Introduction
Identifying the poor, locating their clothes

> During researches over the last twenty-five years or so in rural history I have gathered pockets of information about the way people dressed . . . before the First World War. I did not, at first, go after specific details about the clothes they wore: they told me about this aspect of their lives of their own accord; it was important to them. Later I became convinced that dress . . . is an integral part of the history of any society.[1]

My earliest memory is of a multi-coloured chequerboard-pattern skirt I am wearing while sitting by the cooker in the kitchen, aged about three. Then there is the Fair Isle cardigan with enamelled dachshund brooch (a reward for bravery at the doctor's) which I wear while helping to hang out the washing; the Marks & Spencer's houndstooth, scoop-neck pinafore trimmed with three pairs of black ball buttons (Sunday school); a tartan kilt – I still have the matching scarf – the only one of these outfits preserved in a photograph (Kew Gardens); the white Crimplene shift dress with lace yoke (Windsor Safari Park); the turquoise dress with waterfall cuffs (holiday in Devon). Ask me what I was doing and I can probably tell you what I was wearing – or rather, ask me what I was wearing and I can probably tell you what I was doing, for the clothes lead the way in these memories. 'If fashion is your trade', sings Jarvis Cocker in the Pulp song 'Underwear', 'then when you're naked I guess you must be unemployed.'[2] My clothes and my sense of who I am are so inseparable that, potentially, when I am undressed, I don't exist.

My passion for clothes was fostered by my maternal aunts who worked as professional seamstresses and provided much of my childhood clothing.[3] Auntie Rose was my main supplier. She sewed for the Frank Usher label by day and for private clients in her own time to save enough money to buy a house in which she and her mother lived, together with Rose's sister Lil, also a seamstress. The kilt was made by another Auntie

[1] George Ewart Evans, 'Dress and the rural historian', *Costume*, 8 (1974), 38–40; 38.
[2] Pulp, 'Underwear', *Different Class* (Universal/Island, 1999).
[3] They were actually my mother's aunts and cousins, but all known to me as 'Aunties'.

Lil, a pleater for The Scotch House. She wasn't actually a blood relation but the close friend of Auntie Bet, who was, and who made shirts for George VI. There was also my father's twin sister, Auntie Julie, a skilled amateur seamstress who came for extended visits from Australia, during which she bought wonderful fabrics from Liberty's. Back home she made some beautiful garments for me. I still have one dress, full-skirted, pink, with a story-border hem.

My mother, also a good home-dressmaker, taught me, the keenest of pupils, to sew and knit when I was very young. Sewing became my main hobby and as a teenager I spent Saturdays running up outfits to wear the same evening. Later, as a mother myself, I sewed and knitted for my two small boys, conscious that my skills as a needlewoman enabled me to dress my family far better than my limited economic circumstances would otherwise have allowed. Being also fascinated with nineteenth-century social history – the men in my mother's family were East End dockers – I became curious about how people then, with little money and many children, managed their clothing. When the history books proved silent I realised I'd have to write my own. This posed something of a challenge, not least because it necessitated a return to college and I was by then a single mother of two children, but I kept us throughout my studies by working as a freelance dressmaker. Daniel Miller proposes that 'things, such as clothing, come not to represent people, but to actually constitute who they are'.[4] As a dressmaker I didn't just make clothes for my clients, but refashioned their identities through the manipulation of a few yards of cloth.

Why dress?

> Dress enters so fully into our notions of individuals, that a particular kind of garment has as much human character about it as even a definite form of countenance.[5]

The nineteenth-century was a period of great sartorial change. As cities expanded the loose smocks and sunbonnets of rural England gave way to the tailored business suits of office workers, and corporate and institutional uniforms answered to the growing taxonomic impulse. Cotton gained ascendancy over wool and linen, while new modes of production, distribution and retailing brought cheap, ready-made clothes to the

[4] Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), p. 23.
[5] Henry Mayhew and John Binny, *The Criminal Prisons of London and Scenes of Prison Life* (London: Frank Cass, 1968 [1862]), p. 483.

masses, diminishing the need for the home manufacture of cloth and clothing and speeding the spread of fashions.

