

**The Transitional Spaces of Middle Childhood:
An Enquiry into Children's Everyday Lives as a Contribution to
New Environmental Education Strategies**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis begins with an examination and critique of environmental education (E.E.) strategy in England and Wales, focusing on the dominant knowledge-attitude-behaviour model which underpins this strategy. I argue that new approaches to E.E. are required which respond to a different understanding of how daily behaviour is shaped. The first, and main goal, of this thesis is to present evidence from children's daily lives, providing the basis for new recommendations for E.E. strategy.

Using Bowlby's attachment theory and Winnicott's theory of transitional spaces, the empirical chapters focus on children's daily behaviours and the influence of kin and peer relationships through which daily activities are shaped. I suggest that a conceptual shift away from 'behaviour' as an outcome towards 'behaving-in-relationship' as a process provides new opportunities for E.E. to contribute to behavioural transitions.

The second goal of the thesis is to consider the importance of social constructions of childhood for E.E. and for geographical research with children. The former is important because most formal E.E. targets children in particular. An examination of those constructions of childhood underpinning formal education, and those emphasising the child as closer to nature, enable me to demonstrate their role in E.E. The thesis also contributes to the development of innovative methods for researching with children. My study involved two groups of 10-12 year old children from a village and a suburb in Southeast England, using questionnaires, art and photographic projects to stimulate group and one-to-one discussion. This work also raises questions about how 'the child' is constructed through and by the research methods used. I conclude the thesis with recommendations for new E.E. strategies, re-orientated to incorporate the social relationships through which daily behaviours are formed. I also demonstrate how this study contributes to debates in human geography about human-environment interactions and the geographies of children.

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CHAPTER ONE: AN INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Introduction

This thesis is about strategic approaches to Environmental Education (hereafter, E.E.). My interest in this field derives from my own 'emergent environmentalism' (Palmer, 1993; Palmer et al 1996); a belief that excessive and unnecessary degradation to aspects of our environment is a consequence of the kinds of lifestyles people in more developed societies lead. From this viewpoint, I believe that the survival of humankind in ways which are less environmentally harmful and more socially equitable is both a desirable project and a necessary objective. E.E. is widely acknowledged to be a key component for achieving the behavioural changes which will be progressively required if these goals are to be realised.

In this introduction I will present the theoretical framework which explains how E.E. can contribute to such behavioural changes, and review the development of E.E. in formal educational policy in England and Wales during the last 30 years. Although the practice of E.E. takes place at many different levels in many different organisational and social settings, a great deal of research has been concerned with the formal sector. There are several reasons for this:

- Knowledge, especially scientific knowledge, has held an important position within the theoretical framework which underpins E.E. research (Tilbury, 1997; Job, 1996; Corney and Middleton, 1996; Garratt and Robinson, 1997). Formal education is commonly assumed to be the foremost provider of this kind of knowledge.
- An important element in E.E. theory concerns attitudinal change and the formation of environmental values. Historically, the development of values has been an implicit (though not always explicitly recognised) function of school education (Fien, 1993; Van Matre, 1990; James et al, 1998). As such, values

formation has been associated with the development of a child, and the school has therefore been identified as an appropriate locus for E.E. Given the role of the child in E.E. (see Chapter Two), the basis of these assumptions requires closer examination.

- Finally, there is a substantial body of E.E. research which investigates the theoretical and philosophical foundations of E.E. rhetoric as found in the texts of International and European conventions, and particularly within the policy documentation and curriculum guidance for schools in England and Wales (e.g. Palmer, 1998; Goodall, 1994; Gurevitz, 1997; Stables, 1998) . However, there has been no comprehensive review of actual educational practice in the UK¹ and the extent to which the eclectic collection of organisations, educators and schools are actually aware of, or able to respond directly to E.E. research is open to debate². The problem, at least in part, is due to a research agenda which is focused on policy rhetoric and theory more than on identifying and evaluating ‘good practice’ within E.E.

All of these issues will be addressed in this introductory chapter. I will begin with a brief historical overview of the development of E.E. in the UK through which definitions and statements of the aims and objectives of E.E. have emerged. The central tenets found within these definitions will then be discussed, followed by a review of research literature which explores and critiques the theoretical foundations of E.E.

The emergence of environmental education

Although the first recorded use of the term ‘environmental education’ in the UK was at the 1965 ‘Countryside in 1970’ Conference, when conservationists and educationalists met together for the first time (Sterling, 1992), the historical roots

¹ In particular, an overview of the informal sector is lacking. However, it is beyond the remit of this thesis to offer such a review here.

² The lack of a relationship between policy, research and practice was the central theme of the 1998 Council for Environmental Education Conference, held on November 19th in Reading.

of a notion of E.E. can be traced back much further. Sterling identifies Sir Patrick Geddes (1854-1933) as the 'father of environmental education' for first making the link between the quality of the environment and the quality of education. A botanist, Geddes established the Outlook Tower in Edinburgh - the first 'field studies' centre (see Sterling, 1992, p. 1).

The nineteenth century in Britain saw an interest in nature re-emerging and taking on new connotations in several different contexts. Cities were rapidly expanding, and an awareness of the loss of green open space was growing. In addition, there was a philanthropic concern for the living conditions of the urban poor (e.g. Mayhew, 1968; Booth, 1969; Keating, 1976; Williams, 1985); the working conditions of children (and the subsequent introduction of a universal school education) (Hendrick, 1990; Archard, 1993); and the health implications of urban living conditions for all. One of the most active campaigners was Octavia Hill (who subsequently had a role in establishing The National Trust) who fought hard to preserve remaining green spaces within cities on the basis of their contribution to the quality of life (Parry and Scott, 1998). One cultural response to rapid change and industrialisation can be identified in some of the literature of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Williams, 1985). Carpenter (1985) for example, analyses the texts of children's literature and identifies the romantic, rural idyll as the setting for the imagery of childhood, both harking back to a 'golden age' and a lost paradise in books such as *The Wind in the Willows* and *The Tales of Beatrix Potter* (see also Squire, 1991).

The Victorian era saw the development of 'nature studies' as part of the educational curriculum, linking an appreciation of nature to the notion of a British citizen, trained to value the landscapes of our national heritage (Steers, 1944; Matless, 1997). This reflects a growth in countryside excursions by the urban dweller, facilitated in the early twentieth century by the motor car, as a popular leisure activity for all ages (Matless, 1997). In the twentieth century, these interests were further encouraged by the development of 'rural studies' as part of the school curriculum. Organisations such as the Council for the Promotion of

Field Studies (later renamed the Field Studies Council), founded in 1943, were established to support these developments (CEE, 1986). During the 1950s, A Level Examination Boards began to recommend and include field studies as part of student assessment, especially for Geography and Biology (CEE, 1986). These historical roots remain important as the emergence of E.E. in the 1950s and 1960s was bound up in the coming together of countryside conservationists with educationalists.

A dominant feature of environmental education in schools, both historically... and presently... has been the centrality of the rurally linked concepts of 'nature' and 'conservation' to both its theory and practice (Agyeman, 1997, p.99).

Urban studies did not really emerge as part of the E.E. agenda until the 1970s with a focus on community, local planning issues and 'quality of life'. In large part, the rapid expansion reflected an institutional response to the 1969 Skeffington Report on planning and the built environment which provided, for the first time, practical advice and guidance on how to increase public participation in planning (CEE, 1986). Ideologically, however, 'nature' and 'the environment' was still more closely associated with the countryside while urban studies concentrated on animating local communities and sought to empower children in the recreation of their local places.

However, within the context of E.E., these different emphases have merged in the establishment of a common agenda and a commonly understood set of beliefs about the purposes of E.E. and the primary mechanisms which underpin the educational process. In the USA, Freeman Tilden was the first to define nature interpretation as:

An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information (1967, in Hansen-Moller and Taylor, 1991, p.30).

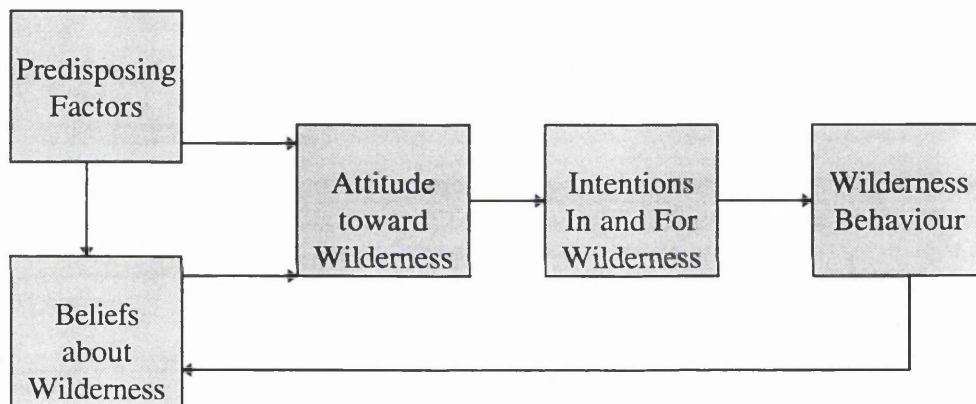
Environmental experience in natural spaces was seen as an awareness-raising tool which would help to foster a greater interest in the natural environment and, in turn, encourage a greater commitment to protect and care for the environment.

A 1975 British 'Guide to Countryside Interpretation', for example, explained interpretation as:

The art of explaining the significance of a place to the public who visit it, in order to point out a conservation message (Aldridge, 1975, in Hansen-Moller and Taylor, 1991, p.30).

The conceptual model underpinning approaches to E.E. is well illustrated in Hanna's (1995) model for wilderness education in the USA. Wilderness education refers to guided wilderness experiences aimed at children and adults alike.

Figure 1. Conceptual model of involvement in and for wilderness (Hanna, 1995, p.22).



Acknowledging his intellectual debt to Fishbein and Ajzen's theory of reasoned behaviour, Hanna describes Figure 1 as an 'explanatory and predictive model' (p.22) which indicates that 'predisposing factors' such as demographics and past wilderness experience, in combination with what an individual learns about the wilderness, will lead to the development of attitudes towards wilderness issues. These, in turn, will create intentions which will manifest themselves in specific behaviours in and for wilderness environments. As I will go on to show, this form of reasoning, based on theories of cognitive and social psychology, has underpinned each stage of the development of E.E. I will refer to this as the 'dominant model' of E.E., and it provides the central theoretical framework for analysis in this chapter to which I will return after concluding this brief historical review.

The 1965 'Countryside in 1970' Conference (1965), introduced 'environmental education' into the UK conservationist and educational vocabularies. Discussions during and after the conference contributed to the establishment of the Council for Environmental Education (CEE) in 1968.

This first flush of environmental enthusiasm and public debate in the late 1960s was dampened by the oil crisis of 1974; E.E. lost its media profile, and its target adult audience. Schools became the primary locus for the development of E.E. A series of documents were produced which introduced E.E. to schools, focusing on the fostering of 'knowledge', 'attitudes and values' and the development of 'skills'. The first of these was a small pamphlet produced by HM Inspectors of Schools in Scotland in 1974, entitled *Environmental Education* (CEE, 1986). The Department of Education and Science produced a four page booklet, *Curriculum 11-16: Environmental Education* in 1979 (CEE, 1986). These documents established E.E. in schools as a general educational approach which was relevant across the school curriculum, but which was not seen as requiring a separate allocation of time or teaching expertise in its own right.

Schools, it was widely argued, could play a central role in E.E. as the providers of knowledge on the natural and built environment. They could help to foster greater environmental awareness, could influence children's attitudes, and encourage behaviours which were sensitive to the environment and responsive to emerging global environmental concerns. Increasing awareness of E.E. in the UK also reflected the place of E.E. on the agenda of the United Nations. An endorsement of E.E. at the 1972 UN Conference on Human Environment led to the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and its International Environmental Education Programme (IEEP) in 1975. The IEEP produced the 'Belgrade Charter' which declared the following objectives for E.E.:

- To foster clear awareness of and concern about economic, social, political and ecological inter-dependence in urban and rural areas
- To provide every person with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment and skills needed to protect and improve the environment

- To create new patterns of behaviour of individuals, groups and society as a whole towards the environment (IEEP, 1975, in Palmer, 1998, p. 7-8).

Clearly at an international level, E.E. was understood as needing to tackle ‘the environment’ more holistically; acknowledging social, economic and political as well as ecological contributions to environmental problems and solutions. The strategy for causing less damage to the environment reflected the same model as found in the rationale of nature studies and environmental interpretation. Although the linear connection between knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour was not stated explicitly, it might be regarded as implicit in the ordering of the objectives in the charter.

The development of E.E. in schools in England and Wales has been broad and unfocused, given that curriculum guidance emphasises the contribution of pre-existing subjects such as Geography and Science rather than establishing a new curriculum. As such, E.E. as actually ‘taught’ within the classroom inevitably reflects the content of the syllabi and examination board requirements for those subjects. Science, as a school subject, is unlikely to reflect the kind of E.E. which brings social, political and economic issues into environmental science (Millar and Osborne, 1998). There is greater potential to achieve a synthetic kind of understanding in Geography, and this has become the subject predominantly associated with E.E. (Tomlins and Froud, 1994), despite a continued emphasis in policy that E.E. should be a ‘cross-curricula’ issue (NCC, 1990).

The Educational Reform Act (ERA) of 1988 established a common National Curriculum for England and Wales for the first time, determining the content and allocation of time to every subject across the entire school curriculum. As a result, E.E. became more formally established within policy (although with no enforced demands on practice) as a cross-curricula theme, along with ‘economic and industrial understanding’, ‘health education’, ‘careers education and guidance’ and ‘education for citizenship’ (NCC, 1990, p.4).

The National Curriculum Council (NCC) produced a guidance document on E.E. in 1990. This document set out the following objectives for E.E.:

- provide opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment and skills needed to protect and improve the environment
- encourage pupils to examine and interpret the environment from a variety of perspectives - physical, geographical, biological, sociological, economic, political, technological, historical, aesthetic, ethical and spiritual
- arouse pupils' awareness and curiosity about the environment and encourage active participation in resolving environmental problems (NCC, 1990, p.2).

The first of these statements reiterates the basic requirement for the acquisition of environmental knowledge and value formation as key determinants for environmental protection; a point reinforced in the third statement where children are 'encouraged' to take action themselves. The second statement offers the rationale for a holistic approach for dealing with environmental issues. However, given that the overall structure of the National Curriculum continues to reinforce separate subjects with clearly defined boundaries (Huckle, 1996), it should perhaps be more accurately interpreted as a rhetorical effort to demonstrate that all statutory subjects can contribute something to E.E., thereby validating the cross-curricula approach. But if no individual member of staff or department is responsible for ensuring that the education which takes place within this framework deals with the same sets of issues, or facilitates a student's ability to draw conclusions and determine appropriate actions on the basis of the contributions made by a variety of disciplines, the 'holistic' nature of this approach must be queried³. It is not necessarily true that the whole is the equivalent to the sum of its parts.

The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) document of 1996 emerged after the scaling down of the National Curriculum statutory requirements by the Dearing committee in 1994. The definition of E.E. found within it remains

³ Tomlins and Froud (1994) found that, out of 106 schools who mentioned E.E. in a policy statement or document somewhere (44% of their total sample), only 22% mentioned the role of an E.E. co-ordinator.

substantially the same, with some small alterations to the first objective which is now reworded to acknowledge the importance of sustainable development:

provide all pupils with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills required to engage effectively with environmental issues, including those of sustainable development (SCAA, 1996, p.2).

The change in wording reflects SCAA's response to the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio which, among other documents, produced Agenda 21 - a blueprint for achieving 'sustainable development' around the world (UN, 1992). Environmental activities were recognised as vital in achieving change:

Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues... Both formal and non-formal education are indispensable to changing people's attitudes so that they have the capacity to assess and address their sustainable development concerns. It is also critical for achieving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behaviour consistent with sustainable development and for effective public participation in decision-making (UN, 1992, p.221).

A central feature of the post Rio formulation of sustainable development was its widening remit to include matters of social and environmental justice, as well as reconciling environmental and economic demands. Unfortunately the SCAA (1996) document fails to incorporate many of these issues within the body of guidance it provides for E.E. at each Key Stage in the National Curriculum or to provide a balanced coverage of these issues within the 31 practical examples offered. Furthermore, given that both the UN Agenda 21 and the British Government Panel on Sustainable Development have emphasised the importance of E.E., it is perhaps surprising that Sir Ron Dearing introduces the 1996 SCAA report by stating:

It is for schools to decide, whether, and if so to what extent, they wish to develop work in this area beyond their statutory obligation (SCAA, 1996, foreword).

The British Government Panel on Sustainable Development responded to this apparent ambivalence on the place of E.E. in the school curriculum by concluding:

The Government's Strategy for environmental education in England, published in June 1996, is disappointing... Its low key approach is inconsistent with the high profile and central role of education in promoting sustainable development (British Government Panel on Sustainable Development, 1997, p.4).

It would appear that the tone of the SCAA guidance was primarily influenced by the Dearing Committee's main task, which was to deliver a scaled-down, statutory National Curriculum. Given this remit it would have, perhaps, been inappropriate to make more substantial demands of teachers in respect of E.E. However, partly in response to these criticisms, an advisory panel on Education for Sustainable Development (EfSD), headed by Sir Geoffrey Holland was set up in 1997 and is currently reviewing and producing a strategy for England which not only aims to reassert the place of environmental education in the schools sector, but has also been charged with the task of providing guidance on how such education can be effective in further education, the workplace, in recreation and in the home. Although considerable progress has been made to define EfSD and provide 'learning outcomes' across the Key Stages in schools education, the Final Report of the Holland Panel on EfSD is not available at the time of writing (December, 1998).

A draft report on the schools sector to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA, which recently incorporated SCAA), offers the following definition of what might be thought of as the new Education for Sustainable Development (EfSD):

Education for sustainable development enables people to develop the knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future (Sterling, 1998, p.4).

The foundation is familiar: re-iterating the 'educational' components of knowledge, values and skills linked to active participation, it suggests that the 'dominant model' of EfSD substantially remains the same as that for environmental interpretation and E.E. However, by referring more generally to an objective of improving 'the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future', a

phrasing has been offered which facilitates a more holistic kind of understanding, without referring back to the individual components listed in the NCC and SCAA documents.

The draft document also lists seven key concepts of sustainable development:

- Interdependence - of society, economy and the natural environment, from local to global
- Citizenship and stewardship - rights and responsibilities, participation, and co-operation
- Needs and rights of future generations
- Diversity - cultural, social, economic and biological
- Quality of life, equity and justice
- Sustainable change - development and carrying capacity
- Uncertainty, and precaution in action (Sterling, 1998, p.4).

These terms of reference certainly have the potential to take EfSD forward in ways which offer some alternative approaches and coverage of a different range of issues than those in earlier formulations of E.E. (Chapman and Cade, 1988; Cade, 1989). The new EfSD may also stimulate teachers to diversify their approach. 'Nature Studies' have continued largely to define E.E. in schools, not least because curricula have been supported by materials produced by nature and conservation non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as the World Wildlife Fund, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and the Field Studies Council⁴. Martin (1996) argues that this dependence has led some commentators to regard E.E. as a 'redundant approach'.

Nevertheless, it may be too early for optimism. Even if the policy rhetoric suggests a more holistic approach, unless some of the broader structures which define the

⁴ Many of these organisations have responded to Agenda 21 and widened their educational activities to address sustainable development in recent years. For example, the WWF produced '*Let's Reach Out: A Survivor's Guide for Co-ordinators of Environmental Education in Secondary Schools*' in 1994 which introduced teachers to EfSD and offered practical guidance on implementing this education across the whole school.

National Curriculum, teacher-pupil roles and relationships, and practical school management issues are reassessed EfSD may remain very difficult to implement. Further, the dominant model and key terms, 'knowledge', 'attitudes'/'values', 'skills' and 'behaviour' which have been identified as common to all of the curriculum documents and international policy statements for E.E. over the last 30 years still remains a largely accepted and unchallenged theoretical framework upon which E.E. and EfSD is based. The second part of this chapter is dedicated to reviewing the cognitive model. But first I will conclude this section with a brief consideration of some of the other structural difficulties involved in making schools the primary locus of E.E.

The place of E.E. in schools

E.E. is not a separate curriculum subject in England and Wales. It is not afforded any statutory percentage of time in the school week. The SCAA 1996 strategy guidance, whilst offering suggestions for ways of identifying E.E. in all school subjects, clearly illustrated that the vast majority of statutory learning which fulfilled these criteria were to be found in Science and Geography. In fact, of these two subjects, the longest list of potential topics is found under Science; and Geography is no longer a statutory subject after the age of 14. The fact that Science, in practice, has therefore become the main statutory subject associated with E.E. raises important questions about the *kinds* of environmental knowledge that children are acquiring (Garratt and Robinson, 1997; Job, 1996).

The majority of statutory components of subjects like Geography and Science which are linked to E.E. emphasise scientific, factual knowledge. Illustrations include:

- learning about the classification of rocks, their texture and mineral composition (Science, Key Stage 3)
- using scientific knowledge and understanding to evaluate the effects of some applications of science on health and on the quality of life (Science, Key Stage 4)

- learning about the characteristics of one type of vegetation and how that type of vegetation is related to climate, soil and human activity (Geography, Key Stage 3)
- studying either water supply or energy supply and its environmental implications (Geography, Key Stage 3) (SCAA, 1996, p. 47-8; p.53).

However, even more fundamentally, there is concern that within science education curriculum development itself there is almost no acknowledgement of the place of E.E. (Lipman and Sharp, 1986). A current report on the future of science education has emphasised the inability of the discipline to engage with issues of values probing. The predominance of a facts-based approach both lacks coherence, and is unable to provide a broader picture of the nature of science. In such circumstances, the current delivery of science education is unlikely to deal effectively with external or cross-curricular themes (Millar and Osborne, 1998).

Another structural barrier to the effective teaching of E.E. in schools concerns the management of curriculum planning and teacher training. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) undertook a survey of schools in England and Wales in 1994 to investigate the extent to which E.E. was being taught (Tomlins and Froud, 1994; Morris and Schagen, 1996; Morris and Stoney, 1997). 294 schools responded to a questionnaire. Only 7% confirmed that their school had 'a single comprehensive' policy document on E.E., while 42% had no policy at all (Tomlins and Froud, 1994, p. 8). Most schools are kept fully occupied with the delivery of national curriculum statutory requirements and are unlikely voluntarily to create even more demands on stretched human and time resources. Yeung (1998) confirms that what is actually taught in the classroom is primarily shaped by the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and reflects the requirements of examination boards. As E.E. is not the single responsibility of any particular department, the practical barriers for a single individual or even a small team to create their own system to co-ordinate E.E. over an entire curriculum (with all the different styles of learning and core topics associated with each subject) are

considerable. The NFER research also found that very few teachers had received any kind of teacher training in E.E. (Tomlins and Froud, 1994)⁵.

Robertson and Krugly-Smoleska (1997) also recognise a substantial gap between research or strategy literature which makes claims about what E.E. is meant to achieve, and the reality of what most teachers are actually able to provide for in a formal school environment. Additionally, there is relatively little research which seeks to evaluate E.E. in practice (Spencer et al, 1989; Posch 1994a, 1996), or even an accepted set of criteria through which such an evaluation might be attempted. Given the emphasis on a holistic approach to E.E. in both policy and research, Robertson and Krugly-Smoleska (1997) regard the segregated, disciplinary basis of most school education, based almost entirely within the classroom, as an inappropriate structure within which to realise the aims of E.E. Their views reflect an equally critical perspective written some 10 years before:

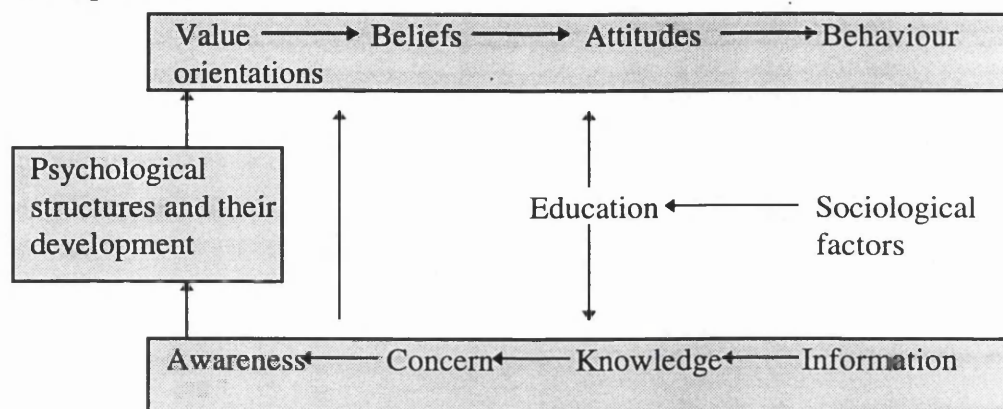
Environmental education represents a challenge to existing patterns of schooling. Its inquiry orientation is a challenge to habitual patterns of teaching; its interdisciplinary character is a threat to conventional disciplinary curricular structures; its emphasis on outdoor education presents problems for existing organisational patterns (Robottom, 1985, in Robertson and Krugly-Smoleska, 1997, p.313).

Little has changed for the better. In many ways it seems to have got worse. Overall, Robertson and Krugly-Smoleska (1997) believe that it is over-ambitious for schools-based E.E. to attempt to bring about change in individual environmental attitudes and behaviour. I will now turn to review the cognitive model that provides the basis for E.E. before reviewing briefly what schools have been able to achieve, despite the considerable institutional and practical barriers identified above. This theme will re-emerge in Chapter Eight of the thesis.

⁵ Respondents to the questionnaire claimed that time constraints, lack of training and lack of good quality teaching resources all placed severe limitations on teachers' abilities to provide E.E. in their schools. Whilst a number of documents provide general information on the potential for teaching E.E. in schools (e.g. Palmer and Neal, 1994; Palmer, 1992; Neal 1992; Hale, 1992), practical materials on what a cross-curricular activity might consist of and how it might be managed within the fixed boundaries of the National Curriculum in addition to the statutory load are felt to be lacking by many teachers (Spencer et al, 1989).

The dominant model of environmental education

Figure 2. The dominant framework in environmental education (Finger, 1994, p. 142).



Finger (1994) presents the above figure to elaborate the basic conceptual model of environmental education, that 'environmental' information, knowledge, concern and awareness can lead to behaviour change. In understanding the origins of this model, Finger draws on three interrelated contributory disciplines - education, developmental psychology and social psychology. Educators make pedagogical links between knowledge acquisition and concern/awareness (McLeish, 1990; Corney, 1997; Parakevopoulos et al, 1998); social psychologists have posited links between beliefs and attitudes, and behaviour⁶ (e.g. Arcury and Christianson, 1993; Lyons and Breakwell, 1994); developmental psychologists make links between value orientations and underlying cognitive psychological structures, providing the rationale which connects the upper and lower associations in the model (Baron and Byrne, 1997).

Theories of cognitive development have played an important role in pedagogy more generally, especially where the education of children has been concerned.

Curricula... are more than the description of content. They are spatial theories of cognitive and bodily development... containing assumptions about how people (that is, largely children) ought best to be (James et al, 1998, p.41-2).

⁶ In fact, reference to the work of social psychologists throughout this thesis reveals that their models are generally considerably more complex than this, identifying a variety of factors which make this basic assumption more or less observable.

The construction of a school curriculum which denotes what should be learnt at a particular age and within a particular context has foundations in a model of childhood which emphasises progressive stages of intellectual development. Educators make judgements about the most appropriate ways to communicate information, moving from concrete to more abstract thinking and setting physical dexterity tasks for children of different ages as they progress through the school system. The cognitive levels expected for children of a particular age also provide a measure by which a child can be judged as 'ahead' or 'behind' that which would be considered 'normal' (James et al, 1998).

One of the best known theorists in the field of children's cognitive development is Jean Piaget, offering a linear view of development from birth to the end point of 'adulthood' (Corsaro, 1997). Piaget's best-known contribution is the establishment of four key stages in the development of intelligence (sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational), each stage being qualitatively different to the previous one (i.e. the next stage is reached through a jump in ability, rather than being identified along a continuum) (Hart, 1979). The basic premise that levels of cognitive development provide the structures through which children come to know the world provides one of the foundations of the dominant model of E.E.

However, some recent research suggests that that the age at which children reach new levels of ability may be lower than originally estimated. New research methods (e.g. observing systems thinking by using computers which can show a system in operation), a recognition of contextual factors (e.g. children demonstrating an ability to think at a higher level if working with older children), and different sets of results emerging from observing children in their daily settings (ecological approaches) instead of in laboratory or school-based tests, have contributed to these more recent developments (Sheehy, 1997).

Turning now to review the kinds of environmental knowledges which mark the starting place of the dominant E.E. model, it is important to acknowledge some of

the difficulties associated with researching and assessing this theoretical framework.

One particular difficulty is how to formulate observable measures of ‘knowledge’, ‘attitudes’ and ‘behaviour’ to enable correlation to be made between them (Newhouse, 1990; Chawla, 1988, 1992). This is particularly true if we consider what kinds of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours we might expect from children enrolled in formal E.E. classes (Chawla, 1988). Children, perhaps more than any other group in society, are constrained in their ability to act freely on what they know, or even to act on their attitudes and beliefs; constrained in the family home by parents, and by institutional constraints in schools (Goldson, 1997; Scraton, 1997; Mayall, 1994, 1996; Aitken, 1998). Legal regulations inhibit children’s abilities to take part in certain activities (Archard, 1993; Sommerville, 1990) or be present or accepted in particular spaces until they reach a specific age (Valentine, 1996a, 1996b, 1997b; Hillman, 1993).

Even if these contextual criteria are taken into account in assessing the ways in which the knowledge-attitude-behaviour model can be ‘tested’, Ungar (1994) argues that 2 other criteria are required for correlation to be established and meaningful: sophisticated explorations of attitudes are required (whereas many studies only tap fairly superficial opinions); and congruency between measured attitudes and behaviours is required (and these measures must also be highly contextually specific). These methodological requirements are fundamental for all research which examines relationships between knowledge, attitudes and behaviour.

Testing hypotheses about causal links between beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours is especially difficult in E.E. for a number of reasons:

- First, the task of distinguishing between research findings and the role of the research tool in meeting Ungar’s (1994) criteria is very challenging. As I illustrate below, most research on knowledge-attitude-behaviour links uses

quantitative measures derived from questionnaire investigations. Using these methods a measure of 'attitude' is constructed by the specific attitudinal questions asked, the way the questionnaire is administered and the characteristics of the individuals who are asked to respond (e.g. age, class, gender, etc.)

- Second, it is difficult to identify and measure individual behaviours that reflect environmental concerns; they are potentially numerous but simultaneously fairly small-scale and, therefore, easy to dismiss.
- Third, structural barriers to individual action (e.g. lack of public transport, limited consumer choice) need to be taken into consideration. These are difficult to assess via general 'measures' of environmental attitudes and behaviour, especially as many structural barriers are context-specific (e.g. transport barriers to behaviour identified from a sample from a particular place cannot be generalised) (Baron and Byrne, 1997).
- Fourth, the public have become adept at responding to opinion polls, knowing the 'correct' environmental attitudes to espouse, even if no behavioural response has been made (Chawla, 1988). This raises questions about the effectiveness of a questionnaire to reveal the relationship between attitudes and behaviours.

It is clear that this area of research is both complex and fraught with considerable methodological difficulties. Therefore the following review of this research aims to highlight some of the major areas of work and findings, yet an acknowledgement of these structural difficulties begins to suggest that there is a need for a new approach in E.E. research in order to either build further upon or challenge these findings.

Environmental Knowledges

The majority of research which has sought to investigate the relationships between environmental knowledge, attitudes and behaviour has conceptualised knowledge in terms of scientific, factual knowledge which can be tested (e.g. Arcury, 1990; Cox, 1993; Lyons and Breakwell, 1994; Palmer and Neal, 1994; Palmer, 1998; Tilbury and Walford, 1996). Such tests assess knowledge of environmental concepts, ecosystems and natural processes. In some instances, related measures are used which provide some indication of the level of comfort an individual feels in handling scientific information (e.g. Lyons and Breakwell, 1994), or the extent to which science plays an important role in an individual's world view (for example, whether they believe that science and technology are well-equipped to deal with environmental issues). In other words, this body of research considers factual knowledge, but also attitudes towards science in an assessment of how well scientific knowledge predicts environmental concern and interest.

Consider the study by Lyons and Breakwell (1994), sampling 1089 13- to 16-year-olds in the UK. Lyons and Breakwell chose two specific environmental issues to assess levels of concern; industrial pollution and emissions of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). Responses were collected via self-completed questionnaires in 12 state-sector schools. Environmental concern was measured through responses to three questions: whether the respondent was 1) *for*, *neutral*, or *against* controlling industrial pollution, 2) *for*, *neutral*, or *against* the banning of the use of CFC aerosol sprays, and 3) respondents were provided with a list of eight themes, including environmental pollution and asked to rank which three they would most like to see research money being spent on in Britain. Scientific knowledge was assessed with a 20-item *true, false, don't know* response quiz. Statements which required a response included '*The oxygen we breathe comes from plants*', '*Radioactive milk can be made safe by boiling it*', and '*Sound travels faster than light*' (p.229). Measures of interest in a scientific career, self-reported levels of scientific knowledge, interest in scientific television programming, class, age and gender were also included in the questionnaire schedule.

The results of Lyons and Breakwell's research did demonstrate a good correlation between knowledge, particularly self-reported levels of knowledge, and 'environmental concern', as defined by the researchers using the 3 questions outlined above. Lyons and Breakwell (1994) argue that higher levels of scientific knowledge will undoubtedly increase awareness and may therefore result in less indifference towards environmental issues. However, they also acknowledge that the research findings of others who have investigated the knowledge-attitude link using different criteria, and in different settings have not always concurred with their findings. In a review of knowledge-attitude research, Zimmermann (1996) concludes that, whilst an association between knowledge and attitude has frequently been identified, we still do not know a great deal about the nature of this association.

More often, research focusing specifically on the degree of accuracy of children's scientific knowledge implicitly suggests that the value of such research rests on the centrality of knowledge in the model of E.E., without explicitly 'testing' the model (e.g. Boyes and Stanistreet, 1993). For example, Leach et al (1995, 1996) investigated children's ideas about ecology by examining their understanding of concepts of cycling of organic matter. Likewise, Boyes and Stanistreet (1993) assessed children's perceptions of the causes, consequences and solutions of the 'Greenhouse Effect', identifying a series of basic misconceptions and confusion that children have about this issue.

However, although the research reviewed above has indicated that the acquisition of scientific knowledge may be an influence on certain kinds of measured attitudes, a number of researchers have critiqued this work, suggesting that this approach may only raise general awareness and provide individuals with the confidence to voice opinions on environmental issues. A knowledge-based approach may not effectively influence the values underpinning specific environmental attitudes (Gigliotti, 1990; Heimlich, 1992). Gigliotti (1990) also argues that, more importantly, an emphasis on scientific knowledge *about* the environment masks a

particular kind of environmental philosophy. Job (1996) has also identified this issue:

Education *about* the environment [i.e. scientific knowledge] is generally interpreted as promoting a technocentric perspective. There is an assumption that by knowing more clearly the functioning of the earth as a machine through positivist scientific and economic approaches, appropriate environmental management, often with the aid of new technology, can obviate harmful human impacts without major redirection of political, economic or personal value systems (Job, 1996, p.31).

Furthermore, this way of learning may not necessarily affect deeply held values (Fien and Slater, 1981) of the kind which might drive an individual to alter their behaviour. In other words, the *way* that we teach E.E. is related to our ways of *valuing* the environment and *responding* to environmental issues.

For E.E., the ascendance of one way of knowing over others results in a language of closure, so that whilst scientific knowledge has much to reveal about E.E., it also conceals alternative narratives and with this forecloses on different ways of knowing (Garratt and Robinson, 1997, p.7).

The foreclosure to which Garratt and Robinson (1997) refer means that alternative world views (e.g. ecocentric values, socialist values, religious values, etc.) are not considered with equal weight to an approach to environmentalism that elevates the role of science and technology as the providers of solutions to environmental problems. This is also reflected by the content and predominant learning focus within the school curriculum. The suggestion that the school curriculum needs to provide a space where education enables each individual to reach their own conclusions based on the emergence of their own values has led to debate about the qualitative differences between 'cognitive knowledge' and 'affective knowledge' and their potential contribution towards the goals of E.E. (behavioural change).

(B)y 'Affective Education' is meant that part of the educational process that concerns itself with attitudes, feelings, beliefs and emotions of students (Lang 1996, in Garratt and Robinson, 1997, p.4).

Within formal education, attempts to explore what affective education might look like have been drawn towards using the arts, music and literature - the less

scientific areas of the curriculum. These developments are reviewed in Chapter Two.

Nevertheless, determining precisely what the ramifications of a shift in emphasis from cognitive to affective knowledge in E.E. will be is not a simple matter. Hsu and Roth (1998), reflecting on the formative experiences of teachers in Taiwan, conclude:

Unlike cognitive environmental literacy variables, affective environmental literacy variables are particularly difficult for many environmental educators to address because the affective variables are often not associated with formal environmental education. For example, the development of environmental sensitivity appears to result from an individual's persistent contact with a relatively pristine environment at an early age, either alone or with a few friends/relatives, from some experiences with severe environmental degradation or some life experiences with role models such as parents and teachers (p.242).

In other words, without considerable change to the structure of school education, Hsu and Roth (1998) argue that the dominant ways in which children learn at school may not be capable of providing the kind of 'affective education' outlined above (also Mays, 1988; Robertson and Krugly-Smoleska, 1997). A further point to note is that researchers who have suggested that affective knowledges are more closely related to the kinds of environmental educational values that might encourage more environmental action, have carried out their investigations by talking to *adults* about their 'formative experiences' (e.g. Palmer, 1993; Palmer et al, 1996; Chawla, 1998).

If values and corresponding actions emerge over a lifetime, then longitudinal investigations would be required to research these assertions convincingly. An attempt to demonstrate relationships between affect and action based on a single educational programme would be much more difficult to assess.

In the final section of this introductory review I wish to explore an important ramification of these recent debates about cognitive and affective knowledges. The dominant model of E.E. clearly articulates that the alteration of values, attitudes

and behaviours is a desired outcome. But to what extent is this fundamentally about social engineering rather than 'education'? Does the cognitive approach represent one which conceives of acquiring knowledge as a less directive route upon which individuals can make their own judgements or does it, as Garratt and Robinson (1997) and Job (1996) claim, simply normalise a 'business-as-usual' technocentric belief system? Does 'affective education' inevitably mean values inculcation, or can it help to educate the citizen who learns the importance of understanding values and the need to take actions, but is ultimately free to choose which values to adopt as their own? Questions such as these have come to the fore very recently, and help to provide a context for my own research. I shall briefly introduce some of these issues in the next section.

Environmental values, attitudes and behaviour

Jickling and Spork (1998) critique the research and writings of those who emphasise a values-and-action focus as the main aim of E.E., where the role of knowledge is maximised if it is contextualised within these more central concerns (e.g. Huckle, 1993, 1996; Fien et al, 1993). Jickling and Spork (1998) interpret this goal as a conflation of education and activism. They argue that education should not be 'for' any particular set of outcomes but rather should emphasise the learning of skills and engagement in processes through which individuals and groups can draw their own conclusions on the huge variety of issues which confront them in everyday life. Whilst most environmental educators would claim that they seek the same outcomes, Jickling and Spork suggest that closer examination of the language of more radical proponents of E.E., such as Fien and Trainer (1993), Fien et al (1993), Huckle (1993, 1996), and Pepper (1987, 1993) reveal advocacy of left-leaning, politically motivated environmentalism as the 'best' central ideology of E.E.

Such wording implies that education should aim for something external to itself and that educators are invited to prescribe a preferred end. It then follows that the slogan 'education for the environment' provides a linguistic invitation for co-option by those who feel they have the best answer. (Jickling and Spork, 1998, p. 322).

Many environmental educationalists respond directly and unapologetically to these kinds of accusations. For example, Van Matre (1990) argues:

And please spare everyone the sophistry contained in the line, “We teach students how to think, not what to think.” Or even worse, the argument that it is unethical for us to impose our values upon them. We make them go to school don’t we?... In the end, I want them to live more lightly on the earth. Influencing their values is exactly what I have in mind (p.14).

Similarly, Fien’s approach (e.g. 1993; Fien and Trainer, 1993) is to suggest that the kind of liberal fair-mindedness articulated by Jickling and Spork (1998) does not offer the kind of education that might have an effective role in addressing the environmental concerns lying at the heart of the *raison d’être* of E.E. Fien’s belief that values and actions need to be tackled much more directly mirrors the work of many researchers who have sought to assess student attitudes and ‘measure’ the levels of associated behavioural responses which might be expected of those who hold stronger environmental concerns and beliefs. For example, Cox (1993) examined the environmental attitudes and behaviours of a group of A level Geography students in England but found little evidence of causal relationship between attitudes and behaviour. Likewise Yeung (1998) was equally unsuccessful in a study of secondary school students in Hong Kong. Yeung suggested that environmentally sensitive behaviours were especially difficult to encourage where these would conflict with pre-existing behavioural norms; and when they were seen to limit personal freedom or require any degree of effort.

Ballantyne et al (1998) suggest that a lack of child participation in actively investigating the nature of environmental problems or in drawing up solutions or actions which are relevant to their own lives may also limit their eagerness to take action (Tilbury, 1997). Other contextual factors are surely important here: the role of the child in many schools, and certainly in society more generally, is rarely one in which ownership of plans for action or participation in the emergence of the curriculum itself is actively fostered. Encouraging a ‘pro-action’ E.E. agenda directly may be possible as a logical conclusion of the debate in a research arena, and may even translate into the rhetoric of policy documents. However, without addressing the broader structures in which such E.E. will currently have to operate

(the national curriculum, a school education system which cannot easily facilitate links between child activities within the school and improvement in the local environment, the organisation of planning authorities, etc.), these admirable goals are probably incompatible with the broader structures which shape, facilitate and confine children's abilities to take action and make their own behavioural choices.

Conclusions: The way forward

In this review of the emergence of E.E. in England and Wales within the context of formal education, a number of key observations have emerged. A dominant model of E.E. has been identified and the evolution of that model has been traced through my review of E.E. principles and practices. Research to test the validity of the dominant model and explore whether there may be more effective alternatives for E.E. is ongoing. However, there are as yet unresolved difficulties in progressing the research agenda.

First, there are substantial methodological problems associated with direct investigations of children's environmental knowledge, attitudes, values and behaviour (Gray, 1985). In particular, the dominant model does not include a time-scale within which a behavioural 'outcome' might be expected to be observable. Longitudinal studies may facilitate further investigation of these issues, but are difficult to initiate and sustain. Certainly, they are beyond the capacity of PhD research.

Second, there appears to be a considerable gap between the kinds of educational goals espoused by E.E. researchers, and the kinds of programmes and learning activities which are currently most practical within the school environment and, in particular, within the structure of the national curriculum. Therefore, although attempting to contribute to our understanding of effective E.E., research is not currently oriented toward the needs of practitioners. Research into E.E. in the formal education sector needs to work within and seek to directly address the organisational structures and cultures which dominate in that arena.

Third, some researchers debating ‘affective’ knowledge suggest that the formal educational sector may not be well-equipped to foster this kind of understanding in children (this is discussed further in Chapter Two). Yet, if it is affective knowledge which might encourage environmentally sensitive attitudes and behaviours more directly then a reassessment of the place of E.E. in schools and the possibility of fostering this education in other social arenas must be considered.

Finally, cognitive and social psychological researchers do recognise that contextual factors come into play (e.g. gender, class, current lifestyle choices, etc.), but have not directly investigated what the dimensions and significance of different contexts might be. ‘Environmental’ actions do not occur in a vacuum. They are part of, include and reflect the everyday choices that individuals, families and organisations make in conducting their daily lives. Given the holistic emphasis in both the earlier definitions of E.E. and newer developments in EfSD, the ‘behavioural’ outcomes relevant to these educational agendas may be better understood if based on research which considers this much broader context.

In drawing these conclusions, I have set the context for my own research which concentrates on the last two issues. I will explore the behavioural aims of E.E. by looking at children’s daily behaviours as they are found, embedded in the entirety of their daily lives. Clearly, it is not possible to discuss everything that a child does. But, while part of the justification for my approach is to gain a better understanding of the daily experiences which any E.E. activity or programme will need to engage with or address, my primary aim is to reveal some of the processes and interactions which shape these daily behaviours. This approach enables a progression of the E.E. research agenda, but is not restricted by the premises underpinning the knowledge-attitude-behaviour model. I will investigate the possibility of reconceptualising behavioural outcomes in alternative ways.

The structure of the thesis

In Chapter Two, I begin the task by discussing the everyday lives of children. I review research which investigates children's environmental transactions, particularly with nature. There is a body of research that deals with children's 'knowledges' outside and beyond the formal educational system and attempts to capture children's affective engagements with the environment. But it is also the case that, often, analysis of specific child-environment transactions are also decontextualised from the rest of the child's life. It is therefore important to consider the ways in which the spaces of the home, school and street enable and constrain different kinds of interactions. At the outset, my own research was also going to focus on children and nature; the piloting stage of my fieldwork reflected this focus and it was only upon deeper reflection that a shift to consider the broader context of children's daily lives occurred. This reflection was as much a result of the difficulties experienced during piloting and the struggle to find appropriate methods as it was about theoretical structures. Therefore I have chosen to present the thesis in a fashion which makes the process of research development more transparent. Chapter Three provides further explanation of my decision to write the thesis as an 'unfolding' of discovery, and discusses how the methodology for the research was determined⁷.

I regard these methodological explorations as an important aim of my thesis. In order to consider aspects of undertaking fieldwork with children in further depth, I offer Chapter Four as a second methodology chapter which accounts for my actual fieldwork experiences. This reflexive chapter also provides the insight required in order to reassess the ways in which I would deal with my fieldwork material, providing the pivot on which the emergence of a different approach to understanding geographies of childhood and advancing E.E. was established.

⁷ Whilst my intention is, in part, to provide a more 'truthful' narrative for this thesis, I also use this approach to reflect on how I can incorporate some of the issues raised in my thesis (such as the role of children and the importance of ownership and authentic participation) into the ways in which I carry out my own research.

I discuss the theoretical transition in my reasoning about E.E. in Chapter Five. An initial phase of analysis, drawing on existing geographical and sociological literatures enabled me to identify patterns of childhood interests and actions from the interview material I collected during my time in the field. But I realised that I did not possess the analytical concepts to understand how these observations were meaningful within the context of the children's own lives and experiences. This understanding was essential if this research was to successfully reconnect with my agenda to offer new strategies for E.E. Further reflection and research led to the development of a new theoretical framework, which is presented in Chapter Five.

Chapters Six and Seven present the central empirical findings of my research. In Chapter Six I look at the daily lives of children within the context of their emerging identities, and the role of parents, adult family and siblings in enabling behavioural transitions and repetitions to become established as part of a child's reality. Chapter Seven extends these ideas to incorporate children's activities with their peers, and their access to environmental and social experiences beyond the family unit. Finally, Chapter Eight synthesises the key observations from the preceding empirical chapters and reapplies these insights to address emerging agendas in E.E. (and particularly EfSD). Conclusions are drawn, the potential for further research on new themes is considered, and I offer some thoughts on geographies of childhood.

CHAPTER TWO: EMERGING CHILDHOODS

Introduction

Research on children's social and environmental experiences is both extensive and complex. Psychology has a research tradition, exploring different facets of childhood experience, often in a developmental context. The earliest phases of this work emerged in tandem with the introduction of universal schooling, where the classroom was often regarded as an ideal 'laboratory' for testing children's cognition (Hendrick, 1990; Goldson, 1997). Childhood research in sociology has only recently emerged in the last 10-15 years (Corsaro, 1997) and has focused particularly on the importance of peer cultures in structuring children's social worlds. In cultural studies there is a long tradition of researching 'youth' spanning the last 40 years, although pre-adolescent children have received almost no attention until very recently.

Geographical research on children has seen several phases over the last 30 years. A substantial body of work emerged in the 1970s which drew on cognitive and behavioural psychology in order to map children's movements in space; identify children's competencies at working with maps; and 'map' emotional place feelings and senses of place onto the physical spaces and ranges within which children moved in their local area (Matthews, 1992; Hart, 1979; Moore, 1986). The 1980s saw a 'cultural turn' towards more radical agendas of identity and difference. Cognitive mapping studies were considered limited, able only to provide only a very partial understanding of socio-spatial experience (James, 1990, 1991; Sibley, 1991; Winchester, 1991). Partly in response to Sarah James' call for geographers to address the absence of research on children (James, 1990), a new body of geographical work has emerged in the last 5 years (e.g. Valentine, 1996a, 1996b, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c; Sibley, 1995a, 1995b; Skelton and Valentine, 1998; Aitken, 1998; Smith, 1995). This work considers a range of themes including the social constructions of childhood, children's experience of the home, school and street, and negotiation of youth identity. But the research can be primarily located within

current interests in social and cultural geography on ‘otherness’ and, in particular, geographies of exclusion and resistance (Sibley, 1995a).

A review of the wide range of perspectives on the experience of childhood and children’s experiences drawn from this disparate literature was an invaluable guide in the development of my thesis, providing key source material throughout my empirical chapters. However, it is somewhat of a paradox that, whilst commentators in several social science disciplines have highlighted a lack of research on children (Corsaro, 1997; James, 1990; Philo, 1992), the range of perspectives and variety of ways of theorising and contextualising children’s experiences is overwhelming.

Academic studies of childhood are fragmented, reflecting a disciplinary fragmentation and the lingering appeal of different paradigms among the social sciences (Sibley, 1995b, p. 137).

This fragmentation denies the possibility of exploring aspects of children’s experiences from multiple yet complimentary perspectives in any coherent manner. There is almost no tradition of interdisciplinary work in this field, although it is true that developmental psychology has informed the research agendas of planners and landscape architects (Moore, 1986). And Cultural studies has been very influential in more recent geographical work (Valentine et al, 1998), exemplifying some cross-fertilisation of ideas in the emergence of the theoretical perspectives which inform these research agendas.

The fragmented nature of the research raises specific challenges for this chapter. In Chapter One, I suggested that one important area of E.E. research which offered potential for alternative approaches to the dominant model concerned ‘affective education’, ‘... that part of the educational process that concerns itself with attitudes, feelings, beliefs and emotions of students’ (Lang 1996, in Garratt and Robinson, 1997, p.4). Further, it has been noted that the kinds of environmental experiences which might engage children’s feelings and emotions often lie beyond the realm of formal education (Hsu and Roth, 1998) and can be found in the broader context of their daily lives. I will review the research which addresses these issues in the first section of this chapter.

However, I will argue that research on children's experiences of nature both reflects and reinforces the specific perspectives of a range of disciplinary traditions, historical paradigms for understanding what 'a child' is, and a range of social constructions of childhood which vary according to the age of the child and the spaces in which their environmental experiences are being considered. The fragmented nature of these approaches, when taken as a whole, leads to multiple and often contradictory statements about the significance of children's contact with nature. Furthermore, a focus on the experience of nature places boundaries around the child's experiences, suggesting that many significant emotional outcomes are derived from the specifics of a particular child-nature transaction. This limits the possibilities of emotions fostered in entirely different contexts playing an important role in determining the salience of specific child-nature transactions (and, therefore, their educational potential).

Therefore, after discussion of this body of work, I will proceed by suggesting theoretical perspectives which can facilitate our understanding of the nature of a wider range of socio-spatial structures and their importance in shaping childhood experiences (including those which take place in more natural settings). These 'ecological' approaches enable an analysis of the interplay of child and social space, illustrated in the second part of this chapter by reference to research on school, home and locality, and the relationships between these experiential spheres. By broadening the range of contexts in which children's daily behaviour is conceptualised, a range of important social, political, and material factors can be identified which offer helpful guides in developing a more holistic understanding of what shapes children's behaviour.

The 'natural' child

Many people still seem to believe that goodness comes to children who simply have contact with nature. It is hard for a Western urban dweller to discuss this without enormous bias, for the entire culture and its literature is saturated with romantic notions of a special relationship of children with

nature ... Paramount among the conceptual issues that cloud the area is the notion that children are 'closer' to nature (Hart, 1997, p.17).

In Chapter One, I referred briefly to the body of nineteenth century fiction which drew on a romantic notion of the natural world in a 'golden age' of childhood and found resonance in the Victorian's concern that urban children should continue to have access to rural experiences of nature (Carpenter, 1985). The roots of a social construction of the child-in-nature go back further, famously associated with the poetry of Blake and Wordsworth (Cox, 1996; Williams, 1985) and, most notably, in Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Emile*, published in 1762 (Sommerville, 1990). Rousseau advocated the need to allow children a 'natural' childhood, free from the constraining directions of adults to socialise them until they were deemed to have reached an appropriate age when they could understand and respond to such training (aged 12 in Rousseau's account) (Sommerville, 1990)¹. Rousseau argued that premature adult intervention denied children the right to their childhood (Hendrick, 1990; Cox, 1996; Maccoby, 1980; Archard, 1993). Further, nature was identified as the source of all good while human institutions were aligned with the introduction of evil into the world (Sommerville, 1990).

