs) are observed through the lens of consumption, in line with the initial conceptualization of this project. It involved a discussion of how those in poorer communities outside of Glasgow employ aspirational values to gain capital and value within their own subcultures. From there, this worked moved on to frame how Neds are conceptualized by others in Glasgow – teachers, artists, neighbours. This section was deliberately placed before discussions with actual Neds were presented, with the aim of showcasing how Neds are conceived of in their environment to frame their displacement in various communities.

Interviews about Neds frame them in as a continuation of the Theory and Methodology sections. Neds are conceptualized as both a product *of* community and a problem *in*

communities, as an interview with a teacher and social worker indicates. A man who impersonates Neds continues this dialogue, building on the ways in which Neds (from personal experience in the neighbourhoods he grew up in) appropriate Black cultures to express their rejection from other classes in Britain. This same person draws on the aspirational values as Neds do to draw a crowd to his shows, which revolve around both celebrating and mocking the subculture at the same time.

The next interviewee spoke to the violent power that Neds are known for in a comparative context. His interview showed that the violence and character of Neds displays an exceptionalism among Neds that Chavs in England do not share – further fortifying the initial interest on my behalf regarding this project. Gary, the subsequent interviewee, highlighted why I chose to deal with Glasgow’s markets as my initial point of recruitment of participants. He utilized style, consumption, and his concept of the “hive mind” to isolate Neds, class and race as key for study. Off the back of this stall-owner’s discussion, the walkabout account of a Glasgow market was presented to give some insight into where Neds socialize and shop. It provided insight into concrete consumption, looking at the styles Neds by, asking why they like such things, and examining a key sphere of socialization for many of these Glaswegians; keywords from the work in the market included such terms as “glamour” and “trash” and the infantilization of Neds was briefly discussed. The aim of examining shopping trends for Neds (revisited later in the work) is to look at which goods are consumed, why they’re chosen by Neds, and to look at the environment in which the social acts of consuming and performing are taking place.

The Arran interview examined artistic and humorous portrayals of Neds and focused on common Ned symbols, like Buckfast tonic wine. He emphasized the performative aspects of

Nedism – speech, fashion, socialization – and held a much more optimistic attitude towards Neds than many of the other people interviewed. Rosie and Daniel, while differing on many Ned-related topics, both held Neds in quite low regard. While one felt Neds were socialized to be Neds, the other felt that it was a borderline-biological trait, and that if a child's parents were Neds, their fate was essentially sealed. From a class perspective, both emphasized that Neds occupied the sphere of the “undeserving poor” and that social mobility was limited for them, but they also did not want to try to grow beyond their circumstances. Film producer Kevin also spoke about Neds and symbolism, focusing on Buckfast as a symbol of rebellion for Neds. He also made note of how affiliation of a brand with a subculture can have negative effects on both parties; Neds are perceived as drunkards and hooligans for consuming Buckfast, while Buckfast is not considered a luxury brand because it has become so much associated with Nedism and crime (much in the vein of Burberry as discussed in the theory section). It also led into a discussion of various brands that have become associated with people/groups who they find undesirable (namely, the luxury brand Cristal and their attempt to distance their champagne from African American hip hop communities).

The non-Neds interview section wraps up with reflections from Scott, who has lived in Glasgow his entire life and reflects on the evolution (or devolution) of Neds over time in his beloved city, commenting on the neighbourhood I lived in during fieldwork (Ibrox) and the infamous Gorbals, a poetic site of class conflict in Glasgow. While it is a sad note to end that section on, I felt that it was important to structure the project in this way to remind the reader that Neds are a product of social/class unrest in Glasgow, and that that is very much true today as much as it was almost a hundred years ago. The next chapter, “Talking with Neds” is less compartmentalized than interviews about Neds with current non-Neds, as it is the product of

interview data, participant observation, and field journals. It began with an encounter with two Neds who became integral to the snowball/word-of-mouth approach to recruitment of participants; in line with the consumption/performativity/appearance themes of this work, our relationship began over a discussion of my footwear. These two active Neds helped to differentiate between their subculture and other subcultures in Glasgow (such as “casuals”, another offshoot of the Chav subculture). They helped to identify styles and brands associated with Nedism, and as our communications became more frequent and in-depth, reflected upon why Neds adopt the styles that they do. Even more important to the specific research question, the information that they provided strengthened the links between not just performativity and class, but performativity and race as well, as they highlighted the aspirational aspects of Ned style that related to Black styles such as Rastafarianism and rap/hip hop communities in America.