Dress served a multiplicity of functions for rich and poor, but since the latter were more limited in their agency and resources, clothing, which often comprised the largest part of their (literally) material possessions, was of supreme significance. In addition to its practical functions of providing physical comfort and protection from the elements, clothing could indicate – or disguise – the wearer's occupational or regional identity, age, gender, religion and social allegiance. It determined inclusion or exclusion, denoted conformity or differentiation, conferred or withheld respectability, attracted admiration and derision and could be the key to advancement or degradation. Charles Russell noted of the Manchester 'street arabs' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that lack of education excluded them from certain occupations, but the 'want of decent clothes, too', he said, 'prevents their getting the situations usually given to youngsters fresh from school'.[6] An individual's life chances might, therefore, be determined by the possession or lack of a suit of clothes.

In Renaissance Europe, notes Ulinka Rublack, textiles retained their value better than metal currencies with little gold or silver content 'and could be pawned, rented, or sold'.[7] Similarly, in the 1700s, says Beverly Lemire, '[c]lothing was negotiable, portable and readily converted into cash or kind: it was a type of currency in itself'.[8] This remained true in the nineteenth century and clothing was often bought with an eye to its potential for future liquidation. Lemire's analysis of 800 transactions at a Sheffield pawnbroker in 1816 revealed that at least 90 per cent were for clothing or footwear. A similar analysis in London in the 1830s returned at least 79 per cent.[9] Much of the loaned money would have been used to buy food, but many of the poor, especially women and children, would at some point have gone without food to buy clothing. Ultimately, also, when a choice had to be made, clothing could be more important than shelter – even (especially) the homeless needed clothes. And for the poor a choice was always necessary; there was never enough money to pay for clothes *and* food *and* fuel *and* rent. I wanted to find out why, and under

[6] Charles E. B. Russell, *Manchester Boys: Sketches of Manchester Lads at Work and Play*, 2nd edn (Manchester University Press, 1913), p. 45. He gives another example on p. 11.
[7] Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 6.
[8] Beverly Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade Before the Factory, 1660–1800* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p. 127.
[9] Beverly Lemire, *The Business of Everyday Life: Gender, Practice and Social Politics in England, c.1600–1900* (Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 95.

what circumstances they prioritised clothing – to reveal why, as George Ewart Evans discovered, 'it was important to them'.[10]

History and 'non-elite' dress

As Lou Taylor pointed out, until the 1970s dress history was largely relegated to the academic hinterland.[11] Since then it has been gaining scholarly recognition which John Styles attributes to the rise of feminist history, cultural studies and a focus on consumption rather than production, all of which are concerned with subjectivities and identity.[12] Despite this, Margaret Spufford, in her pioneering study of seventeenth-century chapmen, noted the imbalance of scholarly attention to the basic needs of human existence and a tendency, when clothing history has been addressed, to focus on elites even though the 'lower orders' formed by far the largest section of the population.[13] Even when nineteenth-century historians have broached the subject of non-elite dress, some, curiously,

[10] See the *epigraph* to this chapter.

[11] Lou Taylor, *The Study of Dress History* (Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 1–2.

[12] John Styles, 'Dress in history: reflections on a contested terrain', *Fashion Theory*, 2:4 (1998), 383–9; 385, 387.