Multiple constructions of childhood emerged in popular discourse as Romanticism gave way to more evangelical concerns about the susceptibility of children to the evils of the rapidly industrialising urban environment (Hendrick, 1990). But the idea of the child-in-nature still has resonance today (James and Prout, 1990). The imagery of Rousseau's idealised, free spirited child became fixed in fiction, providing one powerful source through which adults (parents) would reconnect to their past, 'lost' childhood through the retelling of stories such as *The Tales of Beatrix Potter* (Squire, 1992). The 'natural' child came to represent the self that contemporary adult society had lost, and equally telling, the child was situated in the timeless space of the rural landscape.

¹ In fact, it is important to note that Rousseau's writings on the child referred almost entirely to male children only. The value of the female was seen primarily in being a partner for the male and any tutelage was strongly discouraged, even basic skills such as reading. Women were identified as mothers and seen to be a constraining factor on 'natural' childhood upbringing (Sommerville, 1990; Cox, 1996).

For all its modernization, the nostalgic imagery of childhood refers overwhelmingly to a harmonious and comfortable world before industrial civilization, when plenty did not depend on work or wealth. A rural idyll is pictured on milk cartons, bread wrappers, supermarket labels, advertisements for foodstuffs, and in high-gloss magazines about country living... Children are depicted in a countryside unpolluted by agri-business or nuclear fallout, cultivated by medieval means and inhabited by friendly little animals. Their saucer eyes link past and future, and they appear as a precious treasure in a corrupt world. In the constant renewal of childhood the lost harmonious past can remain forever present and promise a future in which innocence is regained. In a world dominated by commercial imagery, a child can be shown standing outside commerce; in a world of rapid change, a child can be shown as unchanging; in a world of social and political conflict, a child is untainted (Holland, 1992, p.14-5).

Holland's analysis of the world of childhood found in printed advertising imagery provides a powerful illustration of the continuing salience of the idea of the child-in-nature. On the one hand, this cultural representation is regarded as a social construction which reveals more about the needs of the adult psyche in times of rapid change and uncertainty.

The fact remains that the English literary exploration of childhood is no more than two centuries old, and that this exploration has, in many ways, been an exploitation of childhood as a symbol for what is deemed to be missing from and degenerate about adulthood (Archard, 1993, p.39).

However other research, particularly that which pertains to children's environmental experiences and the possibility of an innate connection between the child and nature, suggests that a material reality exists beyond these ideological constructions which E.E. could effectively draw upon. For example, Ward (1978) considers children's sensory perceptions of their environment to be much more intense than those of most adults:

This capacity for vivid sensory experience, commonplace among children is an aspect of the world that the adult has lost, not just because the senses are dulled by familiarity, but because there is an actual measurable physical decline in sensitivity to taste, to smells, to colour and to sound (p.22).

Ward illustrates his assertion with evidence from cognitive mapping studies which demonstrate that infant school children include lots of human references and natural features in their mapping of a locality, whereas junior school students have been shown to include such features only rarely and senior school children hardly at all. However, it should be noted that causation cannot be extracted from this

observation; an example of where the research methods may offer greater explanatory potential than the findings. As children continue their passage through the formal school system, it might be expected that their representations would begin to conform to recognised representations of 'a map' in which street layout and key buildings are emphasised over the details of local nature (aside from specific spaces such as a park, woodland or a body of water).

Similarly, Lynch's seminal cross-cultural study of children in cities (1978) revealed the almost universal valuing of trees by all children, although the basis of the value is not clearly discernable. Do trees represent a child's awareness and respect for the growth of vegetation or does interest in them primarily stem from their appropriateness for climbing, swinging, and imaginative play? Schneekloth (1989) suggests that children will learn responses to natural vegetation which reflect wider cultural values. Such elements of the physical environment are usually regarded simply as 'background' unless individuals are 'taught' a different kind of environmental consciousness. Hart (1997) also notes:

Anyone who has seen children stoning crabs on a beach or burning cigarettes into frogs knows that contact with nature alone is not sufficient for a child to develop understanding of, and a caring relationship for, the natural world (p.18-19).

It would appear that a somewhat confusing paradox results from this debate. On the one hand, children have been ideologically placed closer to nature (and perhaps their sensory perceptions are greater than adults), and their innate sense of 'at-homeness' with such environments places them in a space of innocence, beyond the evils of society. On the other hand, children cannot be left to their own devices when outdoors in natural spaces; they require adult guidance so that they will learn how to value such contact and behave with environmental sensitivity. Before reviewing some of the educational approaches which have been developed to provide such guidance, I will consider some of the ideological factors which contribute to an adult need to mediate children's experiences of nature.

Wild child

Children introduce disorder and pollution into everyday life, and this theme runs alongside the idyllic beauty of childhood. The bodies of young children are leaky; they do not respect established boundaries (...) But when the paradoxes of the 'natural' are replaced by the paradoxes of civilization, when children move beyond constraint and surveillance and run together in the urban streets, the fear is genuine (...) In posing questions about rationality and order, the image searches the margins of humanity itself. Children are said to be like animals, close to madness or the supernatural. By drawing attention to the boundary between the natural and the human, the presence of a child throws the very status of civilization into question (Holland, 1992, p.18).

Like Holland, Sibley (1995a, 1995b) identifies the darker side of the child close to nature permeating the meaning of imagery such as a 1992 Persil soap powder advertisement. The children are portrayed as 'savages', running wild and free through jungle-like wild grasses in American Indian headgear, '... returning home to be cleaned and civilized by their Persil-packing mother. Through the association with dirt and nature, the child is a source of abjection for the mother' (1995b, p.135). These examples also demonstrate the significance of bounded dichotomies in constructing paradoxical constructions of childhood. Whereas a *child* in the *country* is 'good' and a *youth* in the *city* is 'bad', so a *child* close to *nature* is 'bad' whereas an *adult* close to *culture* is 'good'. Social constructions of childhood are thus both temporally and spatially variable (Mayall, 1994b; Davin, 1990; Valentine, 1996b). The meaning of childhood is dependent on whether, in a particular context, a child is seen to be 'in place' or 'out of place' by a dominant, adult group. Corsaro (1997) suggests that developmental psychology, which conceives of childhood in terms of stages leading to the ultimate goal of adulthood, also contributes to these constructions by viewing the child as incomplete and immature. 'For this reason, children often are treated as an out-group - as separate from and inferior to adults' (p.199).

James et al (1998) suggest that the origins of these constructions of childhood can be traced back to the notion of 'original sin'. Hendrick (1990), for example, argues that the philanthropic calls to remove children from the factory environment in the

nineteenth century and the subsequent need to socialise and civilise children through education drew on these traditions. Traced back even further, the writings of John Locke (1632-1704) conceptualised children as 'blank slates' onto which adults must imprint preferable behaviours and ensure that potentially innate negative ones are subjugated (Archard, 1993; Maccoby, 1980). This attitude was critiqued by Rousseau in *Emile*, but the enduring power of these constructions demonstrates the ways in which we arrive at the contemporary position where contradictory imagery is brought into play *ideologically* (nature as both freedom and that which must be tamed), *spatially* (the rural idyll and the abyss of the city), and in *educational* practice (child-centred and top-down pedagogic practices).

Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is the classic piece of literature cited repeatedly both in academic writing and in popular media discourse to remind us of the dangers of leaving children to their own 'natural' devices:

The power of this fictional work is evident in the frequency with which it is given respect and credibility in press accounts of 'deviant' children. It evokes an apocalyptic vision of anarchy as being inevitable should children lose the discipline and order of the adult presence (Davis and Bourhill, 1997, p.31).

This facet of the 'wild' child was highlighted to particularly vivid effect in media discourses surrounding the tragic murder of Jamie Bulger by two 10-year-old boys. In this case, media framings drew on two themes, in particular; the alleged influence of horror films (*Child's Play 3*), and the decline of parental discipline and the family more generally. The former of these influences can be aligned with the construction of the child as a 'blank slate' upon which media and new technology can effectively destroy childhood innocence (Postman, 1982). With regard to the latter explanation of how 10-year-olds could behave in such non-childlike ways, logic would demand that if adults are required to provide children with the necessary behavioural guidance then the adults who were ultimately responsible for these boys (i.e. the parents) had failed in their duties. This is the negotiated and defined obligation of 'the family'; the socialisation and control of children on behalf of the state.

[An element]... of the state-family relation is the transformative process within which children are expected to become suitable and acceptable future citizens (Goldson, 1997, p.23).

Within this framework certain kinds of 'family' are regarded as more suitable for these tasks than others, as is evident in the level of political and media attention paid to the lone (mother) parent, the working class family, the ethnic minority family, and the homosexual and lesbian family. All of these represent 'other' (and therefore less than ideal) families in the construction of a social space in which children develop. Yet there is relatively little research which has actively sought to investigate the nature of childhood experiences within these different kinds of family structures. 'The position of children within the family is assumed to be secure and positive as long as the family fits the traditional, nuclear model' (Coppock, 1997, p.69). I will return to discuss the relationship between the child and the family in the second part of this chapter. However, at this point I will emphasise two key points in the literature already discussed to offer a range of alternative perspectives when examining 'affective' E.E. activities and the rationale behind them.

First, it is important to recognise the paradox of the need to find ways to foster 'child-like' emotions and attachments to nature as a continual experience into adulthood, compared with the belief that adults need to teach children place- and nature-feelings. Both of these discourses are evident in E.E. literature, although the paradox is perhaps overcome to some extent by suggesting that affective education builds on, and reinforces, what children *have* rather than redressing a supposed, innate lack of appreciation. However, the above review would suggest that there are multiple constructions of childhood illustrated through the juxtaposition of children with nature which have become infused in these two distinct E.E. foundations.

Second, the kind of affective relationship being encouraged between children and nature through E.E. needs to be closely examined. I will explore this theme by reviewing the claims that children and adults see and experience nature in different ways. Yet, if adults are ultimately responsible for 'teaching' children how to value

nature and their environment, to what extent is an affective engagement being fostered which is derived from the child's present environmental experience? I will argue that many of the kinds of emotional attachments and values highlighted in affective E.E. are profoundly 'adultist'. I wish to suggest that a more grounded and child-centred investigation of children's environmental experiences is required, if such education is to develop connections between children's experiences and an emotion-led sense of responsibility for behaving with greater environmental sensitivity.

Learning how to feel

One of the classic texts on the importance of nature for children was a paper written by Edith Cobb in 1959, entitled *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood* (in Hart, 1979). This work was later developed into a book of the same title (Cobb, 1977). Cobb developed a theory based on the complex interplay of self and environment, suggesting that mental health required the ability to use the imagination creatively and that nature was a vital resource in this process. Her ideas were based on a combination of observing children at play, and the analysis of hundreds of autobiographical recollections of childhood by adults (both contemporary and historical), carried out over a period of twenty years. Although Cobb drew on Wordsworth, among others, to argue that nature provided the wellspring for creativity, the placing of these ideas in a broader psychological and experiential framework took her work beyond the realms of pure romanticism (Hart, 1979).

Edith Cobb's writing has influenced a great deal of educational work which focuses much more specifically on children's experience of nature (e.g. Adams, 1991; Schneekloth, 1989; Engel, 1991; Moore, 1986). Moore (1986), for example, quotes Cobb's interpretation of the meaning of play:

... a sort of fingering over of the environment in sensory terms, a questioning of the power of materials as a preliminary to the creation of a higher organization of meaning (Cobb, 1959, in Moore, 1986, p.8).

Cobb (1977) believes that '(n)ature for the child is sheer sensory experience' (p.28-9). In her book she develops an argument which highlights the importance of the aesthetic qualities of nature:

The child's ecological sense of continuity with nature is not what is generally known as mystical. It is, I believe, basically aesthetic and infused with joy in the power to know and to be (Cobb, 1977, p.23).

E.E. research, seeking to incorporate aspects of children's relationships with nature in informal contexts (i.e. in their play) into more formal, schools-based educational activities, has focused on an aesthetic understanding of nature. For example, Engel (1991) carried out educational research in a school in the USA with seven year old children. She noted the children's playground behaviour prior to the educational exercise: 'When the seven-year-olds in this study go outside to play at recess at their school, they seem to experience the outside world as a place of potential play' (p.44). The exercise that Engel designed consisted of taking children out into the same playground space and asking them to walk around and '(...) observe with all their senses. They were taken aback and unsure exactly what was involved in this activity. They did not know what to DO' (p.44).

After some time being guided in this activity, the children then returned to the classroom and wrote lists of what they saw, heard and felt. When the children returned to the playground to repeat the exercise a second time, they appeared to have gained a much better sense of what was required. The children's writing reveals a number of dimensions of their experience of the environment which go well beyond the play function of the space: they experience themselves in relation to the environment (e.g. wishing to climb a tree); aspects of the environment evoke feelings (e.g. snow is hard and cold); descriptive terms are included (e.g. the snow had footprints in it); different observations are organised (e.g. the water on the branches is frozen and covers the bark); and the environment is experienced in relation to the self (e.g. the snowbanks are bigger than me) (see Engel, 1991, p.44-5).

In her concluding comments on these findings, Engel suggests the value of teaching children to experience their environment with an 'aesthetic orientation':

It can make children feel closer to, and more situated in their environment, it can expand and deepen aspects of the environment they know about, its a powerful source of material for creative work, and it stretches children's symbolic capacities (p.45).

In this example, the children's use of a space for play is acknowledged but there is no further exploration of children's place feelings and environmental experience in these terms. Rather, the educational activity aims specifically to develop the children's aesthetic awareness as a beneficial way of deepening their relationship with, and awareness of, their environment. The benefits of these approaches cannot be easily tested over a period of time; therefore it would appear inevitable that there is a degree of subjectivity on the part of the researcher in asserting the value of these activities. The research, having taken the benefits of E.E. as given, is primarily concerned with assessing the abilities of particular educational activities to tap into or draw out aesthetic responses to the environment. Creative writing, art, poetry and music have all been employed in a variety of research settings, and have all been demonstrated to facilitate this kind of affective education (Adams, 1991; Hansen-Moller and Taylor, 1991; Simmons, 1994).

For example, Adams (1991) highlights the importance of experiential learning within formal education: 'experience in itself is insufficient. To learn from that experience we need to reflect upon it' (p.20). Art education is identified as a particularly appropriate discipline within which sensory experiences can be explored and reworked to derive knowledge from them. With regard to E.E., Adams suggests:

Certain kinds of art-based study can encourage contemplative, reflective thought, which can extend environmental awareness, an essential basis for environmental understanding. Such study is concerned with exploring our relationship with the environment ... It is not merely passive absorption or simply active response, i.e., reaction to environmental stimuli. It is a creative act - a reworking of experience in order to make sense of it (p.21).

Adams proceeds to provide brief overviews of a range of formal educational activities which have utilised art in projects designed to raise environmental awareness. These included school grounds projects, history projects related to local museum visits, projects about local redevelopment of city areas, change in an

old industrial area in Wales, etc. The projects are described but in-depth reviews and assessments of each project are absent from the study. Adams concludes:

Emotional engagement is important in developing a sense of place. A place is part of the environment that has been claimed by feelings. Art-based study offers a way of knowing distinct from other disciplines. It not only emphasizes the importance of sensory experience but is one of the few subjects in the school curriculum where an affective, subjective approach to study is valued and the relations of the world of the self with the world of objects is continually explored. An important function of art in education is to promote a feeling response, to develop empathy (Adams, 1991, p.28).

Adams' work also provides a review of arts activities which are better suited for the fostering of affective knowledges than some disciplines more traditionally associated with E.E. (Science and Geography). The value of the approach is implicitly suggested in the claim that affective empathy enriches environmental experiences. Whilst I am not trying to refute these claims, what is particularly important in these studies is the kinds of affective responses the educational exercises are designed to draw out.

In both Engel (1991) and Adams (1991), the importance of outdoor environments in children's daily play is acknowledged. Yet the educational activities specifically encourage children to have an aesthetic engagement with their environment. Olwig (1989), however, argues that there is a profound difference between the way many children and many adults experience nature. He suggests that whereas adults conceive of nature as a physical presence (e.g. a green, bushes, landscaping) children experience nature as a potentiality. He goes on to state that this '... requires that priority be given to "the world" the small child constructs, on his or her own premises, out of nature, for the purposes of play and socialisation' (p.21). Olwig (1989) also uses more creative elements of the curriculum (poetry) to investigate the place experiences of children, but does so by drawing on their own experiences without directing them to consider aesthetic elements which might not 'naturally' occur to them². The value of natural elements in the locality for children's imaginative and social play emerges strongly from Olwig's work and

² I adopt a similar technique with regard to drawing and photography for my own methodology (see Chapter Three).

these are aspects which are often overlooked in planning discourse where 'play' is provided for in built playgrounds.

Hansen-Moller and Taylor (1991) critique nature interpretation activities which take place in national parks and nature reserves in Denmark and England: such activities inform children about the natural elements in the sites but do not engage them in experiencing the landscapes directly for themselves. This pedagogic strategy is described as an 'expropriation of experience' where the value of the nature and the proper way to experience it have been predetermined. In contrast, Hansen-Moller and Taylor's research involved the use of poetry and music to engage 8- and 9-year-old children's emotions more directly in response to a visit to a woodland. These media were used to direct children to experience the wood by representing sounds, textures and feelings. Given Olwig's findings (1989, 1991) and those of others who have directly investigated children's daily environmental experiences (e.g. Moore, 1986; Hart, 1979), to what extent might these methods also represent an expropriation? If children are more aware of the potential of natural spaces for play and peer activity, and rarely highlight aesthetic qualities unless an activity specifically demands it of them, then it could be argued that these exercises more accurately represent the socialisation of children to recognise adultist values than a heightening of a child's own awareness on their own terms.

Although I am unable to resolve these issues here, I believe that the above analysis raises important questions. In particular, affective education would appear to be more closely aligned with the 'social engineering' rather than the 'knowledge' approach to E.E. discussed in Chapter One. Indeed, one of the main arguments for affective education presented in the last chapter was that it provided an alternative to scientific knowledge-led approaches. If affective education's strength lies in an engagement of the emotions, then it could be argued that affective education is not really about children 'relating' to their environment more directly (drawing from and building on their own experiences). Rather, affective education emphasises specific kinds of emotional engagement which may provide a more effective way of getting people involved in environmental action.

In fact, Steve Van Matre, who founded *Earth Education* in the USA, is quite explicit about this:

Remember that old adage, “You get the behaviour you reward for.”? Well, that’s what we do in earth education. We set up a situation in which we are likely to get a certain kind of behaviour, then reward the learners for exhibiting it (Van Matre, 1990, p.210).

Earth Education is the extension of *Acclimatization* which Van Matre developed at children’s summer camps in the USA in the 1970s. This consisted of a series of inventive activities designed to bring children into closer, more aware kinds of contact with nature and experience it with all their senses. The activities were constructed within a story-telling type narrative, adding a little fantasy to contribute to the enjoyment of the tasks. In *Earth Education* Van Matre extended these principles and designed a series of educational programmes aimed at children of differing ages. The programmes used a mixture of games, inventive props and stories set within natural habitats to teach children basic ecological principles (e.g. the food chain, habitat niches). Most of these programmes were designed to take place at field studies centres and national parks or nature reserves where school children may just visit for a day or stay for a 3-5 day field trip. At the end of the longer trips, each programme would have a series of follow-on activities which were designed to take place at school, with simple reward systems to recognise those children who took on new environmentally sensitive activities in their homes and at school (e.g. switching off lights when leaving a room; switching off the tap whilst brushing your teeth) (Van Matre, 1990).

The *Institute for Earth Education* now operates internationally, with trained programme leaders based in many field study centres around the world, including the UK. Although there has been no comprehensive research completed to assess children’s experiences of these programmes, I was fortunate to find several children from the suburban secondary school where I carried out my fieldwork (see Chapter Three) who had experienced an *Earth Education* residential field trip

during their last year in primary school - the year before I met them³. Although too few in number to draw any conclusions, it was interesting to note that these children mentioned the woods, rivers and exciting elements of the environments they were taken to but offered little voluntarily about the educational activities themselves. One child did explain that she had continued to practice one or two environmental actions, such as switching off lights and the television. But it was her own experiences with her peers and exciting moments which made the visit particularly memorable:

Dipti: ... when we went in Year 6 there was this, we had to collect these Earthkeeping keys on how to stop pollution and save the world. And that was when we done, did activities. And we got keys - K-E-Y-S. And they all stood for something, and when we went we had to walk through the river and there was this buffalo [bull?] we had to cross and there was my friend, Ruth, and she was so scared. She was scared of an ant while we were camping, so we kept on teasing her, and she saw the buffalo and she starting crying. Oh, it was so horrible. And we had to, there was this big hill we had to go down and straight there was the river, and you had to go to the river so, there was this girl called Holly, and she was going down and she just fell!

Me: Ooh! Did she land in the river?

Dipti: No, no. Um, she fell down and she was covered in mud and then I was, I was scared to go down and so, so I held someone's hand and then I just went down. And when we had to go up it was quite easy but there was a herd of cows just in the way. You couldn't do nothing, so we just ran for it. And you had to walk over bridges a lot (Dipti, suburban school, lines 247-68).

This example highlights some of the main points discussed above. Affective education activities are specifically designed to engage children with the environment on a more emotional level. They are successful at drawing out aesthetic responses via art, creative writing, music etc. *Earth Education* attempts to tap into children's emotions by constructing playful events infused with fantasy, but the children's activities are quite strongly defined and controlled. However, it is less clear whether children are understanding their relationship to the environment, and the causes of environmental degradation more clearly as a result, or if these activities definitely encourage children to want to find out more about these issues. Further, both Olwig's research (1989, 1991) and the interview

³ In addition, I attended a three day training course for Earth Educators led by Steve Van Matre in Worcester in 1995 where I experienced many elements of the educational programmes and activities for myself.

excerpt above demonstrate that children do engage with their environments in an affective way, but not necessarily one which is primarily aesthetic. Therefore, in concluding the first section of this chapter on children's experiences of nature, I will present other evidence which explores children's own, non-directed environmental experiences.

Playing with nature

In the research reviewed in the previous section, the importance of open spaces for children's play has already been acknowledged. Simmons (1994) investigated child responses to different natural environments, using a selection of black and white photographs of different kinds of open spaces (school sites, green spaces within urban settings, fields, countryside parks, interpretative trails, bodies of water and thick woods) and asked 8- and 9-year-old children who lived in an urban neighbourhood a series of questions about the images:

- 1) What is it that you particularly like or dislike about this place?
- 2) If someone said that you were going to visit this place, what would you think?
- 3) If you were going to visit this place, what types of things would you like to do?
- 4) Can you think of anything that would worry you or bother you about visiting this place? (Simmons, 1994, p.196-7)

Simmons found that the school sites were rated as most popular because they provided a '... good place to play basketball with my friends' or they would be a good '... place to play because both boys and girls can play all kinds of activities' (p.198). Simmons found that the children did mention some aesthetic qualities when describing what they liked about the pictures. She also found that bodies of water (e.g. rivers) and deep woods, although considered exciting and fun places to play, were also perceived as the most dangerous places which would cause the children concern. However, overall she concludes:

In characterizing what they liked or disliked about a particular set of scenes it was not unusual for the children to describe the types of activities that could be done in the setting. Perceived 'goodness' and 'badness' of a setting was related directly to these opportunities for activity (Simmons, 1994, p.202).

Roger Hart's extensive piece of research about 5-11 year old children's experiences of place in a small town in the USA (1979) also revealed children's overwhelming awareness and preference for good spaces for play, especially imaginative play, in their local environment. Hart's work has become a classic in its field, adding to knowledge on children's geographies, place range, place feelings, and offering insights into a range of priorities and child needs which are particularly aimed at planners⁴.

For example, he accompanied children on local trips and asked them to take photographs of their ten favourite places. Informal conversation probed for the reasons behind their choices and their feelings about those places. He found that the use of the location for play was most commonly cited. In particular, rivers and lakes, child-built dens, woods and fields were exciting places to play (although some of these sites were visited rarely, e.g. woods). Commercial places (e.g. to buy sweets or ice-cream) and social spaces (e.g. a friend's house) were also popular. Hart noted that places were hardly ever chosen on the basis of aesthetic criteria. He felt that where such descriptions were occasionally offered, they appeared to be repetitions of parental descriptions (and he had also interviewed parents to explore their perceptions of children's place experiences).

Moore (1986) was responsible for producing another classic text on children's daily use of spaces for play (working with 9 to 12-year-olds), this time based in three sites in the UK. Although he did not initially specify his interest in outdoor spaces to the children who took part, his research revealed that most children far preferred to play outdoors, when they could. His interest lay particularly in applying this knowledge to the provision of appropriate play spaces for children. As a planner, Moore became particularly interested in the value of spaces for children's play which were not specifically 'designed' with that function in mind. In addition to end destinations (e.g. fields, parks, woods, friend's houses, derelict sites), Moore also examined the use of pathways for cycling, bollards for leap-

⁴ His work also made a particularly important contribution in the development and assessment of a wide range of methodologies for exploring these themes with children and, as such, will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Three.

frogging, slopes and holes, the harvesting of found objects, etc. which children engaged with along the way.

Both Hart's (1979) and Moore's (1986) investigations have provided rich descriptive material of what children actually did, and what they experienced in their own terms. These have provided the foundations for many studies which have further explored children's cognitive maps of their local area, based on their everyday experiences (Blaut 1997a, 1997b; Liben and Downs, 1997; Siegel et al, 1981; Wiegand, 1991; Matthews, 1992; Blades, 1989; Blades et al, 1998; Hartland, 1992); their place feelings/sense of place in their home localities (Hill and Michelson, 1981; Lynch, 1978; Tuan, 1978; Sanger, 1997); and the nature of children's play (Bloch, 1989; Kirkby, 1989; Moore and Young, 1978; Owens, 1988; Ward Thompson, 1995). However, Moore (1986, 1989) acknowledges that there are many other contextual factors which facilitate or constrain these experiences which could offer further insights into children's attachment to places and play experiences, and a deeper understanding of what shapes these experiences. He identifies factors such as child personality, parental behaviour and parenting styles, environmental factors (e.g. rural or urban milieus), the use and content of television, fears, special visits or holiday experiences, peer companionship, and access to public transport. The challenge, Moore (1986) suggests, is to find a more ecological way of drawing on all of these facets of children's experiences and interactions to build up a more holistic understanding of their daily activities and behaviours. I agree, and would argue that an investigation of this kind could provide not only a better understanding of the importance of particular kinds of environmental experiences in children's lives, but could also provide a better insight into the key factors which shape children's daily behaviour. This would address the concerns presented at the end of Chapter One, facilitating a way of conceptualising behaviour which was not so constrained by the need to draw on 'knowledge' and 'attitude' variables, and which was recontextualised within children's daily lives. I explore these possibilities further in the second part of this chapter.

CHILDREN'S ECOLOGIES

In this section, I will review literature that looks beyond child-environment transactions as a relationship existing primarily between 'the child' and 'the environment', and begins to identify other factors such as social structures, and social-spatial relationships within which child-environment transactions can be contextualised. Many of the studies reviewed here focus on a specific arena of children's lives, particularly the street, the school or the home. I will review work on each of these spaces in turn. However, by identifying a broader range of important factors and structures which affect children's experiences in these spaces, a number of common themes will emerge. Therefore, taken together, these studies help to identify influences on children's behaviours which permit some of the artificial spatial boundaries within which child activity is considered to be transgressed (Sibley, 1995a). Simultaneously the 'separate' spheres of street, school and home remain valuable units of analysis because they are also imbued with many of the social constructions of childhood discussed at the beginning of this chapter. For example, a child is 'in place' and close to nature when playing with friends in the family garden, but a youth is 'out of place' and dangerous when meeting friends on the street corner (Mayall, 1996; Valentine, 1996a, 1996b). Similarly, the teacher-child relationship is not constructed in the same way as the parent-child relationship and thus the meaning of 'the child' in the context of school and home can be different, manifesting itself in the activities of the child in these spaces (Mayall, 1994b; Holland, 1992). I begin by looking further at children's experiences of the street and their locality.

Street culture

Socio-economic factors are perhaps the most extensively reviewed as important for an understanding of children's outdoor experiences. Differences between the extent to which children can be outdoors and the ranges and places to which they

can travel have been identified in relation to age, class, gender, and ethnicity⁵. Newson and Newson (1976) conducted a study in Nottingham in which children as young as seven were identified as spending a great deal of their day away from home (albeit much of this time would be spent at school). They asked mothers whether they would describe their children as 'indoor' or 'outdoor' children, based on their perception of their child's preferred location for activity. 71% of children whose parents were scaled as Social Class V were labelled 'outdoor', compared with only 44% from Social Classes I and II (the highest classes). Further, they found that 67% of boys compared with 52% of girls were labelled 'outdoor' children (Newson and Newson, in Matthews, 1992, p. 17).

Other research also found that working class children spend more time outdoors than middle class children (e.g. Ward, 1978; Roberts, 1980). It is suggested that lack of space in the working class home leads to parental encouragement to the child to play outdoors (Matthews, 1992). However, in conditions of extreme poverty, recent research has demonstrated that the combination of class and physical environment can sometimes lead to the opposite outcome. Bartlett (1998) demonstrates that young children (aged 4-9) living in very poor districts in the USA suffer because traffic, crime, drugs and prostitution in these most deprived areas present too many real dangers for even the most desperate parent to allow their young child onto the streets alone. As many of these families are living in two or three room apartments, many of these children are confined to their own room (often shared with other family members), or are provided with no option other than to sit in front of the television for many hours a day, until they are old enough to go to school. This example illustrates the multiple effect of class, crime, traffic and physical space on children's abilities to negotiate and experience outdoor space.

⁵ There is actually very little available research on ethnicity. Matthews (1992) suggests that this is largely due to the difficulty of separating ethnicity from other important factors such as age and gender. Studies on ethnic segregation (e.g. Knox, 1987; Boal, 1976) suggest that among groups which are more ethnically segregated, there is a tendency to restrict spatial range within the ethnic enclave. This is likely to be the case for children, too.

Many of the socio-economic categories identified in differentiating children's outdoor experiences are best understood in relationship to other social factors. For example, girls are generally not permitted to travel so far alone or with friends as boys, yet these differences are not noticeable until middle childhood (8- to 12-years-old). During this period of time, boys begin to gain more spatial freedom at a faster rate than girls (Matthews, 1987, 1992; Ward, 1978; Hart, 1979; Moore and Young, 1978). However, a further set of structural factors need to be considered to understand why this should be the case.

The difference between boys' and girls' spatial ranges and freedoms have been explained in terms of dominant constructions of gender, where there is a greater expectation that girls will stay at home and assist in household activities (Hart, 1979), and also the greater extent of parental fears for girls' safety on the streets (Valentine, 1989, 1996a, 1996b; Burgess et al, 1988c). Other recent research suggests that the extent of parental fear about traffic (Hillman, 1993) and child abduction (of boys as well as girls), may be leading to less spatial freedom or more parental chaperoning for both boys and girls. Valentine (1997a) presents some evidence from interviews with parents which suggest that parental attitudes to gender and safety are changing, although parenting roles themselves still appear to be conducted along fairly traditional lines.

Crimes such as child abduction, child pornography rings and rape, which provide the focus of many parents' fears for their children, occur only rarely in reality:

But the evidence of this research is that, although 65% of parents are aware that the probability of their child being snatched is low or fairly low, they choose to restrict their children's play in public space because the potential consequences of not doing so are so horrific that they are not prepared to take a risk with their offspring's safety, however small they perceive it to be (Valentine, 1996a, p.209).

Just as dominant social constructions of young children (particularly in relation to their vulnerability and innocence), play a part in these fears and the discourses of the media which contribute to raising parental awareness of these crimes, so dominant constructions of the 'city' and the 'country' provide some of the spatial contexts in which children's outdoor experiences are represented.

Children in urban areas of many industrialized Western countries have far fewer opportunities for such 'grounded' learning and free exploration. Their access to the outdoor environment is limited largely by parental concerns for their safety - both physical and psychosocial (Katz, 1993, p.100).

While the city is commonly identified as an inferior environment for children to grow up in, there is sometimes a danger of this 'inferiority' being constructed in contrast to a mythical rural idyll (Philo, 1992). Ward (1988) challenges these ideas in his exploration of *The Child in the Country*.

Country children are, sadly, one of the ingredients of our nostalgia-ridden rural mythology. We still half-believe them to be blessed with special health and innocence, and to have more earth wisdom than street credibility. The reality, as Colin Ward so vividly documents here, is often that they are quite simply cut off (Mabey, in Ward, 1988, foreword).

Ward (1988) argues that the labels 'rural' and 'urban' reinforce ideological social constructions more than they reveal meaningful differences between children's outdoor experiences:

... (T)here is much more in common in the experiences of children in affluent families, rural or urban, than in those of rich and poor children in the same city or in the same village (Ward, 1988, p.12).

These debates played an important part in my decision to research children's experiences in a village and a suburban setting, in predominantly middle class communities (see Chapter Three). These settings seem particularly important given the relationships between constructions of childhood, the city and the country and the role of these constructions in E.E. (discussed in Chapter One). I explore these themes further on the basis of my empirical findings in Chapter Seven.

However, perhaps most remarkable in considering the review above is the absence of children's voices themselves. The majority of the research discussed draws on adult recollections of childhood (e.g. Ward, 1978, 1988), or surveys and interviews conducted with parents (e.g. Valentine 1997a, 1997c; Newson and Newson, 1976), or via ethnographic observation (e.g. Bartlett, 1998). The literature reveals more about parental concerns and control of children's movements in space, and the role that adult society at large plays in creating exclusionary environments

(with reference to traffic and fear in particular) (Sibley, 1995a), than the ways in which children actually experience their environment within these regulatory contexts.

Both the fact that children's voices are absent in much research and the extent to which parents/adults provide structural constraints on children's movements, indicate that issues of power and control are central to an understanding of the social and physical structures within which children's daily behaviours and activities take place. Perhaps the space in which these issues have been identified in their most explicit form is the *school*.

Within the framework of these educational institutions, persons spend much of their childhood period. In these educational frameworks, the children 'belong' to the state-society, and it is the state-supervised educational system that serves as a tool for the transmission of state-selected information, as well as values and norms (Shamgar-Handelman, 1994, in Goldson, 1997, p.21).

Mayall (1994b) suggests that children have greater flexibility to negotiate behaviour with parents within the home than they do with teachers within the school environment. However, power infuses the nature of all of these relationships. I do not wish to explore children's experience within the school environment further here. The role of pedagogy and the defining of educational outcomes have been discussed extensively in Chapter One and in the first part of this chapter within the context of 'controlling' or influencing children's behaviour as an outcome of E.E. Rather, in continuing to explore the possibilities of understanding children's experiences within the broader context of their daily lives, I will now turn to the arena from which children emerge, and in which power relations are constantly being negotiated - the *home*.

Home rules

Until quite recently, children have been largely absent from family research. They may appear as statistics (O'Brien et al, 1996), or their presence may be implicit in work which focuses on parenting (Coppock, 1997; Jamieson and Toynbee, 1990).

However, there has been relatively little attention paid to the importance of children in the negotiation of parental roles, or family activities more generally.

Two main reasons have been identified for this absence. First, Brannen (1996) notes that, within sociology, most research on children and youth has focused on arenas outside of the family context. An interest in the social relationships and social issues of relevance to youth (Furnham and Stacey, 1991) leads to a tendency to concentrate on spaces within which specifically youth oriented dimensions of the social can be identified, e.g. places where youth meet with their peers, the school, arenas of consumption and reflections of lifestyle. Within sociological studies of 'the family', Hallden (1994) notes:

Often the family is studied as a sociological arena in which the child is the family member upon whom influence is exerted. It is adults who are the subject of sociological inquiry, it is their actions that are studied in relation to the child. Even when children are included in this research, they are seldom studied in their own right (p.63).

James and Prout (1996) recognise a recent shift in sociological study from the position where children were largely regarded as the outcome of socialisation, towards an interest in children as active participants in structuring the context of the family. Some recent examples of this approach within sociology will be reviewed below.

The second reason noted for the absence of the child from family research is the role of feminist research in addressing this arena in recent years (Goldson, 1997). Oakley (1994) suggests that, when feminist theory was applied to the deconstruction of 'the family', children did not feature in the analysis other than by representing 'a problem' to women. Aitken (1998) sums up the consequences of this approach to family studies particularly well:

Leena Alanen (1994) argues that because most contemporary feminists see childcare as socially necessary work that is differentially and unequally divided between the sexes, they tend to objectify children as "other" by focusing on activities that are done to children. Consequently, children are positioned as passive participants rather than as active social performers. Much feminist thinking thus begins appropriately with mothers' oppression but ends with the objectification of children. Understanding the impact of

children as social agents introduces a new and important edge to family and child research in general and feminist scholarship in particular (p.98).

To these two explanations I would also suggest a third. Given the adultist social constructions of childhood which emerge from many of the contexts discussed in this chapter, the extent to which the research methodologies themselves contribute to the ways in which researchers describe children and childhood must be considered. I discuss this factor further in Chapter Three.

An acknowledgement of the trends highlighted above has led to more recent research examining the nature of the relationship between the parent(s) and children more closely. Much of this work has moved away from the more linear concept of the child being socialised by the parent. However, in drawing extensively on theories of exclusion and resistance (especially in geography), the parent-child relationship is still primarily conceptualised in terms of the power of the adult. The role of the child, if discussed at all, is primarily one of either conformity or resistance.

The home is one place where children are subject to controls by parents over the use of space and time and where the child attempts to carve out its own spaces and set its own times. The possibilities for conflict here are considerable (Sibley, 1995b, p.129).

In many practical ways, this reflection on the power relationship between the parent and the child is entirely accurate:

Parents determine the extent of their children's personal geographies by deciding at what age they should be allowed outside alone and at what age, and when they may go to different places (the shops, school, the park, the city centre etc.) unaccompanied by an adult (Valentine, 1997a, p.38).

The central issue here is the extent to which adult and parent behaviours which, on the one hand, reflect care and concern for children, also reveal processes of regulation and control which place limits on children's rights and capacities (Goldson, 1997; Archard, 1993).

The regulation and control of children's behaviour, that which amounts to the imposition from above of disciplinary power, is effective precisely because of its invisibility, its taken-for-granted legitimacy (Scruton, 1997, p.164).

Aitken (1998) expresses a similar sentiment in explaining the importance of recognising processes of control within the mundane context of everyday, family life:

It is part of our culture that children are supervised and directed by adults. The control that is exercised over young people's activities through, among other things, the construction of families and the design of space, influences meanings and practice (p.106).

These insights into the broader structural frameworks of power within which parent-child relationships are negotiated provide one approach to exploring children's experiences of the home. To illustrate these ideas, I will present a case study from the research of Hallden (1994). Hallden worked with a group of 8-9 year old children in a Swedish school. The children were asked to write stories and provide drawings to illustrate their ideas about their 'future family' (i.e. when they grow up). Hallden then analysed the content of these materials, acknowledging that the stories reflect a combination of experience, fantasies, role models and stereotypes (i.e. it cannot be assumed that they accurately reflect the nature of the children's own families now).

In her analysis, Hallden identifies several key themes which differentiate the stories, most of which reveal a marked and significant difference between boys and girls. For example, 16 out of 18 girls but only 9 out of 14 boys describe their 'future family' as consisting of parents and children. Whereas interactions between family members and relations feature in the narratives of all the girls, they are only featured in half of the boys' stories. When boys do include interactions, they tend to be much more diffuse and less central to the story than in the girls' accounts. Conflict arises in 13 of the girls' narratives and it is the mother (usually 'played' by the author) who takes control of the situation and restores order. In the 6 accounts from boys where conflict arises, it is usually as a challenge to authority and order is seldom restored. The girls discuss more caring rituals, such as washing dishes, cleaning and caring for children, whereas the dominant activities in the boys' accounts are play and having fun, and they are more likely to write from the point of view of the child. Hallden suggests that these narratives indicate the ways in which children come to experience and respond to power relations within

the home. Whereas girls are more likely to adopt the mother's role and illustrate the experience of the child as subject to parental control, boys do not depict a framework where control and responsibilities feature, but where any attempt to control the child is resisted. She concludes:

The family as domain becomes interesting, not first and foremost because it serves as an arena where children are socialized through norms and role models, but rather because it is an arena where their self-image is formed and where power relationships are explored (Hallden, 1994, p.76).

Although much of the work which has explored parent-child relationships in such detail have confined the arena in which these interactions take place to the home, it is clear that the structural processes of power and control will have wider ramifications for the nature of children's experiences beyond the home. This would apply to places that children go to with their parents and their ability to move through space independently or with peers (Nieuwenhuys, 1994; Valentine, 1997a, 1997b; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). I explore these themes further in relation to my own empirical findings in Chapters Six and Seven.

In addressing children's experiences in relation to the control exerted by the parent(s), it has also been noted that the construction of parenting has not remained constant over time, and will vary in different cultural contexts (Morgan, 1985; Segalen, 1988; Jamieson and Toynbee, 1990).

Indeed, there is a good deal of evidence supporting the claim that parents have become more child-centered. It appears that many of today's parents have given up being distant and dignified, voluntarily relinquishing the trappings of traditional authority, which has become increasingly difficult to sustain (Ambert, 1994, in Valentine, 1996a, p.215).

Sibley (1995b) describes differences between *positional* and *personalising* families (p.130). The former describes families where power is invested in position; a father may act as an authoritarian figure whose instructions to other family members are to be followed on the basis that he is the father. In the latter family-type, power is more equally distributed; spaces within the home are used and decisions made on a more democratic basis. Clearly, these dichotomous terms represent the extreme ends of the spectrum with regard to power and the family. In reality, many children are likely to negotiate their activities in a setting which lies

somewhere between the two. For example, Buckingham (1994) explores the negotiation of television viewing within the home between parents and children. He acknowledges that parents draw on dominant constructions of children as susceptible to corruption through the media, which plays some part in their need to draw boundaries and control their children's viewing. However, in reality he finds that constructions of 'child' and 'adult' in this context are relative terms, continually negotiated; whilst parents regulate child viewing, at other times they may delegate responsibility for younger siblings viewing to older children.

Furthermore, Buckingham (1994) notes that children play an active role in determining the meaning of these constructions. For example, being told that they are 'too young' to watch a particular programme may be used by the child to justify their inability to carry out responsible tasks that they wish to avoid. Among the peer group, talk about television and video viewing enables groups of children to label others as 'childish' or to demonstrate maturity and impress with reference to violent or frightening scenes in horror films. Buckingham (1994) thus reveals children's more active role in negotiating power and identity:

In talking about their tastes and preferences, and in asserting their right to have access to them, children are actively negotiating with, and often resisting, the constructions of childhood that are made available to them (p.94).

In concluding this chapter, I return to consider how socio-spatial structures and, in particular, parent-child relationships can offer new possibilities for an analysis of E.E. strategy.

Conclusions

Recognising issues of power, resistance and negotiation, particularly between the child and the parent(s) offers a valuable insight which is absent from most E.E. research. The ability of children to either initiate or respond to a call to make behavioural changes must be explored within the context of these power relationships. Uzzell (1994a, 1994b) provides one example of research that has investigated children's capacities to act as catalysts for environmental action within the home. In his summary report of an international project carried out in England,

Denmark, France and Portugal he does not provide details of the educational activities themselves, but reveals that the research findings have demonstrated...

... that educational programmes alone are insufficient to bring about change. It is necessary to support the catalyst process itself. In order for catalytic effects to occur it is necessary to work simultaneously with the child *and* the adult and to support both children and adults in the catalytic process.

What differentiates those children and parents where a catalytic effect occurs is that within these families children and parents readily communicate with each other about the environment. The environment is seen as a legitimate subject for conversation. Furthermore, the conversation is not one-sided with the parent 'lecturing' the child, but there is a dialogue between parent and child with as much likelihood of the child being accorded with 'expert' status as the parent (Uzzell, 1994b, p.7).

...

Many of the barriers to children becoming catalysts of environmental change result from the children's perceived status within the family and the inability of parents to recognise that their children can actually teach them about the environment (Uzzell, 1994b, p.11).

Uzzell's (1994b) report eloquently and powerfully demonstrates the relevance of parent-child relationships, reviewed above, in determining the effectiveness of certain kinds of E.E. However, in addition to the matter of inter-personal relationships, broader socio-economic factors and the nature of the local physical environment provide an important context in which parental behaviour and the opportunities for environmental experiences and activities for children must be considered. As Mayall (1994a) notes:

Childhood and the life conditions of children are fundamentally determined by the same economic, political and social forces which create the framework of adults' lives (p.4).

Katz (1991) argues that much geographical research which explores human-environment relations tends to focus on socio-economic and political structures and to lose sight of the daily activities of the individuals who create and live within these structures. The alternative approach had been to look at human behaviours and relationships as processes, decontextualised from the socio-spatial milieu in which they are produced. Katz (1991) suggests that grounded, empirical research into people's everyday lives - the mundane and unspectacular - can facilitate analysis which can draw upon and synthesise both of these traditions. In constructing my own fieldwork to explore children's daily lives, as they experience

them, I seek to address these challenges. In so doing, I aim to provide a more grounded understanding of the factors which influence children's behaviour which can then be reapplied to the development of E.E. strategy.

CHAPTER 3: DEVELOPING A METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, I describe how my research methods evolved as a dialectical process between piloting a range of methods and deriving further theoretical insights from an emerging literature review. I explain how I came to choose a particular set of methods and activities and what they were designed to achieve. In Chapter Four, I present a narrative of the fieldwork experiences upon which the empirical chapters are based. This kind of ‘nuts and bolts’ account is rarely provided in text books on research methods (Nast, 1994) (e.g. Strauss, 1987; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Burgess, 1984), but limited guidance on geographical research with children currently exists, and these chapters contribute to this emerging field.

Timetable for piloting

At the end of my first year of research, I had completed an initial literature review of E.E., the geographies of children, children’s play, social constructions of childhood, and other relevant materials. These were presented to support the arguments presented in Chapters One and Two. At the end of 1995 (see Table 1 below), the research proposal that emerged at that time was to look at children’s *daily* experiences of nature. However, rather than using methods associated with ‘affective’ education in the formal sector to explore children’s feelings about nature, I argued for the need to contextualise children’s experiences of nature within their daily lives. This was my original research question. Before I could decide on the most appropriate methods for investigating this question, two issues needed to be resolved; which children would I recruit for my research, and where/how would I recruit them?

Table 1. Research timetable

DATE	ACTIVITY	COMMENTS
Oct. 94-Oct. 95	Literature review	Included: E.E., educational psychology, social constructions of childhood, geographies of children, children's play, methods.
Oct. 95-Feb. 96	Questionnaire design and piloting	Piloting in one suburban school: Piloted with 5 students individually, followed by 1 class of 26 children together.
Feb. 96-August 96	Piloting of one-to-one interview	3 children interviewed for approx. 60 minutes each; 2 at home, 1 at school. Questionnaire provides the interview guide.
July 96-Oct. 96	Re-design of methodology	New methods required to address problems arising in piloting. Feminist methodologies reviewed.
Sept. 96-Oct. 96	Questionnaire delivered to 2 schools	163 children in 7 classes in a suburban secondary school; 41 children in 2 classes in a village primary school.
Nov. 96-March 97	In-depth fieldwork with village children	28 children participated in schools-based art and photography assignments. 10 children were interviewed at home during their half-term holiday.
Feb. 97-April 97	In-depth fieldwork with suburban children	38 children participated in schools-based art and photography assignments. 10 children were interviewed at home during their Easter holiday.

Which children?

When thinking about children's daily activities and their environmental experiences, as we have seen in Chapter Two, age is a primary factor which determines their freedom to act as they choose, their local spatial range and their physical abilities. Therefore, whilst some of the main factors which shape children's experiences may be influential throughout their lives, others are likely to be more significant/constraining/enabling etc. at different ages. The reality of these changes and the role of age could most effectively be studied either by initiating a longitudinal study with one cohort of children, or by selecting several cohorts of different children at a variety of ages to work with simultaneously. Neither option was feasible within the confines of a PhD project. But there was a more fundamental reason why I considered neither of these approaches to be the most appropriate. My main concern was to investigate the processes through

which children's daily experiences of nature take shape. I was interested in the specifics of individual activities, and the complexities of the human and environmental relationships through which behaviour is enacted. In order to carry out such an in-depth study, comparison across several different cohorts divided by age would not have been helpful. Therefore, I initially planned to carry out my fieldwork with one group of children. I chose to work with 'middle childhood'; a term which refers to children aged 8-12 years old. Whilst there is a substantial body of research on very young children's activities (Corsaro, 1997) and the street culture of teenagers or youths (Valentine et al, 1998), relatively little research has been directed at the children in-between.

Middle childhood has been identified as a period of transition, when individuals cease to be a 'child' with the onset of puberty and adolescence. As such, it represents a pivotal moment during which some of the boundaries of identification and social constructions outlined in Chapter Two may be transgressed, and one might expect to find a 'child' resisting the label, striving to be recognised as a teenager. The pivot of middle childhood can, therefore, provide a window into the behaviours and relationships which constitute both 'child' and 'adolescent', whilst also revealing something of the individual's own creativity as they strive for their own sense of identity.

Middle childhood is perceived as the time when children experience 'the natural world' most evocatively (Cobb, 1977; Moore, 1986). It is the phase during which children (especially boys) are likely to be negotiating greater access to the locality, and gaining greater independence to play with their peers in different spaces (Hart, 1979; Matthews, 1992). Furthermore, it is also the age when children are most likely to be involved in social/organised groups which facilitate activities and experiences, such as Brownies and Guides, Cubs and Scouts, Youth clubs, etc. These groups may represent opportunities for more peer interaction and access to exciting or enjoyable activities which, by the age of 15 or 16, seem less important if other freedoms have been granted.

Taken together, the above factors provide a powerful motive for the decision to research middle childhood and, within that category, to work with 10-12 year old children. Given the increasing freedoms established by some children at this age, the upper end of the range was the best point at which to identify the ways in which these freedoms were negotiated, and the kinds of activities and spaces to which access was consequently gained. In addition, I wanted to use interviews as the primary fieldwork method (see below) and, having previously had 4 years of teaching experience¹ with this age group when I began my research, I believed that I could sustain conversation more effectively with 10-12 year olds. Recruiting the children became the next task.

Locating the children

Choosing a location in which to base my research, and deciding how the children should be accessed became more than a purely practical issue. Working with children in schools, lesson periods, lunch time, after school, youth clubs, or recruiting at other kinds of locations would all impact on the research in different ways. Certain contexts for meeting with children were more formal than others (e.g. the formality of the classroom compared with the relative informality of the home) (Barker, 1990; Mayall, 1996); some would make it easier to locate and recruit children and maintain a regular contact and commitment from them than others (Matthews and Limb, 1998); and some locations had implications for security, insurance and the likelihood of parents allowing me to have access to their children.

My eventual decision to recruit children via a school was reached for a variety of practical, ethical and methodological reasons. A school provides me with a substantial number of children from whom to recruit volunteers for the research. It provides a relatively formal context in which a large number of children can carry

¹ I taught at Sunday school. The school required teachers to work with a formal curriculum, although I wrote a new curriculum for my year group, using more experiential approaches, during my time there (1990-98).

out a research activity together. A school setting also provides a set of procedures and networks for communicating with the children on a regular basis, reminding them of meetings, providing rooms to meet, and a means of collecting the children's research assignments. Finally, beginning the research process at a school provides the research with a legitimacy and seal of 'safety', particularly in the eyes of parents.

Some recent research projects with children (e.g. Matthews and Limb, 1998) have recruited children via youth clubs. In fact, a number of the children who eventually participated in the research did not belong to a youth club and, whilst unlikely to be a highly significant element of the overall research findings, a greater variety of personal stories existed where the only common experience for all the children was their school. Further, attendance at a youth club is not compulsory, and the entire context is far less formal than a school, so the organisational advantages would be lost.

One school was needed in which to pilot my methodology. I contacted, and gained access, to Year 7 of a large secondary school (approximately 2000 pupils) in a middle class suburb of London in January 1996. The school I selected granted access because I already had personal contacts with teaching staff (see letter in Appendix 2a). Having decided to work with one school only, allowing an in-depth investigation of the participating children's daily experiences (see above), the specific school and location selected seemed less important. The children who participated were not intended to be 'representative' of British children in general.

Rather, I was interested in the processes and experiences which constituted each individual child's everyday life. The school had both male and female pupils, and children from a very wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, providing considerable diversity across these categories. Once the Headmaster had agreed to my project, all further correspondence was conducted with the Head of Geography. Piloting initially involved only one class of children, the aim being to return to the same

school in the following academic year (September 1996) to conduct my fieldwork with the whole of Year 7. Having established the age of the children who participated in the research, and their location, the challenge was finding an appropriate methodology for investigating children's daily experiences of nature.