As my network of Neds around Glasgow grew, I was allowed into environments that I previously had limited exposure to, including house parties with Neds and into their homes (not just on to estates). As I met friends and family members of these informants and they got used to seeing me more, these communities began to trust me more, and new doors opened up. I got to learn about Glasgow’s Young Teams, the loosely organized semi-gangs operated by Neds on estates. The discussion of race was delved into in greater detail, with Ned participants being of the general opinion that being a Ned is something reserved for Caucasians. Furthermore, although it was never discussed in great detail (as it is my hope to look at it exclusively in a future project), the concept of gender and Nedism was touched upon. This project really only looked at female Neds as they relate to male Neds, as I believe a study of Nedettes and Ned gender dynamics is well deserving of a project of its own, perhaps at the PhD level.

Returning to the theme of race (of misperforming tradition Whiteness by adopting Black styles) I went on a shopping trip with Andy. One-on-one we were able to select Nedly products and he provided pointed insight into why Neds opted to wear these goods. I decided to place this section toward the end of the work to remind the reader that the focus of this project is on where race and class – Whiteness/Blackness and working/underclass – intersect to highlight the “problem” of Neds in Scotland.

The scope of this project contained many themes – de-industrialization, divisions in the working class in Glasgow, performance of poorness and performance of Whiteness (or according to many informants, misperformance), to name a few. The main research question involved examining how class and race relate when it comes to discrimination against Neds in Scotland. I initially hypothesized that Neds were, on the surface, despised because they misperformed what it meant to be a decent working class Glaswegian, and underneath that veneer, were hated because they misperformed this identity *by* adopting Black styles as White performers. While the relationship between the misperformance of class and the misperformance of race are definite factors when it comes to Neds, the relationship does not play out in as clear a fashion as initially proposed.

If we approach this conclusion in a similar fashion to how I laid out the fieldwork data from this project, we can examine both sides of this issue. Non-Neds identified Neds as being largely a White subculture, and also felt that Neds adopted Black styles (in particular, American gangster styles and rap/hip hop styles). But upon the conclusion of transcript analysis, it is not clear that those who hate Neds hate Neds because of some sort of racism; simply put, they don’t despise or mock Neds because Neds adopt Black styles. However, the information from non-Neds does suggest that there is an underlying sentiment that Neds are, in multiple ways,

misperforming both what it means to be working class, and what it means to be White working class. An upstanding, salt-of-the-earth working class White male would dress the part, speak in a voice similar to those of other people in the neighbourhood, would not consume anything (drugs and alcohol included) to excess as it impedes the success and stability of not just him as an individual, but working class people as a whole. So many non-Neds felt that Neds misperformed class (the main focus), and a part of this has to do with misperforming race, but rejection of Neds is not as based in straightforward racism as much as it could have been in theory.

The information gleaned from interviews with Neds (as in, those who currently or recently would have self-identified with the subculture) confirms that Neds adopted many styles that they identified as being Black, glamorous, gangster, and/or rap/hip-hop styles. They identified with the struggles of some Black groups (Rastafarians, for example), and aspired to achieve the success and portray the glamour of other Black subcultures (rap/hip-hop superstars, for example). Non-Neds recognize and even ridicule Neds for the styles they've adopted, but Neds celebrate these Black styles. So while they are misperforming class in the eyes of Non-Neds, they're performing identities by adopting newer and non-exclusively White styles. It is my hope, as previously mentioned, to continue to look into this subculture (perhaps at the PhD level) with a focus on gender, on masculinities and femininities and performativity. In conclusion, Neds may be misperforming Whiteness by being violent, tacky, and/or apathetic, but the anxiety over Neds does not have a clear connection to anxiety over Blackness or racial miscegenation in Scotland.

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