[13] Margaret Spufford, *The Great Reclothing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and Their Wares in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), pp. 98–9. Elizabeth Ewing makes a similar point. Elizabeth Ewing, *Everyday Dress 1650–1900* (London: Batsford, 1984), p. 7. Among historians of the nineteenth century, clothing occurs in the Hammonds' pioneering three-volume study of labouring life, for example, only in their reproduction of labourers' budgets, such as those recorded by Eden at the close of the eighteenth century. J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, *The Village Labourer 1760–1832: A Study in the Government of England Before the Reform Bill* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1911); J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, *The Town Labourer 1760–1832: The New Civilisation* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1917); J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer 1760–1832* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1919). John Rule is among the few writers of general histories who have considered clothing, but even he devotes only four pages to it compared with twenty-one on food and twenty-six on housing. John Rule, *The Labouring Classes in Early Industrial England 1750–1850* (Harlow: Longman, 1986). Eric Hopkins has short sections on housing and diet, but not clothing, yet he implies its importance when discussing the difficulties of assessing standards of living by pointing out that: 'The cost of food and clothing varied from place to place and from one year to the next'. Eric Hopkins, *A Social History of the English Working Classes 1815–1945* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979). James Treble's study of urban poverty devotes a chapter to food and housing, but less than two pages to clothing. James. H. Treble, *Urban Poverty in Britain 1830–1914* (London: Batsford, 1979). John Burnett has produced dedicated studies on both housing and diet across all classes from 1815 to *c*.1970, but no parallel study of clothing. He does address the issue in his work on the cost of living, but devotes less space to it than to housing and diet. John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815–1970* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1978); John Burnett, *Plenty and Want: A Social History of Diet in England from 1815 to the Present Day*, 3rd edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 1989); John Burnett, *A History of the Cost of Living* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969).

seem to dismiss its significance as they acknowledge it. G. E. Fussell, for example, noted in 1949 the '[p]eculiarities of costume in different districts', but gave examples from just four southern counties before concluding that this afforded 'a fairly complete picture of the appearance of the people in different parts of the country'.[14] Similarly Pamela Clabburn, in the 1970s, found the minimal interest in working-class dress 'understandable, for the poor generally wear a very watered-down version of the dress of the rich, with only now and again a special garment appropriate to a particular trade'.[15] Yet this was in her introduction to an edition of early-nineteenth-century illustrations whose author had set out to produce seventeen volumes specifically to catalogue the great variety of dress among labourers nationwide.

Happily, the scholarly neglect of English non-elite clothing has begun to change, not least with John Styles's magnificent examination of eighteenth-century plebeian fashions.[16] There has also been sporadic interest in occupational dress, but as the authors range across several centuries, countries and classes – skilled craftsmen and professionals, as well as the semi-skilled, or unskilled – the attention paid to the nineteenth-century English poor is necessarily partial.[17] Also, studies of occupational dress say very little about what clothing meant, how it was obtained, or its place in the hierarchy of domestic priorities. Yet as Negley Harte has long argued, dress history, to be meaningful, must be studied in its economic, cultural and social context.[18] Without this we have, as T. H. Breen says, only 'decontextualized things . . . that no longer tell us stories about the creative possibilities of possession, about the process of self-fashioning'.[19]

Recent, more nuanced studies, focusing on the dress of specific sections of the population or on the use and meaning of particular fabrics or garments have begun to address this. Beverly Lemire has blazed a trail

[14] G. E. Fussell, *The English Rural Labourer, His Home, Furniture, Clothing and Food from Tudor to Victorian Times* (London: Batchworth Press, 1949), pp. 74–6.
[15] Pamela Clabburn (ed.), *Working Class Costume from Sketches of Characters by William Johnstone White, 1818* (London: Costume Society, 1971), Introduction.
[16] John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007).
[17] See Phillis Cunnington, *Costume of Household Servants From the Middle Ages to 1900* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1974); Phillis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas, *Occupational Costume in England From the 11th Century to 1914* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1967); Christobel Williams-Mitchell, *Dressed for the Job: The Story of Occupational Costume* (Poole: Blandford, 1982); Diana de Marly, *Working Dress: A History of Occupational Costume* (London: Batsford, 1986); Madeleine Ginsburg, *Victorian Dress in Photographs* (London: Batsford, 1982).
[18] L. Taylor, *Study of Dress History*, pp. 67–8.
[19] T. H. Breen, 'The meanings of things: interpreting the consumer economy in the eighteenth century', in John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 249–60; 251.