Stage one: children's daily experiences of nature

In order to address the original focus for my research, I needed to find ways to enter into discussions about nature with children. I was aware that it would be difficult to talk about experiences of nature as something detached from a broader context, and that some aspects of contact with nature might not be easy to identify via a direct approach at all. Initially I thought about taking groups of children on some kind of outing where I could observe their activities and then base a series of group discussions or individual interviews around this specific experience. This approach was flawed on a number of levels, however. First, on a practical level, it would be difficult to organise such an outing, gain the trust of parents, and ensure that I was fully in control of any situation that might arise. Second, I would immediately be drawing boundaries around 'nature' by my choice of outing, and would therefore be limiting and altering the kind of information I would be getting from the children. This defeated the purpose of my work which at this stage was seeking the children's understanding of nature in all kinds of everyday contexts. Given these constraints, I adopted two methods for initial piloting; a questionnaire and one-to-one interviews. The questionnaire was intended to provide an overview of the everyday context of children's lives, including some insights into their experiences of nature.

In Chapter Two, I reviewed studies using art, poetry, creative writing, music and other creative activities as a means of exploring children's experiences of nature. In particular, these activities were held to be more appropriate in exploring children's feelings (Hansen-Moller and Taylor, 1991). Much of the work was classroom based, and in a number of cases it appeared that children's creative work was collected but

then taken away to be analysed by the researcher without further input or clarification from the children (e.g. Olwig, 1989, 1991 analysing poetry; Hallden, 1994, analysing creative writing). I wondered why no one appeared simply to have sat down with children and talked directly about the matters that interested them. I chose to explore this option with one-to-one interviews, designed for a single, one hour meeting with the children.

However, this piloting phase was not particularly successful. I experienced a number of problems, relating to both the methods themselves, and the nature of my main research question, demanding a re-evaluation of both. In the next section I discuss the design and implementation of the pilot questionnaire and interviews, demonstrating how these problems emerged.

The questionnaire

The questionnaire (a copy of which is provided in Appendix 1) was designed to fulfil four functions;

- 1) provide some aggregate data on the community of children I was working with. Basic social categories such as gender, ethnic group, religion and residential locality could be described for the group.
- 2) provide some general information about children's use of outdoor places in the locality, such as gardens, streets, shopping areas, parks etc.
- 3) provide information on other kinds of child activity and place use as a context for my specific interest in outdoor places and contact with nature. Such contextual information included amount of TV viewing, and favourite kinds of programme, use of computers and game consoles, holiday experiences and preferences, hobbies, membership of clubs and youth groups.

- 4) gain some initial definitions of nature from the children, as perceived in their own local area and as an abstract term.

The questionnaire was extensively piloted in several stages to ensure that the questions were worded in an appropriate way for the children, to establish their ability and willingness to fill out a long questionnaire carefully, and to seek their opinions on being asked to carry out such a task. To pilot the questionnaire, initially I met with five volunteers individually during their lunch break. Each child filled out the questionnaire while I was present. I asked them to comment on the wording or content of any of the questions as they went through it, and to ask if there were any questions that seemed unclear. The volunteers helped me to reword a couple of questions, in order to improve their clarity, but overall the questionnaire was understood and filled in correctly.

In particular, the children commented on the way that my layout and occasional cartoon caricatures throughout the questionnaire added to their enjoyment in filling it out. Although I used a clip-art computer package to provide these images, the initial idea to include them was inspired by a questionnaire on health conducted by the Thomas Coram Research Institute (Thomas Coram Research Institute, n/d). These cartoon characters proved to be very useful later on when large numbers of children were filling in the questionnaire together, as they had something to colour in and doodle with, whilst they were waiting to move on from one question to the next.

After the one-to-one piloting, I took the slightly modified questionnaire to a whole class to fill in during a Geography lesson. Again, the questionnaire itself proved to be quite successful, but an important lesson was learned in the management of the exercise. During this piloting exercise, I allowed the children to work at their own paces. A small number of children became restless, having completed the schedule quickly, while others worked quite slowly, not managing to complete the questionnaire by the end of the lesson. Further, the freedom I allowed for them to talk during the

lesson meant that it was probable that some answers were shared between several individuals. As the children who had volunteered to try the questionnaire in their lunch-time had completed the work in approximately 40 minutes, I knew that a one hour lesson should be quite ample for the children to complete the questionnaire. But it was clear that the children would work more efficiently if I structured the lesson time. When I finally brought the questionnaire to the whole of Year 7 in the following year, I asked the children to work in silence and I introduced each question, asking them to progress at my rate. This enabled me to ensure that the children completed the work within the lesson, and the minority of children who took longer over the open-ended questions were invited to mark them and return to them in the few minutes remaining at the end of each session. This method of carrying out the questionnaire phase also enabled me to give additional explanations to the group as a whole, if further clarification was required, rather than to several individuals one at a time.

Although staff had authorized my use of classroom time, in the first instance to enable children to fill in my questionnaires, I felt that it was important to present this activity to the children in a way which would sound like an invitation to participate, rather than a compulsory lesson activity, or one that they would be expected to take part in unless they demonstrated a strong desire to opt out (Alderson, 1995). This approach was important, not only on ethical grounds, but also because this would be the first time that the children met me, and I was concerned that the more formal and less exciting questionnaire did not deter them from volunteering for later parts of the project.

In addition to improving my overall technique of delivering the questionnaire and co-ordinating the children's work in completing it, the questionnaire proved to be a vital component in the development of the thesis as a whole, particularly in accounting for the shift in direction that the work took after the first stage of piloting. This is explained in the context of the second stage of piloting; one-to-one interviews.

The interviews

I piloted one-to-one interviews with three of the children who had volunteered to meet with me individually for the original questionnaire pilot. Two interviews were conducted in the children's homes, and the third took place at school, as it was inconvenient to meet at the child's house. In each case, I attempted to begin a conversation based on the child's descriptions of their activities in the questionnaire and then to draw out connections to more global environmental matters or more abstract notions of nature. For example, I would ask about a child's holiday experiences generally, but swiftly direct the conversation to investigate the extent of their awareness and appreciation of natural landscapes in these holiday locations. This made perfect sense in my mind, but the approach was deeply flawed in practice for a number of reasons. First, what seemed to be obvious links between daily practice and constructs of nature to me were, of course, not at all obvious to the children. I was linking ideas that were present in academic literature with 'real life' and this, in addition to the fact that the more global or abstract ideas were often unfamiliar to the child, made it difficult for them to respond to my questions. I was not adequately aware of the children's abilities to discuss my agenda. For example, Barker (1990) illustrates the need to be aware of developmental levels when assessing the suitability of using interviews, and the kinds of subjects that one can expect to be able to discuss with children:

Children in the first few years of life think mainly in concrete terms and have not yet acquired the capacity for abstract thought. Their views and responses relate to their immediate situations and they are unable to view things from longer-term perspectives. Their vocabularies are also limited, hence they can often express themselves better through play or other indirect means. As they approach and enter adolescence children become able to conceptualise things more as adults do and interviews with them can be conducted in ways which more closely resemble those which we use with adults (Barker, 1990, p.4).

Second, my interview technique at this stage was poor. My questions and statements were often confused and unclear, making it difficult for the interviewee to know what I was asking them. Further, I established my own agenda very early on and was not truly

‘listening’ to the kinds of things they were telling me. The interview was not at all child-led, and I set the pace, often cutting in, or rushing onto the next point without giving the child time to think about their answer or expand on a previous statement.

The example below demonstrates the issues of my technique clearly, and is presented as an illustration of the many times that a novice researcher finds themselves cringing whilst transcribing a taped interview. Such evidence is usually eradicated from any public record of the research process, yet many researchers would admit that these experiences form a valuable and often inevitable part of their training (Cook and Crang, 1995) :

Me: ... But, um, when we were talking, when you, there was another question about things in your local area that, say, are part of nature, um, would you ever think when you’re thinking about the area, would you think about the weather as part of your experience of the area? I remember when you wrote about the area you wrote about places and things, but not the weather. Why do you think that gets missed out?

Sharon: I don't know. ‘Cos, I suppose the weather, it’s just it comes and goes but the things in the local area just are there so, I don’t know.

Given the babbling interrogative question she is confronted with, the respondent does amazingly well to produce any kind of reasoning at all. My approach makes it clear that I, in the more powerful position, think that weather ought to be included in a definition of nature by asking why it gets ‘missed out’. This completely contradicted my reassuring comments when the questionnaire was originally being filled out that ‘there are no right or wrong answers, so just write down whatever the word [nature] means to you.’

I decided from my interpretation of the interviews, and my analysis of my own performance, that despite the fact that I had acknowledged the need to contextualise experiences of nature rather than disembedding them from everyday activity, my methodology was failing to achieve this in practice. In particular, I felt that I was leaving the realm of the everyday, the mundane, far too quickly. I was now in a position to better understand the creative approaches used in the research reviewed in

Chapter Two (using various writing and imaginative techniques) to study children's contact with nature of which I had previously been quite critical. If the aim of the research is to consider experiences and attitudes to nature specifically, then these creative exercises offer a way of entering into a 'dialogue' with children about abstract, often taken-for-granted responses and beliefs, which interviews are poorly equipped to access. It also suggests why adults are most often interviewed and asked to reflect on childhood experiences of nature; these experiences can be articulated with hindsight but are difficult for children themselves to identify in abstract terms. Although many of these researchers often provided their own analysis of the meaning of the children's work (Olwig, 1989, 1991; Hallden, 1994), perhaps they realised, or also discovered through experience, that they could not expect children to analyse their own work in this way. Nevertheless, I still had concerns about the constructs of nature and childhood that appeared to influence the kinds of analysis being made.

To summarise, piloting demonstrated that the questionnaire could be successfully implemented, and provided an overview of children's activities and material resources. However, one-to-one interviews designed to specifically explore children's experiences of nature during these activities and in the places that they went on a daily basis were a failure. Poor interview technique accounted for some of the difficulties encountered. If interviews were to continue to play a central role in my methodology, further work was required to find an appropriate style and structure for these interviews. In particular, piloting had made me more aware of the importance of how I interacted with the children. My position as adult researcher allowed me to take advantage of a more powerful position to direct the interviews. But this was to the detriment of the material that would consequently be obtained from the children; they were often unable to respond to my agenda. These issues needed to be explored more fully (see below).

However, equally significant, I discovered that 10-12 year old children could not talk about 'nature' in abstract terms; they simply did not have 'daily experiences of nature' as something that they could identify and articulate separately from their daily actions

and social interactions more widely. What was to be done? An alternative I decided to pursue, was to deal with the kind of material that children *were* capable of communicating, and to seek meaning from that source. During piloting, children were able to talk most extensively, and at ease, when asked about their interests, their friends, their clubs, their holidays, etc. Given that E.E. is about influencing behaviour, the pilot interviews suggested that children could talk about their 'daily behaviour' in a more holistic sense, revealing some of the important influences which shape this behaviour, if I allowed them to discuss their experiences in their own terms. My new research question thus shifted the focus of the research away from a specific examination of children's understanding of nature to a more holistic investigation of children's daily behaviours. In the second half of this chapter, I review the literature that enabled me to better understand how to work with children in research, and I present the new methodology that I developed to address the new focus for the research.

Getting into position

The production of knowledge is inescapably bound up with issues of power (Cook and Crang, 1995). Within feminist discourses, this awareness has raised many questions about the role or the right of the researcher to 'speak' for the 'other' (Spivak, 1990). My review of research with children (in Chapter Two) highlighted the extent that children are spoken 'about' or 'for', but are relatively seldom given a space to speak in their 'own voice' in academic research. Having realised the extent that I was equally guilty of constructing children as an 'analytic object' in the piloting of my own research, I sought to explore alternative ways of working with children.

Feminist research has been grappling with many of the issues that need to be considered in this exploration (Katz, 1994). The 'matter of who describes the world is enormously important' (Herman and Mattingly, 1998, p.9), particularly when it is another's world that the researcher is describing. Whilst it is argued, especially in relation to research

on ethnic minorities (Winchester, 1996), post-colonial (Suleri, 1992), or gay and lesbian experiences (Chouinard and Grant, 1996), that such experiences can only be 'truthfully' represented by 'insiders', the extent to which any researcher can ever entirely be an 'insider' has been queried (Mahtani, 1998; Koyabashi, 1994).²

In feminist research it is now recognised that being a woman researching 'women' does not implicitly permit the researcher to speak 'for' women, as this subjugates the role of difference in women's experiences to a unifying, politicised cause (Rose, 1997). Rather, Katz (1996) recognises her sense of discomfort in speaking for 'the other' because she occupies the space of 'betweenness', neither entirely 'outside' nor 'inside' (see Katz, 1994, p.72). The feminist project is not about representing women in more 'authentic' or 'truthful' ways, for this implies a level of objectivity which is unrealistic, particularly given the political nature of building knowledge of women's experiences.

Rather, we should recognise that the space of betweenness is a site in which we can uncover the experiences and politics of marginalized groups. Situating ourselves in a space of betweenness requires us to build a new concept of objectivity that recognises the partiality and situatedness of all knowledge (Staeheli and Lawson, 1994, p.99).

Varley (1996) argues, in the context of researching women's experiences in the 'Third World', that the fear of being seen to speak 'for' the subaltern can lead to paralysis, where the individual can neither research or say anything about anyone 'else'. To avoid this absurd position, it is recognised that while feminist research may not be able to offer entirely equal power relations in the fieldwork experience (England, 1994), it can offer a space for reflection on the ways in which researcher-researched relations construct and constitute the research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983).

Thinking about children offers a particular insight into these debates. Within *academic* research, children simply would not 'speak' - their voices would not be 'heard' if we

² Although it is also acknowledged that a sense of shared identity, however partial, can be crucial if the researcher is to gain access to particular groups of people and, once access has been achieved, can enable a relationship to develop through which the researched are more likely to share experiences with the researcher (e.g. Mahtani, 1998; Valentine, 1998).

waited for them to represent themselves. Oakley (1994) recognises this as the fundamental difference between the women's rights and children's rights movements:

Women's studies grew directly out of the political movement for women's liberation; it emerged out of the politics of experience (...) the children's rights movement is not a political movement initiated primarily by children themselves. By and large, it is adults who are making representations on behalf of children - in their 'best interests' to re-use a traditional phrase (p.20).

It is unavoidable, in children's research that adult researchers 'speak' for children to some extent, simply by expressing the importance of researching children's lives and daily experiences at all. A number of ethical questions then do need to be resolved. First, given that the choice of research methods is not a neutral one (Katz, 1983), what is the impact of choosing certain methods over others? As Rose (1997) points out, we can never entirely know how our methods affect the research. However, a greater awareness of the role of particular methods can help the researcher find ways of representing children's experiences which are closer to their own articulation of these experiences. Second, 'difference' is inevitable when an adult is researching with children (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988). But the researcher may, by her conduct and her research methods, find ways of reducing the impact of difference such that she may maximise the possibility of children sharing their worlds with her (Buckingham, 1994). For example, it may be more useful to align oneself as an independent adult, seeking a friendship (e.g. Hart, 1979) than presenting oneself as a teacher or parent figure. Nevertheless, children and adults are seldom 'friends' in the way that children are with their peers (Herman and Mattingly, 1998). Therefore, it is inevitable that a distance will always remain (Mayall, 1996). Third, in this context issues of power are complex. On the one hand, the adult researcher has it in her power to insist on a child's participation in research (e.g. by obtaining the agreement of a teacher to have all the pupils of a class undertake a particular activity). On the other hand, children can resist or subvert this position, if they choose, by providing either sparse or misleading information to the adult, who may not know better.

The fundamental question is whether the conduct of the researcher can be perceived as a more 'ethical' way of working with children? (Proctor, 1998) Children should not be seen as 'objects' of research but as participants (Hart, 1992). As England asserts:

... those who are researched should be treated like people and not as mere mines of information to be exploited by the researcher as the neutral collector of "facts" (1994, p.82).

Therefore, an 'ethical' position might be one which considers the extent to which children can choose whether or not they wish to participate in the research. Alderson, (1995), for example, recommends methods through which the children have some control over the kind and extent of information they wish to share. She adopts analytical frameworks which attempt to stay close to the ways in which the children offer meaning to their discourse, and are transparent when applying more theoretical insights or explanations (i.e. the point at which the child's insights end and the researcher's further analysis of these texts continues is clear to the reader). The reflexive approach that I have chosen to adopt, particularly for this chapter and Chapter Four, enables me to present the ways in which I have addressed all of the above questions.

[R]eflexivity is self-critical, sympathetic, introspection and the self-conscious *analytical* scrutiny of the self as researcher. Indeed reflexivity is critical to the conduct of fieldwork; it induces self-discovery and can lead to insights and new hypotheses about the research questions. A more reflexive and flexible approach to fieldwork allows the researcher to be more open to any challenges to their theoretical position that fieldwork almost inevitably raises (England, 1994, p.82).

In the final section of this chapter, I explain how I reoriented the thesis to meet my new objectives; the implementation of more ethical and participative research methods with children, and the design of a methodology that enabled a more holistic investigation of children's daily behaviours to be investigated.

Stage two: new agenda, new methodology

New children

The first development in a new methodology which emerged after piloting was the decision to carry out fieldwork in a second location. A change in the research question, from a project which considered experiences of nature specifically to one which looked at children's daily lives more holistically, meant that differences in children's material opportunities and local, physical environments became an even more important consideration when exploring children's daily behaviours. A second school, with children from a different range of family backgrounds and living in a different physical environment, would provide a different context for children's daily activities.

I decided that a village school would provide an appropriate comparative site. I made contact with a school in a small village, 50 miles from London, on the recommendation of a member of staff at UCL. I did not require an extreme situation where the residents of the village were entirely isolated from urban environments and lifestyles; it was more a case of finding a village which had a sense of place of more significance than solely being a pleasant environment to come back to at the end of a working day. Although I could have found many other locations which were considerably more isolated and 'rural' in nature than the chosen village, I decided that the village was sufficiently different to the suburban case study to offer a different context and set of resources within which children's daily experiences could be explored.

Given some of the ideological constructions of children and the role of the 'urban' and the 'rural' in these constructions (see Chapter Two), it was useful to be able to compare a village setting with that of the suburbs. Ideologically, the suburb represents the 'natural' locus of 'the family' in which the child is embedded in notions of safety, private gardens, public parks etc. (Holland, 1992). The village is the locus of childhood 'freedom' and adventure in open fields, woods, streams etc. and the child in this

context is constructed as less 'worldly' than their urban counterpart (Ward, 1988). Researching children's actual daily experiences in these two settings offered an opportunity to review and challenge these social constructions.

The two case studies differed in several ways. First, the nature of the physical environment of the village location versus a suburban environment offered a different range of local resources for the children. Second, the children in Year 7 were in their last year of primary school in the village whereas they were in the first year of secondary school in the suburban case study. Third, the primary pupils were in a stable, familiar location, although with anxieties about 12+ exams, their new schools next year, where their friends would go and how they would cope with having to make new friends and survive in an environment where there were many older children around. The secondary pupils had made that transition and, when I began my fieldwork with them at the beginning of Term 2, 1997 (see Table 2), they had already established new networks of friends and could negotiate their new school setting. Finally, the village children were much more homogeneous in terms of their ethnic identity (White British) and religious affiliation (Christian). However, the children from both areas were predominantly middle class; Ward (1988) suggests that class determines the similarities or differences between children's experiences to a greater extent than 'rural' or 'urban' environments, so maintaining a constant across one of these criteria was helpful in the analysis³.

In the early meetings that I held in the two schools, it soon became apparent that, beyond indicators of social groupings, the differences between the two cohorts of children did not appear to be as striking as might have initially been imagined. There were, however, a number of structural differences between the two schools and the

³ In a more quantitative, structural study, the number of different factors might appear to be problematic. But, in this research, I do not expect to be able to assign explanations or observations to particular socio-economic characteristics in this generalised way. Rather, where material emerges which seems to have some link to the specific characteristics of a particular child, I hoped to be able to draw from these findings in order to illustrate the ways in which some of these socio-economic factors might have a role to play in a child's network of experiences.

timetabling of the school day within which I had to operate, affecting the research experience. Specifically, it took much longer to get to know the children at the suburban school compared to the village school. This was for two main reasons. First, the time available for lunch-time meetings in the village school was substantially longer - approximately 1 hour compared to only 40 minutes in the suburban school. Second, there were also 10 more children taking part in the suburban school which meant that groups had between 2 and 4 more people in them than in the village school (groups of 10-12 compared with groups of 6-8).

New methods

Four guiding principles shaped the final methodology. First, I wanted to use techniques which facilitated the gathering of large quantities of descriptive information about the activities of children. Second, I wanted to minimise the amount of interpretation that would rely on the use of semiotics, or cognitively driven techniques to produce explanations that might not come from the children themselves. This should not be interpreted as a judgement on my part of these approaches. Rather, a number of researchers have commented on their difficulties in gaining anything other than descriptive information from children, and a variety of techniques have been used to abstract this information to a more theoretical level. I believed that I would learn something from beginning with, and remaining with, the children's own accounts as far as possible. Third, I wanted the techniques used to be enjoyable for the children who would, as a result, wish to volunteer to take part in the activities. In dealing with the general public, we would not accept that a researcher could force anyone to take part in their research. Children have often been regarded as a captive audience, and the classroom used as a laboratory (Goldson, 1997; James et al, 1998). Accepting the potential influence that it could have on my 'sample', I wanted children to choose whether or not they took part in my project and gain something, however small, from participating. Finally, I wanted to avoid structuring the methodology in such a way that it mirrored a theoretical framework too closely. In the first attempt at piloting, the

connections that I tried to make between everyday activity, attitudes and global issues were too obviously mirrored in my interview structures, and I was confining myself to the very model of environmental education that I had taken such pains to critique. Having laid a claim to a more grounded approach, I needed to ensure that the structures and boundaries that I was creating via my methodology would not act as a constraint on the kind of material I would gather.

As a result, I decided to divide the realm of childhood experience into different places, separated according to scale, proximity and regularity of contact - elements which themselves may play an important role in the ordering of a child's network. But, it is important to stress that in no way are these arenas meant to convey closed systems where the activities and discourses are confined to their separate places. The arenas I used are: *the home*; *the local area*; and *holiday experiences*. I felt that these would be easy categories for the children to understand and, if asked to take part in an exercise which focused on just one of these arenas, there would not be any doubt as to what was intended by these terms. Furthermore, dividing 'everyday experiences' into geographical zones would emphasise the contribution of multiple activities in the constitution of space and place. What I mean by this is that, had I simply asked about things to do with play, things to do with the family, things to do with clubs etc., I would not have gained any sense of how the interaction of all these facets of a child's experience interweave to constitute space and daily behaviours.

Holidays, locality, and the home

Having established the arenas which I wished to explore in greater depth, it became easier to choose from the wide range of methods used by other researchers. Certain techniques could be eliminated as unfeasible, or unlikely to aid in the collection of information on these arenas whilst others could be modified to meet my specific needs. The methods chosen for each arena are presented in Table 2, below.

Table 2. Researching holidays, locality, and the home

ARENA	METHOD	CHILDREN INVOLVED	COMMENTS
HOLIDAYS	A1 paper collage	38 suburban children attending lunch-time school meetings, in groups of 8-10. 28 village children, as above, in groups of 6-8.	Holiday experiences represented by children's choice of drawing, magazine cut-outs, computer imagery, CD ROM information, writing, photographs.
LOCALITY	1 month photo-diary	As above.	Cameras or film provided to record every place or activity beyond home and school for 1 month.
HOME	one-to-one interviews	10 children from both the suburban and village schools, interviewed for 2 hours each, in their homes.	Ethnographic interviews, based on collage and photo-diary materials, exploring areas of children's daily lives regarded as most salient by the children.

Holidays

It was likely that among the sample of children I was working with, some children would have had more holidays away than others, and some would have more experience of places abroad, yet they would all have 'holiday experiences' of some kind, regardless of whether they took place in the home area or further afield. I was more interested in the nature of these experiences than simply producing a long list of all the places they had visited. Therefore, I decided to construct an exercise based on their choice of holiday experiences. I did not specify whether or not they should be 'favourite' experiences, but expected the children to impose their own limits on how much they would communicate, and I worked on the assumption that the experiences chosen were likely to be the most salient or memorable for them. This assumption was confirmed during the school group discussions we had when the children brought in their holiday assignments.

Given that I was working with 10 to 12 year old children, it was reasonably safe to assume that the majority of them might not consider being asked to write a lengthy report or essay about these experiences as an enjoyable task (Hart, 1979; Hallden, 1994). I could not necessarily rely on the children having a photographic record of previous holiday experiences, and so, following Moore (1986), I decided that asking children to draw aspects of their holiday experiences would be the most productive technique. I also decided to be less prescriptive than Moore (1986) about what the children could include. They were encouraged to draw, but also invited to use text, computer work, magazine or brochure cuttings and photographs as means of communication. This more open approach could accommodate children with different preferences and communication skills.

Using art work in a less prescriptive way also had implications for analysis. There is a history of using children's drawings, particularly in psychology, to analyse aspects of a child's development (Thomas and Silk, 1990). Yavuzer (1995) identifies a way of categorising the nature of the drawn forms for children at different levels of cognitive development. Within clinical psychology, the dimensions of drawn figures and the colours used have also been understood as an indication of emotional state (Mearig, 1986; Lewis and Greene, 1983). However, despite a long tradition of drawings (Thomas and Silk, 1990), the interpretative power of the technique is still debated (Atkinson, 1991). As such, it is more common in contemporary clinical psychology to find drawing being used as a preparatory exercise to facilitate discussion (Thomas and Silk, 1990). Therefore, questions asked to stimulate a discussion about the children's holiday activities which were based on their collages could be couched in such a way so that they gently and informally probed the children about their experiences. Children could explain the significance of their chosen images in their own terms, creating a narrative which would include both the meaning of the image itself (Danvers, 1995) but which also formed the basis of an extended discussion of memories, activities and interactions which were associated with each occasion (Duncum, 1993).

Locality

Roger Hart (1979) used a wide range of techniques to explore children's experiences of their local area, and his methodological discussions were particularly helpful. For example, Hart went on walking tours with individual children and asked them to take a photograph of their 10 favourite places. Although many of the children enjoyed this activity, some of the younger children in his sample found it difficult to think of 10 different places to photograph. I decided that it might be more difficult to ascertain the salience of the aspects of the locality that children reported on, if they were required to be selective. Within the locality, there was likely to be far more that was taken for granted, even if it were an important part of the children's lives. As a result, I wanted to gain a more complete picture of all the activities the children engaged in within the local area initially, and then use this as a basis for further discussion to establish the relevant significance of different experiences later.

A diary of some sort offered one way of recording all local experiences, but a straightforward written diary would not appeal to many children, and it would be easy to forget to fill it in (Hart, 1979). Instead, I decided to explore the potential of photography as a way of getting children to record salient features of their local area; this technique could be adapted to record all kinds of daily activities and it would also be much more fun for the children. In fact, my desire throughout planning the fieldwork to ensure that I was offering something to the children that was fun was a more important feature than I might have first appreciated. Later on, in semi-structured interviews, seeking 'fun' and 'pleasure' was often mentioned by the children in describing their activities. Providing work for them which could fit this category of experience was a good way to maintain their enthusiasm and their willingness to help.

This also offers an important insight into the matter of research ethics. When considering the issue of unequal power relations between the researcher and researched, the question of what the researched are gaining from involvement often

arises (Varley, 1996). In my research, I demonstrate that the interaction between myself and the children can be both meaningful and less exploitative on the basis that the children were genuinely having fun by taking part. If they were not, then they would cease to attend my meetings at school and would not offer their services for a one-to-one interview. I was, therefore, obligated to ensure that my activities met their criteria for participation (and they defined their 'gains' in entirely different ways to mine), without which I would have been unable to continue my research.

Photography has been used in a variety of contexts in research with children. One common usage has already been mentioned (see Simmons, 1994 in chapter two, p.55) - the use of pre-selected photographs as a stimulus from which children can rank sites or explain preferences for different kinds of natural settings or play opportunities. However, it offers a less suitable approach for my own requirements. I am interested in children's actual activities and the local spaces they use, rather than their potential use of the space shown in a photograph. A number of researchers have asked children to take a series of photographs themselves. In practical terms children's photography (referred to as 'auto-photography' by Aitken and Wingate, 1993), like drawing exercises, can break down some of the barriers between a researcher and child. The activity can be both enjoyable and creative, putting children at greater ease than if they were engaging in discussion alone. The images themselves also offer a route into further conversation in which children may find it easier to communicate about their local activities than if they had to think about and articulate their experiences verbally without any supporting stimulus (Herman and Mattingly, 1998). Auto-photography may also be a more empowering approach, particularly if the children are free to frame and select their images in their own way (Stanley, 1996).

Aitken and Wingate (1993), researching the different local experiences of middle class, mobility-impaired and homeless children, asked the children to complete their auto-photography exercise during a single guided walk with the researchers, in a similar way to Hart (1979). They described the task by telling each child:

“We want you to describe to yourself how you see yourself in your local area. To do this we would like you to take (or have someone else take) 24 photographs so that if someone else saw your photos, they’d know about you and your local area” (Aitken and Wingate, 1993, p.67).

I decided to organise my auto-photography assignment in a different way. The children were given a one-use camera, or a film if they possessed their own camera, and were asked to take their camera everywhere they went for a month and record one thing from each place they went to, or activity they undertook⁴. When the diaries were completed, I had two sets of photographs developed so that every child could keep a set of their own images. By keeping a diary over a longer period I hoped that visits to the supermarket, a friend or a relation’s home, youth and sport club activities etc. would be included. I was also concerned that a walking tour would implicitly define what was meant by ‘locality’ in terms of how far and for how long the children were willing to walk. By letting the children keep the cameras for a length of time, they were able to define ‘locality’ in their own terms. This also provided an opportunity to see the extent to which children’s *daily* activities were facilitated or circumscribed by parents driving their children to different places. This inevitably alters the meaning of the ‘local’ for contemporary children and their experience of it. As Sibley notes:

Now, however, the locality is more likely to be experienced from the car, necessarily in the company of adults, rather than alone or in the company of other children. The car then functions as a protective capsule from which the child observes the world but does not experience it directly through encounters with others (Sibley, 1995b, p.136).

Another ramification of allowing the children to keep the photo diary in their own time was the fact that I had less control over the ways in which the images were selected. This meant that it was even more important to discuss the images with the children, for content analysis offered little potential as a helpful analytic tool (Crang and Cook, 1995).

⁴ They were also given a photo-diary sheet to record a brief description of each photo they took in case they forgot what their pictures were when they got them back, or a picture didn't come out properly, or they forgot the camera one day but could still record where they had been and what they did.

The photographs, like the collages, offered a stepping stone into an extended narrative about all kinds of places, people and activities, some of which emerged tangentially and quite unexpectedly from specific images (Berger and Mohr, 1982; Holland, 1991). This activity, therefore, not only facilitated the recording of children's local movements and activities, but also offered a window through which to hear about family relationships, joyful experiences, strong dislikes, the importance of certain peer activities, etc. In other words, the photo-diary enabled me to obtain the more holistic and detailed descriptions of children's everyday lives that I was seeking. By starting with an exercise produced by the child, albeit within some parameters, I was in a better position to explore their world from their starting place.

Home

In dealing with activities at home, I believed that, just as holiday experiences from the past could be retold, and daily activities in the local area could be recorded, so home activities could be demonstrated and discussed when actually located in the home, with access to the spaces and facilities that were used at home. In keeping with the hierarchy discussed earlier, relating to scale, proximity, salience and the ability to comment on the mundane, the home represents a zone where activities are repeated the most regularly.

The photo exercise may have been quite appropriate to gain this kind of information about daily home life⁵. However, at the design stage, I had believed that a different approach might be required for the home, and hoped that my presence in it would permit me to be more flexible when determining how the children would communicate about home activities. As a result, I kept the design of this stage of the research relatively unstructured. Initially, I considered asking the children to give me a tour round the house with a microphone in their hands. I decided against this in the end as I

⁵ In fact, many children did record home activities in their photo diaries, often a reflection on the lack of activities and places visited beyond the home during the assignment.

believed that it would intimidate some children and would inevitably lead to an overemphasis on home artefacts rather than processes and activities (Hart, 1979). This is because an activity which focused specifically on what children did in each room of the house would be more likely to result in children talking about their transactions with specific spaces or objects. Instead, I hoped to gain an understanding of their activities within the home contextualised within the family and peer networks which would emerge from the other exercises, enabling these human relationships to be incorporated into my analysis. I had also considered the possibility of drawing out the home space and mapping activities and important objects onto this (Moore, 1986), but decided that this would probably be too abstract and a constraining rather than illuminating technique. The key issue was finding a way to talk about immediate and everyday things so that it did not feel strange or artificial to the child.

During piloting I observed that whilst the discussions remained at a level, and on terms, that the children felt comfortable with, our meeting maintained a more informal and relaxed feel. It is possible that some depth of material may have been sacrificed in order to keep the interviewee at ease with the process. However, it is my belief that, in fact, had I tried to pursue topics to gain greater analysis and depth, my interviewee is more likely to have spoken far less about anything (as I experienced whilst piloting when my interview technique was far poorer), and the overall outcome would have been disappointing.

There is relatively little literature which offers advice to the researcher on interview technique when working with children. Greenspan and Greenspan (1991), discussing the conduct of clinical interviews, suggest that unstructured interviews are best because they reduce the possibility that the interviewer is 'contaminating' their analysis of the situation by imposing their own structure on the conversation. However, this is based on the assumption that '... the less you intrude, the more the child will tell you' (p. 148). In fact, this is not always the case. Fine and Sandstrom (1988) note that children expect an adult to take the lead in any interaction and it is possible that too conscious

an attempt to leave the way clear for the child to lead the direction of the discussion will make a child uncomfortable and uncertain about what is expected of them. Foddy (1993) also makes this observation, noting that few research guides consider the ways in which a '... respondent's perceptions of the way the researcher sees them will influence their answers' (p.21). However, there is some agreement that interviewing children in the home environment can be helpful in putting children at greater ease (Barker, 1990) and will also mean that items which the child may wish to refer to will be close to hand (Cook and Crang, 1995).

My final solution for this phase of the research was to see the interview about the home as an extension of the interview which referred back to the child's collage and photos, in an informal conversation, drawing on artefacts and rooms in the house where relevant. Sometimes these discussions would begin naturally as an extension of other activities or people that we had discussed in relation to the photographs or collage, but on other occasions I would need to initiate conversation about the home. In the latter case, I would often begin by asking the child if they wished to show me their room. Children were quite happy, and often extremely enthusiastic to show me their rooms, things they collected or made, their pets, their gardens, videos, and so on. Further discussion of my actual experience of carrying out this phase of the research is presented in Chapter Four.

Conclusion

One of the primary concerns of this methodology was whether it would facilitate the collection of sufficient quantities of rich material which went beyond the somewhat superficial descriptive data that some researchers claimed to have been limited to (Hart, 1979; Moore, 1986). It appears that the methodology was successful on a number of levels; as a way of gaining children's interest, trust and co-operation; as a means of facilitating their ability to talk at length on areas of relevance; as a means of generating different kinds of material (visual, artistic, quantitative and verbal/qualitative) which

might enable a fuller, richer analysis drawing on a number of different, complimentary approaches. Finally, it would appear that if children are given the space to talk about their experiences in their own way that the researcher can have faith that these will illuminate and suggest more abstract, theoretical and applied findings without always needing to tightly structure a lesson-based activity, or repeat tests to generate findings. In the next chapter I demonstrate how these different methods were implemented and the ways in which researcher-child interactions constituted the research process and generated research material, and the means by which I dealt with the analysis of these materials.

CHAPTER 4: REFLECTING ON FIELDWORK

Introduction

In this second methodological chapter I offer some reflections on my experiences of being in the field. Qualitative geographical research with children is still relatively new and, aside from Roger Hart's classic work of 1979, there are very few sources which provide a detailed account of how to do research with children. Therefore my aim in this chapter is to provide a narrative of my own experiences and, by so doing, also offer insights for further methodological developments in future research with children. I will discuss my interactions with the children who participated in the research, and present detailed reflections on the design and implementation of the different 'research assignments' (the collage, the photo-diary, and the interviews). Finally, I will explain how I decided to analyse the fieldwork materials.

Establishing contact with the children

My initial contact with the children in both schools took place in a very formal context. The children met me during a school lesson period, where I introduced the project. I explained that it had been a long time since anyone had really looked at the everyday things that children liked to do and places they liked to go. I also suggested that it was important that people who planned local facilities and those who decided what kinds of things children should learn about in their classes at school had a better idea of what children today really like and why they do particular things. The children were then asked if they would like to help with this project. In almost every class, the question was greeted with an enthusiastic 'yes!' as opposed to silence or indifference, and many children were genuinely interested in the task. This is clearly evidenced by the fact that approximately three-quarters of the children in every class provided their home contact details voluntarily at the end of the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) to indicate that they would like to be further involved with the project.

Although the school work on offer as an alternative was clearly not an attractive option, the children were *invited* to fill out the questionnaire (i.e. they opted *in*), rather than being told that this was *the* lesson activity from which they would have to opt *out* if they truly objected. To some extent, despite my critique earlier of the research tradition of using the classroom as laboratory, initiating my fieldwork with a classroom-based questionnaire is part of that tradition. The extent to which the children would really perceive themselves as having a choice (who would want to be the odd one out?) is questionable, but it was difficult to find an alternative approach within the specific curriculum time slots that the teachers offered me in which I had to address the whole class together. The information that I provided about the project itself and the opportunity, however unattractive, of not participating, did put the children in a slightly greater position of power.

Initially, I had some concerns that the formal way that the children had to fill in their questionnaires might put them off being further involved in the project. However, during piloting I had found that this level of formality did not seem to dampen their enthusiasm for volunteering for further activities. The children were asked to work silently and move from question to question, as I introduced each one. They were informed at the beginning that there were no 'correct' answers - I just wanted to learn about their own experiences and activities. They were also promised that their answers would be kept confidential, although I found it necessary to remind one or two of the class teachers of this fact when they attempted to walk around the room and observe the children at work.

At the end of the questionnaire I explained that, by providing their address details, each child would be invited to take part in further activities which we would do very differently. We would have a chance to get to know each other better, talk, draw and maybe do some photography. It became apparent from some of the references children made later in the fieldwork phase about our meetings that they regarded the project like a club; a number of children in the secondary school even referred to it as 'the Geography club'.

Recruiting children for the next stages of the research was designed to achieve several aims. It was important that children understood something about the purpose of the project and the extent of their role in it; it was not acceptable to simply inform them of the specific activities they would be engaged in, in the hope that these would entice them. The timetable of the research was also made clear, so that the children would understand that lunch-breaks would be used and a small amount of extra work at home would be required. It was important that the children realise they could control the extent of their involvement at all times; they were told they could end their involvement in the research whenever they wanted, i.e. there was no obligation to take part in everything once they had started. Finally, they were invited to contact me to talk about the project if they had any questions before signing up for the first meeting. All of this information was included in a letter addressed to the children and sent to their home address (see Appendix 2b) and re-iterated during school group meetings.

The provision of this information established an open, democratic approach to the researcher-researched relationship from the beginning of the main fieldwork phase. The information I provided was an honest review of what would be required, emphasising an element of commitment (in terms of time) as well as choice. There was no 'propaganda' in the initial letter inviting them to take part in the next stages, primarily because it would not be appropriate for the relationship I was trying to develop and the assignments were attractive enough without requiring a hard sell.

In the suburban secondary school 80 children originally indicated an interest in finding out about the next stages at the end of their questionnaire, and I could not realistically have greater than 35-40 children participating in the drawing and photography assignments. This was because I needed to complete the schools-based part of the project within one term; could only hold group meetings during four lunch-breaks a week; and did not want to have more than 10 children in any group. The cost of running the photography assignment was also a limiting factor. I expected that a number of children would not be tempted by the requirement to

give up some breaks and the need to do some work at home, while others would not be pro-active enough to fill in their reply slips and return them to me (see Appendix 2b). Therefore, I hoped that the children would eliminate themselves, saving me from having to be selective, although the children were informed that if more than 40 applied, I would have to select. There was no way to predict the outcome, but the balance of pros and cons presented in the letter inviting them to become involved in the next phase did have the desired effect; 38 children from the secondary school replied positively to the letter.

This outcome might appear to be an inappropriate way of ensuring that the widest cross-section of pupils possible took part in the research, in terms of the children's personalities, academic abilities, etc. However, given that no child would be forced to participate, it was far better to recruit enthusiastic and willing assistants from the beginning rather than have high drop-out rates during the project. High drop-out rates would make it difficult to manage and plan for group meetings, and would have a negative impact on group coherence and my desire to create a relatively informal, friendly atmosphere.

At the same time that the children were being contacted to ask if they would attend the first group meeting, their parents were also informed about the project. In the village school, I sent out separate letters to the parents which included a tear-off slip with their authorisation for their child's participation and confirmation of whether they had access to a camera (otherwise I would provide one) (see Appendix 2c). The children were informed that I would do this in their own letters.

It was not really a requirement of the research to have a parent's authorisation for children to take part in this stage of the project, but it was advisable in the long term. Children would be completing their drawing exercise at home, and would be spending several weeks trying to remember to take photographs of the places they went. Parents needed to know what these activities were for, and my written explanation would be beneficial for this purpose. Furthermore, if they were aware

of their children's assignments, some parents might help to remind children to take their cameras out, thus assisting in the monitoring of the project's progress at times when I could not maintain any control. Finally, keeping parents informed about the project at every stage was helpful when I contacted a number of them several weeks later to ask their permission to interview their child at home. At that point I could update them on the progress their children had made, my appreciation of the work they had produced and remind them of the purpose of the research (see Appendix 2d). In this way, my request gained greater legitimacy, reinforced by my presence in the schools and the children's contact with me over several weeks.

Although the questionnaires were filled in at both schools within weeks of each other during the first (autumn) term of school, 1996, the following phase of the fieldwork (school group meetings) took place at different times. I worked at the village primary school first, during the remainder of the autumn term and first few weeks of the spring term, and then repeated this phase at the suburban secondary school during the remainder of the spring term. The schedule of work was very tight; it was important to try and restrict my work with the children to two terms as it was not practical to continue with them during their summer, exam term and maintaining consistent contact over the summer holidays, with many children away or involved in other activities, would have been difficult and unpredictable. In addition, many of the children in the village school were moving to a range of different secondary schools in the following autumn.

There was some overlap in the fieldwork carried out at the two sites; the village children were being interviewed in their homes during the spring half term whilst the suburban children were engaged in their photographic diary assignment. This latter group of children were interviewed at home during the Easter holidays. The impact of this schedule on the research is most noticeable in the photographic assignments. Many children from the village school had family gatherings and Christmas celebrations recorded in their diaries, whereas the suburban group were beginning to spend a little more time outdoors, with the better weather. This seasonality did not have any impact on the core of the research material, due to the

way in which the photographs were being used during the interviews. This will be discussed in further detail later. However, by confirming the ability of the research methods to function successfully even with some differences in the photographic assignment, the fieldwork also confirmed that nothing was lost by ending the fieldwork before the Summer holidays except a visual record of their Summer activities and places which children described in such detail during their interviews.

The extent of children's participation

The children at both schools met in a classroom during lunch breaks, allowing a short time for them to eat lunch before the meeting. At the village primary school, meetings took place from Tuesday-Friday inclusive, with between six and nine children in each of the meetings. The children had been divided according to the days on which they did not have another lunch time activity to attend and all of the groups were mixed gender. A total of 28 children attended the first set of meetings. Children were reminded that it was not compulsory for them to stay with the project all the way through if they did not want to. By the final meeting, 22 children were still participating and 18 of these signed up to indicate their willingness to be interviewed at home. At the suburban secondary school, 35 children attended the first meeting and 26 were still participating by the final meeting. Of these, 21 signed up to be interviewed at home.

There were a variety of reasons for the decrease in numbers. Some children decided after the introductory meeting that the project was not something that they wished to do. Five children made this decision, all of whom were boys. I did not chase them up to find out their precise reasons for leaving, so it is possible that a number, if not all of these actually fell into a second category of drop-outs. Many of the boys regularly played football with their friends in the playground every break. Either due to forgetfulness, or the greater desire to continue this activity, a number of boys decided that they no longer wished to give up their lunch breaks for the project, even though it was only once a week. As a result, by the final week I had lost a further 3 boys from the suburban school. Finally, there were a

number of children who were generally interested in the project but who did not complete their assignments. A number of children who fell into this category still continued to come and even reached interview stage, although I had to conduct the interview without their collage as a resource and sometimes with only a very limited set of photos. A further 3 children from the suburban school probably fell into this category. At the suburban secondary school, 24 of the participants were female and 11 were male at the beginning of the school meetings. By the last school meeting 20 females and 6 males still remained. In the village primary school, 19 of the participants were female and 9 were male at the beginning, with all 19 females and only 3 males still attending the last school meeting.

I was aiming to interview approximately 10 children in each location, for a single in-depth 2 hour interview, in the final stage. As gender is definitely a key defining characteristic in the activities and behaviours of the children, it might have been preferable to have 5 boys and 5 girls from each location at that stage. This would have offered the possibility of a range of different personalities and stories, equally derived from children of both gender. In fact, I interviewed 4 boys from the suburban school and 3 from the village school. I decided to accept the selection of children who presented themselves to me, even though the gender balance was uneven. Clearly, with only 10 children from each location, I was not seeking a comprehensive set of stories about children's lives. Rather, as has been discussed earlier, it is the way in which these stories emerge and some of the primary influences which shape them that are of interest. The exploration of these factors across a number of differing individuals suggests that the lack of exactly equal numbers of boys and girls at the interview stage is not relevant to the success of the research.

The self-selection of the children for the research process does raise questions about the missing stories. There is a remarkable range of personalities and stories to be heard amongst those who did volunteer, so their self-selection has not limited my research to one 'type' by any means. However, it is not known whether a range of personalities were excluded from the research by this process of selection.

Ultimately, whether this is the case or not, without repeating the research using a different set of recruitment techniques, recruiting in a different range of places, or using less democratic means of maintaining the children's participation, this is an unsolvable dilemma. The same questions could be asked of any research which requests public participation, for example administering a questionnaire by telephone or on the street, recruiting adults for focus groups, or writing to managing directors to request interviews. There is an expectation that the 'laboratory conditions' can be better controlled when working with children, but one of the primary aims of this research methodology has been to emphasise the unacceptability of this approach to researching children.

Introducing the school group activities

The children at both schools had a total of 3 fieldwork meetings:

1. Introduction, ice-breaker, administration, handing out assignment 1 - the collage.
2. Presentation and discussion of holiday collages, handing out assignment 2 - photo diary.
3. Review of photos, update of diary sheets, presentation to the group, introduce home interview phase, school group work closure.

The first group activity was intended to create a relaxed atmosphere, encourage the children to talk freely, help us to begin to get to know each other and finally to introduce the first assignment. I had prepared name badges for everyone, including myself, with first names only. We chatted informally about school, teachers, lunch and anything else which happened to come up in general conversation whilst the badges were being handed round. I then provided the children with an introduction to the project. My intention was to ensure that they understood the 'ground-rules' for our group work and the overall purpose of the research project.

Basic ground-rules included:

1. They were 'Assistant Researchers' on the project. Therefore, all of their ideas and contributions were important, and they should say whatever they wanted about the project or their work, including making suggestions for improvements, or telling me when something wasn't very good.
2. They did not have to put their hands up to speak, but should try and speak one at a time and listen to each other.
3. They had to call me by my first name - I wasn't a teacher and I would not be telling their teachers or their parents about anything they did or said in our groups; it would all be confidential (in fact, many of the secondary school children found it quite difficult to call me anything except 'Miss' during the group meetings, although this barrier was finally broken down by the last group meeting).
4. They did not have to continue with the project if they did not want to. However, they could not just join in for bits of the project later (such as the photographic project) if they had not been there for the previous meetings.

The term 'Assistant Researcher' was used seriously. I explained that the research could not take place without their help, and that no-one could really know what children of their age liked to do or where they went except them. As they had not really thought about these subjects in a project before, they were helping to do the actual research via their assignments and interviews, even though it was mainly by thinking about their own lives. At the end of the first meeting everyone received a printed certificate stating that they had completed the training required to become an Assistant Researcher on the Children's Environments Project (see Appendix 3a).

The 'training' was also a little more than just attending the first meeting. We discussed what the children knew about the project on the basis of the questionnaire. They had remembered that it asked questions about what they did in their spare time out of school, but did not really understand what the purpose

was. My explanation included the idea of gathering up-to-date information about what people their age did, understanding what places they use for their activities, and mentioning why teachers and other adults who plan activities for children might find that information useful. After the introduction I explained that we would spend some time thinking about how to do this kind of research. The children were asked; *'If you were designing a project to find out what people your age like to do and where you go, how would you do it?'* With some questioning and facilitation from me, the children from both schools began to think about a wide range of issues related to the research process. We discussed why we might find out different things depending on whether we went to children, parents or teachers for information:

Me: Do you think if I asked teachers, compared to me asking you, same or different information?

Everyone: Different.

Me: I wonder why it would be different?

A: They might think that you like something that you don't.

L: Different ideas about what you like compared to what you do like.

Me:... I wonder where do they get these ideas from?

R: Parents evenings when your parents talk to them.

(... general chatter about what parents know)

Me:... So does that mean that your parents also sometimes have different things to say about that to you?

Several: Mmm, yes.

(... several comments about parents not knowing everything)

R: They take care of you.

(... general agreement that parents do know some things about what their children do)

C: They might not say anything, 'cos you're just getting bored at home.

(... The group go on to discuss the clubs and sports that their parents take them to, which they would know about).

Me: What stuff might go on that they don't know about?

L: They don't know what you do when you go out with friends.

S: What you do inside your bedroom.

[Group 2, Meeting 1, village school]

The groups decided that you would get most information by talking to everyone, but that talking to children would probably provide the most accurate information. We then started discussing different ways of getting the information. During these discussions we covered the pros and cons of interviewing, writing, and also tried to

think of other kinds of activities like watching people, drawing, filming and photographs which could help.

Me:... If you were the person in charge of the project, what kinds of ways might you use to try and find things out?

H: Photos.

Me: Photos. Yes. How might you use them?

H: Well you could, like, take photos of people you are out with out of school time. Things you were doing.

...

R: You could get people to write about how they felt about different things around them. Find out what they did in their spare time.

Me: A bit like a diary?

R: Yeh, something like that.

[Group 1, Meeting 1, village school]

The children also suggested drawing pictures of activities, keeping a diary, writing letters about what they had done, spying on people (observation) and making a film. In our discussion of the pros and cons of each activity, the following key points were raised by the children:

Table 3: Children's methodologies

ACTIVITY	PROS	CONS
Writing	Detailed.	Boring, some people find it difficult, might stop before everything had been written down. Might not be able to read handwriting.
Drawing	Fun, lots of detail.	Not everyone can draw.
Photos	Fun, can record all the places you go.	Cost.
Observation	See things happening.	People might not like being watched. You might not understand what you see.
Film	Fun, interesting.	Need equipment and expertise. Cost.

Finally, we discussed the best way to approach people e.g. how you can encourage people to talk to you, whether you should try to force them etc.:

Me: R made a very good point that people might not want to tell you anything... how might you encourage them to want to talk to you? Are there good ways of doing that?

L: You could ask them.

C: Tell them who you are.

S: You could tell them about what you want to find out and then tell them about yourself.

...

V: You can tell them without saying that they have to answer.

Me: So they're making the decision.

R: You can get a shotgun!

Me: That sounds a little bit too forceful!!

[Group 2, Meeting 1, village school]

Me: Do you think there might be ways to get over that, to make people feel more comfortable [about discussing what they do]?

R: I think you have to get to know a person first.

H: Don't act like you're being nosy. Act like you're being casual and don't make it sound like a question.

R: Don't try to force them into telling you anything they don't want to tell you. Just make it feel like it's their choice and they don't have to talk about things they don't want to talk about.

Me: Mmm. Sounds like very good advice. So it becomes more like a casual conversation?

R: Yeh.

[Group 1, Meeting 1, village school]

Therefore, the 'training' session not only helped the children to think about what the project was and how it would work. It was also very educational for me as the researcher. The children discussed many of the issues that I had been grappling with for 8 months, in my search for an appropriate set of methodologies.

As a result of these discussions it became clear that the assignments that I had chosen closely matched the children's preferences for something enjoyable, yet were also good methods in their own right for gathering information, and practical in terms of equipment and cost. They could understand the purpose of the collage and photo-diary assignments which formed the first stages of the in-depth phase of the research. Had our discussions produced an entirely different set of outcomes I would have had to reconsider my assignments and research methods, not only in

order to be truly responsive to the children's advice but also because I would have expected a much larger drop-out rate if I had insisted in setting tasks which had been viewed as unpopular. By allowing the children to choose the extent of their participation I also needed to ensure that the activities offered them something that they would wish to take part in. This approach helps to balance the power relation between the researcher and the researched to some extent.

Setting the assignments

Assignment 1: the collage

Assignment 1 asked the children to produce a collage on an A1 sheet of paper about their holiday experiences (see Appendix 3b). Although the assignment sheet they were given was quite detailed in explaining the task and providing examples of the kinds of things they might want to include, I was concerned that simply talking them through the sheet might not be enough to give them the confidence once they were at home by themselves to create the collage. The assignment sheet did encourage the children to show the instructions to their parents if they were unsure, or give me a telephone call if they wanted to check on something, but my experience of working with this age group in a Sunday school context suggested that I needed to give fairly clear guidance for the first project. It was most important that children did not feel worried about whether they were doing the right thing, as I suspected that many children would tend to opt out, if given the opportunity, rather than doing something like telephoning a researcher for clarification, which takes considerable courage. I decided to make a very quick presentation on assignment 1, with my own collage as an example. Because I was aware that this might have an influence on the kind of collages that the children would produce, I took great pains to repeat that they could arrange their collage in completely different orders, use completely different materials and include completely different subject matters (with examples).

However, my collage gave them an opportunity to see how doing the drawing was helpful to record, and subsequently talk about, what was important when we went on holiday, and how arranging the collage and the materials could also say something about what we liked. My collage contained about six different places, and I tried to use a variety of materials - crayon, chalks, paints, pencil, felt-tip pens. It was drawn very roughly to emphasise that they did not need to be good at art to make a collage or take a lot of time over it (mine took me about 1 hour to complete).

It is clear from the wide range of style and content in the children's collages that I had judged the potential effect of presenting my own collage well; there was no evidence of anyone trying to imitate my collage, and each child presented their collage to the group in an individual way. By presenting my own collage to the children the week before they brought their completed collages into school, I also demonstrated what was meant by a 'presentation'; simply an informal chat to explain what all the pictures were about. This also helped to make the children feel at ease, as they knew what 'presenting their collage to the group' meant. Again, my teaching experience had suggested that, for many children, fear of speaking out or responding to a request is often primarily due to a fear of getting it wrong. Reassurances throughout the project work that there was no 'right' and 'wrong', in addition to the working examples that they could refer to, helped enormously in the process of putting children at ease, simultaneously putting them on a more even level with me as the researcher (i.e. I was not the 'all-knowing' adult who made judgements about whether they were correct or whether the quality of their work was up to scratch).

The assignment sheet was carefully designed to achieve the following:

1. An extensive list of all the kinds of activities which might come under the subject 'holiday'.
2. A list of all the kinds of elements that could be included, e.g. drawings, writing, photos, magazines.
3. Advice on the range of layout possibilities.

4. Reassurance about making 'mistakes' or requiring further help.

The actual layout of the instruction sheet was also designed to look both 'friendly' and fun ('Wild West' style font and bullet points), but also with some degree of formality, i.e. a real research 'assignment'.

Before the end of our first meeting, the children could ask any questions about the assignment. In most groups they required little further clarification, but instead would start to talk about their experiences, or ask me questions about my holidays that I had presented. This was a helpful conversation; I could offer them encouragement to include ideas that they already had for their collages, and the fact that my presentation generated questions boded well for the group activity at the next meeting, where I hoped they would want to ask questions about each other's work.

In all of the groups there were some children who spoke far more than others. One or two children did not say a single word during the first meeting. I was aware of these dynamics but did nothing to try and change them. In most cases, the quiet children were always quiet in school and highlighting their lack of contribution, even by trying to encourage them to say what they thought, would most likely have embarrassed them and made them ill at ease. These children were equally eager to participate in the project, but chose when to speak themselves. By the time we reached our last group meeting, no-one was silent, and some of the quietest members of the group still volunteered to take part in the individual interviews, where they were willing to speak to me at some length.

On arrival at their week 2 meetings, most children had completed their collages. A small number had not, particularly at the secondary school, but some still returned for the project work. These children were still included in the group activity, but were asked if they could think of holiday experiences that they would have included if they had done the collage. After several other children had presented their work, those without collages were usually quite able to join in the activity,

even without their pictures to display. It was important to include these children, providing they still showed willingness to be part of the project. In one particular case a child did not produce a collage and only produced four photographs in the next assignment, yet his interview was as rich as any of the others, and the child really enjoyed having an adult to give him attention via the project (see extensive analysis of 'Leon' in chapters six and seven). He did not have a very good work discipline, and was unlikely to spend time on a drawing, or be good at remembering to take his camera out with him. Yet, having a personality that did not best suit my research assignments did not make him unsuitable for participation in the research. Therefore, making it clear that I was happy with his contributions, and wanted him to be involved, was particularly important in his case. Once we were working on a one-to-one basis, I could be much more responsive to his individual needs and the means by which I could gain more information about his life.

When the children arrived, we laid out all the collages on the tables around the room. They were encouraged to go round and have a look at each other's work, which they were eager to do anyway. I allowed about 5 minutes for the children to wander round and feel comfortable asking each other about their drawings. I would then go to the table with the largest number of children already gathered round it and ask all of the children to join us. I would ask whose picture we were looking at and then ask that child to begin by saying something like: *'Well, as we've all gathered round this table, would you like to tell us a bit about what you've put on your collage?'* Care was taken to ensure that we did not gather around the collage of the shyest member of the group first. There was only one instance where a child did not wish to speak when it was their turn to present. In that instance, I encouraged everyone else to take a good look at what was in the collage, and I made a few observations out loud. Some of the children followed my lead and asked the child a couple of questions about things that they saw. She began to answer some of her friends - the people she would usually be happy to talk to in a more private setting. This was a valuable process; although we did not gain much information from her about her holidays that week, when we met over a

month later at the last group meeting, she had gained the confidence to take her turn at presenting (her photos) and wanted me to come home to interview her.

Once all the children had presented their collages and discussed them with the group, I asked their permission to keep them, but arranged to return any photographs that they had included, once I had photocopied them. No-one objected to this request; most children responded very positively to my efforts throughout the project work to make it clear how much I valued what they had produced. I also remarked on how much we had already learnt about all the different kinds of things they enjoyed about holidays. At the end of the meeting I introduced the second assignment - the photographic diary.

Assignment 2: the photo-diary

The photographic assignment was introduced with another assignment sheet, using the same format as the collage assignment sheet (see Appendix 3b). In this instance I did not bring in any photographs to provide examples; the children already had a sense of the style of the project and a little more confidence to carry out the assignments in whatever way they wanted. I was aware that, in not providing any 'training' on a particular way to carry out the photographic diary project, the children's photographs were likely to reflect the conventions of taking family and holiday snaps (Cook and Crang, 1995; Holland, 1991; Wallden, 1990). This had, in fact, also been true of the collages, where many representations of holiday experiences and distant places reflected conventions of holiday images, place promotion and symbols of nation and identity. I discuss the implications of this for analysis later in this chapter.

The assignment was discussed, the children asked questions for clarification and the cameras and films were distributed, along with the photo diary sheets. I was concerned that the children might not remember where they had been when they took all of their photographs, so I had suggested that when they got home after having taken a photo they should try to write one line to describe the photograph,

where they were and who they were with. The primary school children tended to follow instructions very precisely, whereas many of the secondary school children either forgot to keep the written record up-to-date or were more interested in the informal, activity-focused side of the research and tended to disregard the more formal side of the work. As a result, many of them filled in their diaries in retrospect, during the final meeting once they had the developed photographs in front of them. They did not seem to have any difficulty remembering where the photographs were taken, so my concern was probably unwarranted. However, the diary sheets were a helpful record to ensure that I did not get confused several months later when I needed to match the images up with the children's interview accounts of their activities.

After this second meeting, I did not meet with the children at either school for approximately 4-5 weeks. I contacted them again via the schools when I wanted to arrange to collect the films. This arrangement went very smoothly at the primary school, where nearly all the children brought in their equipment with their diary sheets on the assigned day. Those who were away or who forgot were responsible for arranging the development of the film themselves, and were reimbursed for the cost of doing this.

At the secondary school, miscommunication of my instructions amongst secretarial and teaching staff caused considerable confusion. On the day that I had arranged to collect the equipment I discovered that the office had not communicated the message to the teachers. I allowed another few days and then discovered that many teachers had given the children incorrect information about where to hand in their equipment - some handed it into the school office as requested, some gave it into the Geography department, and others were concerned about leaving it in the wrong place and did not hand it in at all. Finally, they were not properly informed that they were to hand in their film even if it wasn't completely finished. After allowing another few days to redistribute the message again, and emphasising to the teachers the importance of communicating all of the instructions to their students, I finally received about two-thirds of the equipment. A further three or

four children produced their films for me later once they had completed them, and 3 were never returned. In each case, my instructions were faxed to the school and were very precise.

This series of events is not explained in such detail here simply to illustrate the importance of administration in the fieldwork process. During these difficulties, I received comments from the teachers about the unreliability of the children, the probability that they had completely forgotten about the project and had not done anything over the last few weeks, and their inability to follow simple instructions. Clearly, when I eventually discovered the nature of the difficulties, the children were not the cause, and many were quite concerned that they were missing out by not knowing exactly what they were to do with their film. It is these small yet significant events that help to illustrate the ways in which children are constructed within a specific arena, and the ways in which that may impact on their learning environment.

When the children returned for their final group meetings, they were presented with their photographs. They were given about 20 minutes in which to look through their photographs whilst they worked on numbering their pictures and matching this with their photo diary sheets. I wanted to allow a space for the children to present to the group again, primarily as a way to value all of their work (as this would be the only opportunity for those children who would not be interviewed to present their photo diaries), but the process also contributed to the confidence building which was clearly necessary and slowly developing amongst some of the children. It was during this final meeting that one or two children who had spoken very little in earlier sessions began to speak voluntarily and at some length in the presentation of their work.

There was insufficient time for the children to present their entire set of photographs, but each child selected between 4 and 6 photographs which were their favourites to show round the group. It was interesting that, whilst children dismissed photographs which were complete 'mistakes' or which had not come out

properly, many children chose pictures which depicted memorable events, such as a trip or a party, rather than selecting the 'best' photographs in aesthetic terms. This was my first opportunity to observe that the assignment had been successful - its aim was to provide a means of launching into a discussion of children's activities, and the children wanted to talk about the activities rather than the things seen in the pictures.

After the presentations, some kind of closure for the group phase of the project was required. This differed between the two schools, as the follow-ups were not identical. Taking the village school first, children signed up during the meeting if they were interested in a home interview and I then wrote to their parents (see Appendix 2d) providing them with an update on what their children had been doing for the project and what I wished to do with them at home, seeking their permission to conduct an interview. I telephoned these parents about a week after sending out the letter, and received only one refusal, on the basis of the lack of time available during the Spring half-term holiday.

All of the children were invited to meet me again at school during a week of lunch meetings after the half-term break interviews in order to help produce a large collage of their project work to be displayed in the school hall. I had not originally planned for this, but one of the children had suggested it, and the Headmaster supported the idea. During that final week, approximately two-thirds of the group who had been involved throughout the project came to work on the collage. In our first meeting, we brainstormed on all the different categories of activities that our work could fit into for the holiday, local area and home themes. The children generated most of these categories and then thought of their own examples of things that they had done which fitted two or three categories and, between them, they presented them all on the collage. In addition, I had transcribed the school group meetings where they had discussed their holiday and local activities by presenting their collages and photos. I offered each child the excerpt where they had presented their work and many of them selected quotes to accompany their pictures. After being displayed at school for a full half term, I collected the collage

and it was displayed at the 1997 Geographical Association conference, held at the Institute of Education, University of London. The children had been informed that their work would be shown there.

The children at the secondary school had been told about the home interviews via a letter sent to their home address whilst the films were being developed from the photo diary assignments. A second letter addressed to the parents was enclosed and the child was requested to hand their parents the second letter if they were interested in being interviewed. There was a slip at the bottom of the child's letter for the parent to sign if they were willing for an interview to take place in the home.

Although there was no final activity arranged for the children at the secondary school, they had all been promised that their contribution to the research project would be written up and they would be provided with something to put in their school Record of Achievement, a scheme which the school encouraged as a means of recording extra-curricular activities which the children had been involved in during their time at the school. Every child who had been involved in any part of the group meetings and/or interviews received a certificate which acknowledged their contribution as an Assistant Researcher on the Children's Environments Project. The certificate included information on what the project had been about and what activities the children had been involved in. These were posted to the children with a covering 'thank you' letter shortly after the interviews had been completed during the Easter holiday (see Appendix 3c). Therefore, closure at the two sites was quite different, attempting to respond to the needs and requests of the children who had been involved in the project.

Home activities: Conducting the interviews

The final phase of the project consisted of conducting the in-depth interviews with individual children in their homes. When I made the initial 'phone-calls to arrange these meetings, I always requested to speak with the children themselves first, in

order to check that they were still happy for me to come and talk to them. On two occasions the children were uncertain and I suggested that they think about it and could call me back if they wanted to be interviewed, but that I would call again in a few days to find out what decision they had made (I did not want the thought of having to telephone me to be the factor which prevented them from plucking up the courage to meet me). Both of these children (both were at the secondary school) decided that they would not be interviewed. I suspect that this was primarily due to their apprehension of having to speak to me by themselves but, having attempted to be as approachable and informal as possible during group meetings and over the telephone, I did not feel that I could or should do any more to persuade them to participate. With other children who were shy and quiet, their desire to tell me about their lives and continue to participate in the project, hopefully facilitated by the way in which I had conducted our meetings to date, helped them to overcome their fears of having to talk at length to me.

Once I had confirmed that a child still wished to be interviewed, I asked them who I should arrange the meeting with and in all instances they passed me on to a parent - usually their mother. In all cases, parents arranged for me to interview their children when an adult was at home; usually this was a parent, but in some households it was a grandmother.

Although I had practised and reviewed my interview technique during piloting, I had not conducted an interview which incorporated the final focus of the research, i.e. everyday activities (the pilot interviews had tried to explore contact with nature far more) until this point. I felt more confident about conducting an interview in a way which could be more child-directed and informal, but I was uncertain whether talking for a long period of time would be the means by which all children would prefer to express themselves. Therefore, during the first week of interviews I always carried a flipchart pad with me to allow for possible alternatives. Primarily, I wanted children to have the opportunity to describe their activities and use of their home with drawings and mappings, if it helped them to communicate with me.

In the first two interviews I conducted I asked the children whether they would prefer to chat about things they did at home, or whether it would be easier to draw some things out. Both of these children wanted to talk. After a number of interviews, although the flipchart was still at hand, it became clear that I was able to talk with the children and most seemed to be relatively at ease doing so. In fact, once I tried to do anything that was perceived as a less 'natural' form of interaction the children became more aware of the research process and less relaxed. Drawing experiences on large sheets of paper in the presence of the researcher would not have been perceived as 'normal' one-to-one interaction. However, chatting about photo collections, explaining a drawing that had already been produced (the collage) and chatting about home and other experiences proved to be a very engaging way of meeting with the children. Many children talked for nearly two hours, and none talked for less than one and a half hours.

The children and/or parent suggested the room in the home where we would begin the interview. This was occasionally in the child's bedroom, but more often in a downstairs dining room or lounge. In the early interviews, most children were asked what they would like to talk about first, but as they did not share my knowledge of what I hoped to gain, most children wanted me to make that decision. As I became more experienced, I learnt to avoid setting up the interview in any way which caused excessive self-consciousness or unease and this meant taking the lead at the very beginning to start off the interview.

The photographs provided the best stimulus to begin conversations. Children would take me through what was happening in each of the photographs. Although I had a loose agenda to try and pick up on all the main themes, events and activities depicted in the photographs and explore a limited set of others which might also be relevant to the child, each interview evolved differently, depending on what the child said. In most interviews we soon departed from the photographs themselves and began to talk generally about many other aspects of the child's lives, or events and experiences, that they wanted to recall, which had been derived loosely from the themes we had found in the photographs. If I was aware of a topic that had not

been covered at all during our discussion that had come up with another child, I would either bring it up myself as a new topic or, if it seemed to be a topic that might not be relevant to all children (e.g. pets) then I might raise it by saying something like, *'I was talking about... with some of the other children I've met. I was wondering if... Do you do that?'* or a similar question which would establish the relevance of the topic for the child before I embarked on a fuller conversation with them on that theme.

It appears that, for most children, one month was insufficient time to complete a whole film for their photo diary if they only took one photograph per place visited. This is an indication of the amount of activity taking place outside the home and school, but also reflects a few points regarding the way children carried out the exercise. Most found it very difficult to remember their camera every time they went somewhere, and a number of places were not recorded. Some children took several photographs of a relatively small number of occasions; this was in part a response to their realisation that they either had relatively few occasions to record or had forgotten to take photos on other occasions and were nearing the end of the assignment, or the fact that some of them had difficulty in understanding that the camera could be used to record the mundane and everyday. Instead they used the camera to record days out, and family gatherings. But most children also managed to include everyday activities such as visits to the library, the park, a friend's house, the local supermarket, etc.

This closer analysis of how the children used different strategies to complete the photo diary assignment also demonstrates that a content analysis of the images would have been unhelpful, given the multiple contexts in which they were taken. However, the true value of the photographs lies not in the actual images themselves. Rather, one benefit of the assignment was that, as the children were volunteering and not gaining any obvious reward for their work, the photographs were a concrete product which they could take away with them. Two sets of pictures were developed from each film for this purpose. Secondly, the photographs provided a valuable resource which enabled me loosely to structure my one-to-one interviews around activities and themes which truly did emerge from the children themselves. In addition to this important factor, the ability informally to raise themes whilst looking at the photos enabled me to

conduct a relatively relaxed, flowing interview so that it did not appear that I was plucking topics from thin air and quizzing the child to the same degree as if we were talking without any stimulus. In particular, the photographs enabled me to change topic quite sharply when one particular line of discussion seemed to be exhausted. This would, in most cases, appear very unnatural. Yet, when linked to the fact that I simply picked up the next photo in the pile, the flow and connectedness was maintained, and the child would be less aware of a purposeful directing towards a new subject.

I did ask a lot of questions in the interviews, but most of these were aimed at finding out more about an event that had been recalled, or to ask whether a child had ever done a particular kind of activity, rather than as a means to find out what children 'knew' about particular issues or places. We discussed the collages in a similar way, revealing a great deal of rich information about particular holidays which had not been captured in the images used in the collages themselves. In a number of cases, children supplemented their holiday stories by referring to family photo albums that were to hand and, in two instances, family home videos.

When we began to talk about the home, the discussion flowed fairly continuously from the other activities we had reviewed. In some instances, we sat in the same room for some time before moving around the home to see particular things. In other cases, if not invited by the child directly, I would ask if they wanted to show me some of the things in their room. In all instances except one, the children wanted to show me their posters, their toys, most valued belongings, their gardens, computers, pets, etc. I did not enquire why one child did not want to take me upstairs; she may have been given instructions from her mother (who was not in), she may have been concerned about disturbing her grandmother, she may have felt that her room was too messy to show a visitor, or any other number of reasons. It was her right to decide where I could go in the house. However, she did bring down some items that she wanted me to see, particularly her extensive postcard collection.

Many children seemed to view me, in part, as a friend during the interview. For example, I was taken on a walk to somewhere specific nearby, was taken out to the garden to play basketball, meet pets, watch a child's tree-climbing abilities, play computer games and watch cable TV. At the end of each interview, the children were thanked for all their time and help. The primary schoolchildren were invited to come back to the final lunch time meetings to help make the collage. I did not see the secondary children again, but told them that I would write to them, and they received their certificates and letters shortly afterwards.

It was clear that a number of children would have been very pleased to maintain contact for a longer period of time. However, the closure of the project was successfully managed by making it clear that we would only meet once for interview and that this was the final stage of the project. Further, the number and nature of the meetings we had over the length of the project appeared to have been sufficient to assist in making children feel at ease to the extent that the research questions could be addressed in some detail whilst not being enough to develop a closer friendship with the children, which might have been more difficult to bring to a final close.

Analysing the fieldwork material

The main fieldwork period was for 9 months (over three school terms), and followed 6 months of piloting; a substantial volume of fieldwork material was generated which demanded an analytical strategy. All of the school group and individual interviews with children had been taped, yielding approximately 60 hours of material. In addition, I had collected A1 collage sheets of holiday images and sets of photo-diaries which had provided the stimuli for much of the taped material. Finally, I had my own diary notes in which I recorded my observations about group meetings, thoughts about individual children, comments about the physical environment of the two case study areas, etc.

I have explained why, in the context of the ways in which I implemented and subsequently used the collage and photo-diary assignments, a content analysis of the images found in these materials was both inappropriate and unhelpful. Although other researchers, such as Moore (1986) and Aitken and Wingate (1993), found it helpful to code drawings or photographs for the kinds of places and physical features used by children in their locality, I had already obtained that information from the questionnaires. Although it could be argued that the visual materials might have included references to features which did not emerge through 'discursive consciousness' (and, therefore, would not be listed in questionnaire responses), such features were ultimately only meaningful in the context of the children's own narratives about their activities.

The recorded verbal material was extremely rich and detailed. Although misinterpretation is always possible, and meaning can be imposed to make the material fit a particular theoretical structure, verbal material is usually less ambiguous than visual material (Berger and Mohr, 1982). I felt more comfortable using the children's own explanations of their materials as a way of trying to stay as close to their own understandings of their experiences as possible in the initial phase of the analysis. Morley (1992) discusses the dilemma of identifying how we let our respondents 'speak' in the way we report on our research:

We face the difficulty, as qualitative media researchers, of finally telling stories about the stories which our respondents have chosen to tell us (p.182).

But, although the researcher inevitably has the ultimate power of interpretation (Gilbert, 1994; Rose, 1997), an awareness of the context in which interview material emerged, and the ability to identify coherent and convincing themes by drawing on several complimentary sources, can help the researcher to describe their findings in a way which more closely resembles the respondent's own interpretation of their experiences (Cook and Crang, 1995).

To begin, I transcribed all the taped material, which offered an opportunity to be reminded of the children and their personalities. Listening to all the material in a concentrated period of several months during transcription also led to the initial

identification of themes which would later provide the initial framework for the first phase of analysis (see Chapter Five).

Once the transcription was completed, coding of the interviews could begin. Agar (1986) describes coding categories as either 'emic', referring to categories used by the respondents themselves, or 'etic' meaning those imposed by the researcher who is articulating a potential system of interpretation. However, in reality, coding is never purely emic or etic but some combination of the two. Although I received some training in the use of qualitative analysis packages such as Ethnograph, HyperResearch, and NUDIST, which are designed to assist in coding and particularly in the collection and further mapping of coded themes, I found that the stages through which these programmes were designed to lead the researcher and some of the limitations (e.g. the need to break a large single piece of material down into several more manageable segments) complicated rather than simplified the analytical process. Rather, I found that I could produce a thorough analysis of my interviews by spending a prolonged period of time in a close reading of the texts, manually coding, and copying and pasting between text documents to which I could add new coding themes as they emerged.

My initial approach to coding was continually to ask questions of the texts I was reading (Strauss, 1987). In particular, the eventual aim of the analysis was to produce a better understanding of the influences on children's daily behaviours. Therefore, when a child was discussing an activity, I would look at the way in which they explained their activity and the context in which an activity was taking place more broadly, and ask questions such as '*why do they enjoy this?*', '*who told them about this?*', '*why did they stop/start doing that?*' . This discursive approach, through interacting with the texts continuously, generated between 15 and 20 general themes for each interview. Many of these themes were common to all of the children, but each child would also have one or two which particularly characterised them (e.g. a child who particularly enjoyed repeating pleasurable experiences), perhaps identified by a larger volume of excerpted material under one category rather than requiring the addition of an entirely unique theme.

All qualitative analysis which is derived in this way is inevitably subjective and there is always potential for the researcher selectively to choose decontextualised excerpts from interviews to support their own agendas. However, the more consciously reflexive approach outlined above helped me to apply more grounded theory rather than using a pre-selected structural framework in which to fit the analysis.

In writing through the empirical analysis (Chapters 5-7), I was careful to select and build upon the themes which emerged most strongly and convincingly from the interview materials. Where only one or two interview excerpts could be found to support a potential theme, I was less likely to use it in the emerging analysis than themes backed up by pages of clearly articulated interview excerpts, repeated across the interviews of many of the respondents. The consistency which emerged in the selection of main themes across all of the interviews helped to reassure me that important findings and reliable interpretations were emerging. Further, in presenting these materials in my empirical chapters I have taken care to include my questioning where this would have framed the response of the child. I have presented several examples either to reinforce or demonstrate a number of possible interpretations in relation to specific arguments being developed. Finally, I have attempted to select substantial and detailed excerpts which illustrate the context in which a child's comment was made, offering a range of presentational techniques through which the legitimacy of important findings can be supported.

Once each interview had been coded and thematically listed in this way, I produced a general summary of each set of visual material. I studied the images for particular themes which seemed obvious and consistent across the material of a particular child (e.g. the presence or absence of other people such as friends or relatives; the predominance of particular spaces; the dominant themes contained in any text which accompanied the holiday collages). These were noted separately and then compared with a summary of the some of the main characteristics which emerged from the child's interview. In this way, the visual material was referenced

when it supported or helped to illustrate an important theme from the interview material, but I did not attempt a separate, theory-driven analysis of the imagery itself.

In presenting the material in Chapters 5-7, I have noted the places where a child is referring to a photographic or collage image in the interview excerpts (referenced by [photo] or [collage] respectively), but these images have been excluded from the evidence presented in these chapters themselves in order to protect the anonymity of the children, and their families, who shared so much of their lives with me and who were promised complete confidentiality. However, examples of the collage and photo diary assignments have been placed between Chapters 5-6, and 6-7. Both of these examples are taken from children who were not subsequently interviewed and, as such, are presented simply as illustrations of the methods discussed in these chapters. It is for this reason that the two case study locations have also been kept anonymous. A detailed description of the specific nature of each location is not necessary in order to understand and assess the empirical analyses presented in this thesis. A number of important factors, such as the differences between the two schools, the village and suburban locations, and the ethnic backgrounds of the two groups of children, have already been discussed (see Chapter Three).

Other important aspects of the context in which the children's daily lives are experienced emerge in the empirical chapters. The relevance and role of a variety of different spaces, activities, people and experiences are explained by the children themselves. This is the main focus of the empirical chapters which follow.

CHAPTER 5: TRANSITIONAL SPACES OF BECOMING

Introduction: Holidays at home

But I like the mobile home one. I don't know why. I just like being in areas that remind me of home. I like places that remind me of my home and that reminds me of my home. Like in private, it's just homely, rather than a tent where you're doing everything that you would not do at home. You have a proper stove and water taps, whereas you have to wash your clothes - you actually have to go somewhere to wash your clothes instead of having it there. It's really weird. I mean, I like self-catering but I like also being homey (Jane, village, lines 2055-64).

In this excerpt from an interview with Jane, she explains why she preferred taking family holidays in a mobile unit rather than camping in tents. The family used to camp until one year when they decided to take Jane's grandmother on holiday too and they chose a mobile for greater comfort and convenience. But, although Jane mentions convenience advantages like washing clothes in the mobile home it is actually the familiarity of the routine, its similarity to her home life which is most important in making the holiday experience more enjoyable. Jane finds going away on holiday quite difficult, especially when she is not with her family; she can't stay over with friends because many years ago she had a very bad experience sharing a room with a friend away from home (although she can't really explain why it felt so bad) and she tells me about how homesick she felt on a school trip. On that occasion the teacher in charge didn't help to relieve her feelings:

And, um, we go 'Oh Jane is homesick' and she goes, 'Oh don't be silly. Just got to go on with it. Don't worry. You can't go home now... She would be, she's a very nice woman though. Sometimes she gets a bit - 'don't worry' - she doesn't really understand (Jane, village, lines 1827-9; 1843-5).

A number of Jane's friends also mention the need for emotional support from teachers when they are on school holidays and away from their parents. On a school trip to France Sally's best friend trapped her finger in a door and had to be taken to hospital:

But she said to me when she got back, 'Mr. Johnson was like a dad to me', because she wasn't with her parents so Mr. Johnson had to look after her and he had to support her and, you know, encourage her and she said to me,

'He was like a father to me', and she was really grateful to him. But um, Mr. Johnson was really understanding (Sally, village, lines 1482-88).

Adam, one of the boys from the suburban school sample, focuses on a very different aspect of holiday experiences:

My sister, my sister said to me the other day, um, 'well it doesn't matter if you don't make friends, 'cos you're only going to see them for a week', but it's not the same, 'cos like you want to make friends on holiday. It'd be boring if you're just with your brother. 'Cos that's what you go on holiday for - to make new friends and have fun and that (Adam, suburban, lines 879-885).

For Adam, his experience of an unfamiliar place is made most pleasurable not by reference to parental support but by whether he is able to find peers to spend time with; the ability to make friends to play with is essential to his definition of 'having fun' on holiday.

Holidays can be about many things; being in hot places, being in peaceful places, doing exciting activities, spending more time as a family, trying out unfamiliar food and visiting strange places, not being at school and not having to work, and so on. All of the children interviewed mentioned many or all of these aspects in their accounts of various holiday experiences. But underpinning many of the accounts was a continuous reference to the social frameworks which were required by these children through which such experiences became enjoyable and through which unfamiliar experiences became manageable.

Why should familiarity, homeliness, the provision of parental functions at times of distress or uncertainty be so essential on holiday for these children when holidays are often seen as the epitome of 'getting away from it all' and going to the unfamiliar and the exotic? Or in Adam's case, why are peers the key to making a new place an enjoyable experience, even if he might only know them for a week? These questions are key to an understanding of the behaviour of the children I came to know during our activities and interviews. Before I begin to answer these questions I need to explain how these questions emerged and how I intend to develop the thesis in this and the following two chapters.

Searching for an analytical framework: Why I needed to know ‘why’

In Chapter Four I accounted for the bottom-up technique I used to approach an analysis of the interview material; the texts were read closely to seek out what I initially defined as ‘influencing factors’ on what the children told me they did, where they went and why they took part in particular activities. This analysis produced a considerable number of themes, most of which emerged in all of the interviews but with some being much more relevant to one child’s experiences than another’s. The themes were kept intentionally broad and each one was multi-faceted (for example, both positive and negative accounts of parental influence were recorded under the heading of ‘parental influence’.)

The themes which emerged are listed in Table 4. I have allocated each of the themes in the table under three categories: Social relationships, emotions or ‘internal’ realities, and broader cultural factors. The factors listed do not all ‘fit’ discretely under each category; for example the value of male ‘icons’ for many boys is often in the relationship they have with them (e.g. admiration for a football player). This is often not a physical relationship (they have probably never met their icon) and so is part of their internal reality. Yet the icon in question is often a creation of popular culture, either a fantasy figure (e.g. Superman) or a real individual with special skills (e.g. Alan Shearer, the footballer). However the table provides an initial guide which can help to illustrate the basis on which my analysis developed.

Table 4: Initial coding categories from interview analysis

CODING CATEGORIES
A: Social relationships
Influence of the mother/parent
Interactions with siblings
Influence of other relations
Influence of/interaction with peers (making friends; being with friends)
Influence of other people
Negotiation to achieve desires
Awareness of/questioning of the expectations and beliefs of those in authority
B: Emotional/Internal reality
Familiarity/Security
Pride in achievements
Sense of belonging/community
Care/ concern for others
Exciting activities
Fears and factors which restrict or limit
Awareness of appearance to others (self-conscious reflections on identity)
Enjoyment
Fantasy/imaginative play
C: Cultural factors
Popular culture
Cost
Television
Material opportunities/things valued
Household routines/ritual and order
Activities associated with being younger (age-appropriate awareness)
Male icons/role models
Valued/distinctive environments

Returning to my research question, which sought to better understand what shaped a child's daily behaviour, this list of factors clearly demonstrated a wealth of social and cultural factors which needed to be better understood in order to create new opportunities beyond formal 'learning' and 'knowledge' if E.E. is to become a

more effective tool for changing behaviour. However, observing such a list of factors and the multitude of ways in which they influence particular events or activities in a child's life does not provide a helpful tool for understanding the significance of these factors in more conceptual terms or easily suggest a means by which such observations can help to create new approaches for E.E.. What is required is a conceptual framework which can help to explain why such factors should be important and whether this list of different yet interrelated factors can, in fact, be integrated into a more coherent understanding of children's behaviour.

My need to look for such a conceptual framework stems from the evolution of the thesis. A thesis which began, at its inception, with a question about child-nature relationships as potentially the key to long-term concern about the environment became subsumed within the 'context' of the research (children's daily lives) in which all 'behaviour' takes place and within which many other influential factors can be found. Unlike research which might take a very specific concept (e.g. Parker, 1998 on British/Chinese identity) and examine how it is performed externally and perceived internally by individuals who identify with the concepts, this thesis is no longer looking at the role of one particular concept within daily behaviour (i.e. relationships with nature). Rather, by seeking to challenge the dominance of the knowledge-attitude-behaviour model in E.E., the empirical work calls for the proposal of a different framework on which a whole range of behavioural outcomes can satisfactorily rest.

Such a project is fraught with danger; where all such frameworks are simplifications of a complex multitude of realities, to what extent is it useful to replace one with another? And to what extent will such a framework inevitably essentialise the categories which it seeks to challenge, albeit in a different way? These problems are not new, and a theoretical framework has been suggested by Aitken and Herman (1997), applying the ideas of the psychologist, D.W. Winnicott (1896-1971), providing an exciting set of possibilities both for a satisfactory resolution of my own dilemma and as a tool for providing a new foundation for further research on children's geographies. This framework has emerged from

Aitken's work (Aitken and Bjorklund, 1988; Aitken, 1991a; Aitken, 1991b; Aitken, 1992; Aitken and Rushton, 1993) on using transactional and transformational theories as the basis for behavioural geography.

Aitken (1992) identifies the roots of transactionalism in the work of the American philosopher, John Dewey, in the 1930s (Dewey, 1929; Dewey and Bentley, 1949). The theory considers how transactions between people and their environments can transform person-in-environment contexts. It became an important strand of environmental psychology and influenced behavioural geography in the 1970s (e.g. Proshansky, 1978, on place identity; Newman, 1973, on defensible space).

The transactional whole provides a context for study comprised of inseparable, reticulate, interdependent factors. It does not espouse separate elements - such as cognition and behaviour - or sets of discrete elements into which a system is divisible (Aitken, 1992, p.557).

In other words, transactional theories highlight the difficulty of identifying specific 'knowledge' or 'attitude' measures, abstracted from a particular context. (Aitken and Bjorklund, 1988). Transactionalism suggests that these factors are so interrelated in their contribution to person-environment interactions (i.e. the behaviour of a person in a specific context) that any attempt at measuring these 'artificial' categories offers limited scope for the development of theories of behaviour (Aitken and Bjorklund, 1988).

Transactional and transformational theories do not focus on 'the person' or 'the environment' but try to understand the interface between the two.

Instead, an interdependent person/environment system is postulated where change in the system is the principle focus of attention. Change is an inherent quality of the system, not merely an outcome of separate elements interacting with each other (Aitken and Bjorklund, 1988, p.57).

Therefore, *patterns in behaviour* and *forms of relationship*, identified as important when individuals are making behavioural changes or adapting to a new environmental context, are the focus of study, rather than the means to predict causal relationships between discrete factors (Aitken, 1992). Within behavioural geography, therefore, the notion of a high-level theory which can adequately 'predict' behaviour is generally acknowledged as an unrealistic endeavour (Aitken,

1992). A more useful framework is one which can function as a 'guide to action' rather than fulfilling the task of being the 'best fit' to directly explain a behavioural observation (Aitken, 1991a).

In transactional theory, space and place is not conceptualised as a stable 'thing' that people make a cognitive response to. Rather, it is the context, created by human interaction with specific environments. 'The environment' is a more fluid, changing entity, marked out by the ways that people behave in it (Aitken and Bjorklund, 1988). The concept identified as an alternative to more fixed, cognitive responses to an environment, is the 'mental schema'. This is the way that individuals create order out of information through which they then respond in particular ways to stimuli in a specific context. The notion of the 'mental schema' is more dynamic than 'cognition', and the schema can change or adapt when a new situation is encountered, or new information is received by an individual.

Transactional theory provides a potential framework to explore children's *doing* and *behaving* rather than attempting the explanation of *an activity* or *a behaviour* as a frozen event in time, as is the case with a more constructivist approach, favoured by cognitive behavioural geographers. However, critiques of transactional theory have highlighted the difficulties of identifying some of its central concepts in empirical study (Aitken and Bjorklund, 1988). An acknowledgement of the importance of examining the specifics of each environmental context, and the human behaviour of interest in that context, makes it particularly difficult to develop behavioural theory beyond an analysis of any particular case study. Further, these theories, by identifying relationships between *people* and *environments*, do not adequately recognise the *social relationships* in which the individual is embedded. In Aitken's more recent work (Aitken and Herman, 1997), he identifies another useful theory, drawing on the work of the psychologist, D.W. Winnicott. This introduces the concept of the *transitional space* and offers a way of bringing the individual, the social, and the environmental together, yet maintains the emphasis on *process* and *relationship* offered by transactional approaches.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will present Winnicott's concept of *transitional space* and trace back the behavioural psychology which provides a helpful framework for the analysis of my empirical work. The roots of this theory begin at birth, and with the foundations of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1953). This takes us to the centre of the child's world and reveals the significance of the opening interview excerpts; the parent-child relationship and the locus of 'home'. These themes will provide the focus for an analysis of the daily behaviour of several of the children who took part in the research in the next chapter. One of the methodological challenges to emerge from the concepts being posited here is the inappropriateness of piecing together observations from short excerpts of interview. This technique would encourage a more constructivist means of identifying moments and behaviours. The very nature of the approach that I wish to use calls for a more holistic treatment of the texts and this challenge will be discussed before the empirical work is presented.

Having set up the conceptual framework and examined some of the processes suggested for the development of the child's daily behaviours, Chapter Seven will consider the extension of the child's world through peer interaction (the context for the excerpt from Adam's interview above). Chapter Eight will draw on the central findings of the empirical chapters to inform a series of suggestions for new strategies for implementing E.E.

D.W. Winnicott

D.W. Winnicott (1896-1971) was a psychoanalyst, specialising in work with children, with over 40 years of clinical experience (Phillips, 1988). He was also a prolific writer, both of quite complex clinical texts for practitioners, but also extremely accessible texts and collections of lectures, often addressed directly to parents (particularly the mother). Winnicott's contribution to psychoanalysis is considered quite unique. Although he was influenced by the two main schools of psychoanalytic theory - the tradition stemming from the work of Sigmund Freud,

and a school of thought based on the work of Melanie Klein - his own work did not correspond with any one of these traditions in particular. Although he would often draw on their analyses, Winnicott was rather creative in his interpretation of their work and, without publicly disagreeing with their ideas, he would often rework them considerably as part of his own evolving theories (Jacobs, 1995).

The interpretative framework identified as Winnicott's own contribution to psychoanalysis is *object relations theory*. A central part of this theory was the development of ideas about the relationship between a mother and child, extended to conceptualise the relationship between the child and its whole environment, and individual elements within it. For example, whereas Klein considered the child who loved nature as an indication of loneliness (nature was being used as a substitute for an absent mother), Winnicott regarded the mother as just one (albeit very important) part of the whole environment. In his analysis, nature would be one part of the 'outside world' that the mother would gradually introduce to the child (Jacobs, 1995).

One of the criticisms of Winnicott's work is that, although his theories evolved in tandem with his clinical practice, he does not clearly articulate what observations from clinical work led to the theory. Therefore, although object relations theory, and his ideas of the *transitional object* or *transitional space* (discussed below), provide a power theoretical framework for the analysis of behaviour, it is acknowledged that it is but one interpretative framework out of several approaches espoused in the field of psychoanalysis. In the following sections I describe some of Winnicott's central ideas and explain the way forward that they offered for my analysis. However, ultimately my analysis of my fieldwork interviews was grounded in the children's own words (see Chapter Four). I use Winnicott's theories here for their considerable ability to offer a coherent framework, strengthening the application of my analyses of children's daily behaviour to propose new strategies for E.E. (see Chapter Eight).

Stepping out into a 'transitional space'

A *transitional object*, as defined by Winnicott (1965a, 1965b, 1971, 1991), is one which a child is completely attached to at particular times and places (for a period it may even be all the time - an object which the child carries with them everywhere) without which they would be distraught. This may be an external 'object' in the physical sense e.g. a piece of blanket or a teddy bear, or it may be the child's own thumb, or a repetitive stroking movement, a nursery rhyme or the presence of a parent/carer. The function of such an object is to enable the child to '... reconcile the inner reality of the self with the external reality of society' (Aitken and Herman, 1997, p.65).

An easily recognisable early example of this is the child's transition from being awake to sleep. This can be understood as a transition from the known security of the present into something which is unknown and uncertain, but such processes exist continuously as the child is confronted with new experiences. If the child successfully copes with the new experience then their internal reality will be altered as a result of new understanding and their external reality will likewise be changed as a result of having discovered a new part of it. Whilst we might question the validity of separating the concepts of 'internal' and 'external' in this model, the significance of this framework, for me, lies not in the constitution of either of these categories. Rather, I wish to focus attention on the transitional spaces which lie at the heart of the **process** and the importance of the interactions which take place during the transition which may result in a shift in understanding and behaviour¹. According to Aitken and Herman (1997), transitional spaces are thus defined '... as spaces where connections may be maintained between an external world and an internal conception of self so that the new significance can be realised' (p. 72).

¹ In chapter three, I discussed my rationale for using the *arenas* of holiday, locality and home. Using Winnicott's theory of the *transitional space*, my explanation of considering behaviours within and across these arenas is theorized more convincingly. The *arena* is a concept that can be understood by the children, providing a useful structure for the fieldwork. But, in analysis, the *transitional space* provides the conceptual tool for interpreting the interviews.

Through such processes development is not, as Piagetian models depict, a set of clear cognitive phases at the end of which lies 'adulthood' (Corsaro, 1997) but '... there is no adult maturing apart from the previous development' (Winnicott, 1965a, p.21). Winnicott suggests:

These phenomena (that I call transitional) appear to form the basis of the whole cultural life of the adult human being (1965a, p.13).

It is the conceptualisation of E.E. as a process by which daily behaviour may be gradually changed in a move towards more environmentally aware and sustainable forms that makes the notion of Winnicott's transitional space so appealing as a potential theoretical framework. Furthermore, in elevating the importance of processes, such as 'playing with' or 'making use of' over the construction of stable models of logic and reason, Winnicott's theories provide a very different way of looking at human 'being' and 'behaving' (Flax, 1993) than those more familiar to E.E.

Winnicott's theories not only provide a different way of conceptualising human 'development' with increasing age, but also provide a means by which to overcome the problematising of the state of 'becoming' which James and Prout (1990; also James, Jenks and Prout, 1998) cite as defining 'childhood' in social constructionist terms. Conceptualising childhood as a state of 'becoming' is unhelpful only if the conclusion drawn from an observation of transition and change is that the experiences held within such a period are therefore unimportant due to their instability and transience. However, as explained further below, Winnicott's conceptualisation of a state of becoming does not lead to the dismissal of the importance of a child's experiences; as the quote above demonstrates, he believes that such experiences are the fundamental building blocks of everything that follows. It is **because** childhood is a time when transition is more rapid than at other times of life (i.e. a time of 'becoming') that a better understanding of the experiences and relationships which occur during these times is so important to understanding the formation of ways of daily behaving.

Perhaps even the language we use reveals something of the processes which are central here. I wish to sketch out a very brief and somewhat simplistic framework to explain this statement and will then return to discuss some of the concepts derived from behavioural psychology alluded to here in more depth. One of the most fundamental transitions occurring after birth is whilst a baby is learning to differentiate between 'what is me' and 'what is not me' (Gallup, 1979). A human can only do this in relationship with something or someone else. Therefore a child comes to know their environment and society through entering into relationships and simultaneously is developing a concept of 'what is me' (i.e. self-identity). Transitional spaces are continually created in the management of the changes constantly occurring in the child's reality and the framework is a very fluid one. We might consider this as one basis for 'informal education'. I would argue that, in such a context, 'behaving' is more appropriate than 'behaviour', the former suggesting a process which emerges from the intertwined and reciprocal activities of learning to 'be-' an 'I' (self-identity) and '-having' relationships with our social and physical environments, whereas the latter alludes to the aggregate or 'result' of a set of responses (i.e. the product rather than the process.)

I will return to a discussion of transitional spaces to further expand on the significance of this theory and my intentions to apply it to my empirical work. However, a brief review of some key concepts from behavioural psychology is required first. If a transitional space is that which marks the processes involved in moving from the security and safety of the known to the uncertainty of the unknown we need to consider what kinds of relationships constitute a secure known and how these may facilitate or hinder an individual's ability to manage the changes inherent in discovering the unknown and 'realizing a new significance' (Aitken and Herman, 1997).

Whilst the theories presented here suggest a psychoanalytical approach to the thesis, later discussions will demonstrate an awareness of the interrelatedness of the contexts in which the children are behaving (Aitken and Bjorklund, 1988). These include: the relevant behaviours of the parents which are constituted by such

factors as their understanding of 'good parenting' (Valentine, 1997a, 1997c; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997); their life history (including economic stability, divorce, childhood, education etc.); the age, gender and ethnicity of the children (all of the children in my research were middle class); and a multitude of peer relationships; other adult relationships. In addition, many other factors (listed in Table 4) derived from the initial analysis of the interview material are important.

It is within and through such contexts that transitional spaces are being produced and I am not, therefore, proposing a singular psychoanalytical framework to 'explain' behaviour as a means of replacing the dominant knowledge-attitude-behaviour model which I critique in Chapter One. Rather, I am arguing, like Aitken (1991a), that such 'explanation' in terms of modelling is an unrealistic endeavour. I do not seek a 'better' model to explain behaviour in the context of E.E., but will propose a re-focusing on the processes and interactions which might facilitate transitions towards more environmentally sustainable forms of behaving.

Attachment theory

Attachment is a well-established theory in social psychology (Baron and Byrne, 1997). At its root is a child's need for the emotional (and initially also physical) support of a parent or care-giver which provides a child with a stable place to 'return' at times of anxiety. Without such support a child is likely to be fearful of exploration beyond the mother (as a very young infant) and further beyond, to ever-widening boundaries, as they grow and become more familiar with a wider range of experiences (Skynner and Cleese, 1983).

In traditional attachment theory, the mother has usually been seen as the primary attachment figure (Bowlby, 1953) and the identification of the mother's role is fundamental in the development of Freudian psychoanalysis in particular. However, later studies have expanded the concept to be inclusive of a range of potential relationships. Maccoby (1980) provides a working definition of attachment as, '... a relatively enduring emotional tie to a specific other person'

(p.53), although she also recognises the likelihood that a biological mother, in many cases, is often the first attachment figure, as they are still often (for a variety of social and biological reasons) the most likely primary care-giver. However, it is the mother's *function* as primary care-giver which is relevant here (Lewis and Feiring, 1979) and there is no reason why this function may not be taken by a range of other individuals. Nevertheless, there is a large body of research based on empirical observations of the mother-child relationship (Edwards and Lewis, 1979) and, as I will illustrate later, the mother-child relationship is a very important one in my own empirical material (all the children who took part in my research lived with their biological mother) so further references made to the mother here are made within those contexts.

Whilst attachment is an attribute of the child-mother relationship from birth, its significance here is in the development of different styles of attachment in the early years of a child's life which are believed to set the precedents for all of that individual's social and environmental interactions throughout their life. Attachment sets up the psychological dynamics by which an individual relates to that which is 'not me' and, therefore, has a role to play in determining the likelihood of a 'transition' occurring whereby new relationships are entered into, a new understanding of the world occurs and new forms of behaving might result. This is what Winnicott meant when he suggested that transitional phenomena would '... appear to form the basis of the whole cultural life of the adult human being' (1965a, p.13).

A brief review of 'attachment styles' is presented here to provide further explanation of the concept. I emphasise that these theories are not being posited as the singular explanation for daily behaviour. Rather, I am arguing that by identifying the kinds of social and environmental interactions and relationships which these theories suggest as 'healthy' contributors to pro-social behaviour (Skynner and Cleese, 1983), I can consider the importance of these processes in approaching E.E..

Attachment style

Attachment styles can cover a wide variety of possibilities but for the purposes of illustration I will comment on the significance of 'secure' and 'insecure' styles of attachment. A secure attachment is one where the child is able to identify consistency and dependency in the behaviours of the person or object that they cleave to at times of stress or uncertainty. This attachment style can facilitate the development of trust such that the child can come to know both the boundaries to their emotional and physical explorations and can identify a kind of emotional and physical 'home' to return to when change is too rapid or the new becomes too unfamiliar. An insecure attachment style is the reverse; one where the object or person cannot be depended on to provide consistent support if the child explores (again, either physically in space, or emotionally as they learn to feel and develop their own sense of identity) too far and needs to touch base again with the security of 'home'.

For example, a child's first day at school is both an exciting and potentially frightening venture.

The thing to understand is that coming out of the enclosure is very exciting and very frightening; that, once out, it is awful for the child not being able to get back; and that life is a long series of coming out of enclosures and taking new risks and meeting new and exciting challenges (Winnicott, 1965a, p.36).

If a child finds themselves in a different and uncertain relationship with their mother as a result of venturing out to a new environment (where they will also discover a whole new set of relationships to be negotiated) then they may be reluctant to continue this venture, in fear of losing the 'home' that the mother has come to signify. I am summarising what is clearly a very complex set of processes. For example, as Winnicott (1965a) explains, it may well be the behaviour of the mother which is primarily responsible for the generation of the relationship which characterises an insecure attachment. She may be too protective of her child and find it emotionally difficult to 'let go' yet when the child is away from home she may fill this emotional gap with another activity in order to cope, making it very

difficult for the child to find their way 'back' to her when s/he returns from school - this can make the child prone to try and cling to the parent even more and be less willing to venture out again.

Another possible set of outcomes to result from insecure attachment is more likely if the parent is sending out mixed messages to the child; inconsistent styles of parenting, care and emotional bonding. This leaves the child uncertain of what relationship they have, or if they have a relationship with the mother. In order to cope with such confusion and potential sense of rejection, one commonly observed characteristic of the child is to become distant (Winnicott, 1965b), finding it difficult to enter into relationships (and, therefore, transitional spaces) at all. We would usually identify a person like this as 'withdrawn' (into themselves), i.e. 'in their own world.'

As stated earlier, this review of attachment theory has primarily referred to the mother-child relationship as this has been the focus of most literature in this field. But there is potential for attachment to be a characteristic of any relationship entered into with another person (Maccoby, 1980), object (Winnicott, 1965a), or environment (Deux et al, 1993). Winnicott espouses the extension of these basic principles in his object-relations theory, this being the basis of transitional object theory. It is this idea which he extends to discuss 'transitional spaces' in relation to children's play (Winnicott, 1971). To further complicate the means by which one could apply these theories, it is suggested that, as a child or individual enters into multiple relationships with many people and places, so they may develop different attachment styles with each, depending on the characteristics of each person or place and the context or circumstances in which these relationships develop (Holmes, 1996). Therefore, whilst the process is very important and especially significant to the argument being developed here in the context of E.E., it is very difficult to derive causation between an assumed or observed attachment style in one empirical study to an individual's behaviour in a variety of different settings. However, I wish to suggest that if attachment is a central principle in the 'success' of transitional experiences then such dynamics need to be addressed and in some

way guided if an E.E. programme or activity is to have greater potential to facilitate changes in daily behaviour. Chapter 8 will be dedicated to taking this thesis further.

Learning from the transitional spaces of childhood

Having considered the principles of attachment theory and its influence on the processes which create transitional spaces, I now return to the notion of the transitional space itself. Aitken and Herman (1997) suggest that an engagement in a transitional space is akin to Lefebvre's explanation of a 'trial by space'. By this, Lefebvre means that ideas and values become concrete and can be acted out only if they generate a space.

Ideas, representations or values which do not succeed in making their mark on space, and thus generating (or producing) an appropriate morphology, will lose all pith and become mere signs, resolve themselves into abstract descriptions, or mutate into fantasies (Lefebvre, 1991, in Aitken and Herman, 1997, p.75).

We might then consider what ideas and values are 'learnt' by a child in relationship with their parents, teachers, peers etc. when the behaviours of these groups convey values, or the activities taking place or objects being used whilst engaging in such relationships implicitly suggest values. For example, Nancy Chodorow (1974, 1978, 1989) argues that, as children explore the physical and emotional spaces further away from the 'home' of the mother, girls are more likely to remain less separated from the mother than boys. We could understand this as a transitional space which is filled with objects which connect mother and daughter in terms of female gender formation. The child may learn what it means to be 'male', 'female' and 'child' from the behaviours of the family members she interacts with.

However, a parent's behaviour is not solely a performance of their own 'fixed' identity. New parental behaviours are constantly being created *in relationship* with the child on the basis of the normative developmental beliefs held by educators, policy makers, toy designers etc. with whom the adult enters into a relationship, as a parent. Media and other social and cultural arenas where dominant beliefs about

child safety are articulated (a discourse which is also gendered) also influence the behaviour of the parent with the child (e.g. Matthews, 1987; Valentine, 1989; Burgess et al 1988a, 1988b, 1988c).

In the extension of attachment theory to refer to objects and environments as well as individuals we can perceive of more generalised contexts such as home, school, park, shopping mall etc. as being in relationship with children too. These can also provide transitional experiences where the place represents sets of values and the child both engages the self in these experiences and may also experience a transformation of the self as a consequence.

Although Winnicott states that this is an ongoing process throughout life, he suggests that as an individual establishes a world-view and a self-identity that can withstand new experiences, fewer transitional spaces are created (less is 'new' in the world) and so as we get older we spend less time readjusting our perceptions and practices. It would seem, therefore, that the childhood years are qualitatively different from adulthood and represent a potential for dominant societal behaviours to be challenged and transformed during the time leading up to and including adolescence.