with her extensive and illuminating work on the rise and use of cotton in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[20] Steven King and Peter Jones have both highlighted the role of the parish as a supplier of clothing under the Poor Law.[21] Christopher Breward's analysis of urban male consumption emphasises the relationships between dress, class, identity and display.[22] And Laura Ugolini's work on menswear between the 1880s and the beginning of the Second World War examines the connection between masculinity and consumption, as does Clare Rose's study of late-Victorian boys' clothes which also considers the role of clothing in the creation of normative modes of 'respectability'.[23] Alison Toplis's thesis on retailing in Herefordshire and Worcestershire illustrates the range of acquisition methods, legal and illicit, independent and assisted, available to provincial non-elite consumers during the first half of the nineteenth century, while Rachel Worth has highlighted the middle-class lament at the perceived demise of an idyllicised rural dress.[24]

While most of these authors have focused on one half of the nineteenth century, this study spans the period from the late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries. My focus is the changes in the dress of the poor resulting from the industrialisation, urbanisation and democratisation that characterised the period, disrupting traditional communities and generating fears about the blurring of social boundaries. Although, as Lemire reminds us, English sumptuary legislation ended in 1604, 'governments and moralists [still] claimed the right to restrain material expression within the lower ranks' in an attempt to maintain separation between classes.[25] In the nineteenth century, under the pervasive

[20] See in particular Beverly Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660–1800* (Pasold Research Fund and Oxford University Press, 1991).

[21] Steven King, *Poverty and Welfare in England 1700–1850* (Manchester University Press, 2000); Steven King, 'Reclothing the English poor, 1750–1840', *Textile History*, 33:1 (2002), 37–47; Peter Jones, 'Clothing the poor in early-nineteenth-century England', *Textile History*, 37:1 (2006), 17–37; Peter D. Jones, '"I cannot keep my place without being deascent": pauper letters, parish clothing and pragmatism in the south of England, 1750–1830', *Rural History*, 20:1 (2009), 31–49.

[22] Christopher Breward, *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion and City Life 1860–1914* (Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 95.

[23] Laura Ugolini, *Men and Menswear: Sartorial Consumption in Britain 1880–1939* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Clare Rose, *Making, Selling and Wearing Boys' Clothes in Late-Victorian England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

[24] Alison E. M. Toplis, 'The non-elite consumer and "wearing apparel" in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, 1800–1850', PhD, University of Wolverhampton (2008). Rachel Worth, 'Rural laboring dress, 1850–1900: some problems of representation', *Fashion Theory*, 3:3 (1999), 323–42; Rachel Worth, 'Rural working-class dress, 1850–1900: a peculiarly English tradition?', in Christopher Breward, Becky Conekin and Caroline Cox (eds), *The Englishness of English Dress* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), pp. 97–112.

[25] Lemire, *Business of Everyday Life*, p. 110.

influence of evangelicalism which regarded social stratification as providential, this was effected directly by supplying only 'useful and necessary' clothing through the Poor Law and charity, and indirectly via a constant stream of didactic literature decrying 'finery', which was perceived to betoken pride, vanity, luxury, idleness and improvidence, especially when worn by the poor. 'Ignota', for example, writing in *The Cottager's Monthly Visitor* in March 1828, warned that dress was dangerous to both sexes and all ranks, but especially to middle- and lower-class women since: 'The present low price of articles of dress naturally tempts persons to an improper fondness for show, and seems to plead an excuse for it.' But this might attract the attention of social superiors, leading many 'once lovely females' to 'perish in vice and infamy' at the hands of those 'who would be but too ready to take liberties with persons who had the slightest appearance of levity and vanity'.[26] The fault for such catastrophe would lie not only with the assailant, but also with the females who tempted them, reflecting what Alan Hunt identifies as 'a moral preoccupation with female modesty that mingled with a concern about the controllability of women'.[27] Borrowing from linguistics Roland Barthes proposes distinguishing between clothing and dress, with clothing being 'the structural, institutional form of what is worn . . . (that which corresponds to language)', and dress being 'this same form when actualized, individualized, worn . . . (that which corresponds to speech)'. Within this framework, and during a period of increasing demands for political representation, efforts to restrict the dress of the poor can be read as attempts to silence them.[28]

Identifying 'the poor' . . .