Aitken and Herman (1997) highlight the transformatory potential of Winnicott's theory of the transitional space. By emphasising the interrelationship between the child and 'object' (an aspect of their environment, including people), they suggest that the child has greater capacity to transform spaces than would be the case using the theories of, for example, Piaget or Freud. Using the frameworks of these latter theorists, the child is structured by a pre-existing 'culture' to a far greater extent. Aitken and Herman (1997) suggest that, if the child and their environment are simultaneously separate entities yet also constitute each other, the child then becomes a more active agent in transforming, or giving meaning to space, through action, albeit within a framework of '... cultural and societal codes and rules that saturate care-givers and environments' (Aitken and Herman, 1997, p.80).

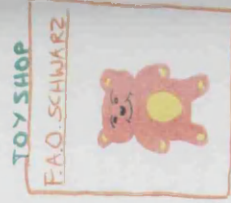
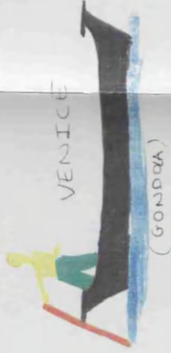
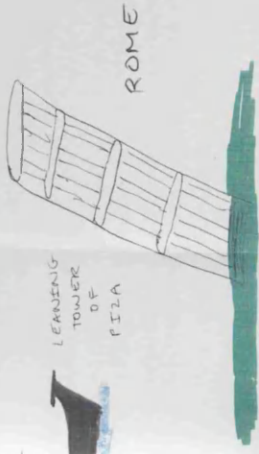
Although Aitken and Herman (1997) acknowledge the uneven distribution of power in these interrelationships, such that the child's life is substantially controlled by care-givers and other adult figures, they suggest that Winnicott's theories can be used to challenge the taken-for-granted nature of these interactions. A transitional space is one '... where it may be possible to grow and contest established norms' (Aitken and Herman, 1997, p.82). They propose using these ideas to reconceptualise notions of 'justice', where the 'transitional space' permits individuals to explore and understand 'difference', '... including the differences between adults and children' (p.82).

However, I am less optimistic about these possibilities than Aitken and Herman (1997), and return to the parent-child relationship which forms the basis of attachment theory. Not all transitional spaces have equal potential, as not all relationships and interactions involve participants of equal power or involve the emotions in the same way. Clearly in the parent-child relationship the parent has the ability to exert considerably more power (in the form of control) than the child and the emotional nature of the attachment may be considerably more powerful than between a child and object or environment (although this cannot be assumed). I would therefore part with Aitken and Herman (1997) in some of their conclusions; rather than emphasise the potential of transitional spaces to transform (although I am attracted by this possibility too in certain contexts - see Chapter Eight), I consider one of the main conclusions emerging from an application of this theoretical framework to be the acknowledgement of the importance of the parent and other adults (relations, teachers, media personalities) to act as role models. This should heighten our awareness of the possibility that the ways in which we act in society now provides the arena for a child to learn informally through our relationships with them. I will return to this argument in my discussion of E.E. in chapter 8.

(see over)

Figure 3: Transitional Space 1

ITALY



AMERICA!!!

NEW YORK



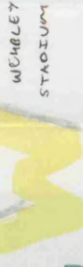
FAVOURITE PLACE

WASHINGTON D.C.

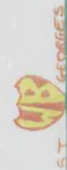


AMERICA IS MY FAVOURITE COUNTRY. I LOVE IT SO MUCH. MOST OF MY RELATIVES LIVE THERE AND WE GO TO MANY SITES. I LIKE PLANT HUSBAND MOST. I LIKE AMERICA SO MUCH, I DON'T MIND LEAVING THERE.

GOING AROUND LONDON, WEMBLEY AND HARROW IS FUN FOR ME. IT IS VERY GREAT AND THERE ARE SOME OF MY FAVOURITE PLACES.

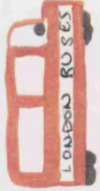


I USE GOING BOWLING



HARROW

LONDON



WERE MY PARENTS COME FROM AND MOST OF MY FAMILIES.



CHAPTER SIX: CHILD IN RELATIONSHIP WITH ...

Exploring the interviews with children for transitional spaces: describing the terrain

Returning to my empirical work, the theoretical framework presented in the last chapter calls for a re-examination of the interview material. As shown in Table 4, even in the initial phase of analysis I was drawn to relationships with people, social and cultural contexts and emotions as the most important factors to emerge from a bottom-up reading of the interviews to 'explain' daily behaviours. The theories of transitional spaces and attachment help to demonstrate why such observations emerged and why they may be significant. However, having observed them, a closer examination of the ongoing processes and the interplay between people, objects and environments is now required in order to demonstrate how these theories can be applied in practice.

It is usual in the presentation of qualitative interview material to select short excerpts from a range of participants which illustrate an occurrence or relationship of significance to the thesis. However, this approach seems less appropriate and less helpful in this instance. I have explained that the interviews were originally intended to gain a broad overview of many aspects of a child's daily activities and behaviours. Therefore their strengths lie in being able to consider individual incidents and events in the context of a larger whole. In Chapter One, I presented my critique of E.E. research which examined research on the knowledge-attitude-behaviour model in the absence of any context beyond broad socio-economic categories and my methodology emerged, in part, in response to that critique.

My research methodology also elevated the perceptions and accounts of the children themselves by drawing solely on their stories. Siblings, parents and teachers were not interviewed. This provides another alternative to the approaches used in much E.E. research where children might be consulted or tested or possibly just observed, but the research agenda is rarely derived in such a bottom-up way.

Yet, by choosing these approaches, a certain caution is required in the analysis of the interview material in the search for transitional spaces. I have suggested that forms of attachment may differ according to the specific context and the nature of the object with which the child is in relationship. The children who were interviewed do not relate every experience in equal levels of detail, so the nature of some experiences cannot always be confidently interpreted. Further, some of the relationships which are undoubtedly important in the account of a particular experience are not always made explicit.

It may sometimes be appropriate to draw conclusions about the nature of a particular event by examining its relationship to more commonly observed facets of a child's interactions with people and environments to see if more general characteristics of the child's attachment style can be suggested. Here the holistic nature of the interview provides the key. In order to convey this, simply selecting many short excerpts which account for a specific incident removed from the context of the child's other behaviours would be unhelpful. Instead I have chosen just five of the children who took part in the research to consider in some detail. Important themes will still be highlighted with reference to short excerpts from their interviews, but their relevance and the validity of the finding being supported will be provided by placing such observations within the context of the main characteristics which emerge from considering the 'whole child', as I came to know them through my interactions with them.

Kin relationships

This chapter is about the relationships that the children have with family members, especially parents. However, in order to try and maintain a more holistic sense of the children's characteristics, the transactions which are constantly taking place between the different arenas of the children's lives, and the multiple significance that a particular space may have in the child's daily activities, both peer and environmental interactions are included where they help to clarify the analysis. In other words, the analysis in the chapter is orientated to elevate the significance of

family relationships but not to the exclusion of the interactions which help to make fuller sense of children's daily lives. Likewise, the following chapter (7) will elevate peer interactions but will inevitably need to make reference to the family lives of the children and the environments in which peers play and interact.

Each child will be presented in turn in some detail, followed by a brief conclusion to this part of the analysis, to draw out the main themes and relationships which have emerged.

ROSE

Rose is 12 years old. She lives in the suburbs in a semi-detached home with her mother, father, 15 year old brother and grandmother. The family had a 'granny flat' extension put onto the house when Rose's grandfather died a number of years ago, so Rose's grandmother is semi-independent but sees the family daily. The family are 'White, British' and practising Christians, and Rose is very proud of the regularity of her church attendance; Rose and her best friend are the most regular attendees of 'Junior Church'. Her mother is a Home Economics teacher and her father was a stockbroker but now stays at home due to physical disability.

Rose's interview was particularly distinctive for the amount of common characteristics and interests that Rose shared with her mother. At times her mother appears to be particularly directive in shaping Rose's experiences, but it is clear that on numerous occasions the degree of similarity between Rose and her mother seems to be something fostered and cleaved to by Rose herself. This makes her mother a particularly powerful role model and gatekeeper for many of Rose's experiences.

While there are 24 separate explicit mentions of her mother's influence or role in a particular event in Rose's interview (and many others which are denoted by 'we went...' , 'we did...' etc.), her father is only mentioned 3 times; on two occasions, as part of a family activity (going to church and being interested in gardening) and,

on the third occasion, Rose refers to the limitations to their holiday experiences caused by his disability. According to Lamb (1982), in a more traditional performance of functions by parents, one might expect a father to take on more disciplinary and/or play roles with their child. Rose's father is less physically able to take on the second role, and it is clear that play activities, in particular, take place through Rose's relationship with her older brother; she looks up to and admires her brother enormously and is very grateful for his willingness to play with her and help her with activities. Rose's mother's occupation as a school teacher reflects in their relationship too and with this interaction the father's input in disciplinary and educational matters is also overshadowed. Therefore, whilst Rose undoubtedly has a relationship with her father, it is not reflected in my interview with her at all, and this relationship would appear to have relatively little bearing on her daily activities. Rose does not mention any other adult role models (e.g. teachers, media personalities) beyond her immediate family and other relations with whom she engages in activities-in-relation; her family, therefore, provide the central and significant relationships which influence her daily behaviours.

Rose and her mother: sharing the past and the present

Rose's mother is keen to share many places and activities which she enjoys and values with her daughter and Rose shows great interest in the range of activities she does in relationship with her mother. Particularly striking is her love of Dorset where her mother grew up, and Swanage where her mother went on family trips and holidays as a child (the birthplace of her father was not mentioned during the interview).

But during the half term we went to Somerset, but during that day we went to Glastonbury Tor, we went into Street where they've got the Clark's village, and we went to Swanage as well 'cos we begged my mum to take us there 'cos we hadn't been there for quite a while, so we went there all in one day, and then we came home again (suburbs, lines 152-7).

Me: So tell me, what's your history of going to Swanage then? Why?

Rose: Why Swanage? My mum's originally from Dorset, and she, when she was younger she used to go to Swanage. And so when she had me and Darren she started taking us to Swanage (suburbs, lines 192-7).

And Rose has aunts and uncles living in Dorset, providing another set of relationships through which to experience an environment which is very different to her own home.

Rose: Um, oh I can remember where my great aunt and uncle live. They live in a little village called Mustertown, which you might have heard of. (Me: I don't think I've heard of it). And it's just on the very borders, and it's really lovely. It's very remote and there's hardly any traffic down there where they live, and it's just really lovely, and the same is where my other great-aunt and uncle live, 'cos it's just really beautiful out there.

Me: Do you quite fancy the idea of being in that kind of place?

Rose: Yes. That's really my second home, 'cos that's where we always go on holiday. I think the only other place we ever go on holiday is Wales - Brecon Beacons and that sort of area. Which is really lovely and everything, but it's not exactly home, if you see what I mean, 'cos home is Dorset and home is here (suburbs, lines 1275-92).

The comparison with Wales is interesting because it helps to demonstrate that it is the family history and the relationships that Rose has with members of her family that makes Dorset really special. The beauty and peace of the areas she goes to is also highly valued, but the Brecon Beacons also offers that kind of environment. And Swanage is not a particularly peaceful or beautiful place; Rose remembers playing in the arcade there and winning a cuddly toy, and seeing lots of familiar faces of people who work there that they know when they visited during half-term.

Rose's mother has a strong emotional attachment to Dorset and Swanage as the place of her childhood and her family. The way that Rose explains that her mother started to take her and Darren there once they were born does not immediately draw on the family members that they visit, but a very direct link between her visits to Swanage when she was younger and her desire to take her own children there.

Therefore Rose has come to value a place, in part through her own enjoyment of the activities, the people and the environment, but initially because it is the place that her mother invests great value in; the place symbolises a continuity between her mother's past and Rose's present. However, although a similar emotional attachment may have been established, there is a degree of transformation where,

once accepted as part of Rose's pleasures, she comes to relate to these places in a variety of ways, appreciating specific interactions which her mother may not value or even be aware of.

Rose's pleasure at the arcade is one example of an event which may reflect a pleasure that is specific to her and her brother but this space may have little significance for her mother. The excitement that Rose gains in an arcade may be more reflective of the spaces in which she interacts with her peers (see Chapter Seven), a play space (significant because this also provides an arena of interaction with her brother). An ability to combine the pleasure she associates with this space with a place whose value has emerged from a family network together creates an event in time where several of Rose's social schema 'fit' together in a particular moment, making them salient enough to recall to a relative stranger when discussing favourite experiences.

Rose's relationship with her great aunts and uncles will also be a different one to her mother's and so, once at their homes, these relationships can transform her experience into something which is valued by Rose for different reasons to her mother.

... in the evenings when we're at our aunt and uncle's in the Cotswolds, he's mad on wildlife and they've got a park very close to them and it's really big, and we just walked round it, and we were looking at all the flowers, and walking past the village hall and the church and everything, and it's just really healthy just to walk past all these places. It's really calm, and they've got this little river down, the stream, with little ducks (suburbs, lines 1311-8).

There is a great deal in the above extract which refers to Rose's pleasure in natural, less urbanised environments but in the context of this chapter, it is the passion with which her uncle enjoys wildlife which appears to be instrumental in the attention which the family gives to the flowers when they take an evening walk. She mentions a similar experience on another occasion when her family went on a walk at Brownsea Island with a woman whose identity Rose can not remember, but who was also very knowledgeable about wildlife, and Rose also enjoyed that experience

where the woman was able to tell her a great deal about the nature around them. It is the passion of her uncle's and the woman's interest which Rose finds compelling; they provide the excitement associated with learning something about wildlife and nature.

Rose never specifically mentions such passion or interest coming from her mother, but she does talk about her own interest in gardening being related to the fact that the whole family enjoys it and it is therefore quite feasible that her interactions with her family in the space of the garden at home has provided a grounding for her further interests in nature, which others have been able to provide for in their specialist knowledge and means of communicating with Rose. In fact, the excerpt below suggests that Rose's family do take an active interest in wildlife too, beyond gardening, which supports this relationship.

Me: You've got, I see you've got a couple of things put out for the birds. Do they get used much? Do you see much coming in?

Rose: Um, yeh, this morning we saw a blue tit go in, deciding if it was good enough for it. We didn't see it come back out again though, which is very strange.

Me: Oh, I hope it did! So do you keep it stocked up with food?

Rose: Yeh (suburbs, lines 1547-55).

Rose was part of a 'we' when the blue tit was spotted that morning and when they waited to see if it would reappear. The excerpt does not reveal who was instrumental in drawing attention towards the bird box on this occasion, but other material in our interview suggests that when Rose is responsible for noticing something or achieving something, her pleasure and pride in these things is always reflected in the way she tells me about these things in terms of 'I saw...' or 'I did...' rather than 'we', so it is quite likely that Rose's mother pointed out the blue tit on this occasion.

Transactions in Rose's family garden

Her father and mother both work on the garden, grow vegetables in a green house, and her grandmother has her own section which she tends and grows flowers in.

Rose had been helping in the garden (and she gets a say in what vegetables they grow in the greenhouse) but she also wanted her own section, so her mother provided her with an old wheelbarrow. During the interview her mother came into the room when we were talking about the wheelbarrow, and the dialogue which follows suggests that, once permission had been granted for Rose to have her own garden, her mother invested as much emotional pride in the space provided for Rose's gardening as Rose herself, if not more so.

Rose [showing a photograph]: B&Q, the garden centre, that one.

Mum: And that goes with this [the wheelbarrow]. I remember she came back and planted her wheelbarrow.

Rose: My wheelbarrow, yeh.

Mum: Oh well, you painted the wheelbarrow first, though.

Rose: I painted the wheelbarrow.

Mum: You had to buy the paint, then paint it and then plant it. You can see that, it's out here.

Me: Mmm, OK.

...

Me: And what did you decide in the end that you would try and plant in it? Flowers or...?

Rose: Yeh, flowers and trailing ones. I can't remember what I planted. I only planted it yesterday. But it's got all the little labels in there, so I know what I planted, but there's trailers, and there's some that will grow quite tall, and some which will just flower (suburbs, lines 43-8; 106-13).

As with Rose and her mother's attachment to Swanage and Dorset, it is often Rose who initiates the request (she and Darren **begged** to go and visit Swanage on their day trip, and she really wanted her own section in the garden which her mother then provided for her), but her mother's interests appear to be the initial influence on Rose and the development of her own interests. This provides a series of spaces where Rose, in relationship with her mother, draws on the objects and environments which connect them emotionally and physically and transforms them into behaviours and activities which are internally valued by Rose in her own way. Thus, we could understand the mother's provision of an old wheelbarrow as the transitional object through which Rose adopts and develops her interests in gardening and in nature, and the garden as one of the transitional spaces in which these interests and values come into being.

There are a number of other occasions when Rose chooses to adopt her mother's habits which her mother helps to facilitate but does not consciously initiate. One example draws on Rose's eating habits.

Me: Do you get to say much about the kind of stuff the family buys for food?

Rose: I put in what I want, 'cos I'm, I eat most things, yeh, but I'm quite picky about what meat I eat, because I won't eat beef, I won't eat some lamb, I won't eat some pork, and I won't eat some chicken or turkey. It has to be the right kind of meat, you see. I'm a bit picky.

Me: Oh right. Can you tell me a bit more? What's the reason for not eating certain kinds?

Rose: I just don't like it. I don't like the taste, and it just makes me feel ill, basically. I don't know, it's just I used to really like eating meat and everything, and then my mum turned vegetarian and I was still okay for a while, but then I started trying what my mum was eating, and I liked that as well, so, and I just don't like the taste of some of the meats anymore, I just don't. Tastes horrible to me (suburbs, lines 568-86).

In this excerpt, Rose claims that her reasons for not eating many kinds of meat are because her tastes have changed. However, she identifies her mother's change in diet as the turning point which led to her own transition. At face value it may be the case that her tastes have changed, but given the many other instances when Rose has adopted her mother's behaviours, the story above is likely to reflect a more significant pattern. Rose cannot tell me why her mother chose to become vegetarian; perhaps if she knew then this might provide her with her own rationale too. However, in the absence of this knowledge, she has constructed her own, personal explanation for a change in dietary habits. The pattern of events here suggests that it is the relationship with her mother that provides the foundation for her adoption of similar eating habits and the practice of these new behaviours provides a transitional space within which a change occurs in her internal reality to account for this change. Baron and Byrne (1997) describe a similar process as 'modelling' through which children adopt the behaviours of their parents through observing their actions and the process which Winnicott would describe as transitional in the above example would, in their terms, be a case of 'cognitive dissonance' where Rose needs to create an internal understanding to account for her change in external behaviour.

Another example of Rose's adoption and transformation of her mother's interests is her enjoyment of cookery. Cooking was listed under the hobbies section of her holidays collage, and she explained that this interest was inherited directly from her mother.

Cooking - that is because my mum's a home economics teacher and she teaches cooking, so she's been teaching me how to cook certain things, so I know how to fry an egg, sausages, bacon, fried bread, tomatoes, mushrooms, cakes, rice. I can make rice and things like that (lines 888-92).

Rose: I do cook breakfast. I do cooked breakfast, sometimes. It depends what mood I'm in.

Me: Is that mainly at the weekends when you've got more time?

Rose: Yeh, weekends, I do a big fry-up for my brother. He's, he's the carnivore of the family (suburbs, lines 694-701).

Rose does not spend any time during the interview describing the kinds of things about cooking as an activity in itself that she enjoys. This contrasts with Jane, from the rural school, whose best friend's mother is also a home economics teacher and they have great fun mixing things up and experimenting together in the kitchen, even when they do not achieve much (in fact, part of the fun was the mess that they usually made). Conversely, Rose's pleasure is in her achievements; the purpose of the activity is to make food which other members of her family will enjoy eating. Within the context of her relationship with her mother, it is possible that this tendency to value the achievement and success associated with an activity has also been learnt to some extent. Her mother's interventions to explain all the work required to produce the wheelbarrow garden also projects the importance of the outcome in these terms.

Achieving closeness: reflections on attachment

For Rose, the importance of the achievement can be seen in many of the activities she engages in. She also took up cross-stitch and tapestry with encouragement from her mother, who bought her a kit and a magazine with patterns. Because these activities are, to some extent, a reflection of a very close attachment with her mother, and Rose rarely mentions sharing any of these activities with friends, it

would seem that the activities provide pleasure only if the outcome demonstrates that Rose can mirror her mother's abilities. When she tries to improvise or try a new activity of her own, she quickly retreats from the task into the security of the home if the experiment is unsuccessful.

I've designed some of my own cross-stitch things, and I tried to do them. When I draw them out, and it just didn't really work, so I don't do that very often... Tapestry, same as cross-stitch really. Doesn't really make that much difference which I do, 'cos to me they're both quite easy to do (suburbs, lines 911-19).

Another example in a different arena is the church. The whole family goes to church, but they do separate things once they are there - Rose goes to Junior church and that is enjoyable because she has one very good friend there and they do activities like making cards (which is another of her hobbies).

'Cos me and my best friend are the most regular members of Junior church, so I'm proud of doing that (lines 478-80).

Yet again, it is in the achievement of being most regular members that marks the significance of the event, but I believe that Rose's pride is also due to her success at transforming her own church experience into something enjoyable and therefore compatible with her family's values. The Junior church is another transitional space, but one in which she is apart from her family. The activities that they do which are similar to some of her home hobbies, and the presence of a peer which she has established a relationship with, makes Junior church a space which Rose can incorporate as part of her everyday behaviour. But on other occasions, the objects within the church space have not made such a transition possible.

Rose: And I used to go to Guides and Brownies there, but I gave, I went to Brownies there, but I didn't go to Guides 'cos I didn't really enjoy it, so I didn't think I should go.

Me: You didn't enjoy what? - the people, activities...?

Rose: The Guides. Oh, some of the older girls were a bit rough and rude, so (long pause).

Me: No point if you don't get on, don't enjoy the social aspect of it. (Rose: No) And is there anything else that has taken its place? Do you do any other out of school clubs or activities?

Rose: Not yet.

Me: Are there any other kinds of activities that you'd be quite interested in trying or taking up? Things you'd go to?

Rose: I don't know. It would depend what came (suburbs, lines 511-25).

This is one of the few occasions during the interview where Rose strongly asserts an 'I'. She would have had to assert herself in negotiation with her mother to explain why she did not want to continue going to Guides. This is an example of an arena in which the family/mother-orientated schema, which would espouse attendance at a youth activity in the church, does not 'fit' with a peer schema in which Rose has not been able to enter into relationship with other girls who attend Guides. Once at the Guides evening it is the peer schema which is most relevant and Rose has to negotiate her own 'being' within this for a successful transition to occur. When this is not the case, she retreats, and does not seek an alternative location for peer interaction but waits to see what might come; most likely either another group which her mother will encourage her to try or something which an already established friend, or possibly a relation, might suggest.

Rose hardly mentions her friends during the interview; when I ask her directly whether she goes out much with people from school she told me that she has a group that she will visit the local shopping suburb and cinema with, and she told me that her best friend is the one that goes to Junior church regularly with her, but she does not talk about the interactions she has with these peers at all. It would seem that Rose has a fairly limited group of friends, and perhaps finds it quite difficult to make friends. Therefore many of her hobbies and activities are either done alone or with her mother, and her brother will also do certain things with her. Given that Rose's mother appears to have a strong desire to introduce her to her own valued experiences and interests in quite a directed, achievement-focused way, it is possible that this relationship reflects an attachment style which is, in part, the cause of Rose's limited social interaction with peers. McCandless (1969) suggests that children who have greater autonomy and whose parents permit access to peers will be rewarded by their friends via play behaviours and interaction. Shulman et al's (1994) study of pre-adolescents at an American summer camp showed that attachment style with caregivers had a demonstrable impact on the competence of children to form friendships. Rose's mother shares her favourite activities with her

daughter to such an extent that it appears to affect the ease with which Rose can form similar relationships with peers (or perhaps even the necessity for such peer interaction given the amount of time spent in activity with her mother).

Rose's mother's boundaries, Rose's boundaries

In addition to the less tangible emotional relationship that Rose has with her mother which has emerged from the interactions described above, Rose's mother also asserts spatial and temporal boundaries around Rose which gives her some control over Rose's activities and interactions with others. These boundaries reflect cultural understandings of 'good childrearing', a social construction of 12 year old childhood with reference to issues of risk, safety, emotional maturity (development), as well as reflecting the attachment style already discussed above.

Me: And do you have any kinds of restrictions on how far you can go, or places you can go to?

Rose: If my mum knows where we're going, and she knows that we're going to be there and that's where we're going to stay, and we don't go anywhere else, there's no restriction really. As long as it's not too far, like miles and miles away. But that's the main restriction really (suburbs, lines 312-19).

Rose is allowed to go to the local park and green field space with a group of friends, and she can take the underground with friends to the local shopping area which includes two small malls, one of which contains a cinema and arcade area. Therefore, she does have some freedom to go out with friends, but the conditions which her mother places on her range and mobility once out might exclude her from playing with certain groups of children from her new school, many of whom have fewer restrictions. Another of Rose's good friends who lives close to her is still in the last year of her primary school; this friend will remain important for many reasons, especially if Rose finds it difficult to make new friends at her new school. However, given her relationship with her mother it would also appear that Rose has not yet made (or been permitted to make) the transition to the kinds of behaviour espoused by some of her peers. The move to secondary school is very significant for many children, signifying new freedoms and a development in group identity; a theme which I will discuss further in Chapter Seven.

To what extent does a rule which requires Rose's mother to know exactly where Rose will be going and requesting that she stays at that one location really impact on the risks of going out beyond the home? In theory, if Rose failed to return home at the required time her mother would know where to go first if she felt the need to search for her. But her mother's knowledge of her location does not really affect the probability of involvement in a traffic accident or of 'stranger danger', although it could be argued that the mother places boundaries around locations which she believes her daughter to be more familiar with, and therefore she will be more adept at negotiating these spaces (e.g. knowing which is the fast road where she has to be extra careful when crossing). What I am suggesting here is that, although these physical and temporal boundaries may have some directly practical rationale, they are also symbolic of emotional boundaries; the extent to which the mother is willing to 'let go'. Whilst practically it may make little difference to potential risk, emotionally the mother is more at ease about allowing her daughter out of the home if she knows where her daughter will be. Because of Rose's very close attachment to her mother, she is unlikely to contravene these instructions at present, and does not make any reference to such resistance (unlike Christine in the next case study). However, she is not entirely persuaded by her mother's rules in all spaces:

Me: And do you have any, again, any household rules about not watching [television] after certain times? (Rose: No) Basically you watch whenever you want?

Rose: Whenever we want. If it's after nine o'clock we won't be allowed to; we just go up to our rooms and watch it anyway. 'Cos everyone's got a TV in their room, so they can't exactly stop us because, 'cos the other night, I woke up in the middle of the night and I couldn't get back to sleep and it was like four o'clock in the morning, so I just turned on the TV and turned the volume right down. So I just watched that instead (suburbs, lines 822-33).

Because Rose has a television in her own room (which her parents must have permitted and, most likely, purchased) she perceives television viewing rules as non-existent. Although her parents won't allow her to stay up past nine o'clock to watch TV in the lounge, these regulations do not appear to apply in the privacy of

her bedroom or, at the very least, her parents turn a blind eye to her contravention of the rule in that space. Therefore, the control of Rose's time with regard to TV viewing is again more symbolic than actual. If the rationale for terminating public viewing is because of inappropriate material after 9.00 p.m. or because of childrearing values that mean that 9.00 p.m. is late enough for a 12 year old who has school the next day, one would expect the rule to hold throughout the home. Rose's parents, probably unconsciously, are giving her a space in which to resist and 'rebel' albeit within limits which they set. Rose's bedroom is marked as a private space in which she can 'explore' her own boundaries, play and fantasise; it is a transitional space within the safety and security of the home where she can experiment with her own identity. For many girls, the space of the bedroom is especially valued for these purposes, as many have less freedom than boys to explore outdoors during adolescence (Valentine et al, 1998; McNamee, 1998).

In Rose's heavily family-orientated world, and in the absence of many strong peer relationships, it is the relationship with her brother which presents a means for her to access different kinds of play experiences and it is to this which I will now turn.

Rose and her brother: accessing play spaces

Rose looks up to her brother, Darren, and many of her activities are, in part, aimed at pleasing him. He is generally willing to play with her and, due to his age (15), provides her with an opportunity to do more exciting and independent activities when she is with him. However, the interview dialogue does not suggest that the former observation is Rose's conscious way of achieving the latter; the two aspects of their relationship are discussed independently but the good relations between the two siblings may result in Rose being particularly willing to help her brother, as a sign of reciprocity. If she appreciates his willingness to play with her and take her places, she may enjoy his appreciation and need for her skills when she does something to help him. For example, when Darren goes to the local shopping suburb after school, a brother might not want to be seen with a younger sister,

especially if he was with friends, but Rose appreciates the fact that he does not tease her or make her feel unwanted:

He has to bring me home from school, usually, so sometimes that involves, if he needs something from [the town] that means I have to go with him. But it doesn't matter - he doesn't mind that really. He's alright about it (suburbs, lines 708-11).

And, reciprocally, when she learnt to do cross-stitch:

Rose: ... and I made a Valentines thing for my brother to give to Beverley, so. I had to make it. I didn't get anything for it, I just had to make it. But I didn't mind, really.

Me: Did you have his gratitude? (Rose: Yeh) Oh well, you got something.

Rose: I was going to teach him how to do it at first, but then he sort of gave up, 'cos he asked me on the Monday before the thing, and I had to, on the Friday night I was working 'til 9.30 to have it finished, to give to him to give to her, so it's a bit of a rushed job, but it was okay in the end. It's quite nice (suburbs, lines 451-63).

Even though she might have felt angry with him for giving up, she really did not mind doing the stitching for him and actually takes a great deal of pride in the fact that she worked long hours to have it ready for him. She was quite pleased with her achievement, even though it was rushed.

Rose's enjoyment of play with her brother, and the way she looks up to him, provides a relationship through which she may try more adventurous or unusual things than she would with her mother. For example, on the rocks at West Bay:

Yeh, everyone just climbs about on it. It's really good. And once, there's a massive pier going out and, 'cos it's in a, 'cos it's a bay they have to control the water level, and we went once and it was really stormy and really rainy and all the waves were just crashing up over the top and basically sailing straight over us. And so we had to sort of run back and back further in. That was just, but me and Darren were having real fun, yeh, 'cos we were just, we were daring, we were running away from the waves and basically just having a laugh, really (suburbs, lines 1187-95).

Therefore the presence of an older, male sibling in Rose's family life provides another very valuable relationship through which she can enter a variety of transitional spaces which provide opportunities for greater adventure and risk, and

the testing of personal boundaries which involve her physicality; her sibling relationship provides a sense of safe space and emotional trust within which to experiment.

I have presented many facets of Rose's experiences in relationship with family members in considerable detail here. My aim has been to provide an introduction within which the concepts of transitional spaces, attachment, transactional and transformational theories can be located within an empirical case study. Having demonstrated some of the means by which I am applying these notions I will now proceed with the other case studies, drawing particular attention to alternative models of attachment and a variety of other transitional spaces. The purpose of this empirical analysis is to demonstrate the usefulness of transitional theories in elevating the social and emotional foundations for daily behaviours. These case studies demonstrate the substantial significance of these factors which have, until now, been excluded from E.E. research. This provides the grounding for the alternative approaches to E.E. that I will discuss in Chapter Eight.

CHRISTINE

Christine is 12 years old and lives in a small village about 30 minutes drive away from the village primary school that she attends. There were no other children from my sample at the school who lived in the village with her. However, Christine has a substantial group of friends in her village. Christine also spends some time in the school village with other school friends.

Christine's parents are divorced but both have remarried. All members of the family are 'White, British', and nominally Christian, although Christine does not discuss practising her faith. Christine lives with her mother and step-dad, Jack, and she spends every second weekend at her father's house, plus some holiday time. Christine has a close relationship with both her mother and father, but identifies much more closely with her father. This is a reversal of the stereotypical mother-daughter relationship. I discuss this further below.

Christine has a remarkable ability to incorporate everyone into an enlarged family, and gains real pleasure from the new and often exciting opportunities that interactions with step-relations and other family members can create. Christine takes advantage of all of these opportunities and is pro-active in helping to create these kinds of relationships, to the extent that she draws on the whole village as an extended family, as illustrated below. I will explore Christine's parental relationships (related to her parents attachment style) which, I believe, form the foundations for this behaviour a little later.

Me: You say everybody's generally very friendly, and people look out. Is that true for the new people coming in as well? Do they fit in?

Christine: Yeh, they fit in very well, 'cos me and Laura go and introduce ourselves. We do that with every new person in the village. So, yeh, they get, 'cos when I first moved in it took me about 6 months to get in with the village people and everything. But after that you just become one of the villagers and that (village, lines 1101-10).

The village provides a secure environment in which the interactions between the villagers, and especially the caring parental attitudes that Christine feels the adults show towards all the children, provide the basis for a safe place to establish new contacts with people. Christine understands that it is these relationships which create a feeling of being 'at home', also providing a secure space for children to play and explore.

Christine: But I wouldn't really like to live in a big town or something like that. I prefer to live in the country.

Me: Yeh, what? Any reasons for that?

Christine: I don't know if there's a reason; I like it because it's small and everyone's friendly and you know everybody, and like nothing, nobody would let anything happen to you, like all the parents in the village are watching out for everybody else's children (village, lines 1035-45).

Christine's ability to regard everyone in the village as part of an extended family mirrors the manner in which she has coped with her own family which is often changing and expanding. These new relationships provide new opportunities for adventure and secure spaces for play.

New relationships, new adventures

Christine spends time with many different members of her extended family. She introduces me to them in her photo-diary collection:

That's my grandpa, my grandma, my brother, my mum, and my sister and Jack [step-dad] (village, lines 160-1).

That's my dad, my step-mum, who's pregnant in that photo, but you can't really tell, and that's my step-mum's friend who she works with, Emma. And that's on my birthday. I went there for the evening (village, lines 170-3).

That's the whole of my mum's side of the family. That's my aunty, my brother, my grandma, my sis., no I don't have my sister there, my cousin, Kathryn, my grandpa, my other cousin, Carol, my mum, my step-dad Jack, and my auntie's new boyfriend, Tom (village, lines 179-83).

That was the day I was ill and off school for the day. And that's at my step-grandma's house, called Alice. She's Jack's mum (village, lines 199-201).

Oh, I do have more family who live in Southend. My step-mum's mum and dad and my step-uncle and my other step-uncle and my future-to-be step-aunty. If you can work all that out! (village, lines 278-81).

During her interview, Christine mentions many of the interactions that she has with these relations in terms of resources - opportunities to go to different places and try different activities. But her references to emotional attachments, shared interests and characteristics, and parental rules or boundaries are reserved for her birth parents alone. It appears that the stability she experiences with her parents and their encouragement to socialise within the village provides a secure 'home' basis upon which her interactions with her extended family can provide positive and exciting experiences.

Me: And if you go over to them, your cousins; you've got one there that's a similarish kind of age. What, if you're there for an afternoon, what kinds of things might you do if you're going over to them?

Christine: Well, well, they have lots of horses. We go and ride the horses a lot. 'Cos, um, her mum rides horses. She used to ride them for a living, but now she just rides them for fun (village, lines 287-94).

I love boats, yeh. And that's another thing I like doing, 'cos Jack's great-uncle is about 83 but he's completely mad. He owns a boat, he owns a

micro-light, he goes flying and everything. So he owns a boat and we go sailing on that a lot, and my grandma and grandpa live by a river, and they know people who own a boat and we go on that a lot. Yeh, I do like that. It's basically 'cos I like water. I love swimming, and things like that (village, lines 2039-46).

Christine's reference to her uncle being 'completely mad' here is interesting. Like Rose, who said that her uncle was mad about wildlife, 'madness' appears to be associated with someone who is passionate to an extreme about something (although in Christine's case, she may regard her uncle's flying habits as a really crazy interest to maintain at the age of 83!) . Like Rose, Christine is excited by and drawn to the activities which are introduced to her via somebody's passion. Tomlins and Froud's research (1994; also Morris and Schagen, 1996; Morris and Stoney, 1998) on the implementation of E.E. in schools, noted how often the existence of an E.E. policy in a school was dependent on the presence of a particularly passionate teacher with environmental interests. Likewise, Parry and Dicken (1997) have noted that pupils' interactions with a passionate teacher would present opportunities for the creation of transitional spaces in which their own environmental concerns might develop and the research demonstrated that if such a teacher then left, interest in E.E. within the school and amongst pupils would wane considerably or even disappear. It may appear to be a basic fact of good teaching practice, but the evidence suggests that in both daily interactions beyond the school, as well as in interactions with teachers within the school, the passion that an adult brings to the introduction of new experiences and knowledge plays an important role in establishing a relationship between adult and child (i.e. whether the adult provides a role model for the child who may then wish to become involved in similar ways of behaving). It was evident that Rose's mother was clearly a strong role model for her, in part because of the way in which her mother sought to involve her in many of her favourite activities. Christine's parents encourage her to spend much more time outdoors and socialising with others in the village, but the relationship that she has with her father shares some similar characteristics to Rose's relationship with her mother.

Holidays with dad

Christine included the weekends that she gets to stay with her father in her collage of favourite holiday experiences:

This is probably my favourite holiday - going to my dad's. I go there twice a week - no - once every two weeks. Um, and there's not a lot else I can say. We don't do a lot. We just sort of stay at home, we stay in on Saturday nights and then on Sunday we either go to the fruit market, go to my nan's, things like that. But mostly on Saturday nights, my dad loves brandy, and he drinks a bit too much and then he gets out the karaoke and he starts. It's a bit embarrassing though, 'cos he starts messing around with the karaoke. But that's quite good fun - I do like that. That's why, 'cos also going back to my singing lessons on the tape I did, The Power of Love, I couldn't do it, and it was too hard for me to do, and it doesn't sound too good. We went through all my dad's karaoke CDs and we found one that had The Power of Love on and I've been practising and practising and I'm much better now. So that's quite good (village, lines 2161-77).

Because Christine only spends weekends and some holidays with her dad, most of her interactions with him are opportunities for play. They both love singing and share many other interests; even though she could not think of many 'exciting' activities to tell me about, she clearly enjoys doing things together with her dad.

Christine: I either want to be a famous singer, but I think that's asking too much, it's called wishful thinking (Me: Well, aim high), or I want to be a jeweller, or I want to work in the police force. One of those three.

...

Me: What appeals about the police force?

Christine: I don't know. Um, I suppose because my mum works in the law courts as an usher and she comes home with all these stories. Also, I love 'The Bill' on TV. I don't know, I just sort of, I don't suppose it's solving crime that sort of really appeals to me. I suppose it's just, I don't know. I suppose it's just a child's fantasy of being able to arrest people and things like that. But, yeh, but I wouldn't actually like to work in the police force... I want to work in the armed police force. I don't know why. I just have this, I know if you listen back to the tape this is going to sound like I'm some kind of crazed killer, ... Not like I'm, 'cos I'm an exact replica of my dad. He's exactly like me. He wouldn't hurt anybody, he wouldn't be horrible to anybody, he's only once ever smacked me. And he would love to work in the police force too (village, lines 1517-48).

When Christine is thinking about a future career, she draws on the excitement that she associates with the police from a variety of sources; TV and her mum's stories.

However, after hesitating for a while (a lot of 'I don't know...'), she eventually tells me something about her fantasies. I have edited the above quote a little as I regard some of what she told me as very private material, but what is clear is that she has shared some of these private fantasies with her father and found that he holds similar thoughts. She also mentions being a jeweller in her three options; her father's career. She has a substantial collection of different rocks and minerals, some of which have been supplied by her dad but many which she has gathered or purchased herself ; his interest has become her interest. And when he married his second wife she got a necklace for being her step-mum's bridesmaid;

... but I was also best man at my dad's wedding and I loved that (village, lines 1457-8).

It is clear that one of the things she values a great deal in the relationship she has with her father is trust; something which her father also appears to invest in her. Sharing secret fantasies with him provides one example, but she also states this more explicitly when telling me about a tape of singing she made with her teacher.

Yeh, that's what my singing teacher keeps telling me; 'Just don't give up', and I keep going with it. It's like my dad. He heard it and he was so impressed with it 'cos he, he, like he's never, ever been horrible to me but he's going, 'Oh Christine, stop singing. You can't sing.', and like I played this tape to him and he's the sort of person who wouldn't say, 'Oh yeh, it's really good', when it wasn't. And he turned round to me and said, 'Christine, that's great' and he sort of goes, 'I'll tell you what. I'll give you, I'll give your singing teacher as much money as she wants if she can take me and you into the stud., into her studio type thing for one afternoon and we'll do a tape together, and I'm going to do a duet with my dad. So, I suppose if I don't give it up I might be able to get somewhere (village, 1622-35).

Christine does not consider the times when her dad has criticised her singing as bad or nastiness because she admires his honesty and knows where she stands with him. Because of this trust, she greatly values the praise he gives her, and the reaction she got to her songs on tape provided a moment of transition within the context of her relationship with him which gave her hope that she may really be able to achieve something with her singing if she keeps trying.

Living with mum: responsibilities and freedoms

Christine's relationship with her mother provides a different framework for her home experiences; her references to her mother in the interview suggest that this relationship is much more about providing a structure within which her responsibilities and freedoms are negotiated. Unlike her relationship with her father, she does not generally wish to emulate the daily behaviours of her mother, not even her hobbies (her mother loves gardening but it is not something that Christine is interested in helping with). However, there is one occasion in the interview where she does adopt her mother's behaviour:

Me: But there's nothing that comes up, say sometimes you hear about things on the news or generally that you hear about to do with food... That doesn't influence what your family buys in?

Christine: Like the mad cow disease scare? No. That hasn't bothered our family. We still eat it. We just say if it was here now it was here 5 years ago, we might have eaten it. So what? We might be run over by a bus tomorrow.

Me: Yeh, that's true. That's quite a good way... (Christine: To put it).. yeh. When you hear about statistics, people sometimes react too much.

Christine: Yeh, no we wouldn't because, I mean, if we die because of that tomorrow at least we enjoyed the food we eat today. That's what my mum says (village, lines 1144-63).

Unlike Rose who rarely explained her activities without reference to 'we', Christine describes many of her daily behaviours in terms of her own interactions; a stronger sense of self-identity is reflected by an 'I'. Yet in the above excerpt, as well as adopting her mother's behaviour, these are justified in relation to a 'we' identification. This is indicative of the nature of the particular issue and the dominant themes which emerge from her relationship with her mother. The issue of mad cow disease (BSE) is one where the information available from the media is complex and advice regarding consequent behaviour is confused. According to Bowlby's theories of attachment and Winnicott's basis for transitional theories, a child is most likely to look to the security of the mother (in the context of 'home', both physical and symbolic) at times of greatest uncertainty. Christine makes a clear decision to respond to the issue by allowing her mother to provide the logic

and clarity by which to proceed. For Christine to behave otherwise, an alternative argument would need to be sufficiently convincing to cause her to resist family mealtime eating behaviours and insist on the provision of other foods. This is a significant barrier to change; even if Christine had initially been concerned by the scare (and the excerpt above does suggest that the matter must have been discussed within the home at some point), her mother's explanation of their continued dietary practices, coming from the emotional source of Christine's security, is sufficient for her internal reality to 'fit' her external behaviour (i.e. any potential cognitive dissonance is resolved).

Christine's mother provides further practical (incorporating the emotional) guides to security within which Christine can explore beyond the home. She demonstrates certain kinds of caring behaviours towards her daughter, providing her with plenty of time to engage in play by freeing her from most household duties, and it would appear that Christine has adopted similarly 'motherly' kinds of attitudes towards her little brother, who she is often asked to supervise and entertain.

Although her mother's reasons for encouraging Christine to venture out beyond the home regularly may partly be due to her own need for space, it is also clearly an active desire to see her daughter adopt sociable behaviours and take enjoyment in exploration and play. She provides 'safety rules' in various settings to help facilitate these activities within secure physical and emotional boundaries (both for her and her daughter).

Christine: And also, next weekend, not this weekend, next weekend, after we get our 12 plus results, because we get them on Friday the seventh and on the eighth, me, Susan and Carol are all going shopping in [the town] to celebrate or commiserate. We decided that would be a good idea. So Susan's parents are taking us and one of my parents are bringing us back So we're all getting money for doing the 12 plus, so it's like a treat...

Me: Oh, that's nice. So, you say in [the town]. Is that the big indoor shopping centre they take you to?

Christine: Yeh, the big indoor shopping centre. They, like, drop us off, wait around for about an hour just to make sure nothing's happened, and it's alright 'cos my parents, my other parents, my dad and step-mum work there... So if anything happens I do know people there, so it's not that, well

it's not safe, but it's not dangerous. I don't think a lot could happen (village, lines 891-917).

Christine is very aware of the perceptions of safety which her parents negotiate in determining the boundaries of her peer activities. She appears to have an implicit respect for the caring which underlies these decisions, regardless of any objective security actually achieved by the measures. However, within the context of the village where she is given freedom to roam with her friends, her familiarity with the place and the elevation of peer schemas once she is outdoors with them, lead to her occasionally acting in ways which she suspects would transgress her mother's security boundaries if she knew about them. She feels secure enough to engage in these activities and negotiates this aspect of her own internal reality by keeping these behaviours private from her mother. The following example provides an illustration of how peer 'schemas' can become dominant within a framework provided by the child-parent relationship. This enables Christine to enter transitional spaces in relationship with peers that facilitate her growing independence.

Christine: So they [other children in the village] come knocking for you and then if you don't come out they go knocking for somebody else until they've got a bit of a gang and then they go wandering around the village, not doing a lot. In the Winter there's a pond down there, although my mum doesn't like us doing this, she doesn't know that I do do it, but there's a pond down there that's very very thickly frozen - you can't even see the bottom. And sometimes we go skating round the edge of that, 'cos it's not deep; I know it's not deep 'cos someone's fallen in it before and it only comes up to about your waist.

Me: Yeh, still, I suppose it would give you a bit of a shock.

Christine: It would give you a shock I suppose, and I know I'm not meant to do it, but I still do these things. But I do pay attention to things like that and I wouldn't do anything completely stupid. (village, lines 773-90).

Christine also tells me about the fun they have around the 'Haunted House' with her school friends in the school village.

Me: I think it's quite nice to hear though, particularly in a village where there's maybe only 2 or 3 main places that people go, that they've got something like that that they can have some fun with as well.

Christine: Yeh. Most children, when they're younger, they do things that their parents won't let them do. I don't think parents know that they do

them, but I don't think they care 'cos they probably did that when they were younger.

Me: That's right, yeh.

Christine: I'm sure my mum would stop me doing it, though (village, lines 865-77).

Christine appears to consciously understand and therefore successfully negotiate her own behaviours within the context of 'normative' child and parent behaviours. She is suggesting that parents, in allowing their children unsupervised exploration and play opportunities within set boundaries, semi-consciously collude with their children to bend rules and cross some of the boundaries. However, if Christine's specific actions were known or discussed by her mother she is certain that her mother would respond according to a normative parental response.

This exchange is interesting because it demonstrates an acute awareness and acceptance of her own construction as 'child' by her mother yet simultaneously she is pleased with her ability to develop a conscious awareness of her own self-identity. Further, she appears to recognise the vital role that her mother plays in facilitating the means by which she can make these discoveries via the same structures which also provide clear boundaries. Skynner and Cleese (1983) would identify these behaviours as examples of a healthy attachment style, encouraging the development of the identity of the child whilst providing a secure emotional 'home' within which this development can occur; this attachment style has also been linked with a child's ability to make new friends and exhibit pro-social behaviour in general (Shulman et al, 1994; Baron and Byrne, 1997).

I will now turn to consider some of the boys who took part in the research and the parental and sibling relationships which are relevant to their everyday activities. As I will explain below, an analysis on these themes proved to be a considerable challenge.

ANALYSING THE BOYS' INTERVIEWS: NEW GAMES, NEW RULES

Introduction

I experienced considerably greater difficulties analysing the boys' interviews compared to those of the girls. There were a number of reasons for this. Boys generally tended to voluntarily provide less detail during interviews so the material did not appear to be so rich. They tended to talk about what they liked and what they did as individuals much more but there was less explicit mention of important influences on their behaviour making it more difficult to know 'why' they engaged in particular activities. As a female researcher I found it difficult to find topics where I could relate to their experiences in the ways I found possible with the girls - it was also difficult to sense how much of this could be attributed to their tendency to talk about things in less detail anyway, and how much reflected on my position and skills as a researcher.

As a result, I felt less confident about some of the categories that I had begun to generate in my initial analysis of boys' interviews, particularly after having begun this work with several girls' interviews. However, it soon became evident that the reasons for this went much deeper than simply being a product of their briefer accounts and my perspective as an adult woman; for some of the boys' daily activities *were* orientated around different internal and behavioural schemas to some of the girls. For example, there were far fewer references made directly to parental influence or control; many more of their daily activities were orientated around peer schemas; and some of the richest descriptions and details referred to the spectacular and exciting as events in themselves, sometimes without much indication of the social relationships through which these events were experienced. These observations fit well with Hallden's analysis (1994) of 8-9 year old children's stories about their future families in Sweden, discussed in Chapter Two.

I am cautious of dealing in generalities here, as it is also well-established that characteristics which are constructed as 'masculine' are commonly found in both

males and females, and likewise with 'feminine' characteristics (Flax, 1993; Chodorow, 1994). The individual children who participated in my research demonstrate that their behaviours cannot be causally linked to such general principles in a straightforward manner and not all the boys and girls in my small group of participants conform to sex-based 'norms'. It is not the function of this thesis to provide further support for or against these gender debates; my research material and methods do not permit such an examination.

However, my initial difficulties both during interview and in analysis were real, and this creates problems which need to be addressed for this empirical analysis to proceed. In a chapter which is dedicated to family relationships there are a number of boys who do not comment on these sufficiently for me to be able to suggest the significance of these relationships in their lives with any degree of certainty. Nevertheless, the limited explicit mentions of family interaction found in all the boys' interviews suggest considerable consistency for the most important times when these interactions occur. The several boys who do make greater reference to family matters, in particular contexts, raise possibilities for understanding the role of these relationships further. Therefore, my strategy in the presentation of these final case studies is to draw on three children in particular who are able to illustrate some of the most important functions of family relationships for these boys. But I will also make reference to several other participants to provide further evidence for my analysis where required.

DIPESH

Many of the boys who spoke of parental relationships and the activities they did with a parent or other family member had similar experiences to Christine (for example, Adam, discussed in the next case study). They related to their fathers most in terms of activities, hobbies and hopes for the future but their mothers provided a secure 'home' framework within which they negotiated access to friends, outings, hobbies and material things. The mother often seemed to be

identified with these roles and rules, even if they also worked and were not always available at home.

Dipesh was recruited from the suburban school. He is 'Asian, British' and a Hindu. Dipesh's relational structures are slightly different to the more dominant, male pattern. Although his mother continues to provide behavioural rules and boundaries, he also shares many of her interests, and her family relationships abroad have been transformed into valuable transitional spaces in which his own identity is developing. This fairly strong attachment to his mother can be partly understood in the context of his father's very long working hours and absence from Dipesh's world during most of the week. Although Dipesh likes to play and have fun with his father, the only example that he provides of this interaction is in his father's newsagent store, i.e. an opportunity to be with his father was created by accompanying him to work on a Sunday morning. The location of this interaction in the workplace meant that he could only take his games so far; if he messed around too much with his father's employees then he got into trouble because his father was concerned about reactions from customers.

Learning with mother

Dipesh is twelve and he has a ten year old sister, but she is barely mentioned during the interview. He occasionally plays games in the garden with her (but they like different games), and sometimes helps her with work on the computer but says that they do not do anything else together. When he is not with a friend at home, or out for an occasional afternoon with a large group of school friends during the holidays, most of his other activities are either conducted alone or with his mother. With limited resources for his own entertainment and a more rigid set of rules than most of the boys have about going out unless he is with a large group of friends, Dipesh is more likely to turn to his mother and to spend time in relationship with her to create opportunities for activity and creativity. The time that they spend together can help to create an arena for 'informal' learning which I have argued is

the reciprocal and transitional space through which a child realises their own identity and develops their own behaviours.

A combination of a father who can not be available for play very often, a lack of other local relatives or older cousins to interact with, and the mother's fairly confining range boundaries all contribute to the construction of an arena where Dipesh and his mother interact a great deal.

Me: ... are there any other jobs that are your jobs, or not really?

Dipesh: Well, doing the gardening. Me and my mum. She likes gardening, so we do gardening, putting plants from here to there. Doing the Hoover, doing the dishes, washing the dishes and everything.

Me: So you do quite a bit. Do you enjoy gardening, or do you just do it to help her?

Dipesh: I do, yeh, I enjoy gardening (suburbs, lines 557-68).

It is interesting that although Dipesh enjoys gardening with his mother, he does not seem to have taken ownership of this activity to quite the same degree as Rose. When he went to India with his uncle he mentioned his mum's sister's gardening interest in relation to his mum's hobby rather than his own. This may simply reflect the relationship which exists between the two women which makes it seem more appropriate to refer to the similarity between them rather than to his common interest. However, there are also other occasions when Dipesh seems to involve himself in a number of his mother's activities without a transition occurring where he sees them as part of a repertoire of activities which are 'his'. For example, when he was in India he bought a model of the Taj Mahal, but this was a contribution to his mother's collection of holiday souvenir ornaments (something she likes to display in the lounge) rather than the beginning of his collection.

These observations suggest that although Dipesh' mother can fulfil a very important function in playing with him and involving him in activities, these transactions do not necessarily produce the transitions which were evident in the interactions between Rose and her mother. There could be many reasons for this; it is not possible to identify the 'moment' or the precise nature of a relationship which can provide the framework in which a transitional behaviour will occur.

However, Dipesh' responses to other opportunities he has had with male relations suggest that gender is likely to be an important factor in understanding the difference between him and Rose (Chodorow, 1989).

Adventures with my cousin-sister's¹ husband

Dipesh: Everywhere except Bombay, I think, there's cows roaming about and bulls...

Me: They don't belong to anybody?

Dipesh: Because they're wild, they're wild ones. And once I nearly had an accident with one. There was like, we [cousin-sister's husband] were at full speed because we had to go somewhere and there was this man, he had just grazed the cows and there was one cow, we were going full speed, and there was like, you know a hedge, on motorways here (Me: Mmm), well there was like a cow hiding behind it and we, when we got there we put a sudden brake because the cow was coming but we couldn't stop it and the cow's horn, you know the cow's horn, we banged it and he broke our glass. He broke our glass our van just turned right at the edge of a hill.

Me: Oh! That was scary.

Dipesh: Er, yeh! (laughs). It really happened. The front two tyres were off the pavement. (Me: Wow!) But we quickly reversed it, quickly got out as well... But luckily no-one was hurt. That was the main thing (suburbs, lines 731-63).

Dipesh also tells me that a lorry went into the back of them at a police stop barrier when he was with the same man. He tells me about the wild monkeys that ran over and banged on the car roof and about the wild animals that he threw stones at with his male cousins on the streets in India, which he would never do at home (both he and his mum love pets). These exciting adventures provide the times in the interview when Dipesh is most animated and goes into most detail in retelling the stories. India was a strange and exciting place but it was also the place where he had an opportunity to interact with male relations who took him on exciting adventures. This was a world away from his local outings with mum.

Dipesh: Sometimes if I haven't got anything I take my cycle out and go round the block.

Me: Right, you just do that by yourself, go round.

Dipesh: Yeh, but my mum's gotta know where I'm going.

Me: Yeh, do you have many rules regarding that, how far you can go or who you can go with?

¹ Dipesh and several other Asian participants use this terminology to refer to a female cousin.

Dipesh: She says, well sometimes if we're going out to Parsons Road [local shopping parade] I take my bike and she comes with me because I haven't been there before, and big crossings so, as well (suburbs, lines 568-82).

His mother is also the keeper of religious knowledge. He acknowledges that there are rules which influence his diet but always has to check with his mother to know which foods he is allowed; he knows that he cannot eat beef but he does not really understand why. It is also his mother who is responsible for the statues of various Gods in the lounge and other rooms in the house. He does not know much about them but he was very excited when some of them started to drink milk in an incident related to an international miracle reported in Hindu communities. This was a transitional experience for Dipesh. Other discussions about religion revealed that Dipesh had little understanding of his faith, but he marvelled at these miracles and became very excited when telling me about the amazing event that he had witnessed. Although he was still uncertain about the nature of his own faith, these Gods now acquired a new significance in his imagination, greater than had been the case prior to the miracle. As such, his own experience was embedded within the tradition of his family and the events which affected his whole community.

Quite a few miracles happened. Like, did you hear on the news about one of the Gods? (Me: The thing with the milk?) Yeh. That's one over there. And there's one and there's one. I'll show you. That's one, that one there drank it, and this one, I think, drank it. This one didn't (suburbs, lines 1707-11).

Dipesh also told me about all the animals that were important for the various Gods depicted in his house and, although he did not know the details, he knew that stories existed to explain why these animals were special friends to the Gods.

Like many of the mothers of the children in my research, Dipesh' mother also provides the boundaries within which their emotional and physical securities are constructed and negotiated. But, as Hallden's research (1994) found, it is opportunities to transgress or test boundaries, the adventures and new experiences which are especially exciting for Dipesh and play an important role in the development of his own identity. His trip to India with another relation provided

an opportunity to behave in these more 'masculine' ways but his daily home life is more rigidly controlled by his mother; her interests and beliefs provide the framework in which his own daily experiences occur and the degree of interaction between them creates the arena in which Dipesh engages in more traditionally 'feminine' activities within the home.

ADAM

Adam was also recruited from the suburban school and is 'White, British'. He lives with his mother, father, 18 year old brother and 7 year old sister, in a home in a cul-de-sac where many other children of similar ages also live. These children play outside together and hang out in the local area whenever they can, so Adam has a very active social life with his peer group. He also spends a great deal of his time playing football, both socially and for several local teams. In the past he has played for the youth teams of major league clubs (e.g. Watford, QPR). He was not currently playing for one of these teams when we met, although he hoped to attend trials for Luton in the near future.

Adam's experiences resembled those of many of the boys who took part in the research, but whose interviews had revealed less about family relationships. This is a reflection of both their actual and desired freedoms to play and be with friends. Adam's family is a particularly close, supportive unit, providing a very secure 'home'. It would appear that many boys who feel secure about their home relationships can then engage with their peer group effectively, and this provides their main arena for play, adventure and excitement, and pleasure. I believe that this is one of the reasons why many boys did not discuss their family interactions a great deal in our interviews - the family context was somewhat taken-for-granted. In the next case study I discuss Leon, who talked about his family quite a lot, but this was because of the difficulties and insecurities he experienced in that arena.

Because of the nature of the family and peer frameworks that contribute to Adam's daily activities and behaviours, many of the experiences that might be

identified as 'transitional' take place in relationship with friends. These are discussed in Chapter Seven. However, in the context of this chapter, I provide some examples of the ways that Adam's parents provide a secure 'home' and facilitate his peer activities. They are also his role models; Adam is clearly very proud of his family. He does not have many other relations, and his parents and siblings (particularly his older brother) are important figures on whom Adam models some of his own behaviours and activities.

Models of 'mothering' and 'fathering'

One of the most striking features about Adam's references to his mother and father is the way they reflect almost opposite behaviours, largely conforming to dominant gender roles. Their personalities correspond to Hallden's (1994) analysis of male and female family roles (discussed in Chapter Two) extremely closely. On the one hand, mum provides physical and emotional boundaries to Adam's activities and behaviour. Adam refers only to his mother when discussing restrictions on his freedoms:

Me: Do you have, when you're going out and so on, mum and dad giving you restrictions as to where you can go and can't go?

Adam: No, if I said like, 'I'm going to Piccadilly Circus', like with a few friends, they'd say, 'No, you're not'. But if I was like say going to [town], they'd say, 'Yeh, that's alright', or [town]. I haven't been there by myself yet, I don't know if she'd, but she'd probably let me if I was, depends who I was going with. If I was going like with a few friends that she didn't like then she wouldn't let me go ... (suburbs, lines 697-707).

Adam's mother is also identified as the primary carer of other family members. For example, she is responsible for ensuring that the whole family visit his nan each weekend. She bakes a cake to take with them every Sunday morning, and ensures that her husband and son accompany her after they have finished their morning football fixtures. She is also responsible for ensuring that he maintains a healthy diet.

This is over my nan's [photo]. The cake was over my nan's, and we were just going over to see her. She's, she's been in hospital, but she just got out,

so we go and see her every Sunday. We always take a cake, 'cos she likes a cake (suburbs, lines 35-8).

We see my nan's every weekend. If we don't see her one weekend we see her the next weekend, 'cos they haven't got no husbands or anything, 'cos they're dead. So it's quite nice for them to see us, so they're not by themselves (suburbs, lines 577-80).

Me: And shopping - at Tesco's and so on, food and MacDonalds and so on, do you take much of a role, part in what comes in for food?

Adam: Oh no, my mum's the master at that. She decides what's coming in and what's not. If we want a cereal and it's not good for you, then 'No, you're not having that, you're having muesli', and stuff like that (suburbs, lines 717-24).

Adam discusses these activities and consequent impacts on his own time and behaviour implying that, although these are not behaviours which he then 'learns' as part of his own repertoire, he clearly appreciates their importance. As such, his mother is valued and respected for the role she plays in protecting family health, and being a reliable source of care for family members in need. She therefore provides a solid base of security who Adam can 'test' possible activities or behaviours with to see if they fall within her boundaries of acceptability.

On the other hand, Adam's father is the free spirit of the family. He is involved in exciting activities, like his own Blues band that performs pub gigs. He also manages one of the local football teams that Adam plays in. Adam plays the clarinet (an instrument that his mother used to play), but his identification with his father is reflected amongst several ideas he has had about a future career.

Me: And do you have ideas about your future at the moment? Are you interested in doing football professionally?

Adam: Yeh. I find that I'd like music to be, I like music. I like playing clarinet a lot. And I like a vet. And I go to my mum, 'I'd like to be a fire, fire, um, fire brigade person' and she goes, 'No you don't, no you don't', like she didn't want me to, so I won't be one of them. One of the jobs my mum wouldn't want me to do (suburbs, lines 635-42).

This exchange also reinforces his mother's role again. On a number of occasions the different roles that his parents play in modelling and shaping his own interests and behaviour are emphasised by the kind of contribution they make to a particular issue. In the first illustration, Adam's father is taking part in the exciting activity -

playing with his band - whilst his mother is the one who explains why it is not appropriate for Adam to go out with him yet. In the latter example, Adam's father is taking advantage of the mother's early departure for work by taking the children out to MacDonalds for breakfast - a relatively rare treat for Adam:

Me: Have you heard them [the band]?

Adam: They practice here sometimes, but I'm not allowed to go, 'cos they don't get back here 'till about one in the morning, and I'd be too tired. I wanna go, but my mum won't let me, and it's in a pub and some people get drunk and that (suburbs, lines 686-91).

Adam: [photo] OK, this is on the same day [as a football game], but earlier. We went to MacDonalds in the morning, 'cos my mum was at work and we was hungry and my dad said, 'We'll go to MacDonalds, get something to eat' (suburbs, lines 154-7).

Adam does not mention his brother and sister a great deal, but this is at least partly due to the age gap between them all. His 18 year old brother is seldom at home, although Adam likes to play with him when he can. He has great respect for his brother, who once had intentions to be a vet (see Adam's list of potential future careers, above). When Adam talks about his brother's basket ball playing abilities, and the fact that *even he* can not manage to complete the computer game, *Tomb Raider*, it is clear that his older brother's skills provide a target for Adam to aspire to.

Adam's sister is only 7 years old. However, she is also mentioned, in the context of play. She plays out on the street with Adam and his friends, on roller blades, and also plays football with Adam and his dad. She is a good companion, partly because she conforms to his play preferences². Perhaps she looks up to Adam in much the same way that he admires his brother, allowing Adam to take on the mantle of 'role model' and responsible guide sometimes too - roles which he has learned from his parents and brother.

² Although he does not discuss the nature of their relationship explicitly, she is mentioned several times as an integral part of the groups that Adam plays with. When I ask if she plays in any football teams, he answers, simply, that she has not expressed a desire to yet. But he does not indicate that this might be inappropriate for a girl. She appears to be one of the 'gang'.

LEON

Holidays-out of-relationship

Leon's interview revealed a great deal about the significance of family relationships for two main reasons. Firstly, *because* of the relationship which he had with me as the researcher, and secondly, because his family relationships, by being problematic, contributed to the extent that he spoke of them. Leon's parents are divorced and have been apart for at least 5 years (the age of his little brother, who has a different father who is also no longer part of the family home). He hardly ever sees his father and currently has very few other family interactions. His mother is no longer on speaking terms with her mother and they have not had good relations with her brothers and sisters since he was about three years old. He occasionally spends time with an aunt, especially on the few occasions when his mother has taken a holiday without him. Leon was recruited from the suburban school, and his family are 'Black, British'³ and Christian.

Leon did not produce a holiday collage for the project; although he could tell me about day trips to theme parks, youth Summer schemes that he used to go to when he was younger and other things he did with friends when he was off school, Leon had no holidays away from home that he could speak of. Holiday periods brought this difficult family context into sharp relief:

Me: So what else have you been doing this holiday? Tell me about where you've been.

Leon: Nowhere. Just been watching TV and going to parks. All kinds of parks - [name] Park, [name] Park, [name] Park, [name] Park. There wasn't much more parks than that.

Me: Yeh? What you been doing down the parks?

Leon: Um, at [name] Park we go swimming, at [name] Park we go swimming, at [name] Park we play on the slides and all that. We don't do a lot of things. It's boring. I hate holidays (Me: Yeh?) Well, I like being off school, but there's nothing to do on holidays. I just play out with Chris [neighbour] all the time (suburbs, lines 95-109).

³ See caveat on ethnicity at the end of this chapter.

Leon is given a great deal of freedom to go out and be with friends. But with limited financial resources and little parental input to take him or his friends further afield, holidays become mundane and unexciting. Compare his response to the time he spends in the park with friends to Christine's pleasure in going out with friends in the village. Christine's enjoyment was related to the emotional security of her home and her extension of this framework into the whole village within which she could play, have adventures, transgress boundaries and explore fantasies. Several of the other boys who were interviewed also provided their most rich and vivid descriptions when talking about exciting events, holidays and outings. Compared with Leon's lack of activities-in-relation with family members presented here, I am suggesting that some of the other boys, just as with Christine, are able to respond and be a part of these activities because there is a degree of stability and certainty in their family relationships which provide for their emotional foundations. Leon does not have this stability and this has an impact on his responses to a more restricted set of play opportunities with peers but not adults, and this may also influence his responses to the environments in which he can go for this play.

Leon's lack of enthusiasm at this time was probably heightened by the recent disappointment of being let down by his dad. His dad was meant to take him out during the Easter holiday when we met but he did not turn up. The times that he has spent with his dad have also provided further access to relations; his grandparents, other aunts and uncles on his dad's side and some step-brothers and sisters. He did live with his father for a short time but his mother wanted him back. His awareness of this would indicate that he knows that he has been the subject of argument in the past and this may contribute to his apparent self-identity as someone who is perceived by others as trouble.

I always get in trouble, 'cos of Roy [brother], I get in trouble all the time (suburbs, lines 857-8).

Leon: I wanna learn the guitar. Me and Amet want to learn the guitar. We keep asking Mr. Gater but we keep being naughty in class and we keep blowing it!

Me: What do you do in class that... ?

Leon: Talk...Yeh, I can't help it. I just have to say something. I just don't like it when it's all quiet and peaceful (suburbs, lines 478-88).

The interactions Leon has with his mother which he chooses to talk to me about all refer to her pleas for him to stop causing trouble. Likewise, his school teachers regarded Leon as an attention-seeker and someone who always plays the fool (in fact, one teacher suggested that I might experience discipline difficulties in my group meetings with Leon present). Leon is acutely aware of the way in which he has been 'labelled'. He explains this as a discomfort with silence - he loves loud, busy places such as big cities and theme parks. Like many of the other boys, he desires excitement but a lack of family members who can facilitate such experiences leaves him having to imagine many of these places. But, simultaneously, he appears to think that he is at least partly to blame for this isolation because when he does interact with adults (his mother and teachers), he is constantly reminded of his troublesome behaviours.

Noise, distraction, excitement - looking 'out', avoiding 'in'

During my early meetings with Leon, I interpreted his great enthusiasm to attend lunch time meetings and take part in every stage of the project as a response to my willingness to let him speak at will. He did not complete either of the assignments (although he did take 6 photographs for his diary) but this bore no relationship to his pleasure in continuing. When I called him to arrange a home interview he responded as soon as I had identified myself on the telephone with, *'Hi Rachel! When are you going to come and see me?'* - by far the most enthusiastic response I received during the entire project. It soon became clear that there were very good reasons for his interest in having my attention. It is possible that I was one of the only adults that he was currently in relationship with who listened unquestioningly to his side of the story and let him talk freely about what was on his mind (For example, at the end of the interview, after the tape had been switched off, this included a discussion about what happened after someone died, related to the recent dumping of a young baby in his local park which had greatly disturbed him). This discussion emerged through the development of a trusting relationship.

Leon's mother studied at college to try and gain new qualifications to improve her employment prospects (so she was not present a great deal of the time and was unable to dedicate much of her attention to him) and, while he respected many of her wishes, he did not place great trust in, or feel much security with, his mother. When he talks about the friction between him and his brother, he notes:

He's five. Always playing on my Sega. He won't let me have a go. And my mum keeps telling me off, keeps telling me off for saying, 'Let me have a go Roy!' and then I'm in trouble. And mum comes in and says, 'Come on! Just peace and quiet'... Parents don't understand. They're so sad (lines 245-59).

It is interesting that Leon's assessment of his mother's lack of understanding here comes shortly after repeating her frequent plea for 'peace and quiet.' It is clear that Leon is an unhappy child. He feels let down by a number of relations whom he believes have promised him things and then failed to keep these promises. (Another example - his grandmother promised to take him on a trip when he turned twelve and he is now nearly thirteen and she does not respond to his queries about this). Yet, simultaneously, he is made to feel that he is to blame for the relationships that he has with family members and teachers. Noise, activity, excitement and interaction can divert his attention away from himself and outward towards the eye-catching and the spectacular or even the fantasy. Silence heightens his feelings of loneliness, uncertainty and lack of self-confidence. He has one good friend - his neighbour Chris. Unfortunately Chris 'fancies' Kathy, who lives next door to him and she fancies Chris and the closeness of their relationship makes him feel excluded, even though they still let him play with them. He does have one or two other friends who are part of local gangs of boys in local estates who get together in the parks, hang around and make 'camps' in the undergrowth and using whatever they find in the local estates for fantasy games. But, whilst these peer interactions provide opportunities for fun and play, his boredom in holidays when they are the only source of entertainment suggest that the absence of adult role models and secure parental attachment (or with other relations) are central to his unhappiness.

Fantasy - a safe, controllable world in which to 'explore'

Leon enjoys playing on his video games, reading his Marvel comics or watching one of the complete set of Bruce Lee or Van Damme videos that he has collected. In the absence of good relationships with adults and in particular with male role models, fantasy figures play a part in fulfilling some of these functions.

Leon: Yeh, I'm very much into Kung-fu and martial arts. I've got all the Bruce Lee videos, all of them. All the Jackie Chan videos. And most of the Van Damme videos.

Me: So you like watching them.

Leon: When I'm a black belt at Tai Kwondo I'm going to go on to karate... And there's this Chinese guy who comes in, yeh, he's wicked at Tai Kwondo. He's done the splits and everything. And he's done this flying kick. 'Cos he jumps in the air, yeh, and he's two feet went Bam! Bam! Yeh! Like that. Excellent! (suburbs, lines 372-97).

I am cautious of reading too much into the utilisation of fantasy to fulfil important functions in Leon's development of self-identity which I am suggesting might otherwise be provided for by a relationship with an adult. The interview material is not sufficiently detailed to interpret such findings confidently, although my assertion of the relevance of these observations would appear to be in line with similar observations emerging from behavioural psychology (Skynner and Cleese, 1983). I would like to present one further section of the interview which I believe does suggest a relationship between the importance of fantasy and the lack of an adult-child relationship which can provide the necessary framework for Leon's exploration and search for identity. I am suggesting that fantasy helps to create structures in Leon's 'internal reality' within which he can explore identity and escape some of the 'labels' which have been assigned to him.

Transformations-in-fantasy environments

Leon is very attached to a set of toys which are extremely old:

Leon: I'm very much into transformers. I don't know why. I like transformers - robots in disguise.

Me: Yeh, I thought that's what you meant. I didn't know they made them still.

Leon: 'Cos they've sold out. I've liked transformers since when I was a baby. I like the way they change into other things. Robot changes into other things. And there was one that changed into four, three things. It changed into a robot, a train and a plane (suburbs, lines 318-28).

Later, in the bedroom that he shares with his brother, he shows me one of the transformers and makes it change. As he starts to tell me about his transformers his brother shouts out that they belong to him now to which Leon concedes that his mum gave them to Roy and told Leon that he was too old for them now. There is tension between his internal reality, which made them *his* in the stories of his relationship with these toys, until his brother's intervention suggested an alternative reality. Leon then acknowledged this 'external reality' which had been created by his mother's actions. The toys are simultaneously his brother's because his mum says he is now too old, but they are also his, because he has loved them since he was a baby. In an 'external' environment which rarely seems to go the way he wants it to go, fantasy can provide a haven of security - an emotional 'home'. If Leon has been particularly attached to these toys since he was a baby then, following Winnicott's theories on the origins of the transitional object, his mother's removal of his 'ownership' of these toys has been particularly distressing. This loss which is experienced in relationship with his mother could be conceived as a transitional space through which Leon regresses further inward into the emotional security of fantasy. As such, not all transitional experiences are necessarily positive, leading to growth and development, but can lead to an anti-social change in how a child manages their environment and their interactions with other people.

I believe that this story also supports my observation of the importance of fantasy in the structures which support Leon's self-identity. It would also appear significant that he wants to be an actor when he is older - another means of identifying with change, transformation and fantasy.

Leon's participation in my research has provided me with many insights. Of the boys who failed to discuss family relationships very much, most appeared to have very secure attachments to parents, stability in the home and opportunities to

interact with other relations to do exciting activities (uncles were especially important for several of the boys). These boys had sufficient security and certainty in the gradual emergence of their own identity to take 'home' almost for granted, providing the stability for them to explore with friends and try different kinds of exciting activities and experience new places - holidays were especially valued for the opportunities they provided to do this. Yet Leon's experiences were very different. Although he could go out and play with friends a great deal, doing this every day was 'boring'. Although he had several different games machines and could also watch Cable TV at home, these material facilities were, in large part, replacements for interaction with adults and role models. Therefore, they had a different value as objects in themselves when not part of a human-based relational structure. This was evident in his attachment to me, as the researcher.

Long after 'my' interview had finished, Leon wanted to continue our conversation and was particularly interested in my opinions and my experiences. He wanted me to spend time upstairs with his toys and, when his brother was still occupied on the games machine with a friend, we spent some time together looking at the Cable TV channels. At this point, I was conscious of having to create a closure but his mother had gone out for a short while and left us. It was inappropriate (and illegal) to leave Leon and his brother in the house until she returned. Once she had returned, I initially found it difficult to encourage Leon to go outside in the garden and play with Chris, who was out there at the time. (I thought that transferring his attention to another play relationship would facilitate closure far better than leaving him by himself, although I did not appreciate quite how significant this strategy was at the time). In the end, I needed to tell him that I had to get back home, but it was clear that he would have preferred to spend more time with me instead of going out in the garden to play. These personal interactions give me greater confidence in my analysis but they also raise ethical issues. On the one hand, I feel uncomfortable that Leon's unhappiness provided me with rich research material. On the other hand, the limited time I had with Leon did provide him with an opportunity to relate to an adult, have the experience of someone listening to him, and having contact with someone who could tell him about different opportunities.

(For example, we also talked about sticking with school and working hard enough to be able to get onto the next stage, and different kinds of exciting jobs). As a researcher, there was little else that I could offer.

Two caveats

The brief overviews of five children which have been presented here raise many issues about the centrality of kin relationships in children's daily activities and behaviours. I have continued to apply Winnicott's object-relations theory, finding it particularly helpful to communicate why particular kinds of relationships and activities-in-relationship are significant. However, I am also conscious that this choice of psychological framework historically brings with it particular ways of conceptualising mothers, development and, especially relevant in this chapter, gender. In addition, some of the children whose experiences have been presented in this case study, although not intended to be 'representatives', are from minority ethnic communities. I will respond briefly to these issues below.

In discussing the 'functions' which particular kinds of relationships help to fulfil, I am aware that there are times when I appear to make implicit value judgements when an activity-in-relationship is depicted as a 'substitute' for some other 'norm'. For example, I suggested that Rose's relationship with her brother provided a particularly valuable interaction for play which traditional psychological analyses (I referred to Lamb, 1982) would usually claim to be most likely provided for by a father. Similarly, I suggested that fantasy helped to create a particularly important transitional space for Leon in the absence of other adults to be in relationship with. However, whilst psychological literature has tended to assume the two-parent nuclear family with children to be the 'norm' (which, according to Clarke, 1992, in O'Brien et al, 1996, for the 53% of children growing up in Britain today who will not live with both of their birth parents for the duration of their childhood, is not the case), this is not the same as claiming that this family structure is hierarchically the 'best' within which relationships become meaningful or influential of behaviour. In fact, a comparison between Rose and Christine and their relationships with their

fathers illustrate that the presence of the father within a child's home cannot be causally linked to the relevance of these relationships and their capacity to have a role in the child's daily behaviour. O'Brien et al (1996) found a similar complexity in the meanings of child-parent relationships with children of divorced parents.

Although behavioural psychology has traditionally referred to two-parent nuclear family structures to discuss child-parent relationships, it is the *function* of these *kinds* of relationships to contribute to daily behaviour that I wish to emphasise rather than to espouse such family structures as 'optimal'. In other words, I am suggesting that activities and *functions* such as play, security, etc. are important elements of daily behaviour and I am interested in the ways in which these are realised in relationship with others. It is the nature of these relationships, particularly with other people, which form the basis of 'pro-social' behaviours. I will return to discuss the significance of the 'pro-social' for E.E. in Chapter Eight.

Likewise, my use of psychological approaches to consider the role of gender in the relationships that girls and boys have with mothers and fathers does not signify that I espouse the explanations of Freudian analysis for such gender formations. My interaction with the children and the stories they tell me about their families and their activities clearly demonstrate a range of gender differences. Neither Christine nor Dipesh conform entirely to gendered stereotypes; my aim is not to explain the psychological roots of these observations but to look at specific child-adult interactions and demonstrate an awareness of the role that constructions of gender can play in children's relationships with parents and other kin (this was especially helpful in considering why Dipesh's interactions with his mother did not appear to result in transitions to the extent observed in Rose's relationship with her mother). Like Flax (1993) I note that:

Feminists define gender as a changeable set of social relations that pervade many aspects of human experience from the constitution of the "inner self" and family life to the "public worlds" of the state, the economy, and knowledge production. Gender is not a consequence or effect of "natural sexual differences" (p.50).

Similarly, Chodorow (1989) reviews the work of Whiting and Whiting (1975) to demonstrate that the dominant behavioural styles of males and females is variable between different cultural settings which espouse different gender-associated behaviours. However, I do not present the experiences of Leon or Dipesh as 'typical' examples of Afro-Caribbean or Asian child-parent relationships. Instead, I have concentrated on the specifics of their *individual* experiences, mentioning the role of ethnicity, religion, tradition etc. where appropriate. Therefore, Dipesh's extended family in India is relevant to his experiences, and their existence and activities are related to the context of Dipesh's family background. Similarly, the significance of the miracle of the milk with the Hindu Gods is contextualised with reference to his mother's role in maintaining religious traditions in the home.

Leon could be misinterpreted as a stereotypical example of an Afro-Caribbean child, living with a single mother, having a father who seldom sees him, and being labelled as 'trouble' at home and school. However, these are some of the specific contexts in which Leon's experiences and self-identity are constructed. No further generalisations beyond these specifics are intended. Christine provides an alternative case study, demonstrating that the experience of divorce is clearly not causally related to inherent child problems.

Although there is a higher rate of divorce among the British Afro-Caribbean population⁴, Goody and Groothues (1979), Muir and Goody (1972), and Stapleton (1978), researching West African families, have investigated the cultural and historical contexts in which these figures need to be considered. They demonstrate the ways in which traditional West African patterns of child-rearing are sometimes very different to notions of the 'ideal' Western, nuclear family unit, yet entirely suitable for 'good' child-rearing. Muir and Goody (1972) challenge the appropriateness of using the theories of Freud and Bowlby in these contexts. However, I do not present Leon as a case study in these terms. Rather, in African

⁴ In my questionnaire survey, 19% (38) of the children had divorced parents. 50% (8) of those children describing themselves as 'Black British', 44% (4) of 'Africans', and 43% (3) of 'Caribbeans' had divorced parents. Although the numbers are small, these were the highest proportions in any individual ethnic group. The next highest divorce figure for a group with more than one child in it was White British, with 28% (16).

families where one parent is absent, there is often an extended family of aunts, grandmothers, or uncles and cousins, who provide a network of adults with whom a child can form a relationship (Stapleton, 1978). Due to the specific difficulties that Leon's mother has had with her family, this support network is absent in this particular case. Therefore, although broader socio-economic factors cannot be ignored in his case (and this would also include a consideration of the role of racism in the 'label' he has received at school), the specifics of Leon's material, physical and social resources are the central concern here.

It is not within the remit of this thesis to further contemplate the bases on which gender and ethnicity is constructed. Rather, having observed a variety of behaviours-in-relationship and the transitional spaces within which these take place, where constructions of mother, parent, child, gender, ethnicity and so on all contribute something to the ideological frameworks within which identity and actions are negotiated and experienced, I now wish to proceed by considering the significance of conceptualising daily behaviour within networks of kin relationships.

Daily behaviour-in-relationship

Winnicott's object-relations theories and notion of transitional spaces provide a helpful way to reconsider daily behaviour because it facilitates a connection between the individual, the social world and the material environment (Pile, 1993). It provides '... a map of the self in place' (Sibley, 1995b, p.125). Starting from parent-child attachments, a child 'learns' about its environment within the context of the relationships it has with others, via the activities that they do together or which the more powerful adult facilitates for the child. Attachment theory suggests that the parents, or other adults that a child establishes a relationship with, can provide an emotional 'home' within which all responses to external stimuli are formed and through which new experiences occur. (This 'home' may overlap with the physical home and the material resources there, but it may be constituted in other spaces as well, or instead, depending on who a child is in relationship with).

The 'style' of this attachment can have a considerable influence on a child's behaviour (Lamb, 1977a, 1977b, 1977c, 1982).

A variety of different kin relationships and interactions have been explored in the presentation of five case studies in this chapter. In all cases I have demonstrated how the nature of a child-adult attachment has emerged within the specific socio-economic context that a family finds itself, but where a parent or other adult's 'personality' also plays an important role (Lamb, 1982). Therefore, the particularly close relationship of Dipesh and Rose with their mothers are partly a response to the attachment styles of these women, but these attachments are formed within a context where the father and other adult kin are unavailable to some extent. Attachment theory would suggest that these are interrelated, the child having less opportunity to 'leave' the emotional home of the mother without another person to help facilitate this move and with the close attachment of the mother contributing to a more limited degree of peer interaction.

Leon's problematic relationship with his mother and teachers is, in part, related to the personality and behaviours of his mother, exacerbated by his perception that she defines him as 'trouble'. A lack of positive interactions with others in Leon's 'external reality' makes him more likely to seek an emotional 'home' internally. Explorations into the world are then more likely to take place within this internal context, heightening the importance of fantasy in Leon's interactions.

Similarly, each of the case studies has demonstrated that many of the ways in which these children spend their time are substantially shaped by a parent or other adult, either directly or indirectly. The existence of a garden at the homes of Dipesh and Rose and their interactions with the natural features of that space (i.e. gardening) is experienced initially through their relationship with their mothers who are keen gardeners. Perhaps it is stating the obvious to observe that without the material access to a private garden and without an attachment to their mother which facilitates their desire to share her interest, it is unlikely that these children would have developed an interest in gardening (unless another set of

psychologically and materially well-placed opportunities emerged elsewhere). However, such social and material contexts for this behaviour are often absent from an E.E. discourse which might focus on a 'knowledge' of how to do gardening and the communication of a 'value' that gardening is a good way to have contact with nature (for example) as sufficient to help foster a behavioural outcome in the dominant model of E.E..

Siblings have received less consideration in this chapter, largely as a consequence of the specific children chosen to explore as case studies. However, the references made to siblings, especially by Rose and Christine, illustrate observations relevant to many of the other children who took part in the research. The roots of attachment between a child and primary care-giver(s) is likely to have some consequence for the nature of sibling relationships within a family, combined with a series of other considerations such as age difference, whether the siblings live in the same home, and gender (Katz, 1983). The activities that a child does with a sibling offer practical opportunities for 'doing' in relationship, simultaneously creating the relationship (Winnicott, 1971). Many of the children in my project behaved in similar kinds of ways with elder siblings.

Christine's behaviours toward her younger sibling are quite different. She is willing to support his emotional and physical needs, sometimes almost as a 'substitute mother', e.g. she exhibits caring behaviours towards him. She will also facilitate his explorations through her interactions with him in play. A number of other children, both male and female, talked about various 'childish' play activities which they did with younger siblings. These games often used very few props and relied on the imagination (e.g. Joseph being a 'horse' for his brother to ride, Ruth playing '*Sonic the Hedgehog*' with her brother chasing her and her rabbit in the garden). These activities, as with all those discussed here, serve multiple purposes; they contribute to the ongoing relationships which exist between siblings but the predominance of fantasy play seems especially important. Perhaps this provides the elder sibling with an opportunity to 'explore' their journey through childhood and cross internal boundaries between their past childhoods and the transition

towards being an adult. This play then becomes reciprocally important for both children. The younger can explore further 'out' from their 'home' with the support and security of an older, respected sibling. The elder can safely return to their childhood 'home' from time to time within the context of their sibling relationship, during a time when they are experiencing many transitions in the external world which take them further 'out'.

Parents, in particular, influence their children's activities beyond material opportunities and attachment styles, although I argue that these are the central foundations on which behavioural outcomes are based⁵. Parents also control their children's time and create spatial boundaries within which they can emerge and explore beyond the physical (and emotional) home. The greater restrictions that Rose and Dipesh have on their freedom to play in the local area or go out with friends is both a reflection of their mothers' attachment style but also has further ramifications for the nature and extent of their interactions with peers and with their environment. Greater restrictions will influence the relative proportion of their behaviours and experiences which occur in relationship with their parent and this contributes to a different kind of emotional arena for the development of their own self-identity than if more time were spent in relationship with peers. A different range of experiences are likely to occur and different kinds of behaviours are likely to result. This theme is developed at the beginning of Chapter Seven.

To add to the complexity of the processes which I have identified here, parental controls of space and time and, to some extent, attachment styles are not simply a product of parental 'personality' (as suggested by Limb, 1982). Parents' behaviours are constructed in relation to culturally and socially dominant understandings of 'good parenting'. Parents relate to political discourses about child-care (Valentine, 1997a), safety in public space (Valentine, 1996a, 1997b,

⁵ Many children talked about outings to museums, parks or other open spaces, foreign countries where different cultures, activities and behaviours were either observed or experimented with, etc. Parents (and also teachers, on holidays organised by the village school) create these opportunities for children. These experiences add to the child's informal 'knowledge' of the world. The particular choice of activities and places also signify the kinds of 'cultural capital' that a parent is sharing with their child (e.g. Rose's family took her on many museum outings and visits to nature reserves).

1997c; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997; Hillman, 1993), psychological impacts of watching TV and playing video games (Reimer, 1995a; Stutz, 1993, 1995; Boseley, 1995; Elston, 1996; Coward, 1998; Livingstone et al, 1998; Grant, 1996; Buckingham, 1994; Postman, 1982; Oswell, 1998), and so on in a variety of ways and these also contribute to the relationship that they consequently construct with their children and the ways in which they seek to control their time and space.

It is particularly evident in a review of these kin relationships that, whilst attachment theory and object-relations theory can assist in an analysis which elevates the significance of behaving-in-relationship, they do not offer predictive capabilities to indicate what a child may do in a specific future encounter. Attachment and object-relations are too blunt an instrument and only one set of criteria within a complex multitude to be assigned any simplistic causal properties. Nevertheless, all of these observations do provide a useful way to conceptualise children's daily behaviour.

Conclusion: transitional relationships as pathways in social space

This chapter has considered the role of relationships between children and parents, siblings and, occasionally, other close relations in shaping children's daily activities, decision-making processes, some values (e.g. Christine's food choices) and ways of behaving with and towards others.

Winnicott's psychoanalytic theory introduces the importance of relationships and draws on the 'internal' reality (much of which cannot be 'known' in the cognitive sense by the individual) in partnership with 'external' realities to help understand how we behave within and interact with the material and cultural.

Psychoanalytic theory, in its theories of the unconscious, describes how the social enters, constitutes and positions the individual. Similarly, by showing that desire, fantasy and meaning are a (real) part of everyday life, it shows how the social is entered, constituted and positioned by individuals (Pile, 1993 in Sibley, 1995b, p.137).

By conceiving of the child's milieu as constituted by activities- and opportunities-in-relationship, an awareness of the nature of these relationships at a particular moment in time can help us to understand what kind of behavioural outcomes are more likely to occur than others in a particular context within a specific set of relationships. However, it does not exclude the possibility of new relationships being created or transitions occurring in existing relationships which may facilitate new sets of opportunities being acted upon in different ways (this, after all, is one of the purposes of psychotherapy).

Using this framework, I am suggesting that we take the emotional and physical 'home' of a child as the starting place from which the social and physical interactions which constitute 'behaving' in space emerge. The nature of child-parent attachment and the availability of other close kin with whom to enter into relationship, provide the foundations for other behaviours (e.g. development of peer relationships; shared values with identifiable 'groups'; activities in space such as hobbies, play, interaction with outdoor environments; behaviour within the context of formal education settings, etc.). These other behaviours and interactions provided the focus for Chapter Seven.

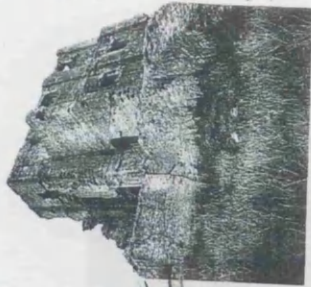
(see over)

Figure 4: Transitional Space 2



This is a picture of a window looking out northwards.

CORFE CASTLE



This is a picture of the keep which is the main part of Corfe Castle.



This is a picture from Bournemouth. On the horizon you can see the pier that is being made for the waterbus.



This is a picture of a netting Net. Crabbing on Bournemouth beach. The net is used to catch crabs.



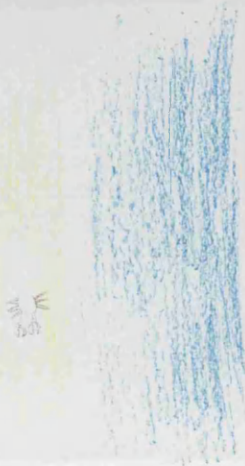
Beach



This is a picture of the new building for the Bournemouth Museum. The new building is 10 stories high.



This is a picture of a netting net. The net is used to catch crabs.



POOLS CORN IN AYLESBURY



This is a picture of Poole Harbour which is a bay.







CHAPTER SEVEN: BEING WITH FRIENDS

Introduction

In the last two chapters my focus has been to elevate the social dimensions of daily behaviour; not to argue that these are the only relevant factors in understanding behaviour, but to suggest that they do have a central role, largely unrecognised in E.E. theory. In moving from an examination of child interactions with kin to now consider peer interactions, this thesis is further strengthened.

In this chapter I will use the empirical material from my interviews to explore the ways in which peer interaction plays a central role in shaping children's behaviours beyond the home. In the last chapter it was advantageous to restrict the analysis to a small number of children in order to demonstrate how attachment styles and transitions which took place through parent-child and sibling relationships were played out consistently in accordance with the theoretical foundations presented in Chapter Five. However, in considering peer relationships, a fuller exploration of several themes to be presented here will be better served by drawing on a wider range of children's experiences. This will become evident from the presentation of the theoretical contributions of social psychology, sociological and cultural studies, and recent cultural geography to an understanding of peer cultures and interactions which I will discuss before proceeding with my own empirical material. The focus of much of this literature does not explicitly address the aspects of behaviours-in-relationship which I wish to develop, but it does provide some valuable foundations from which further analysis can proceed.

Transitions from parent-child to peer interaction

In Chapter Six I explored the ways that children's daily behaviours take place through transitional spaces which are created by being 'in relationship' with parents and other close family. An understanding of the role of attachment in determining the likelihood of a transitional experience occurring, or a new

relationship forming, provided the means to suggest that both the existence and the nature of peer interactions were also likely to be derived from this basis.

Within the field of social psychology a great deal of research has been dedicated to exploring the relationship between child-parent attachment and how children form friendships with peers (Durkin, 1988; Leyens and Codol, 1988). Corsaro (1997), for example, presents the findings of research carried out for the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in the USA which demonstrates that many factors associated with putting a child in day care, such as the number of hours spent there, the age at which they entered day care, the quality of this care or the number of occasions a child's day care arrangements were changed did not affect the trust displayed by a fifteen-month-old child in their mothers. Rather, 'the thing that did affect infant's trust was a mother's sensitivity and responsiveness' (p. 222). In other words, Corsaro is noting the significance of the attachment style of the mother in determining the sense of security felt by a young child. Equipped with this security and trust, the young child can cope with many factors involved in leaving the mother for periods whilst in day care. Such day care centres may provide some of the earliest environments in which a child encounters other peers.

Further research on the links between parental attachment and a child's peer relationships can be found extensively in journals such as *Child Development*, *Social Development*, and the *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly Journal of Developmental Psychology*. For example, Carson and Parke (1996) found that negative or indifferent parental responses in play with pre-school children could be linked to the likelihood that a child would share less, avoid others and be more aggressive in peer play. Likewise, Kahan et al (1994) found that the quality of interpersonal interaction between young children and their parents influenced a child's ability to engage in positive interaction with peers during play.

However, Pettit et al (1998) found that greater maternal involvement in child-peer play predicted lower levels of child competence at forming peer friendships and their ability to play with peers than where father's were involved in these

interactions. Within the context of a heterosexual nuclear family unit where the mother is the primary care-giver, this research supports Bowlby's (1953) theories about parental roles. Another adult is required to facilitate a child's movement away from their close infant-attachment to the primary care-giver. The father, in this case, can provide the sense of security through which new relationships can form without fear of losing the emotional tie to the mother. Extending this line of thought into other contexts where children form relationships with significant adults, Howes et al (1998) found consistency between children's secure attachment with their first school teachers and their ability to form peer friendships in the school environment.

This body of research in social psychology theorises the ability to form peer friendships as a positive thing and one that is an important part of child development. This assertion may appear indisputable but, as a review of peer group research within sociology and cultural studies will demonstrate, not all research into peer relationships conceptualises peer interaction in such positive terms. Before considering these alternative approaches an examination of the nature of friendship and the definition of the 'peer group' is required.

What is a friend?

In considering this question, I took a moment to consider my own friends. I know who they are, I know who I consider to be my closest friends, and I know which groups of people, when interacting in certain contexts, I would consider myself to have 'friendly' relations with. But finding the vocabulary to explain what the differences are between these uses of the term 'friend' and what it is about the individuals who are assigned these terms that makes them 'friends' is extremely difficult. This issue of definition is one which researchers in social psychology and sociology have grappled with extensively. Whilst not providing an all-encompassing 'definition' of friendship, researchers have sought to examine the kinds of emotional terms or functions which many people associate with the concept of a 'friend'.

Argyle (1988) reviews the contributions of the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, which has sought to bring together work on kin, interpersonal attraction, parent-child relationships and friendship to consider the nature of these different kinds of social relationships. He cites values such as *co-operation*, *closeness*, *informality* and *equality* as important aspects of 'friendship'. Duck (1998) also emphasises the role of equality and reciprocity in relations between friends. Allan (1979), a sociologist, reviews some of the transactions which take place between friends in terms of conversation, joking behaviour, job assistance, personal services and cash assistance in what is a heavily class-structured analysis of adult friendships. Newcomb and Bagwell (1995) characterise friendships as those which possess

... more intense social activity, more frequent conflict resolution, and more effective task performance. Also, relationships between friends are marked by reciprocal and intimate properties of affiliation (p.306).

These approaches enable us to consider the value of friendship as a social structure in particular contexts but, with Allan's (1979) transactions in particular, these are rather utilitarian values. Whilst a friend may be able to assist at times of financial or emotional need, we clearly do not 'have friends' in case such needs arise. Allan is not claiming this, but his list is more suggestive of roles that friends 'may' play without demonstrating why friendships exist in the first place. Further, as Corsaro (1997) notes with regard to research on children's friendships,

The focus of nearly all of the research is on identifying stages in the child's abstract conceptions of friendship. These conceptions are elicited through clinical interviews... Yet few psychologists study what it is like to be or to have a friend in children's social worlds, or how developing conceptions of friendship are embedded in children's interactions in peer culture (p.17).

A more recent body of research provides alternative insights into the significance of friendships. Hartup (1996) suggests that researchers need to look beyond whether an individual possesses a friend or not, to consider the behavioural characteristics and attitudes of these friends amongst the features of a friendship. Providing an explanation of friendship which would incorporate the observations

listed above, Hartup proposes that friends can provide each other with a kind of cognitive and social 'scaffolding' which supports an individual's ability to cope with transitional experiences in their daily lives. Rizzo and Corsaro (1995), in an analysis of their ethnographic research undertaken in pre-school settings, also found that friendships seemed to have an important role in helping children through interpersonal adaptations in their daily worlds. Referring back to the language of Winnicott (1971), these theories suggest that friendship can be understood as a relationship through which transitional spaces are negotiated as a child's environmental and social transactions evolve. As such, it is not helpful to consider friendship as something static which operates according to a consistent set of criteria. Rather, friendship is a more general concept which describes the ways individuals work together to address shared concerns.

From this review, it would appear that research corroborates the notion that parent-child attachment is at the core of the child's world, which in turn facilitates child-child interactions. These relationships together provide the milieu through which children negotiate the transitional spaces which constitute their daily experiences and shape their behaviour.

A final theme requires consideration to provide the framework for the analysis of my empirical work; what role does the 'peer group' play? Are the functions identified as being central to friendship the same for groups of friends? Again, this is an enormous area of research in its own right and I do not propose to review all aspects of it here. Rather, I will focus on the aspects of these questions which will be most helpful in understanding the references made to peer group behaviour in my interviews.

'Being' with the peer group

Within research on group processes and group identities, there are similar divisions in the approaches used in these investigations. On the one hand, attempts have been made to identify important group functions such as 'a sense of belongingness'

(Hogg and Abrams, 1988) where there is social attraction between group members based on similar personality traits, interests or a common cause, for example. Likewise, Hogg and Vaughan (1995) consider group functions such as completing tasks together, gaining a sense of identity, obtaining social support or the pleasures of social interaction.

However, Corsaro (1997) provides a socio-psychological outlook on peer group collectivities which shares much in common with Hartup's (1996) suggestion of 'scaffolding' with regard to friendships (see above). Corsaro (1997) describes the interactions which take place within peer groups as participation in 'cultural routines' which,

... serve as anchors that enable social actors to deal with ambiguities, the unexpected, and the problematic while remaining comfortably within the friendly confines of everyday life (p.19).

Again, Corsaro (1997) links this notion of support back to the idea of security and attachment which starts with the child-parent relationship:

It could be argued that this striving to maintain the sense of security first established in families is the basis of children's formation of peer cultures. It is most certainly a strong factor in children's valuing of participation and communal sharing in their peer cultures and friendship relations (p.98).

Fornas (1995), drawing on research in cultural studies, notes that this research '... is more often motivated by optimistic curiosity about young people's creativity or by a sense of 'solidarity' in the face of shared difficulties' (p.3). This would appear to mark the brief point at which psychologically-influenced accounts of the significance of peer group cultures and culturally-orientated approaches meet. Both remark on the significance of solidarity and belonging as being an important part of the identities of the individuals who constitute the group. However, whilst psychology primarily considers engagement in childhood friendship groups and peer culture as a sign of 'healthy' psycho-social development, the interest in youth culture which emerged in cultural studies during the late 1950s and early '60s conceived of these groups as 'delinquent' (Valentine et al, 1998). James et al (1998) also note this paradox between the two disciplines and explains this in terms

of the evolution of the disciplines themselves. This is true but I believe that, whilst the framing of the peer group culture has been very different (positive or negative), some of the psychologically and sociologically defined behaviours have a great deal in common. An investigation of this commonality reveals what is particularly significant about peer group cultures.

Cultural studies and for the most part, cultural geography, has focused mainly on adolescent behaviour. In the 1950s and '60s, most accounts described this behaviour in terms of 'delinquency'. However, in the 1970s a radical turn in cultural studies led to a virtual romanticisation of these same activities. The discipline recreated 'youth culture' as a 'sub-culture' which signified resistance to a 'dominant' culture through the performance of rituals and the subversion of symbols (e.g. Hebdige, 1979; Hall and Jefferson, 1976). On the whole, early research emphasised the construction of 'youth' or 'adolescence' or 'the gang' by the dominant, adult society rather than examining what the meaning of participation and belonging to these groups meant for the participants (Valentine et al, 1998). This resonates with the dominant approach to the study of childhood reviewed in Chapter Two. Even where group participation has been considered in cultural studies and cultural geography, 'belongingness' (Hogg and Abrams, 1988) or resistance is the main focus. Leonard (1998), for example, notes that '... sub-culture tends to suggest a group displaying integrated behaviour, beliefs and attitudes' (p.102). Valentine (1996a) conceives of these integrated behaviours in terms of resistance by suggesting:

Hanging around on street corners or in parks, underage drinking, petty vandalism, and larking about and other forms of nonadherence to order on the street become (deliberately and unconsciously) a form of resistance to adult power (p.213).

In presenting this material, I do not seek to challenge the extent to which peer group behaviour is about resistance; I believe that in certain contexts it is, especially when considering adolescent youth culture. However, by placing these observations within a developmental context, it becomes clear that these forms of adolescent behaviour can also be understood as transitional experiences which

facilitate both an emotional and a physical movement further out from the 'home'. Given the stress which such changes often cause (Skynner and Cleese, 1983), this may be 'managed' through the support of a peer group rather than simply being about 'resistance', *per se*. It is perhaps partly because of the nature of these transitions during adolescence, often marked by shifts from educational environments to work environments or different kinds of education (or unemployment), by bodily changes, growing awareness of and involvement in responses to sexuality, and so on, that greater security is felt in knowing that one is part of a group who are all experiencing similar things.

Friendship is not simply a cognitive relationship of affectivity. It must be affirmed, confirmed and reaffirmed through social action. This explains how the emphasis on 'sameness' and conformity in children's social relationships - wearing the same clothes, eating the same food, liking the same football teams - works to mitigate the significance which any differences might have. It represents one visible demonstration of friendship, for it is through such public performances that children evaluate and acknowledge their friendships with one another: being friends must not only be experienced but be seen to be experienced (James, 1993 in James et al, 1998, p.95-6).

Winnicott (1965a) describes the process thus:

Adolescents can be seen struggling to start again as if they had nothing they could take over from anyone. They can be seen to be forming groups on the basis of minor uniformities, and on the basis of some sort of group adherence which belongs to locality and to age. Young people can be seen searching for a form of identification which does not let them down in their struggle, the *struggle to feel real*, the struggle to establish a personal identity, not to fit into an assigned role, but to go through whatever has to be gone through. They do not know what they are going to become (p.84).

And this struggle is directly related to the process of 'separation' from the parents or locus of the emotional 'home' (Brannen, 1996). *Place* plays a very important role in these processes. The transitional spaces through which such personal development is taking place are not imaginary, though they may be virtual. They exist in the privacy of a bedroom, on the telephone, via interaction on the computer, in the school playground, the shopping mall and outdoors in open spaces. This latter space seems to be especially important, but I will return to

consider the use of all of these spaces in the presentation of my interview material shortly.

The fact that place is so vital to the provision of peer interaction helps to highlight the interconnectedness of so many of the factors which contribute to the transitional spaces of middle childhood - the stage of life identified as immediately preceding adolescence. A child's ability to form peer relationships may be influenced by parent-child attachment, but the absence of safe open spaces to play, or other suitable places, may make it difficult for a child of 9 or 10, for example, to develop these relationships and gain experience through them.

... one of the distinguishing features of youth culture is just this search for places where one can be in control; a place to be alone with friends, a place free from parental or other adult interference. These free spaces are absolutely essential if the individual, together with others in similar situations, is to be able to seek, experiment, and shape his or her own identity and subjectivity (Ganetz, 1995, p.87).

We would probably associate 'play' as the predominant activity which children engage in together. This is the substance of Winnicott's book (1971) *Playing and Reality*, which conceptualises this universal childhood activity (Katz, 1991, 1993) as central to the processes of self-identification and becoming which have been developed in the argument above. Winnicott asserts:

It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self (p.54).

Given the centrality of 'creativity' to this kind of 'healthy' play, the provision of structured play areas in the locality may not provide children with what they most need. Ward (1988), reviewing the work of Opie and Opie (1969) on children's games, notes that the planner's and the educationalist's search for greater efficiency in social provisioning for children, we have failed to provide what they most need; '... the necessary space - or privacy - in which to become human beings' (Ward, 1988, p.88). The kinds of spaces in which children play, and the peer interactions through which these behaviours take place will form a central part

of the second half of this chapter, being the most extensively discussed aspect of children's peer interactions during my interviews.

Having chosen to work with 11 and 12 year olds, at the upper end of 'middle childhood', this analysis also demonstrates what transitional spaces of peer interaction can be when not primarily about 'resistance' and 'subversion' of adult dominant cultures. These children are not yet adolescent, although there are occasional instances when they demonstrate behaviours, in collaboration with peers, that reveal a degree of independence which are oppositional to parental preferences. However, due to the relatively close relationships maintained with kin, especially parents (as demonstrated in Chapter Six), this empirical work also helps to fill a gap in our knowledge of the less dramatic performances of peer culture. As noted by Valentine et al (1998), 'the emphasis on resistance and spectacular forms of youth cultures has led to a neglect of the young people who conform in many ways to social expectations' (p.24).