Many people who talk glibly of 'the poor' as of one homogenous group fail to recognise how sharply divided are the social classes and how immensely various the standards of life.[29]

A 1999 inter-disciplinary conference at Oxford Brookes University, 'The Dress of the Poor 1750–1900: Old and New Perspectives', was the clearest indication of the awakening of academic interest in this

[26] *The Cottager's Monthly Visitor*, 8 (1828), 115–16.
[27] Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p. 218.
[28] Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System*, trans. Matthew Ward and Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990 [1967]), p. 18.
[29] Mrs Carl Meyer and Clementina Black, *Makers of Our Clothes: A Case for Trade Boards* (London: Duckworth and Co., 1909), p. 164.

subject.[30] Inevitably, as an initial venture into largely uncharted waters, the conference raised more questions than it answered, chief among which were: What constituted poverty? Who were 'the poor'? These questions are still in need of a conclusive answer and to some extent it is perhaps easier to define who, for the purposes of this volume, 'the poor' were not rather than who they were. So, they were not synonymous with the 'lower orders', despite the tendency of wealthier contemporaries, especially in the early part of the century, to treat either group as an homogenous mass. According to François Bédarida, in the latter part of the nineteenth century the 'lower orders' accounted for five-sixths of the population and could be divided into skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled. Fifteen per cent were skilled and could earn around £80–90 per year, 45 per cent were unskilled and could expect to earn around half that amount while the remaining 40 per cent of semi-skilled workers could expect to earn about two-thirds as much as their skilled contemporaries.[31] Nor, although they formed a part of them, were 'the poor' interchangeable with 'the working, or labouring, class(es)'. These terms mask a complex social stratification in which, as John Burnett underlines, 'there were infinite gradations of skill and an infinite range of earnings, which gave some workers unprecedented standards of comfort while plunging others into unparalleled poverty'.[32] For the same reason, in the parlance of modern historiography, 'the poor' does not equate to 'non-elite', although that has been my focus in this introduction so far.

The problem of identifying 'the poor' is exacerbated by the absence of a precise and stable concept of poverty. As Gertrude Himmelfarb shows, from Edmund Burke's 1795 attempt to differentiate 'the labouring people' who earned their own livelihood from those dependent on aid, to the distinction in the 1834 amended Poor Law between poverty and indigence, to the 'discovery' of poverty manifested in Mayhew's mid-century *London Labour and the London Poor*, and the *fin-de-siècle* social surveys of

[30] Selected papers were published in *Textile History*, 33:1 (2002). See also Vivienne Richmond, 'Report back: "The dress of the poor 1750–1900"', *History Workshop Journal*, 49 (2000), 271–3.

[31] François Bédarida, trans. A. S. Forster and Jeffrey Hodgkinson, *A Social History of England 1851–1990* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 56, 60–1.

[32] Burnett, *History of the Cost of Living*, p. 195. Robert Roberts makes the same point. Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), Chapter 1. See also Brian Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom: Stability and Change in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 159–60; Barry Reay, *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800–1930* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 152–3.

Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree, 'the mischievous ambiguity of the word "poor"' persisted.[33]

According to Steven King and Christiana Payne, there is 'convincing evidence' to show that in the early nineteenth century:

> at least 70 per cent of all people would experience part of their lives in absolute or relative poverty . . . However, this 'crude' perspective really conflates the *risk of poverty* and the *actuality of poverty*. In practice, only perhaps one-fifth of the 'labouring classes' might be actually 'poverty stricken' (in the sense of being dependent upon community or charity or on the margins of being in such a position) at any point in time.[34]

Nevertheless, in a separate study of English poverty King argues that in the early nineteenth century '[m]ore people became more poor', while according to Bédarida although by the close of the century living standards for skilled workers had improved and industrialisation had restructured occupations and industries, the 'lowest ranks of the proletariat . . . remained chained to their degradation'.[35] As Eric Hobsbawm emphasised, the transition to wage labour meant that insecurity hung like a pestilence over the lives of nineteenth-century workers.[36] Lady Bell considered that most of the employees at her husband's Middlesbrough ironworks were:

> living under conditions in which the slightest lapse from thrift and forethought is necessarily conspicuous, and brings its immediate consequences . . . any indisposition, any passing bodily ills . . . assume a more sinister aspect when physical discomfort and suffering are but a small part of the misfortune they entail, when there is not one penny to meet the extra expense by which alleviation would be bought, unless it is taken off something else which up to that moment has seemed essential.[37]

By the end of the 1800s investigators such as Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree were seeking to define poverty on an empirical basis with their respective surveys of London and York. Booth set the poverty

[33] S. G. and E. O. A. Checkland (eds), *The Poor Law Report of 1834* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 334. For a full discussion of changing concepts of poverty in nineteenth-century England, see Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* (London: Faber & Faber, 1985); Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* (New York: Knopf, 1981).

[34] Steven King and Christiana Payne, 'The dress of the poor', *Textile History*, 33:1 (2002), 3–8; 3.

[35] S. King, *Poverty and Welfare*, p. 105; Bédarida, *Social History of England*, pp. 64–5.

[36] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital 1848–1875* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995), pp. 219–20. Bédarida also stresses the insecurity of the workers, living 'ever on the verge of pauperism'. Bédarida, *Social History of England*, pp. 150–1.

[37] Lady Bell, *At the Works: A Study of a Manufacturing Town* (London: Virago, 1985 [1907]), pp. 52–3.

line at an income of less than 18–21*s*. a week 'for a moderate family' and unexpectedly, the surveys revealed around 30 per cent of the population in receipt of an income inadequate for their support.[38] Rowntree's subsequent rural survey, with May Kendall, published in 1913, adjusted the poverty line to 20*s.* 6*d.* for a family of five. The findings revealed that with the exception of five northern counties – where the availability of alternative employments increased the agricultural wage – and despite having calculated 'a poverty line so low as to be open to the criticism of serious inadequacy . . . the average earnings in every county of England and Wales are below it'.[39]

Booth distinguished between the 'poor' whom he described 'as living under a struggle to obtain the necessaries of life and make both ends meet', and the 'very poor' who lived 'in a state of chronic want'.[40] Rowntree's pioneering concept of 'primary' and 'secondary' poverty, defined the first as: 'Families whose total earnings are insufficient to obtain the minimum necessaries for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency'; and the second as: 'Families whose total earnings would be sufficient for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency were it not that some portion of it is absorbed by other expenditure, either useful or wasteful.'[41] Rowntree, as Asa Briggs points out, was also unique in identifying alternating cycles of 'want and comparative plenty' through which an individual might pass in the course of a lifetime, with poverty most likely to occur in childhood, as the parent of young children, and in old age.[42] Rowntree's model was based on the two-parent family, but there were also many households which deviated from this, not least the numerous widows and deserted women – and their dependants – unsupported by a male wage, who experienced extended periods of extreme poverty.

Rowntree's conclusion that 10 per cent of the population of York lived in primary, and 18 per cent in secondary, poverty was based solely on

[38] Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London*, 17 vols (London: Macmillan, 1902–3), *First Series: Poverty*, vol. I, p. 33. B. Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2000 [1901]), pp. 117–18; 299–301. For debate about the reliability of Booth's and Rowntree's empiricism see Carl Chinn, *Poverty Amidst Prosperity: The Urban Poor in England, 1834–1914* (Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 30–2. Similarly, Lady Bell calculated that the inhabitants of one third of the 900 houses 'carefully investigated' for her study were either 'absolutely poor' or 'so near the poverty-line that they are constantly passing over it', their lives 'an unending struggle . . . to keep abreast of the most ordinary, the simplest, the essential needs'. Bell, *At the Works*, pp. 50–1.

[39] B. Seebohm Rowntree and May Kendall, *How the Labourer Lives: A Study of the Rural Labour Problem* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1913), pp. 28–30.

[40] Booth, *Life and Labour*, First Series: *Poverty*, vol. I, p. 33.

[41] Rowntree, *Poverty*, pp. 86–7.

[42] Asa Briggs, *A Study of the Work of Seebohm Rowntree 1871–1954* (London: Longmans, 1961), pp. 40–1.