CHILDREN'S PEER CULTURE

Corsaro (1997) defines children's peer culture '... as a stable set of activities or routines, artefacts, values and concerns that children produce and share in interaction with peers' (p.95). Whilst this definition is intentionally broad, it does provide a helpful framework from which to begin examining the peer interactions of the children who participated in my research. This material provides insights into all of the 'functions' of friends and peer groups discussed in the first half of this chapter, drawing on activities, artefacts, values and concerns.

Peer interactions are discussed by the children with reference simply to having a friend/belonging with a group of friends, shared symbols (sometimes artefacts, sometimes shared knowledges/interests), and shared personality traits or behaviours (including hobbies). These are some of the visible affirmations of friendship. Other important facets of friendship also discussed, but more entrenched in emotions, include the reciprocity required to sustain behaviours-in-

relationship, having fun, a particular emphasis on fantasy and imaginative play, a sense of trust and security needed to take part in certain activities (facilitated by the presence of friends), and the importance of friends in more substantial transitional experiences (e.g. moving home, going on holiday). Finally, there are some instances where a child appears to have limited opportunities for developing friendships. These are often related to parental restrictions on their movements in the locality, or where other aspects of the nature of their relationship with their parent(s) affect a child's responses to peer interaction (as in the case of Leon, discussed in Chapter Six). In such instances, these children still need and value the emotional functions of friendship and there is evidence to suggest that they gain this through their relationships with a variety of 'substitute' friends; most frequently a pet, their toys, T.V. and computers, or with a parent to whom they are very attached (e.g. Rose, in Chapter Six). In the following analysis, I will explore all of these aspects of peer culture, illustrating how these notions are played out in everyday behaviour.

Many of the interview excerpts selected contain several of the facets outlined here; one would not expect to be able to divide everyday conversation into the neat categories discussed in theory. However, for the sake of clarity of analysis I will highlight those particular aspects of these vignettes that are appropriate to the main point being discussed and passing references to other important themes will be returned to for separate examination.

Me and my friends

Alan really loved his holiday in Cornwall.

Me: What kind of stuff did you do in Cornwall?

Alan: Play in the arcades with my friend. I've got my best friend who's my pen pal, called Tom. He lives in Southampton and I met him in Cornwall. We used to take about like five pounds to the amusements and change it all to tens, and there was this really good game, this two-player game where we really liked it, so I played with him. So we just played on that a lot of the time. Like, it said, 'Continue?' and you put in 10p to continue and we ended up like with 20 10ps into it. But we ran out. We still never finished the game. Ran out of 10ps.

Me: So is that basically what you remember of Cornwall?

Alan: Yes. Being with my best friend (village, lines 2086-2107).

Arcades are exciting places for many twelve year old children; the games are entertaining, provide a degree of independent play space, and the games also provide material for peer chat (see below on 'peer knowledge') . But Alan, although talking about one particular game that was really good, never tells me what the game was or what was good about it. Instead, it seems that what is especially significant was the fact that it was a two-player game which he could play *with* his best friend. When I ask him at the end of his description if this was his memory of Cornwall (in case he had other memories to tell me about), he confirms the significance of the story he has just told by providing what might have been the title if this was a written story, '*Being with my best friend*'.

A number of children mention their 'best friend', although ascertaining what it is about these relationships which make them the 'best' is not at all obvious. For Alan his 'best friend' is a boy that he met and spent time with for a short period; continued contact requires the effort of letter writing. Most children have a 'best friend' and may denote this special relationship symbolically, even within a peer group setting:

Sally: Oh, and my presents from my friends [photo], 'cos we went to a sleepover for Christmas on the 21st at Carol Gordon's, and we all gave out our presents there. And it was, all of us, we all had different presents from different people because best friends, like Carol Gordon gave Carol East something different from all the rest of us... and Anna gave everybody the same because she doesn't really have a best friend (village, lines 226-234).

Considering the ways in which some of the other children mention 'best friends', both the personality of the individuals concerned and the opportunities to behave in particular ways and take part in particular activities *in relationship* with these friends would appear to be important factors in defining the friendship.

Rose: But in Junior church we make cards to give to elderly people, and we just talk about some of the stories in the Bible and we have activities to do with them as well. And that's what we do in Junior church. 'Cos me and my best friend are the most regular members of Junior church, so I'm proud of doing that (suburb, lines 475-80).

Rose doesn't mention friends much at all during her interview so this reference to her best friend is especially significant for her. Although she describes church activities that she enjoys, these do not appear to be the cause of her pride *per se*. A theme which runs throughout the interview with Rose is her desire, once she finds something enjoyable, to repeat the activity whenever possible: she talks about a board game at a friend's house which she likes so much that she will play it again and again until it drives her friend mad; she will read the same book many, many times if she really likes the story; and she loves the repeat visits to Swanage and mentions other trips (zoos and wildlife parks in particular) that the family used to visit a lot (before her father's disability became a barrier to these journeys). Therefore, her pride in the regularity of her church attendance is something which also denotes considerable pleasure in being there and taking part in the activities.

Developing my suggestions (see Chapter Six) that Rose was especially closely attached to her mother and that this played some part in her difficulties in making friends, it would seem that the transition involved in trying something new or going somewhere (especially without her mother) is, relative to some other children, quite an ordeal for Rose. Having established that something is enjoyable, or having established a successful friendship, Rose re-establishes her sense of security through a close attachment to the behaviour or relationship in question.

As discussed in Chapter Six, Rose stopped attending Guides at the same church because the girls were unpleasant to her. Although most of her family also attend church regularly, her brother does not (he does not enjoy it), so it would appear that having a 'best friend' who shares some of her interests and with whom she can have regular contact by attending church (she doesn't mention spending time with her elsewhere) represents the social relationship through which church attendance has been transformed into a regular and pleasurable behaviour.

Trust and security are also important in determining the likelihood that Dipti will attend an activity:

Dipti: And right now I'm thinking of going back to swimming and starting, like joining a different club and I'm taking part in basketball [at school]. And when the school has a rounders team and a tennis team [in the summer], and yeh, I'd like to join those as well.

Me: So it's a bit easier to do all these activities when it's part of school. Straight after school?

Dipti: Yeh, at least you know you're with people who, like, you could trust. Because if you went all alone and with a small gang and never got on with them then you wouldn't know what would happen. So, my mum's a bit protective sometimes (suburb, lines 840-52).

At the beginning of this excerpt, Dipti is talking about club activities in general, but in moving on to the activities she is currently doing or will shortly have access to the locus of these clubs becomes restricted to the school. Her desire to take part in these activities is obvious, but her anxieties are about the nature of the *social relationships* that she will establish. Of particular significance here is the blurring of her fears with those of her mother; the implication is that her mother's protectiveness is the primary barrier to her involvement in out-of-school activities. There is a sense of unresolved tension between internalising these fears herself and recognising her mother's concerns as a barrier to the extent of her peer interactions.

Rose and Dipti's experiences demonstrate the importance of emotional security in determining the likelihood of participating in activities and engaging in certain behaviours. Peer group friendships play a vital role in providing the necessary relationships through which trust and, therefore, security can be established.

'Clubbing' with my friends

In other instances, children talk about an activity they enjoy or a place they attend where it is clear that their ability to excel at the activity contributes to the importance of that activity, and these activities/behaviours make a positive contribution to their evolving sense of self-identity. However, making friends and social interaction are also mentioned with great frequency within these contexts, further demonstrating the importance of the social relationships through which the activity contributes to the child's identity. As Reimer (1995b) notes:

People's leisure activities are social and acquire their significance in their social contexts. In other words, noting what activities people participate in is not sufficient for gleaning a comprehensive picture of people's lifestyles (p.131-2).

Adam [talking about playing in football teams]: You make a lot of friends, like people you don't know and 'cos like, I know, I know most of them from my Sunday team ... That year I knew everyone except for that one [photo]. He's called Anthony, and Stephen. But we've made friends with them, so it's all right. We know everyone. We get, you get a lot of chat in football. So it's all right ... So if I didn't do football I wouldn't know a lot of people. I wouldn't know all those team mates that I've got. So I do quite well with friends and that (suburb, lines 356-67; 385-88).

For Adam, the fact that he has made friends with the other members of his team is valuable both for his enjoyment of taking part in the football team, but also because coming together to share this common activity provides Adam with a network of friends to socialise with on other occasions. His best friend plays in the same team as him, attends his school and also lives very locally. This degree of common interest and number of regular and accessible spaces in which they can meet suggests that, in this example, the 'best friend' is the peer who can be called upon most frequently and with whom activity and play occurs through these interactions.

However, many children have limited opportunities to find new friends through their own activity in local space due to parental restrictions on range, times of the day and seasons when they are permitted to be outside etc. Many parents will then facilitate their children's activities beyond school by encouraging or supporting their involvement in clubs and other organised activities (e.g. transporting them to these places by car). Therefore it is not surprising to find that many examples of friendships emerging from common activities are formed in these settings¹.

Jane: ... I did ballet at a theatre school, 'cos there's acting, and modern tap, singing; I go to singing lessons as well but I've only just started; ballet,

¹ Most children would form some of their closest friendships at school, this being the arena in which children make daily contact with their peers. However, school activity was specifically excluded from the interview guide, the aim of the research being to ascertain what kind of behaviours occurred beyond school. Nevertheless, many children inevitably mentioned school friends, school clubs and trips etc. and these contributed to an understanding of the children's social arenas without digressing too far into formal learning aspects of school experience.

jazz, ballroom dancing, everything under the sun to do with acting and theatres... And that was me - my friend took it [photo]; one of my best friends at the ballet school. It's quite nice actually 'cos I've met so many people dancing and everything and they've turned into really good friends. I've seen them loads of times; they come round to my house and everything (village, lines 22-32).

Me: And of all the different sports, what is enjoyable about running?

Sally: Well, I just find it quite easy. Well, some courses. I just, it's just the social side of it because on last Sunday I ran and I didn't do very well and there was like Sharon and everybody there and they were all really nice to me and like, I stayed. And Nathalie and Eleanor and Anna were running, and I watched them and I went round with Sharon which I don't normally do because she's like 17, and she was really nice to me. And I normally hang around with Henny, Alison, Carol, Nathalie and Kate who are like 11 and 12, so it was really nice (village, lines 269-81).

In this second example, Sally is especially appreciative of the social side of her running club because of the friends she has there (those of her age) but in this story she is highlighting the generally friendly atmosphere where, unusually, a 17 year old was willing to provide some emotional support when she did not do well in her race, fulfilling the friendship role that her absent friends could not provide on that particular day. The implication from this story is that, had Sharon not been really nice to her and provided some support, she would not have stayed on after her race to watch the others running.

Turning to a different kind of evidence, analysis of the questionnaires revealed that 75% (152/204) of the children in Year 11 from both schools were members of at least one club (this included school clubs). It is interesting that a higher proportion of girls belong to a club than boys (82% of girls; 69% of boys) and also that a higher proportion of children from the village primary school take part in at least one club compared to those from the secondary suburban school (88% of the village children; 71% of the suburban children). In this latter instance, the higher proportion of boys in the sample from the suburban school (a 60:40 boy:girl ratio) will have influenced this pattern but the greater existence of *local* resources (a village youth club, Scouts, Brownies, Guides, village football club, and a significantly larger choice of school clubs) can account for the greater involvement of the village children. It may also be the case that in a more tightly defined

community it is more likely that children who already know each other from school will especially want to play and interact further in these other peer settings in the village.

The children in the suburban area are in a large secondary school with over 200 children in their year, compared to approximately 50 in the village primary school. They have just recently undergone a major transition in their move to a new school; the catchment area of their new school incorporates children from over 20 different primary schools. They are more likely to have to start anew and form different friendships at their local clubs which may be more difficult to foster if the club only meets weekly and this may be one factor which discourages a child from attending.

Winnicott (1971) emphasises the importance of what exists in an individual's *locality*, understanding the place within which emotional security is fostered to be of vital importance to 'healthy attachment'.

In effect we need to accept the fact that psychiatrically healthy persons depend for their health and for their personal fulfilment on *loyalty to a delimited area of society*, perhaps the local bowls club (p.141).

As geographers we may question Winnicott's definition of 'locality' as a specifically bound physical entity, particularly in the case of middle class, mobile individuals who may 'belong' to many communities spread over some distance. However, Winnicott's emphasis on locality is clearly appropriate for those still in middle childhood where the freedom to establish more distant networks is still quite limited².

The gender difference in club membership is also noteworthy. I did not employ suitable fieldwork methods to establish a quantitative measure of the physical range of the children who participated in my research or the regularity with which they

² Although Leonard (1998) on Grrl Zines (print and internet web page versions) and forthcoming research by Holloway and Valentine on children's use of the internet may suggest that this is no longer universally the case in Western, middle class communities.

went out to play. However, there is a substantial body of research which confirms that girls are more restricted than boys (e.g. Hart, 1979; Moore, 1986; Burgess et al 1998c; Matthews, 1992; Valentine, 1996a, 1997a, 1997b). This may be one of the factors involved in girls' greater involvement in club activities; these organised peer settings may provide a 'safer' place to which parents are willing to bring their children and which girls therefore value for the opportunities they provide for peer interaction. However, as the questionnaire did not separate school clubs from other clubs, another factor which is likely to account for the gender difference to some extent is the existence of a male-dominated playground culture (Titman, 1994; Sheat and Beer 1991a, 1991b; Higgins, 1992). At both the village and the suburban school, many of the boys occupied their lunch breaks by playing football or other ball games outdoors. These activities take over the playground space in most traditional, asphalt playgrounds (Moore, 1989). Girls are more likely to occupy the fringes of these spaces or find indoor spaces for conversation (although some will participate in more physical games outdoors, too) and are more likely to take part in club activities offered at lunchtime.

In summary, these findings demonstrate that, for many children, the likelihood of involvement in a variety of non-compulsory activities is significantly increased through the ability to enter into relationship with peers and establish or foster friendships. These friends help to create secure transitional spaces through which these activities become an enjoyable part of a child's repertoire of behaviours and, especially if they can be excelled at, part of the child's sense of self-identity. Activities are considered to be more enjoyable, or 'fun', if friends are involved. This is one way of articulating that this transition has taken place (and 'having fun' with friends contributes to the likelihood of transition occurring) - an enjoyable activity will not be one which causes unmanageable stress or anxiety. Engagement in more formal, organised activities are most likely to take place at school or in local clubs (the importance of informal arenas of interaction will be considered in depth later in this chapter) which reciprocally create the spaces in which children go to 'make friends' - this is one of the valued outcomes of engagement in these activities in its own right.

Having considered how some kinds of activities are more likely to occur if they facilitate a relationship with peers, I now wish to consider children's behaviour which emerges, in part, as a 'symbol' of belonging to a peer group. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, 'belonging' is an important aspect of peer group culture. Some of these behaviours are also common to the developing of one-to-one friendships, but I will begin by considering the identity of the 'groups' in which some of these children see themselves as belonging.

My gang

Group identities exist at many different scales and identification with a particular group may be context-specific (e.g. being in one group at school and another at club). However, only a small number of children suggested that following a 'fad' or exhibiting a specific behaviour was something that they shared with 'everyone':

Leon: I used to collect Streetfighter stickers, and Pogs. Oh, Pogs used to be so popular in my primary school. Everyone had Pogs. (Me: Yeh?) In my school there wasn't one person that didn't have Pogs (suburb, lines 954-61).

Rose: Swapping stickers - I think I've got, how many? I've got three sticker books. Three sticker albums. And at [school], when we were younger, that was the thing to do, so I've got books full of stickers which I've still got, and I still buy stickers if there's some really nice ones (suburb, lines 894-98).

Ruth: Oh, yeh, I'm scared of spiders. And that's because everyone at school was scared of them and so I just became scared of them and now I am (village, lines 1618-20).

These were the three clearest examples from the interview material of children taking part in an activity or exhibiting a behaviour because 'everyone else' was. It is interesting that during the time I came to know these three children and through my analysis of their interviews, supplemented by their photographs (no friends included), these are the children I identified as having the most problematic

relationships with peers³. Both Rose and Ruth seemed to have very few friends, and did not really discuss their activities with them. Although Leon seemed to have peers that he could go and play with, he did not seem to have developed any close relationships, with the possible exception of his next door neighbour (and even that was in question now that this neighbour 'fancied' a girl living in the same street and was spending more time with her).

Yet, feeling that they belonged to their peer group was important - these children might be more likely to take up a popular peer activity in order to claim this affiliation. Leon mentioned the 'deal' he had to make with the friends with whom he plays outside in the local area, which would also fit this behaviour:

Leon: Everything, all the money we find, yeh, we have to share it with the others. That was the deal. I hate that deal. I don't want to share all my sweets (suburb, lines 150-2).

Leon acknowledges that to 'belong' in his gang of friends he has to comply with the group's rules, although he makes it quite clear that his affiliation with these 'friends' is not such that he would actually want to share with them if he had the choice.

However, for many of the children interviewed, belonging to a group was a matter of more careful selection and, while it was not always easy to identify what the members of the group had in common, it was most frequently described in terms of shared characteristics or preferred activities.

Me: So if you're going over, say, to somebody's house, what kind of things might you be doing together to occupy the time?

Jane: Well, I like making things and when Jo comes round here we usually make things and when we go round there she makes things. In the Winter we usually watch television, um, and I listen to music with my friends... Well, we don't really do much apart from make things. I don't know, it's just that everybody has something to do in their house that maybe somebody

³ For example, Ruth discussed incidents, during her interview, where she would 'play the fool' as one strategy for gaining peer attention. She also had an extremely close relationship with her pet rabbit, playing and talking with him often. This pet could be considered a 'substitute friend', and provides the transitional object through which Ruth can manage her emotions and sense of self in the absence of a reliable peer group.

else hasn't and they just get round to making something. That's what we do at the moment (village, lines 548-57).

Jane has a group of friends that she likes to play with, though not necessarily all at the same time. However, these friends would identify themselves as a group when at school and when there are opportunities to meet up together (most parents seem to prefer a child to have just one friend round if they are going to be playing in the house, unless a special party or sleepover is being arranged, discussed further below). For Jane, the common activity she shares with her group at the moment is making things. This is more than just co-incidental; later she tells me:

Me: And all the games [board games in the study]. Is that something you'll do?

Jane: Well, I'm not, I'm not a games person. It's my brother, my mum and dad. I'm a making person (village, lines 1437-40).

So, for Jane, doing craft activities with her friends is a shared interest but also, as something which she considers to be a part of her self-identity, represents an outward sign of their common characteristics which helps bond the friendships within the group.

Likewise, Linda identifies one of the outward signs which unites her group of friends. Linda's bedroom is covered with posters of horses and riding rosettes. She goes riding at a farm near her village.

Linda: ... And I think we're all the same, really. Claire and Nathalie are both horse mad. They ride at the stables (village, lines 896-7).

Sometimes it is easier to describe the group as the inverse of how a child has observed others behaving, either in positive or negative terms. Sameera and I talked about her experiences at a Muslim Sunday school:

Me: Do you enjoy it?

Sameera: Yeh, I like it, but I don't like the lessons that much. I like it at lunch time.

Me: It sounds like a familiar story... It's nice to be with your friends, but it is Sunday and you don't really want to sit in lessons.

Sameera: I don't, like there's two sorts of groups in our class. One's not like me, and sort of popular but they're not really like me. They're really smart and they don't have to concentrate in lessons. And the group that I'm

in are not that popular. Only a few friends. And I really have to try there 'cos I find it hard (suburb, lines 326-41).

In an environment where Sameera feels that she doesn't fit with the popular group because she is not smart enough it becomes even more important to be part of a group with whom her experiences at Sunday school can be made manageable, even if this group is, in part, defined by its inferiority. There is a degree of labelling occurring here, somewhat like Leon's assertion that he is always 'trouble'. It is often the case that these identities are being suggested or reinforced by others, either a parent or other peers who exclude some individuals on the basis that they don't 'fit' with the group.

Alan *chooses* to exclude himself from the group of boys that he sees playing outside near where his father lives because he does not identify with their behaviours:

Me: When you're over at his [dad's] place, do you spend your time differently there?...

Alan: I do pretty much the same here, but I don't go round with my friends much. I haven't got many friends round there. So, like, it's not. I just don't like some of the people round there.

Me: So you maybe just stay with him?

Alan: Yeh, stay away from them 'cos they're always being naughty, so I just stay at home, playing with my computer... some people, Len Brown, I'm not sure if you know him, he lights bin fires and stuff (village, lines 1062-90).

When Adam talks about the likelihood of being able to go out with particular groups of boys it is clear that his mother is primarily responsible for 'labelling' some groups as more or less appropriate for Adam to 'belong' with, although he is also capable of differentiating between groups of 'horrible people' and his friends.

Me: Do you have, when you're going out and so on, mum and dad giving you restrictions as to where you can go and can't go?

Adam: ... if I was like say going to [shopping suburb] they'd say, 'Yeh, that's all right', or [distant shopping suburb]. I haven't been there by myself yet, I don't know if she'd, but she'd probably let me if I was, depends on who I was going with. If I was going like with a few friends that she didn't like then she wouldn't let me go ... It depends what kind of people I'm going with as well. I wouldn't go with horrible people, but if I did, she wouldn't let me go (suburb, lines 697-712).

Being part of a peer group can be enabling, as in Adam's case when he wants to go out to different places; it both enables individuals to achieve goals through group effort or pressure and simultaneously these activities play an important part in the development of group friendships, as in the examples below.

Christine: And also, next weekend... after we get our 12+ results, because we get them on Friday 7th, and on the 8th me, Sally and Carol are all going shopping in [town] to celebrate or commiserate. We decided that would be a good idea... So we're all getting money for doing the 12+ so it's like a treat. 'Cos our parents were like going to give us £20 for passing, but we didn't think that was fair because even if we don't pass we tried our best and as much as we could do so they all decided we'd get the money for doing it anyway (village, lines 891-902).

Sally: But Anna, her, I'm going to a party tonight. She's going bowling... Carol Gordon, on Friday we went to The Bull with her and Karen. And then, Carol East, she had her party in December and it was just a games party. And Annabel, she's the youngest of us, and she's like in May sometime, so, but we hold sleepovers quite regularly. Carol Gordon does the Christmas one, Karen's doing one on May 1st and Annabel's doing one sometime in the Summer holiday. So we hold sleepovers quite regularly, and we get together and we talk (village, lines 834-44).

In the first example, Christine's peer group both provided emotional support for the stressful time leading to receiving their 12+ exam results but also put pressure on their parents who were otherwise going to act in a way which would have undermined this emotional security. If only one child had received money there would have been no group outing to look forward to and the other girls would have felt much worse about 'failing', reinforced by their parents responses which would have confirmed the sense of disappointment.

The second example illustrates how birthdays and school holidays provide the best opportunities for a group of friends to either go out or stay at each other's homes *as a group*. Once permission has been granted for the first of these gatherings, a pattern can be established and justified in terms of *reciprocity*, another important value of peer group behaviour. This is especially true of sleepovers which do not automatically have the same culturally normative currency as birthday parties.

Therefore, identifying with a group is important both for the emotional support it can provide and for the emotional security inherent in simply having a group affiliation. Children are beginning to develop a greater awareness of self-identity - the establishment of an 'I' which is separate from the 'we' of family. Belonging to a peer group is a source of security through which these transitions can be undertaken. In addition, sharing aspects of behaviour which constitute this evolving 'I' with other peers (e.g. sporting activity, collecting similar things, enjoying similar music, etc.) is one way of knowing that the evolving self still 'fits' within the parameters of social norms, though not necessarily those of your parents from whom you are seeking greater independence; no child enjoys being picked out by their peers as too individual (e.g. too square, too 'thick', too fat, etc.)

Leon: I hate homework. There's this boy, Jaray - he's really smart. And everyone, everyone hate him 'cos he's so smart.

Me: Yeh? Does he ever help people with things?

Leon: Yeh. No-one likes him 'cos they think he's a nerd. He's so smart at Maths. Every subject he's got an 'A'.

Me: Would you like to be able to do that well though?

Leon: Yeh. Actually, I wouldn't like to do that well, just like to do well (suburb, lines 881-93).

I have demonstrated that one way of 'fitting' with the peer group is through shared activities and group behaviours, often reinforced via reciprocal actions between the friends in the group. I now wish to consider some of the more frequently discussed forms of 'group knowledge' shared by the children. Acquiring this knowledge, necessary for full participation in some group activities and talk amongst the group, is likely to generate a particular range of behaviours.

What I need to know

Me: Are you a magazine buyer? Are there things you get occasionally, or regularly?

Jane: Yeh. I get, um, Smash Hits regularly, which is a pop magazine, and I get, my mum orders Aquila, which is a magazine for 9-13 year olds, which is educational ... it's not bad, but it's not got as much in it; Smash Hits - I can find out more. That's more to do with school so I can say, 'Oh, did you know that la-di-da, Spice Girls Emma, say, is 21?', rather than, 'Oh, did you know that horses have 4 legs?', or something (laughs). Um, for

example. If I want stuff for school then I get Smash Hits (village, lines 891-905).

Jane tells me later that one of the reasons she buys *Smash Hits* is because she likes pop music, but she thinks that the main reason she buys it is to make sure she is up-to-date with pop gossip. This knowledge provides her with a source of conversation when with friends but, more importantly, allows these girls to affiliate and identify with each other on the basis of the knowledge they possess, especially as this allows them to find out about each others' tastes in music. Reimer (1995b) claims:

Loving the same band, collecting posters and articles on their favourite bands, going to their concerts is a way for girls to have fun together. Idols function also as a *common project* which strengthens the bonds in the girls' groups (p.91).

This kind of knowledge is valuable to both boys and girls, but my interview analyses could only find examples of boys referring to group knowledge by inference. It would appear that the kinds of topics that boys collect and share knowledge on is more often articulated through or alongside performance, rather than through conversation in its own right (though not exclusively - see below). The children also acknowledged the gendered nature of peer talk:

Sally: We walk to school with Jason and David walking with us, and we walk back with Jason with us, so it's not really a private talk because there's boys there. So we can't really have a girlie talk, but we do that most of the time when I go round to Karen's, we just talk in her bedroom, or talk on the computer so, um, there's different things we can do around here (village, lines 586-92).

In the above example, the importance of private space for peer behaviour and interaction to take place (the bedroom) is also emphasised; a theme which I will return to shortly.

For the boys that I interviewed, computer games and football were the most common themes where it was important to be knowledgeable. Many boys demonstrated this through their poster collections at home, their football sticker albums and their magazines. In the excerpt below, the location of Matthew's

scrapbook at school suggests that this is one symbol through which he can affiliate with other boys in football chat.

Matthew: I buy the Manchester United magazines. I've got a few of those, and after a while I cut them up and stick them in, 'còs I keep a scrapbook that's in school. And I stick them in that, and stick them on my bedroom walls (village, lines 257-60).

Alan provided me with an in-depth analysis of how sticker swapping systems operate; shiny team badges can be worth up to 10 players, especially if it is a successful team. Participating in this bartering system requires a good knowledge of the performances of individual players, as well as knowing how the teams are performing in the Premier League. This information is most accessible via the television and in soccer magazines.

The children themselves are acutely aware of the gendered nature of these peer knowledges and the kinds of behaviours that are associated with them.

Me: Do you use the computer much?

Jill: Well, he's [brother] got a Nintendo that we're allowed to use and we've got an old PC down there that's got games and things on that we use at school, so I do use the computer quite a bit.

Me: Do you like the kinds of games that are on there? Do they appeal much?

Jill: According to my friend, Rebecca, I'm as bad as the boys are with computers because my brother had swapped his Nintendo for a Playstation for a week and this boy who played with this other boy, we were talking about computer games and Playstation games and my friend was just sitting next to me looking at me and suddenly said, 'Jill, you're as bad as the boys! All you talk about is computers', and I go, 'I like the Playstation'. We were talking about this game called 'Tomb Raider', 'Pandemonium', the demo ones - which games we liked and which games we didn't like for it. We were talking about the different combinations you get on 'Adidas Soccer' where you've got men who know what they're talking about and then there's women who say things like, 'that pitch looks a bit dry, it needs a good moisturiser,' ... (village, lines 859-912).

The gendered nature of computer knowledge is being reinforced from multiple directions in this example. To begin, Jill acquired the knowledge needed to participate in a conversation with boys at school because her brother has a Nintendo which she is *allowed* to play on. It is likely that one means of behaving-

in-relationship with her older brother is through playing with him on the computer, or if not actually playing at the same time, then playing by herself from time to time will enable her to discuss computers with him. In the next part of the story it would appear that her engagement in conversation with the boys (who initiated the conversation between themselves) excluded her friend who was with her at the time to the extent that it prompted her outcry. Finally, in discussing a game which symbolises the two main areas of boys' expertise - computer games and football - the design of the game itself reinforces the fact that football knowledge is male knowledge.

Watching and identifying

Television has already been mentioned briefly as one valuable source of peer knowledge. Livingstone et al (1998) reports that, in a BBC Television Opinion Panel, television was named most often when children were asked what they talk about with their friends. Being able to share the latest story line in *Neighbours* or *Eastenders* is a valued part of peer group interaction, especially for many of the girls:

Jane: 'Oh, you'll never guess what? Did you see Neighbours last night? Did you know that Libby was la-di-da?' Stuff like that, yeh (village, lines 912-4).

Television, as with all of the behaviours and activities which have been discussed here, is valued for many different reasons, not only for its role in facilitating social interaction. However, the questionnaire results revealed an interesting difference in favourite viewing choices between the children of the two schools (see question 24a and b in Appendix 1). This was one of the few areas in which important behavioural differences could be detected between the village and the suburban school which could not be accounted for in terms of local resources, gender or ethnicity.

The most mentioned programmes from the two schools are listed below in Table 5.

Table 5: Children's top 15 T.V. programmes

RANK	SUBURBAN SECONDARY (% of sample who named programme)	VILLAGE PRIMARY (% of sample who named programme)
1	Eastenders (56)	Eastenders (41)
2	Neighbours (47)	Neighbours (41)
3	Home and Away (39)	The Bill (29)
4	The X Files (33)	Home and Away (27)
5	Cartoons (23)	The X Files (24)
6	Sister Sister (18)	Match of the Day (17)
7	Match of the Day (15)	Animal Hospital (17)
8	Friends (12)	Casualty (17)
9	Other sports (11)	Cartoons (17)
10	Brookside (7)	Friends (10)
11	Rugrats (7)	999 (10)
12	Moesha (7)	London's Burning (10)
13	Top of the Pops (6)	Blue Peter (10)
14	Strange but True (6)	Children's BBC (10)
15	Hollyoaks (6)	Coronation Street (7)

Although there is a great deal in common between the viewing preferences of the two schools, the top 15 programmes begin to indicate a trend which continues more convincingly lower down the chart with programmes which were mentioned by 6% or less of the children within each school. The following programmes were not mentioned by the primary school children at all (with the % from the secondary school who mentioned the programme shown in brackets):

The Simpsons (4), California Dreams (4), Moesha (7), Sweet Valley High (6), Hollyoaks (6), Blind Date (4), Saved by the Bell (2), Sister Sister (18).

These programmes which were not mentioned by the village schoolchildren are some of those which I would most closely identified as 'youth/teenage programming' and most are shown during the afternoon⁴ (Oswell, 1998). Conversely, I would consider some of the programmes which feature high up the village primary school list to be regarded as adult or family evening viewing (e.g. The Bill, Casualty, 999, London's Burning and Coronation Street). In the same list, younger children's programming features much more than on the secondary school list (e.g. Blue Peter, Children's BBC). Although the numbers involved are not large, they would appear to be indicative of some interesting trends.

Although the children from both schools were the same age, the children in the village were in the last year of primary school whereas the suburban children were in the first year of secondary school. The preferred choices of the primary school sample are orientated towards 'family viewing', mirroring popular evening viewing in general. However, the choices of the secondary school sample reflects some interest in 'teenage' viewing. This may reflect a greater identification with adolescence in the latter sample, with children making viewing choices independently of their parents. In the primary school sample, more children are likely to share their parents viewing choices, within the parameters of what a parent thinks appropriate for their child to watch; on a number of occasions these children even mentioned sharing a particular programme with a parent, especially their mother. Livingstone et al (1998) also found that the BBC Television Opinion Panel reported that 'watch television' was the most frequent activity that parents claimed to share with their child.

Although the actual number of mentions of some of the programmes is low, there is consistency in the trend of lower/higher mentions of certain kinds of programmes (children's, teenage, etc.) between the two schools. It is important to note that these programmes were put down in answer to a question that requested programmes that the children enjoyed watching; it is not an accurate measurement

⁴ This is a subjective assessment based on the scheduling of these programmes and my own categorisation based on my knowledge of content.

of all that they might actually watch. Therefore, even a small number of mentions suggest that a programme has particular salience for some of these children.

These trends support the suggestion that identity and, particularly, shared group identity influences children's T.V. viewing choices although within a structural framework that may be provided by parental rules. Children who have a television in their own bedroom will have more freedom to choose what they watch. Reimer (1995a) supports these findings, providing an overview which identifies that media use is about both ritual and activity. The former refers to the structural role of the television played out through family relationships and the social structure of space within the home and the latter refers to the information and uses of information gained from watching television.

Interactions between children, television and computer games are seldom constructed in positive terms in cultural discourse, except in the spheres of advertising and marketing. Instead, the increased number of hours spent in front of the screen is believed to have reduced children's capacity for imaginative play (Postman, 1982; Stutz, 1993). Fornas (1995) provides an explanation of the multiplied strength of these constructions and relates them to the negative images of 'youth':

On the negative side, youth is often associated with the dangers of the future, when fear of the unknown is coupled with a culturally pessimistic diagnosis of degeneration in which the morals and norms of youth become sure signs of the sins and transgressions of modernity. Such reactions are especially strong when youth and the media interact to become an explosive scapegoat. Young people test out new media and genres, so neither is it an accident that criticism of these new media often goes in tandem with criticism of youth culture (p.1).

In the final sections of this chapter I will challenge these negative images of children's use of media, especially television and computers. The preceding section has already examined the ways in which television viewing is much more selective than might have been imagined, given the amount of television children are watching. Livingstone (1998), using time-use diaries with 418 children aged 9-17 in the UK, found that an average of 147 minutes per day were spent watching

television with a further 30 minutes per day spent playing computer games. Stutz (1993) estimated children's screen viewing considerably higher (a combination of television, videos and computers) at 4-5 hours per day, which seems excessively high, but the source of these figures is not revealed.

Whereas Postman (1982) and Stutz (1985) might see television and computer games machines as enticing gadgets which remove children from the play arenas where they can better exercise their imaginations, listening to the children talking about their play experiences suggested the exact opposite. These children were likely to turn to the television and computer during the hours when they were *required* to be indoors or did not have the opportunity to be with their peers. However, although interaction with these indoor media may appear quantitatively substantial, it is clear that qualitatively, children continue to value outdoor play with their peers above all other pastimes. Concurring with Postman (1982) and Stutz (1985), the interviews revealed that the exercise of the imagination, especially in fantasy play, is particularly important. However, contrary to their bleak conclusions, there is no evidence to suggest that the children who took part in this research, who claim to watch television to the extent described above, have lost the capacity or the desire to play.

Outdoor play

In this section, I will begin by examining some of the factors which influence the extent to which children can play outside and the activities that children engage in when playing outside with their peers. I will then develop some of the themes which emerge to explain why outdoor play is so important for these children.

Every child who was interviewed talked about their enjoyment of being outdoors with their friends. Children did not exclusively go out to stay out - some went to nearby shopping malls, leisure centres or cinemas with groups of friends and leisure time is likely to increase in these spaces as the children get older (Ganetz, 1995), when increased finances, responsibility for their own purchases (e.g. via

allowances) and increased mobility (e.g. permission to travel further on public transport, permission to borrow a family car or the purchase of their own) will have an influence on lifestyle choices. Children mentioned these locations as places that they would go to with groups of friends, but the interviews did not reveal the kinds of activities which occurred in these places. In many cases the activities in these locations seemed too obvious to warrant further explanation from the children; watching films at the cinema and walking round the shops (with occasional purchases) in the shopping centres. The importance of these spaces for facilitating peer interaction and the sharing of taste, style, and other means of identification have already been discussed.

Playing outside, however, was discussed in far greater detail by the children; for some it was during this part of the interview that they were at their most animated. It has been noted elsewhere (e.g. Cobb, 1977; Roberts, 1980; Ward, 1978, 1988) that 'as children's boundaries extend beyond the caretaker and home, the outdoor environment plays an increasingly significant role, reaching a pinnacle in the middle years of childhood' (Kirkby, 1989, p.7). In the questionnaire (question 10a, Appendix 1), children were asked to list all the different local places that they went to. The following list only reveals the proportion of children who mentioned each place and does not give any indication of the frequency of their use, but the overwhelming mention of the local park (which continues to hold when the analysis is split by gender or by case study location) also illustrates the importance of being outdoors.

Table 6. Local Places where children go alone, with friends, siblings, parents or relations.

LOCAL PLACE	% responses from total survey (n=204)	% responses from total boys (n=121)	% responses from total girls (n=83)	% responses from total suburban sample (n=163)	% responses from total village sample (n=41)
Park	71	73	69	71	71
Friend's house	51	50	53	52	46
Shopping centre	46	40	54	51	24
Local shops	42	41	43	48	15
Sports centre	30	28	34	31	27
Cinema	24	22	27	26	15
Other sport venue	22	30	11	21	24
Local streets	22	20	24	22	20
Fields/Green	19	23	12	14	39
Club	16	17	16	12	32
Newsagent	16	16	16	7	51
Relation's house	15	12	19	16	12
Library	8	5	12	9	2
Other	6	4	8	3	17
Restaurant	5	5	5	6	0
Arcades	3	4	2	4	0
Religious/Cultural	3	2	6	4	0
Music/Arts lessons	3	2	6	2	7
Non-response	1	1	0	1	0

The above table shows that these children have access to quite a wide range of places in their 'locality'. Here the area of the locality is not defined, as it was left

to the children to decide the extent of the area with which they were most familiar and the places they went most often and this area was not subsequently measured. It is generally more extensive for the suburban sample who can easily catch the underground or a bus to travel to the nearest substantial shopping suburb with its shopping malls, cinemas, arcades etc. For the village children, the village is a more self-contained unit which primarily forms their locality, although the similar proportion who refer to the sports centre (27% of village children; 31% of suburban children) indicates that some individual venues which are not located in the village are still considered local resources.

In general, the differences between the suburban and village responses simply indicates the availability of certain resources. For example, a far higher proportion of village children use a local green or field than suburban children (39% and 14% respectively). This is partly due to the availability of such spaces and partly due to the nature of the village park; it is a fairly small space with some good green but mainly fixed playground equipment for younger children, and greenery which makes it a good location for imaginative play (see later). Therefore, football games are more likely to take place on a field space, and there is one especially popular field in the village which has become the locus for many village children to meet, including some of the girls, due to its social nature. Many of the parks in the suburban area have extensive areas of green, so football can be played within these spaces, although there are some field spaces available in the area too. The gender difference in references to fields/green (boys 23%; girls 12%) indicates the use of these spaces primarily for playing football. Similarly, the gender difference in references to 'other sports venues' refers mainly to football clubs, cricket clubs and basketball courts which the boys are more likely to frequent (30%), whereas the girls who mention these (11%) were usually referring to running clubs, gymnastic clubs or riding schools.

Friends' houses are also particularly important locations for play (51% of the total sample) and these will be mentioned where relevant, but the remainder of this

chapter will primarily focus on the importance of outdoor spaces for children's play.

Where we play, when we play

Playing outdoors is influenced by several key factors; the permission of parents to go outside (parental controls of time and space were discussed in Chapter Six), the weather, the availability of local friends to play with (or if not, then a sibling), and the availability of suitable kinds of outdoor environments. Joseph articulates how these factors have shaped his daily experiences in the different homes he has lived in:

Me: So you've moved around quite a lot? (Joseph: Yes.) And out of all the different places you've been, have you been living in very different kinds of places?

Joseph: Well, we lived in [town] and we lived in a very quiet road. It was sort of like a cul-de-sac and there was a railway there. And I didn't use to do much there. I used to stay in the house. But when we moved down to [village] it was much different. I had lots of friends and we lived on a road that went down. It was a lovely village and I had lots of friends there, and we lived next to a church as well so I did quite a lot there. And then when we came here at first I didn't do much but now I just go about everywhere in [village] (village, lines 96-115).

For Joseph, the transitionary experiences he has had when moving house frequently over the last few years have been more or less manageable and enjoyable, depending on the nature of his social and physical environment. The town where he lived was very quiet - there were few peers to mix with where he lived and he was cut off in a quiet cul-de-sac with a railway line close by, making it potentially dangerous to wander freely in the immediate surroundings. The next village was a success because of all of his friends, and living on a street that 'went down' suggests that the space itself could be used for play and perhaps the extent of the street enabled Joseph to locate and play with a number of other children. When he first moved to his current location he lived in a house in a different street to his current home for a short while. Once Joseph had been living there for a few months and had started to make friends at his new school, these peers helped to

facilitate his play all over the village. Moving to a different street in the village also helped because there are more of these peers living in the same street as him now.

These children are more likely to be allowed to play outdoors by their parents if they are with friends. Those who mentioned being outside alone made it clear that their movements were restricted when they were by themselves; usually to their own street, or 'round the block' on their bikes:

Dipesh: Or sometimes if I haven't got anything I take my cycle out and go round the block.

Me: Right, you just do that by yourself, go round?

Dipesh: Yeh, but my mum's gotta know where I'm going (suburb, lines 568-74).

In addition to the social resources required for children's outdoor play is, of course, the need for suitable outdoor spaces in the locality. Although children will play or wander in their local streets, the most suitable spaces mentioned by the children are overwhelmingly green, semi-natural spaces.

Sally: We go up to [village field] and just mess about and watch the boys play football, and occasionally we nick the ball and tease them and everything. But if we don't go up [village field] we go, either up [village hill] or go for, um, on our bikes for a ride somewhere.

Me: So when the two of you [best friend] are together, you can basically go anywhere you want?

Sally: Go out anywhere, yeh. 'Cos around here there are a lot of greens, so we can go there. With Karen, in [a different village], there's no greens there, there's just a big hill which we can ride down, but most of the time at Karen's we just play on the computer. We just go and see Anna 'cos she lives in [the different village] as well (village, lines 50-64).

The availability of suitable play spaces for children is specific to each individual locality. In the above excerpt, one village (where my research was located) is relatively well-provisioned with open, green spaces for play but the neighbouring village where Sally's best friend lives has little to offer. In this example, playing on the computer is clearly a substitute activity in the absence of better *outdoor* opportunities.

The issue of available outdoor space for children's play, as revealed in this example by the proportions of children in the village and suburban samples who used local open spaces (see Table 6 above), corroborated by many of the children who were interviewed (there are further illustrations throughout this section), demonstrate that considering the spatial behaviours and opportunities of rural and urban children as though these categories 'explain' patterns in their own right is inappropriate.

In Chapter Two I discussed social constructions of childhood and, just as television and computers are associated with negative images of youth, so nature and childhood as a positive, romanticised affiliation has contributed to the myth that rural children always have the best play opportunities, i.e. the best opportunities to 'naturally' be children. Ward (1988) discusses this social construction:

Our mental picture is of games on the village green and of the ability to wander endlessly, to hang around in the farmyard and help at harvest time, but above all, the freedom to manipulate the environment, 'larking about' in the hayfield, digging, building dens, climbing trees, hiding in the bushes and splashing in the water. Space in the country, everyone agrees, provides opportunity for the vital kind of play that is based on familiar fantasies. (p.99)

Compared to some of the areas where Ward carried out his investigations, the village in my case study is not all that 'rural' (i.e. isolated). Although it is surrounded by fields of crops, cows and horses, it is only 8 miles from the nearest small town (connected by approximately 6 buses a day), about a thirty minute drive from several large towns and an hour from the edges of Greater London. Only one child who took part in the interview stage of the research had a father and an uncle who worked on farms, with one other whose father was a groundsman for the local landowner's estate. However, I travelled to a number of surrounding villages to interview children who attended the village school, including the one mentioned above by Sally that had few outdoor play spaces, and each had completely different kinds of open space which would be more or less suitable for children. Likewise, the suburb I selected was well-serviced with good spaces (accessible, green spaces) for children to play. Yet I was only a 5 minute drive from a high-rise council estate

where the blocks are joined by concrete bridges and, beyond a few patches of green within the estate which are notorious for drug activity, especially at night, the immediate vicinity provides a shopping parade and two busy, main roads. Had I carried out my case study in that location I would probably have found many children displaying a very different pattern of outdoor behaviour.

The point here is that the label, 'rural' or 'urban' does not reveal what makes a locality a good place for children's outdoor activity. Each locality has to be considered in its own right and the provision of services, such as public transport, can shape the extent of this locality so there is no single appropriate unit of scale.

Young people's growth and development depends upon environments that provide stimulation, allow autonomy, offer possibilities for exploration, and promote independent learning and peer group socialising. These criteria are important in all settings...

Here again, the artifice of the distinction between nature and culture is invoked. Stimulating environments are not limited to 'natural' settings as is often assumed by young people's advocates. The privileging of rural environments as settings for young people is as deeply troubling as it is wrong... In all settings, whether urban or rural, it is poverty, disinvestment, violence, and privatisation that threaten environments nurturing growth and development, not something intrinsic to the environment (Katz, 1998, p.141).

Ward (1988), Philo (1992) and Valentine (1997c) draw attention to the fact that, even where there are fields, streams and hay bales etc., landowners may effectively bar children from trespassing in these areas. The village children knew exactly where they were permitted to roam:

Me: Do you have restrictions as to where you can go, what routes you can take?

Jane: Yeh, well, 'cos you see it all belongs to the [local landowner] - the [landowner's] estate, and this field belongs to the [landowner] [at bottom of her garden]. In the Summer you are actually allowed to walk 'cos it's corn this year. And so when it's corn they cut the corn into two little things and they make kind of paths and so you are actually allowed to walk then, but you're not allowed to walk in the Winter 'cos it spoils the crops. Which gets so annoying when the footballs go over. You are allowed to go and get the footballs, but you see, this man, who is the farmer, he thinks he owns the whole land, but he doesn't, he's just a worker for the [landowner's] estate.

And he actually said to, um, two doors away that if he saw him on his land then he'd shoot him! (village, lines 443-58).

Weathering the environment

The material nature of local open spaces does not remain static throughout the year. Jane discusses how the agricultural growing seasons influence the places and the range in which she can walk and play above. The weather also plays a very important role in determining children's play environments both physically and, as a result of the physical differences it imposes, also socially.

Me: Would you say that it's mainly in the Summer time when you get to spend more time out?

Joseph: Yeh, because at, because there is no school and because it's warmer. And in the Summer holidays, or even if it's not the Summer holidays, but in Summer after school we sometimes find ways of doing homework quickly and then go out to play 'cos nowadays [Winter] when it's cold we don't usually get to go out much.

Me: So instead, when it's weather like this do you find that you see people less or do you just see them in each other's houses instead?

Joseph: See people in each other's houses, yeh. Usually go to friends' houses now whereas when we used to play out, other friends came out too. So in the Winter I usually play with one friend at their house, and in the Summer I play with a group of friends. Up on the green there with football or something like that (village, lines 220-46).

Adam is still permitted to go out when it is cold as he has friends in neighbouring houses in his cul-de-sac in the suburbs who will come out to play with him. However, in better weather he will be permitted to go further and play in the fields behind a local leisure centre, or on the astro-turf football pitches there⁵.

Adam: ... and that's my friends, Daniel and John [photo]. They live just across there [across the street] and then we usually go and knock for all the other people up the top. That's where they all live. But if it's really cold and wet, if it's cold they're the only three that come out (suburb, lines 475-9).

Adam (talking about whether he helps with household chores): ... so I help her [mum], but I don't do it usually. I'm always out in the street.

Me: Yeh, I suppose it's quite nice now the weather's getting better.

⁵ Adam explained the value of Astroturf; 'Even though it burns you sometimes because you know, it's so, but that's all right... don't get muddy. Mum's like that' (lines 522-7).

Adam: Yeh, yeh. So like you can go further and like, if they'd done that in the Winter, 'No ball games allowed', we wouldn't have had nothing to do. 'Cos you couldn't have stayed outside. The only thing you could have done was stay in someone's house and that would have been a bit boring after a little while. But out and in the street there's always something different to do and that (suburb, lines 1095-107).

Adam is explaining that, after complaints from neighbours in his cul-de-sac the police recently came and erected a 'No ball games allowed' sign on the small patch of green that forms a mini-roundabout at the end of the cul-de-sac. This is the other end of the short road where he lives. During the Winter when he was only allowed to play in the street, the green was a valuable resource for his play. Now that the weather is improving he can begin to go out to the local field and park again to play, but the new sign has effectively removed the space which was most frequently used by all the children in the street. He also perceptively recognises the potential consequences of this kind of adult reaction:

Adam: But they don't like us, they don't like us like playing football and that. They think we're too loud. But then if everybody's hanging around doing nothing and doing naughty things and that, they wouldn't like, I think they'd rather let us play football than go around doing stuff like that (suburb, lines 1323-27).

At the end of the previous excerpt from Adam's interview he also described outdoors as a space where there is always something different to do, whereas being indoors all the time would get boring after a while. I have examined the social and environmental structures which affect the ability of children to play outside; I will now consider why outdoor play is so important for the children who I interviewed, drawing on other literature to seek some explanations for these outdoor activities.

Let's make-believe

When Jane's grandmother died, she left a small amount of money and the family used it to purchase a wooden hut as a playhouse for Jane and her brother which the children named after their grandmother. The children could choose all the things that they wanted to go inside it; it has a small table, bunks, a cupboard, and even its own curtains, which Jane's mother made out of towels.

Jane: So we got it in August, so we haven't actually had that much time to play in it. We could actually come up here even in Winter. We come up with candles and things, and we all huddle around the candle. And we were in the woods and things, 'cos this is what we do with Alice and Rebecca. We just pretend - it's like we were little kids - so we just pretend we are doing things. Well, we don't actually sleep, but we pretend to sleep, and we have rations and things for food. And, oh, it was lovely! It's our best game (laughs). When we come out here (village, lines 1716-25).

The playhouse in the garden provides a space where Jane, through her interactions with other children, can pretend to be doing things. Alice and Rebecca are both younger than her (they are nine years old) so their presence enables her to play 'like we were little kids'; the implication here is that make-believe is what you do when you are younger, but Jane clearly loves these activities. Jane also uses the playing that she sometimes does with her younger brother for imaginative play, usually indoors with his cuddly toys.

The theme of the imaginary scenario which Jane presents is also interesting. They imagine that they are out in the woods - a scary place for many children (see below), and they are having to be independent and survive on rations. In this world of make-believe, the scenario could be understood as an imaginary space in which the children are trying out what it feels like, emotionally, to be in unfamiliar territory where they have to be independent. At the beginning of Chapter Five I used material from Jane's interview to present her difficulty in staying away from home on school trips and her desire to go on family holidays where they stayed in places which felt like home. Given this emotional context, the imaginary scenario which provides the space of play would appear particularly relevant for Jane.

Imaginary worlds, spaces of exploration and adventure all feature in many of the children's interviews. These imaginary spaces are most frequently found outdoors in woods, green areas, abandoned or derelict sites or, when outdoor spaces are unavailable, within the privacy of a child's bedroom. Although one or two children from the suburban area (e.g. Leon, Dipesh) mentioned making dens in the local area or using trees and other materials in their garden for imaginary play, and several also discussed the value of shrubs and trees in park areas for hide and seek,

the overwhelming majority of material on these themes came from the village children, utilising specific outdoor spaces which were simply not available in the suburban area where I carried out my study. It is also possible that, if more of the suburban children were beginning to see themselves as having a 'teenage' identity (see earlier) then the kinds of fantasy play discussed here might be less appropriate or less likely to be revealed in their interviews. These children have already made the transition to secondary school, and some potential imaginary scenarios may not be as relevant for these children. The following excerpts are from two village children:

Christine (talking about the public footpaths where she can go with friends): *Yeh, it's a public footpath circular walk and then you can come back through the fields which you're allowed to do. I don't know if it's a walk or not, but the farmers don't mind. So that's quite good fun, 'cos you can play in the woods up there, and muck around up there. I don't know if you've ever seen the film 'Hocus Pocus'? (Me: I don't think so). Well, it's about these three witches and they're brought back from the dead by this candle and they're meant to suck out all the youth from children to stay alive for their lifetime. And their house that they live in is in like a tiny wood, with a tiny house. And you go up and it's exactly like it [the one in her local wood]. 'Cos there's a little tiny run-down shed, made out of bricks. Ah, it's so scary though...*

Me: *But, so it makes you feel a bit creepy when you go up there, but you still quite enjoy it?*

Christine: *Yeh, it's good there. We play armies and things like that, 'cos the boys in the village love playing armies. And they made a base down at the park and it was great; it was on a platform like up in a tree, with like trap doors and everything. They made it out of things from their house like corrugated cardboard and things like that. It was really good (village, lines 712-45).*

Christine: *You've probably heard of it from lots of children you've talked to - the haunted house⁶?*

Me: *Oh, yes. A couple of people told me about that.*

Christine: *That's very famous. People go down the little road. And I went to Carol's house, 'cos she's my best friend, and her friend, Kate... we all went down there and we were walking about, like really scared out of our wits, and suddenly we heard these glasses clink and then these rabbits came running out in front of us and we got so scared we ran all the way back up the road! And we decided, 'oh, don't be stupid', so we walked back again, and then there was this gun shot and all these birds came running out the*

⁶ Many children mentioned the haunted house during the interviews and in our school group discussions. I have used Christine's interview material again here because she provides a particularly vivid account of playing by the haunted house.

trees, so we decided we weren't going to go back there for a little while. It was too scary... I've heard stories about people going inside and seeing all these wonderful, ghostly type things... 'Cos Carol's mum wanted to buy that house when they were thinking of living here, but Carol wouldn't let her because she knew what it was like 'cos she'd been there with her friends. So they didn't buy it, which most of the people in the village were quite happy about 'cos they could still go there and muck around (village, lines 801-37).

Jill: Well, if I'm at my nan's I usually go to Lucy Crawford's house and we do things to do with horses and we go down to the quarry to look for things...

Me: And you go exploring in this quarry ... Found anything much in the quarry?

Jill: Well, no. We haven't yet because now people, where most of the things are, there's loads of rubbish and things, but there's also a nice patch that me and my friend found if you go down through the trees there's a nice patch of flowers - snowdrops when the snowdrops are out. So that's where we used to stay; or by the flint place, and look for all different kinds of flints (village, lines 605-8; 625-38).

In both of the excerpts from Christine's interview the places are described as scary but fun. Although the hut in the wood reminds the children of a frightening film, she says, 'it's good there'. Likewise, the haunted house was 'too scary' for Christine and her friends to return to for a while, but the village children were really pleased that Carol's mum did not deprive them of this exciting place to play. The paradox of the 'scary place' and the enjoyment gained from being in these places is one which many of us experience; the Roller-coaster ride at the amusement park or the thrill that some people gain from surfing, gliding, rock-climbing etc. Although some of these activities have a risk of serious injury associated with them, we tend to undertake them when we have a sufficient sense of security provided by both the context and our ability to manage both our emotions and our physical bodies to make the transition whereby we will actually engage in the particular activity. Christine managed to make this transition in the wood, but is not able to manage the fear associated with the haunted house yet.

Further, both the wood and the boys' den in the park can be read as imaginative spaces which reflect the excitement and fantasy of scenarios which the children have probably seen on television - the film *Hocus Pocus* and 'armies'. Here the television can provide a source of physical and emotional challenges, a range of

social scenarios (especially the 'soaps'), and access to heroes, heroines (both imaginary and real) who provide role models and ways of behaving which a child may espouse, even if only in fantasy. In imaginative play a child may want to be the war hero, or perhaps the vet or doctor saving lives. Even violent films are read in multiple ways by children - a war film can help to show children what bravery is; it is not necessarily interpreted as a call to use guns by most psychologically healthy children.

Jill describes a different kind of play; she and her friend have found their own special place to play and explore, where the materials they find in the quarry are a source of enjoyment and fascination. Like the dens mentioned by some of the boys and the bushes mentioned by several other children in both the village and the suburb which are good for hide and seek, these are private spaces for children within a public, outdoor, usually adult environment. These are the spaces where they can experience and experiment with freedom a little bit more and where the imagination can provide a space where, through playing with friends, both emotional and physical explorations can take place.

Perhaps some of these children's play activities are the precursors to what some groups of adolescents are doing when they are 'hanging around' on the street, 'performing' and trying out their evolving identities via style, language, group affiliation, where even minor transgressions and vandalism (Valentine, 1996a) are simply testing out the boundaries of their social and physical boundaries, whilst simultaneously exploring their own behavioural and emotional boundaries.

What is play?

From the accounts above I have suggested that children have an emotional need to explore their social and physical environments via imaginative play. The work of Winnicott (1971) on play developed this theme to describe these behaviours as taking place in the 'transitional spaces' created through play. If children have an opportunity to imagine what it is like to be faced with certain kinds of situations, or

to test the limitations of their fears with the support of the peers that they play with, perhaps they will be better equipped to deal with similar situations or those which arouse similar emotions in 'real life'. This is Winnicott's assertion, from which he suggests that the ability for all of us to 'play' - including adults - is essential for psychological health. If we extend this process to other kinds of behaviour, we know that all kinds of training programmes, especially those associated with work skills and 'team-building' often use role-play and other kinds of games in order to test out scenarios through which we learn how we will respond to different situations. This process is a useful one which I will return to consider in Chapter Eight.

A substantial volume of research over recent decades all concurs on the importance of informal, open spaces for children to play in, and particularly for the way in which they facilitate imaginative play (e.g. Hart, 1979; Moore, 1986; Adler and Adler, 1994; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997; Taylor et al, 1998). I believe that Winnicott's (1971) explanation of the contribution that play makes to the transitional spaces of middle childhood provides the most persuasive framework with which to make sense of all of these observations and to which the evidence presented in this chapter also contributes. It is also helpful to consider these behaviours within a developmental framework because this allows a link to be made between childhood behaviours and the social, physical and emotional frameworks within which we continue to behave throughout our lives.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated that children's peer relationships emerge, in part, from the nature of their kin and particularly parental relationships. It is through these peer relationships that children continue their journey further afield from the emotional and physical 'home'. These peer interactions provide the support structures through which children are more or less likely to engage in certain activities and have positive environmental experiences. Being with friends provides access to a range of experiences and places which being alone or with a

parent cannot facilitate in the same way. Simultaneously, a child's need to belong within their peer group, through which their own self-identity can emerge, heightens the value of particular kinds of behaviour, particular kinds of knowledge and a variety of outward signs and performances. These both signify group membership but also become transitional experiences and behaviours in that they become part of the child's own identity too, especially activities at which they excel or those which contribute to healthy emotional growth (e.g. imaginative play).

Considering children's daily lives within this framework further demonstrates the importance of social relationships and environmental/local contexts which together provide the transactions through which children's daily behaviour emerges. In Chapter Eight I will explore the ways in which these insights have new strategic implications for E.E..

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

NEW STRATEGIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION - MAKING THE TRANSITION

Introduction

In the last three chapters I have examined children's daily behaving as a process through which a wide variety of activities take place and through which their 'environment' is experienced. My analysis of the factors which influence these different ways of behaving indicate the great significance of *social relationships* for gaining an understanding of the nature of children's daily behaviour. This has not previously been sufficiently acknowledged or acted upon via the strategies which shape E.E. The nature of these social relationships have been explored in depth to enable their role in shaping children's daily behaviour to be better understood.

The central theory, applied to analyse my empirical findings, and drawing on the social psychological foundations of 'environmental experience', is the *transitional space*. Using this theory, I have taken up Aitken and Herman's (1997) challenge to consider the potential of applying Winnicott's theories in understanding children's geographies. The transitional space is that which is created, in its most basic sense, between the material and the imaginary, and between the known and unknown. I have demonstrated the importance of certain kinds of social relationships which can provide the structures and the support networks through which a transition takes place and another action or way of behaving becomes more likely in particular contexts.

This empirical research has several applications. It has provided fresh material on children's geographies from a bottom-up perspective, deploying a theoretical framework which demonstrates the need for geographers to apply dimensions of *social psychology* to their understanding of issues of identity and social behaviour. This offers an alternative to a division of 'the social' into *structure* and *agency* in

which the former is often conceptualised as an external structure and the latter is a 'known' (cognitive) human intentionality (responding to 'external' social and cultural contexts) (Pile, 1993). Pile goes on to explain that the theories of psychoanalysis do not dissolve the distinction between structure and agency, '... although these terms are rendered redundant' (p.132).

It is more that it can reveal the intricate inter-relationships between the personal and the social, which enter into the depths of the person and provide the axes around which the self is organized, at the point of contact between the individual and the collective; it steps beyond the analysis of structure-agency (Pile, 1993, p.132).

Pile (1993) argues that the use of psychoanalytic theories in human geography will 'enhance our understanding of the human experience of space and place' (p.134). The empirical research methods and subsequent analysis employed in this thesis have explored this potential and demonstrated how these theories can be applied. Winnicott's object-relations theory and notion of the *transitional space* reconceptualise the relationship between the *social* and the *self*, highlighting '... the intricate, dynamic and power-ridden relations between them' (Pile, 1993, p.137).

However, in this concluding chapter, I wish to focus on the strategic aims of E.E., especially this new understanding of transitional spaces, and consider what the preceding analysis can contribute to new directions. The analysis suggests several important areas for discussion. First, it suggests alternative ways of understanding children's daily environmental experiences, acknowledged in most E.E. literature as an important factor in the formation of more environmentally responsible attitudes and behaviours. Second, it offers a different way of conceptualising the end 'product' of E.E. - behaviour - as a contextualised process of behaving-in-relationship. This has implications for how E.E. might be seen to influence behaviour and how such an achievement can be identified. Third, it raises questions about the place of E.E., both in terms of how and where to implement E.E. strategies, and in terms of recognising the limitations of E.E. and the need for other strategies to encourage behavioural change in society. I will address each of these themes in turn, drawing on some of the main findings from the previous three chapters and with reference to several of the most recent debates and research publications on E.E. and EfSD.

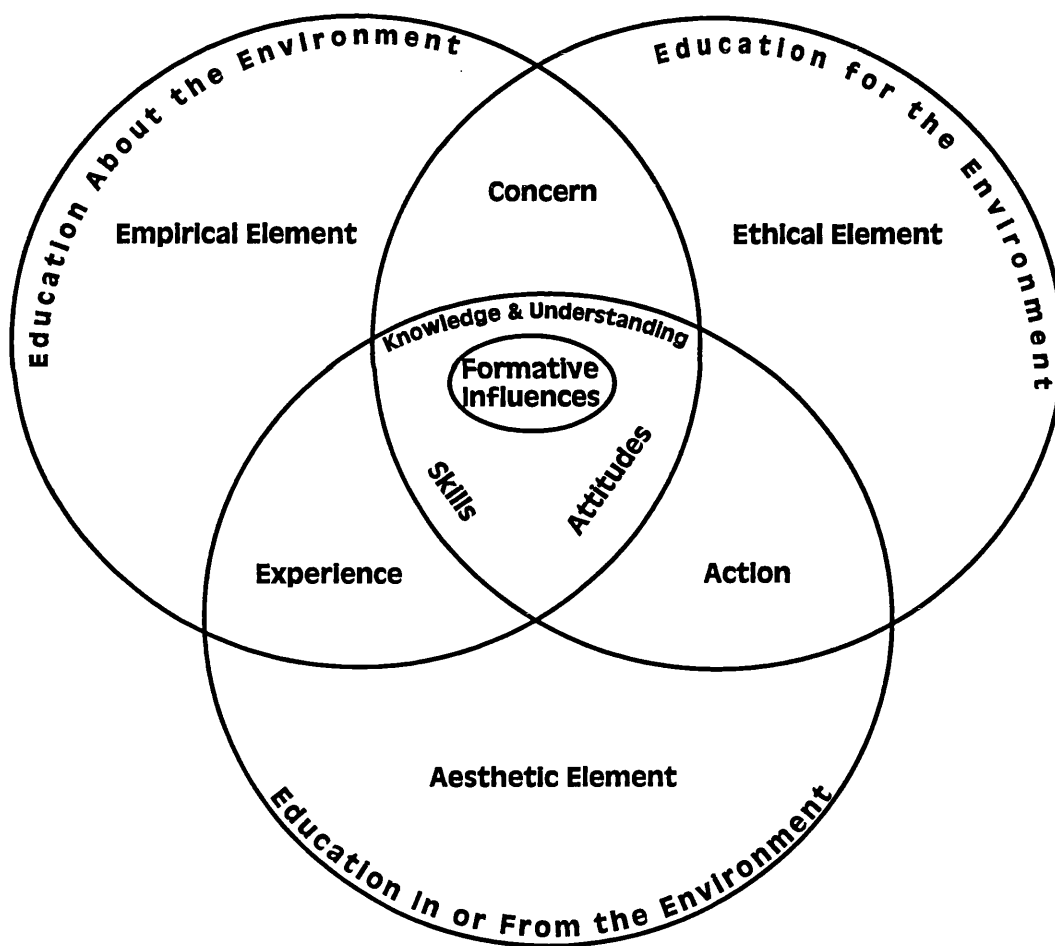
Significant life experiences

During the 1990s, E.E. research has increasingly begun to recognise a range of factors and experiences which lie beyond the realm of the formal, school curriculum and which are likely to have implications for the effectiveness of any formal E.E. programme. These factors seldom represent new findings - environmental educators working in the informal sector (e.g. environmental interpretation, youth work, conservationists etc.) will be familiar with them. However, this recent research begins to acknowledge the need to reassess our models of E.E. by considering the place of such factors.

For example, the *Development of Concern for the Environment and Formative Experiences of Educators* research project emerged from the work of Joy Palmer during the 1990s. It has expanded to become an international comparative study under a broader project, *Emergent Environmentalism* (Palmer et al, 1996). This research is based on the earlier work of Tanner (1980) who investigated the significant life experiences of active conservationists in the USA. Palmer's work, like Tanner, found that outdoor experiences, especially those which took place in childhood, were most commonly cited as influences on the adult environmental concerns and actions of environmentalists. However, as Jones (1987) notes, it is generally accepted that being outdoors is 'good', but the reasons for this are less satisfactorily theorised. Palmer's research also looked at important social influences, ranking the top five as: family, media, older friends (e.g. teachers), friends, and religion (Palmer et al, 1996). In chapters six and seven I explored the significance of all of these categories and the children's dialogue has enabled me to examine the meanings and interactions between these categories extensively. However, although the *Emergent Environmentalism* project would appear to offer little additional information in this regard, it is mentioned here as it provides the background for Palmer's broader consideration of the direction of E.E. and future areas of investigation presented in *Environmental Education in the 21st Century: Theory, Practice, Progress and Promise* (1998). In her concluding chapter, she

suggests that what she describes as ‘formative influences’ (including the factors listed above), may be the most significant factors which shape adult environmental concern and action, providing the foundations which effectively determine the likelihood that other models of E.E. (the fostering of knowledge, attitudes and behaviour) will be well-received and acted upon. These assertions are presented diagrammatically as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Model for teaching and learning in environmental education: complete planning framework (1) (Palmer, 1998, p.270).

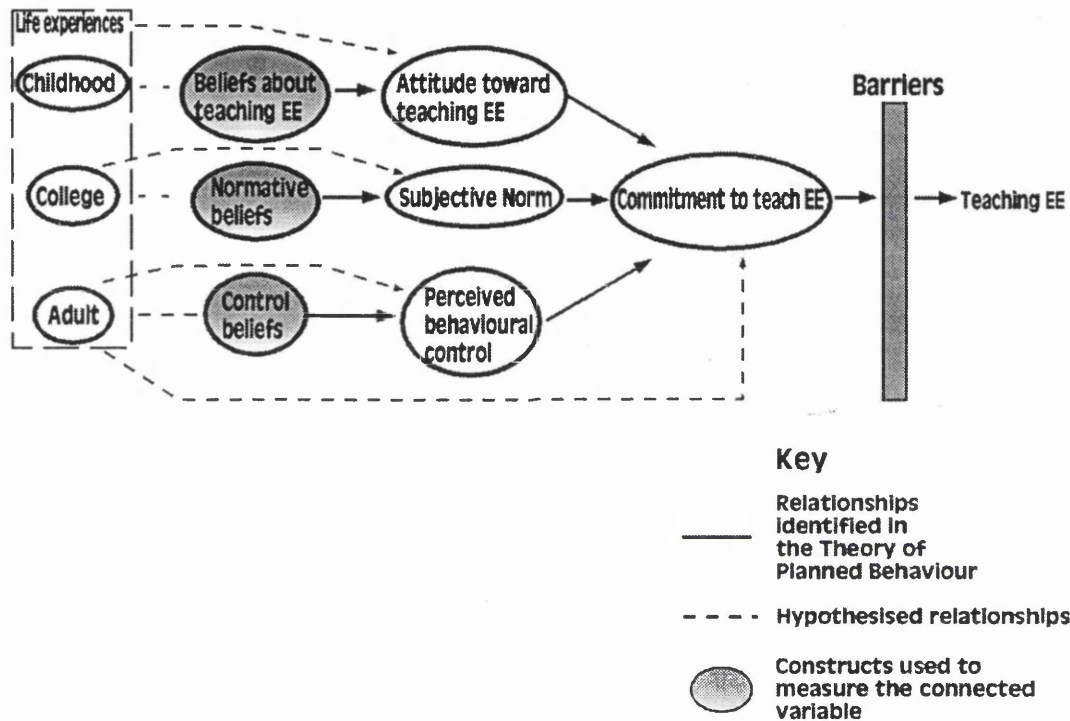


It should come as no surprise to educationalists that experience of and interaction with our outdoor environments is an essential part of E.E. (Horwitz, 1996; Cooper Marcus, 1979). We would expect children to have difficulty developing concern for that which they have only learnt about in the abstract and of which they have

had little experience. If the 'outcome' of E.E. is behaviour which demonstrates greater environmental awareness and concern then a model of learning which does not use experience as its foundation would lack the very arena in which such behaviour would be demonstrated. This model moves forward from the dominant, linear knowledge-attitude-behaviour model in acknowledging the centrality of environmental experience and the influence of other people (parents, friends, teachers etc.) on children via their interactions.

Unfortunately, Palmer does not take the thesis further to consider the educational implications of this beyond espousing the need for children to have access to these formative experiences from early childhood, although she calls for teachers to be aware of these foundations, drawing upon and building upon them in their teaching practices. Shuman et al (1997), however, when researching the life experiences of practitioners of E.E., whilst finding that many teachers cited similar childhood experiences to those found by Palmer, also acknowledged the institutional, social and structural barriers to implementing E.E. in formal educational settings (see Figure 6 below). Given these barriers to implementing E.E. within the school (see Tomlins and Froud, 1994, reviewed in Chapter One), the structures which lie between 'formative experience' and student action are likely to be equally significant.

Figure 6. The model of environmental education commitment (MEEC)
(Shuman and Ham, 1997, p.27)



My own research has revealed the complexity which lies at the heart of Palmer's model (Figure 5); for example, it would appear that many outdoor experiences have little to do with environmental concern *per se*. Hart (1997) remarks that many children who have opportunities to spend time outdoors (i.e. 'closer to nature') do not necessarily exhibit more caring behaviours towards nature (e.g. pulling the legs off frogs, throwing litter in the stream, etc.) Likewise, Martin (1996) states that if acknowledging the centrality of 'outdoor experience' in the lives of activists leads to educationalists *designing* 'environmental experiences', this could be viewed as a rather simplistic, unhelpful response. He believes that, unless embedded in a participative process (an important aspect of social interaction, discussed further below), such experiences are artificial and of dubious worth. Similarly, Slater (1993) draws on Eisner's concept of 'educational

encounters' (1979), where the learning outcome is unstated or somewhat unpredictable, but stresses:

What is important is the enquiry process and the opportunity to explore personal environmental knowledge and experience (Eisner, 1979, in Slater, 1993, p.11).

Therefore, although most of Palmer's environmental activists recall outdoor experiences from their childhood, causation cannot be proved on the basis of this factor alone. Chawla (1998), reviewing research on 'formative experiences' more widely, cites the work of Bixler and Morris (1997) who looked at the childhood experiences of people involved in wildland water recreation and sums up:

... they [recreationists] not only had nature experiences, but also experiences that socialized them into interpreting nature in positive or meaningful ways (Bixler and Morris, 1997, in Chawla, 1998, p.17).

Although Palmer's research has acknowledged the importance of parents, teachers and other kinds of mentors, many of a child's most influential social influences lie beyond formal education, and therefore beyond the powers of the curriculum and teachers to address directly. I will return to this point later in the chapter.

Outdoor experience plays a very important role in the lives of children for a wide variety of reasons but Winnicott's theories of the transitional spaces of play highlight the significance of a large proportion of my interview material on this theme. Outdoor spaces provide the material environments which, through a child's social relationships (especially when at play with peers) provide some of the best resources for the transitional interactions essential for the healthy development of the self, the child's sense of identity. The development of identity is much more than a knowing of who we are. It is about placing ourselves within a network of social relationships, themselves part of a complex network of material opportunities, localities and communities and feeling that we know *where we are*. In other words, developing a sense of security. Exploring the meaning of attachment, and the basis for 'healthy' security in Chapter Five, Six and Seven

demonstrates that positive socio-spatial interactions provide the observable phenomena which result from such healthy psychological structures.

Research which focuses on the significant life experiences remembered by adult activists is rarely conceptualised in these terms. Jones (1987) and Chawla (1998) note that looking back is a selective process. Further, by focusing on adult activists and seeking activities which they consider influential, we fail to identify the majority of non-activists who may remember similar activities but for whom the behavioural outcomes were very different, i.e. we fail to consider the processes by which such activities become meaningful. My research, by working with children in the present has generated less self-conscious accounts of childhood activity and, by considering the mundane rather than the exceptional, enables daily behaviour to be conceptualised as an ongoing process rather than an outcome which is fixed in time. As Aitken and Herman (1997) note,

The person we once were may continue to compose an element of our identity, but the child nevertheless becomes embedded within the adult and mediated by processes of socialization. Though we may be able to reconstruct the circumstances of childhood, this reconstruction is often embedded in a set of cultural values, and the emotions of children probably remain somewhat distant and elusive (p.76).

In considering the significance of 'formative experiences', most research does not delve beyond observable material practices. Chawla (1998) recognises that psychological processes must surely be an important consideration, but little research exists which has explored this route. My research has sought to address her assertion that formative experiences are:

... exchanges between an external and internal environment: an external environment composed of the qualities of physical surroundings and social mediators of the physical world's meanings, and an internal environment of the child's needs, abilities, emotions, and interests (p.19).

Examining some of the practical implications of understanding children's activities in these ways suggests a re-orientation of E.E. which responds to the centrality of *process* rather than behavioural *outcome*. In the next section I will explore some

of the links that can be made between the empirical findings of the previous chapters and current debate in E.E.

'Process' not 'Product'

A reorientation of E.E. centred on process is one of the distinctions made between the dominant outcome of considering E.E. as education *in, about* or *for* the environment and the aims of EfSD (Education for Sustainable Development). Fien and Trainer (1993) argue that understanding the relationships between people, groups and their environment rather than a simple person-environment unidirectional model of responsibility inevitably requires an understanding of processes rather than the determination of fixed goals. Relationships vary between different groups; different kinds of power relations are involved; scale and geography are important in understanding the specific environmental and social implications of a variety of different socio-economic processes, etc., making it unrealistic to teach about 'solutions' to environmental problems in a generic sense. Following on from this, therefore, there is no single behavioural outcome that can be espoused as the environmentally 'correct' one. Instead, an understanding of how to handle a body of information which includes environmental knowledge but which must also include political, ideological, economic and social knowledge is required. *Behaviour* is not an identifiable outcome but rather *behaving* is the process through which experience can be gained and through which solutions can be tested. In theoretical terms, these represent a transactional approach to understanding people/environment systems.

The transactional view does not deal with the relationships between elements like cognition and behaviour in the sense of cause/effect or dependence/independence... Instead, an interdependent person/environment system is postulated *where change in the system is the principle focus of attention*. Change is an inherent quality of the system, not merely an outcome of separate elements interacting with each other ... Change according to the transactional model may produce transformations that are habitual, variable, emergent and/or novel (Aitken and Bjorklund, 1988, p.57, italics added).

This thesis, in looking at the daily behaviours of children, has sought to move beyond understanding E.E. as a system, whether it be one about outcomes or processes. Understanding what is meant by, and what can realistically be expected of individuals in terms of their daily behaviour requires an understanding of the identity of these individuals and the processes and relationships which guide and influence these behaviours. As such, I have looked at *change* in terms of the social relationships through which children experience events as transitional. In other words, behaving-in-relationship as a process which, through social and environmental encounters, may lead to transformations in behaviour. This approach calls for an understanding of the processes inherent in the development of identity which, in turn, suggest the value of understanding the interplay of *social* psychological processes with socio-economic and environmental ones. Further, as it is ultimately human behaviour that E.E. seeks to inform, it is arguably a better understanding of the psychology of the *social* (i.e. an emphasis on emotional security, feelings, motivations etc.) rather than an understanding of 'the (physical) environment' which might point towards new opportunities in E.E. strategy.

Hart (1997) is one of the few practitioners of EfSD, developing children's participation, explicitly to acknowledge the central importance of responding to issues of *identity* explored in this thesis:

... for children, groups serve as work places in which they demonstrate competence and the first flourishes of independence, whereas, for adolescents, groups serve more as a stage for trying out the identities they are creating.

The heightened sense of industry of the middle childhood period involves doing things alongside others... children need authentic recognition that their ways of mastering experience and self-image are reasonably consistent with how others view them... An organisation needs to provide support if these children are to carry out their sometimes overly ambitious ideas. It cannot simply play a role in engaging children in meaningful, concrete projects; it must also make it a priority to ensure, as much as possible, against failure in these projects by supporting children's grand schemes with structure and practical resources. The organisation must help the children learn to deal with failure when this becomes necessary. If both authentic projects and adequate supervision are provided, children at this age can become part of a community where their industry is valued and where they can engage in meaningful tasks with peers and adults (p.28-9).

In other words, Hart acknowledges how vital it is for practitioners and teachers to be aware of the *processes* of interaction between themselves and the children, and between peers. He notes how a child's response to engagement in environmental projects is a function not only of the environmental benefits of the project itself but, more importantly, is dependent on the nature of their identity and of the social interactions in which they engage. He goes on to suggest that youth organisations need to learn to deal with adolescence by providing flexibility for teenagers to adopt symbols and practices, and determine the culture of the organisation for themselves. The organisation needs to provide a base of trust and be able to supply valid information on issues, supporting participants needs as and when required.

Hart also understands that there are complex reasons why some children will be more eager to participate than others, related to issues of culture, self-esteem and social class. Ultimately, for any institution to maximise the involvement of children and youth it needs flexibility, and the ability to find multiple opportunities for different kinds of individuals to identify with the activities being offered. The empirical evidence of the previous chapters has traced out the nature of these interactions extensively, and corroborates Hart's recommendations. For example, Rose (see Chapter Six and Seven) finds it emotionally stressful to engage in new activities with a peer group and might be more likely to take on a new activity if it could be experienced with her mother. She might more likely to take part in an activity without her family if the organisation running the activity consciously fostered an accepting environment where she could find a friend or if, in a more cliquey peer environment, opportunities were provided for some children to take part as individuals, supported by a positive, friendly relationship with the adult leader(s). Such factors have nothing to do with environmentalism or even belief in an environmental ethic *per se*, but without an awareness of the kinds of social interactions through which Rose can participate, the transition through which the activity may become a valued part of *what she does*, and therefore *who she is*, is less likely to occur. The different characteristics of the children who participated

in my research illustrate the need for diversity in the kinds of opportunities provided by organisations who wish to promote environmental behaviours.

Hart's work also demonstrates the importance of child 'development' in a way which does not prescribe specific abilities to children of specific ages in a Piagetian manner. Rather, it suggests fluid relationships which acknowledge '... that the nature of 'childhood' necessarily changes as the objects around the child - social relations and family structures - change' (Aitken and Herman, 1997, p.73). This moves us on from an E.E. rooted in educational theories which adopt developmentally linear models and, therefore, allows for educational exchanges where the educator responds to the individual 'identities' they find before them rather than relying on, and therefore reinforcing, social constructions of childhood. Whilst 'good' educators will already be practitioners of such an approach, we need to find the language to convey these approaches to E.E. from the top, strategic levels from which practice is derived, and help to transform the structures within which such exchanges take place, especially schools. I will return to discuss this theme shortly.

I have argued that one way to reorientate an E.E. that is concerned with shaping human behaviour is to better understand the *social psychology* underpinning such behaviour. Before addressing the institutional changes required in schools alluded to above, I wish to explore the theoretical implications of this assertion.

Pro-environmental or Pro-social?

One of the main ways in which I have sought new ways of researching E.E. is by unpacking the central assertions constituting the dominant knowledge-attitude-behaviour model that underpins much of the E.E. strategy documentation for England and Wales. In both the review of literatures relevant to the thesis and the empirical work undertaken, a substantial omission might be queried. Nowhere in this thesis have I sought to question or discuss the assumption that E.E. is actually required. I have not engaged in the debates surrounding the nature or existence of

human-environment relationships by which it is believed that environmental damage is being caused. I have not explored the assumption being made by environmental educators that behavioural change is both necessary and possible in order that we can continue to live on this earth in ways which cause less degradation and harm to both our environment and the communities who live here. I feel that it is necessary to acknowledge these omissions at this stage in order that the nature of the conclusions which I now draw can be placed within an appropriate context.

I began this thesis by stating that my interest in this area of research stems from a belief that we are living without due concern for environmental changes and social inequalities which are, in part, a result of the ways that we organise our society, our economy, etc. In other words, I approach my work having accepted the basic assumption upon which the need for E.E. is based. It is not within the scope of this thesis to examine the enormous literature on environmental philosophy, ethics, or the extensive range of specific issues and contexts that would need to be examined and responded to on an individual basis in order to justify the call to take environmental action. These substantial topics are essential areas of ongoing research but, in the context of this thesis, their findings represent the body of information that can be drawn upon in the process of E.E. in order that behavioural choices can be made and actions taken.

However, by re-focusing on the *purpose*, the *aim* of E.E., I return to the need to understand the processes by which behavioural change becomes more likely. In Chapter One, I reviewed the body of E.E. research that demonstrates on countless occasions that an awareness of the issues, and an attitude of concern often correlate very poorly with daily behaviours. I wish to argue here that environmental educators, in their passion for the issues requiring urgent action, often fail to acknowledge the nature of the *processes* that can help us to understand why the majority of the population do not share their passion or take up their calls for action. My claim here is that the pre-cursor to engaging families,

groups of friends, schools, communities etc. in environmental action (i.e. the pro-environmental) is an understanding of *pro-social behaviour*.

Pro-social behaviour is:

... behaviour that has positive social consequences, and that contributes to the physical or psychological well-being of another person. Behaviours that fall into this category include altruism, aiding, attraction, bystander intervention, charity, co-operation, friendship, helping, rescue, sacrifice, sharing, sympathy and trust. It is important to remember, however, that the determining factor is the perspective of the society being considered (Hogg and Vaughan, 1995, p.439).

The nature of pro-social behaviour and the contexts in which it can be seen to be exhibited have been areas of extensive research in social psychology. Most research concurs that pro-social behaviour is not an innate property of the psyche of certain individuals but something which is acquired as part of the socialization process in a variety of contexts (Hogg and Vaughan, 1995; Bierhoff and Klein, 1988; Baron and Byrne, 1997; Holmes, 1996). Hogg and Vaughan attribute pro-social behaviour to a range of transactional experiences including:

- observing a positive outcome when watching someone else exhibit pro-social behaviours,
- being seen by others as a 'helpful person' which then becomes a part of self-identity,
- responding to the expectations of society (in certain cultural contexts),
- identifying reciprocity as a positive outcome of pro-social behaviour,
- learning a sense of social responsibility.

In addition, both Hogg and Vaughan (1995) and Bierhoff and Klein (1988) point out that an individual may be more or less likely to exhibit pro-social behaviours in specific instances depending on a range of factors such as:

- whether or not they perceive the person in need as worthy,
- if they find themselves in an emergency situation,
- if there are other people available to step in instead,
- if they are in a good mood,

- whether they perceive themselves to have the necessary skills to help,
- whether they feel part of a small, friendly community where people help each other.

Deux et al (1993) also consider other social characteristics such as *conformity*, extending pro-social theories to look at how individuals may act when part of a group, depending on the characteristics which constitute the identity of the group. The same individual may act differently in different group situations.

Examples of many of the factors in the first list can be found among the stories of the children in the preceding two chapters, particularly those exhibiting 'healthy' attachment styles and the ability to enter into relationships, manage transitional experiences and try new activities/behaviours. Likewise, a non-response to many of the situational factors in the second list could be interpreted as signifying a lack of confidence or security. Illustrative examples of these characteristics can also be found in the stories of the children presented in this thesis. These empirical findings highlight the importance of understanding *attachment* and *security* - *the foundations of psychological health* - as the basis for the development of pro-social behaviour.

The need for psychological security

Holmes (1996), in a chapter which explores the relationships between psychological health and social democracy, argues that secure attachment, once established as the dominant style of social relationship between an individual and the primary carer (and by implication, later on with peers and others in society), provides the foundations for self-confidence, the ability to relate, generosity and co-operation. He suggests that these behaviours can be regarded as foundational features of 'good citizenship'. He goes on:

These findings suggest significant links between the 'private' space of the family and infant-parent bonds on the one hand, and the 'public' domain on the other. A particular social order inscribes itself through the security or otherwise of its children. The capacity of parents to provide security for their children will depend in part on the felt security of their world (p.34).

Martin (1996), head of education for the World Wildlife Fund, also emphasises this relationship:

If we are providing an education that can potentially engender a level of care and concern, it also requires the presence of a security from within which this care and concern can be felt and expressed. We cannot cry for others safely without the security of our own comfort (p.48).

Whilst we would expect the above to be true for all reflections of pro-social behaviour, I believe that it is particularly important in the realm of environmentalism. With many societal issues the solutions, whilst not always as straightforward as they might seem, often appear to be identifiable. For example, we can understand that providing employment and basic accommodation is one way of ending homelessness; even if there are substantial obstacles to achieving this, we can be fairly certain that these measures, if undertaken, would achieve the desired outcome.

However, many of the environmental issues which have received most media attention are much less certain. Although there is now considerable governmental support which backs scientific assertions that global warming is taking place, there is still a constant flow of information via other scientists and the media which questions this assertion. Furthermore, even if we are certain that global warming is happening, there is then considerable debate about the kinds of practices we should adopt and the relative urgency with which we need to take action. So there are also issues of the timescales involved and the corresponding perseverance required in making a behavioural response which compound issues of uncertainty. An example in Chapter Six illustrates one response to this level of uncertainty. Christine is aware of the debate about BSE - 'mad cow disease' - but chooses an explanation for her family's practice to continue eating beef which is rooted in the security of the mother-daughter relationship. It is easier to trust her mother's instincts than to deal with the complicated science and uncertainty depicted in the media. The resistance and behavioural change required to contradict her mother's decision would represent a distancing from a relatively secure relationship, leaving Christine in an uncertain space of identity for which she is not yet ready.

Hicks (1998) also acknowledges the role of uncertainty and the need for security in addressing environmental issues:

Psychology as much as science will... determine the planet's fate, because action depends on overcoming denial, among the most paralysing of human responses. While it affects most of us to varying degrees, denial often runs particularly deep among those with heavy stakes in the status quo... (Postel, 1992, in Hicks, 1998, p.167).

Hicks points to the need for 'environmental stories of hope' to be a part of E.E. as one way of countering a culture of despair. He derives these stories from focus group work with environmental educators, examining their formative experiences for examples of such stories. These include memories of natural places, experiencing spectacular places abroad, observing alternative behaviours in different cultures, friendships, spiritual beliefs, and role models who did not let obstacles stand in their way.

It is also interesting that Chawla (1998), in addressing her assertion that 'formative experiences' are about an exchange between 'an internal and external environment', considers work on pro-social behaviour as providing a set of established methods for use in further research. These methods include children's stories, responses to emotional films or pictures, observational work and physiological indicators. My own research has utilised children's stories about their own daily lives as the primary gateway into understanding the 'exchange' she refers to.

If the elements of behaviour which constitute 'citizenship' are considered as the processes by which E.E. can advance, and these are closely related to a healthy psychological state (an outcome of healthy attachment), how do we ensure that these processes become central to the way all E.E. initiatives and actions are carried out? If we take some of the ideas discussed above to their logical conclusion, do they suggest that formal education offers little to the child from a family background in which there is insecure attachment between parent and child?

Holmes (1996) explains that, whilst a child's home clearly provides the primary space in which many of their behavioural traits will become established, the absence of a secure base there does not condemn a child to a particular set of life-long behavioural traits. Attachment can exist in many other realms - in Chapter Six and Seven I demonstrate that many of the children's transitional experiences take place with a member of the extended family (e.g. Dipesh and his uncle), sibling (e.g. Rose and her brother), the peer group (e.g. Christine and the children in her village), and even with toys, television and computer games (e.g. Leon). It is through these kinds of observations that Winnicott was able to extend attachment theory to embrace other opportunities via his object-relations theory; transitions could occur by behaving *in relationship* with someone or something else. Clearly, these examples also suggest the possibility of a teacher or youth leader also providing the secure attachment which will help to encourage a child to participate in an activity. The enthusiasm of Christine's uncle for boats and the water and of the woman who took Rose and her family on a nature walk illustrate these possibilities.

If one of the ways we learn pro-social behaviour is by observation, then we would expect parents, relations, the peer group, teachers etc. to all represent potential social interactions by which such behavioural responses might be 'learnt'. Baron and Byrne (1997) describe this process as 'modelling'. Hart (1997) warns that the educational response to this finding cannot be reduced to a simplistic 'watch how I do it' teaching formula, as this undermines the processes of ownership and participation which must remain central (see below). 'Modelling' is a continuous, unconscious process that is likely to take place via peer interaction and parental guidance as much as within formal educational settings.

This indicates two directions for E.E. On the one hand, if processes of citizenship are seen to be an extension of healthy attachment, initially established between a child and the primary care-giver, then closer consideration must be given to E.E. within the context of the home environment. Extending outward to consider peer interactions and other kinds of social interactions, including those which draw

upon television and other media, we must also consider how E.E. can effectively draw upon and also influence these other arenas of interaction. I will conclude this chapter by examining some of these possibilities. However, given that these questions represent considerable challenges to the arena in which most E.E. has been focused to date - formal education, I first wish to suggest some of the implications of these findings there.

Is there a place for E.E. in schools?

I ask the above question somewhat provocatively, challenging the assumption that schools inevitably provide the primary location in which E.E. can be carried out. The evidence presented in this thesis raises serious questions about the ability of E.E., delivered via formal education, really to address the central purpose of E.E. - behavioural change. In this section I wish to argue that there is a place for E.E. within schools, but that schools represent but one space in which children may encounter E.E. Furthermore, the ways in which E.E. is communicated within the space of the school must respond to and include the kinds of processes outlined above.

Although I will refer briefly to the structural constraints of school management and the national curriculum again to highlight some of the barriers to change, I do not wish to review them extensively. Rather, I seek to highlight aspects of educational practice and school management which either already exist or are to be found in recent educational discourses upon which a more effective school-based E.E. can be built. As such, in examining the role of formal education, I wish to focus on the achievable within the existing system and the realistic opportunities for transforming this system. Educational research is sometimes guilty of presenting exceptional, revolutionary alternatives to current practice that fail to recognise the need to offer the gradual steps and processes by which transition is possible (Tilbury and Walford, 1996). Given that this thesis seeks to promote such processes as central to child-centred learning, this is something I wish to avoid doing here.

Fagan (1996) argues that education should be about confrontation, stretching the boundaries of comfort, change and challenge. *In other words, educational contexts should act as transitional spaces.* The challenge for formal education is to provide these transitional spaces for a wide range of individuals via processes which enable the maintenance of psychological security, and which foster a sense of ownership (i.e. the ability to identify) with the behavioural practices which become a part of this educational process.

Reassessing the ‘values’ of school education

Many researchers have critiqued the nature of the schooling system as essentially undemocratic and interpret the curriculum as being a vehicle which reinforces rather than challenges the status quo in our societies (Robertson and Krugly-Smoleska, 1997). Posch (1996) argues that an emphasis on the systematic acquisition of knowledge, specialised into compartmentalised fields, delivered largely via transmission modes of learning from the top down mirror wider societal values. Fien et al (1993) believe that the dominance of such approaches run counter to an interdisciplinary approach, the investigation of values, and an emphasis on problem-solving and action needed for effective E.E. Fien (1993) extends his critique further by suggesting that both the overt and hidden curriculum of schools actually reinforces unsustainable values, e.g. in the promotion of economic growth, a competitive economy, the importance of self-advancement, the determination of economic and social priorities via profit motives and market practices.

Yet at the same time, within E.E. strategy documents, education is promoted as the primary vehicle for transformative changes. Sterling (1993) states:

Education is being increasingly counted on as an agent of social change rather than (as it has predominantly been) an agent of social reproduction: as a transformative rather than a transmissive vehicle (p. 88-9).

Slater (1992, 1994, 1996) also demonstrates that an analysis of geographical teaching materials reveals how many, far from being 'value-free' (an unachievable position in any case), are 'clouded by the accepted ideology to distort understandings of society' (Slater, 1992, p.106). However, many geography teachers would ascribe to the view that teachers are agents of social change. 'Here, indeed, is the mismatch between aspiration and actuality' (*ibid.*, p. 106).

Nevertheless, acknowledging this situation provides the first step to alternatives. Slater (1992) suggests ways in which both teachers and their students can be encouraged to 'travel with a different view'. Fien and Slater (1981) advocate 'Values Probing' as one strategy which can be employed in values education in geography. This approach seeks, through practical class-based case studies, to allow students to critically examine their own values, which provide the foundation for the attitudes and beliefs they may hold about specific issues. They offer this approach as an alternative to teaching a range of particular 'environmental values', or simply evaluating the different attitudes which underpin the perspectives of *other* interest groups.

This kind of critical, reflexive thinking offers one potential route out of an educational curriculum which reinforces the status quo in society. Within the context of more conventional classroom activities and curriculum delivery, it is a useful start. These activities demand the greater uptake of an enquiry approach to learning (Corney and Middleton, 1996), and the development of critical judgement and research skills among students (Slater and Spicer, 1978).

However, the evidence gathered for this thesis has demonstrated that no correlation can be assumed between the ability to analyse and evaluate values and attitudes, even personal ones, and our daily behaviours and actions. Job (1996) suggests that it is our social and personal behaviours which may provide the primary models which influence our values and attitudes, not vice versa. Fagan (1996) agrees, highlighting research from social psychology that demonstrates the inseparability of values and behaviour. This demands an educational approach

which addresses action and learning together. One of the few major attempts at doing this in E.E., in recent years, was the international ENSI project (Environment and Schools Initiative), established by the OECD in 1986 (Pettigrew and Somekh, 1994; Posch, 1994a). ENSI encouraged schools to engage in environmental action, located in their local communities and through the establishment of networks with other local interests, as part of an action-research approach to learning (Posch, 1994b).

The programme has identified difficulties, including the stability of certain kinds of local networking (the reliability of partners), the limitations that some teachers feel stem from their limited knowledge and lack of appropriate resources, and the time and management constraints of participating in the project whilst meeting the specific curriculum requirements of the various national educational guidance documents (House, 1995). Much of the published findings, to date, have emphasised teacher support and training in reviewing the project to date. More long term research is required to evaluate the impact on students (Elliot, 1995).

Involving children in education

The evidence from the empirical chapters of this thesis appears to support the current drive within E.E. discourse to recognise the role that experiential learning must play in encouraging behavioural change (Sanger, 1997). My work has highlighted some of the ways in which, in children's everyday activities, an opportunity to do something is transformed into a valued element of a child's behaviour and identity via processes of transition. These transitional experiences, and the transitional spaces through which they take place, require a degree of psychological security which can be understood as an outcome of the nature of the social relationships fostered between a child and the other social actors involved in the activity (parents, siblings, peers, teachers, etc.) Therefore, in suggesting ways in which a school can provide a series of transitional spaces, I wish to emphasise the *processes* (i.e. the social relationships) through which 'experiences' might offer positive opportunities for 'experiential learning'.

Hart (1997) argues that this requires nothing short of the democratisation of schools. Whilst the final report of the Advisory Group on 'Education for Citizenship' (1998) refers to the need for students to gain 'political literacy' (i.e. learning about the democratic process and structures of government), it also states clearly:

'Active citizenship' is our aim throughout... it is obvious that all formal preparation for citizenship in adult life can be helped or hindered by the ethos and organisation of a school, whether pupils are given opportunities for exercising responsibilities and initiatives or not; and also whether they are consulted realistically on matters where their opinions can prove relevant... In some schools these are already common practices, while in others absent or only occasional (QCA, 1998, p.25).

Unfortunately, whilst noting some of the relationships between education for citizenship and other themes currently under discussion by advisory groups (Personal, Social and Health Education - PHSE, and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development - SMSC), the report fails to acknowledge the role that 'active citizenship' can play to enhance school involvement in EfSD, if schools were to respond to this call for greater democratisation. This is a major omission, possibly politically motivated¹, especially given that both citizenship and EfSD are about encouraging individuals to become active, competent and responsible members of society (Hart, 1997; QCA, 1998).

Nevertheless, a set of democratic processes in formal schooling is clearly a requirement if school efforts to involve students in action projects are to result in the sense of security (confidence in skills) (Dillon and Gayford, 1997) and identity (ownership) (Knapp et al, 1997) required for such actions to hold the potential to be transitional experiences. 'Empowerment' can aid the development of necessary skills and in-depth knowledge, relocating the 'locus of control' into the hands of citizens who will then be better placed to turn an intention to act into concrete

¹ I was involved in consultations in a two week internet debate hosted by the WWF to be fed into the Advisory Group report on EfSD. It was suggested, during informal conversations, that there would be time and other logistic limitations to fully implementing all advice on cross-curricular themes. This may have been reflected in the work of some advisory groups by a conscious exclusion of the relevance of other themes from advisory documents.

environmental actions. Hart's work on children's participation in environmental projects (1992, 1997) consistently emphasises that the motivation to take part in something is dependent on the feeling that participants can manage to accomplish a project, and feel some sense of ownership in the project and the outcome.

Democratisation is much more than simply setting up appropriate institutional structures, e.g. a school council. In fact, School Councils UK, an educational charity dedicated to establishing a more democratic schools culture (QCA, 1998), invest a great deal of their resources in providing training for teachers and students (together and separately) to raise awareness of the kinds of interpersonal skills required if such democratic structures are to be established in a way that will provide positive social experiences for all involved.

Dijk and Stomp (1996) highlight the extent to which 'involvement' has not been adequately included in most strategic approaches to E.E. However in their alternative model, involvement-knowledge-individual behaviour-social behaviour, they still argue that these elements should follow in this linear, largely discrete order. The findings of Leeming et al (1997), who have been researching the role of participation in class-based activities, demonstrate that participation does not necessarily facilitate an increase in environmental knowledge, but it does play an important role in fostering more pro-environmental attitudes. Furthermore, the increased enthusiasm of students for a matter in which they have actively participated has been seen to positively influence the environmental attitudes of their parents (see Uzzell, 1994a, 1994b).

The desire to take part in an activity for the benefit of 'the environment' and/or 'society' is a reflection of a *pro-social behaviour*. Whilst it may appear that I am conflating 'environmental' with 'social', the main focus of EfSD, upon which it claims to be a progression from E.E., is to emphasise that these are inseparable, dialectically integrated arenas. Furthermore, Jickling and Spork (1998) argue against the use of the term 'education *for* the environment', suggesting that this implies the ability to empathise with the 'feelings' of the environment in order to

know what would be 'for' its benefit, something which they believe represents dubious foundations for E.E. A close analysis of one of the most quoted 'ecocentric' theories, James Lovelock's *Gaia* theory (1979) demonstrates that ultimately it is not the destruction of the earth that we need to be concerned for as Gaia is likely to cease to support human life in order to sustain planetary life in the long term. Even one of the most holistic environmental theories suggests that environmentalism is based, ultimately, upon anthropocentric concerns. The empirical evidence in this thesis clearly illustrates that the 'social' and the 'environmental' are *not* separate spheres in children's daily experiences².

Clearly, an E.E. strategy which is oriented around the *processes* of empowerment, ownership, participation and citizenship represents a substantially different model to the traditional knowledge-attitude-behaviour concept. This has ramifications for both the formal and informal educational sectors.

Schools could be considered as a *transitional space* in which children, in relationship with peers and teachers, can experiment with democratic processes and environmental activism. Both the overall ethos of the school and individual teachers could provide the structures, relationships and, therefore, secure spaces through which children could be offered opportunities to engage in local environmental actions and practices. This is no easy task for many schools to accomplish; the sheer size of many schools, the range of different kinds of children that must be accommodated and the weight of curriculum content and administration all work against such an empowering school ethos being established. Furthermore, whilst democratisation could provide some of the tools which would encourage more democratic teacher-pupil interactions, the development of such relationships would challenge dominant constructions of childhood. In other words, for schools to be transitional spaces in which behavioural transitions can occur, the social constructions upon which dominant teacher-pupil relationships are currently based would be challenged. The transformatory potential of such a

² This is true of the ways that adults talk about environmental issues too (e.g. Burgess et al, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c).

model of social change based on Winnicott's theory of transitional spaces is proposed by Aitken and Herman (1997) (discussed in Chapter Five). This potential is far from being realised in formal education at present. As Walkerdine points out:

Pedagogic practices... are totally saturated with the notion of a normalized sequence of child development, so that those practices help produce children as the objects of their gaze (1984, in Aitken and Herman, 1997, p.68).

In other words, a great deal of educational practice found in schools is both established on and helps to sustain particular notions of a childhood subject. By focusing on the kinds of social interactions which help foster ownership and participation, leading to behavioural change, challenges to the dominant construction of the 'school child' (Hendrick, 1990) are inevitable.

However, I believe there is no simple means of evaluating the potential consequences of a shift in the *status quo* within an educational context. Although child empowerment may appear to be the antithesis of much top-down teaching and therefore 'a good thing', many children have learnt the social schemas through which behaviour in school settings operate. To challenge and reposition these schemas will inevitably create a degree of uncertainty within the system, denying children the security of knowing where they stand in relation to the school system and their teachers whilst readjustment occurs. It is the challenge to undergo this kind of cultural 'revolution' that is suggested by some E.E. researchers (e.g. Huckle, 1996; Van Matre, 1990) that government-sanctioned educational policy bodies understandably feel the need to tone down considerably (Panel for Education for Sustainable Development, 1998). The transition required appears too large to be bridgeable. Although I have suggested many ways in which we can begin to engage in this process in schools, which many schools have already begun to address, it is not at all clear that strategic advice from the QCA is facilitating this process.

Therefore it becomes apparent that any 'cultural change' which might potentially take place within the school cannot be in isolation. We need to look beyond the

schools as the answer to all society's ills and recognise the close interrelationship between the culture of our schools and our society (Sterling, 1993; Slater, 1994, 1996; Hsu and Roth, 1998). Even if considerable cultural change did occur within the school setting, Hart (1997) warns that without a parallel change in wider society the school might be in danger of existing merely as a 'shielded environment'. Entrance into the 'real world' after formal schooling had ended might then simply lead to rapid disillusionment and withdrawal from social participation. Palmer (1998) notes that it is rarely stated in any E.E. documentation that formal education cannot be seen as the only answer. Yet despite the rhetoric of policy which acknowledges the need to address all arenas in society (e.g. the current Holland Panel on EfSD), it is much more difficult to discuss this all-encompassing nature of 'society' than to research and advise on the specifics of school practice. In the final section of this chapter I will discuss some of these difficulties, and suggest some possibilities which arise from this thesis.

(Re)Placing E.E.

One of the conclusions that Chawla (1998) draws from her assertion that we need to understand 'formative experiences' as an exchange between internal and external environments has a direct bearing on E.E. She notes that the concept of the 'exchange' denies the possibility of a universal 'environmental experience' or singular route to 'environmental sensitivity'. The meanings of these things will change as people, places and cultural interpretations (and, by implication, the relationships between these elements) change. This makes it impossible to prescribe a singular approach to E.E.

The range of places and different kinds of social relationships which are constituted in them through which the children in this research take part in activities and exhibit particular behaviours is indeed considerable. Furthermore, the same places can mean very different things to different children (therefore affecting their desire to engage in the activities that take place there), depending on the ways in which they, as individuals, are positioned within the network of social relationships which

frame their experiences. This suggests that those who are dedicated to facilitating behavioural change in our society in ways which are more responsive to helping to create sustainable societies must utilise every kind of opportunity to engage with the members of society.

In looking for opportunities to engage children in issues of environmental sustainability, Hart (1997) lists many existing possibilities, e.g. small scale community development organisations, youth groups, social services, environmental clubs, child-initiated clubs and networks, NGO campaigns and local group activities, Children's Councils in local authorities (see also Matthews and Limb, 1998), involvement in planning authority activities, school-business partnership programmes and community centres. Some of these groups are well-established, others are relatively new and emerging. Further, some have identified their role in helping to generate more sustainable living and others see themselves as primarily existing for other purposes. At a strategic level we need to go further than providing outline documents that list the potential roles of these groups. We need to establish local and national activity programmes in which these different organisations can participate, and we need to find ways of communicating that these are central activities in E.E., not simply optional extras to schools-based programmes.

Adults with little time on their hands (and children whose time is prescribed for them) may not respond to any kind of voluntary invitation to participate in activities (or they may be coming from a position of psychological insecurity); government legislation or peer group pressure to conform to new 'standards' reinforced through the media may generate more behavioural change among some individuals. Clearly this latter example demonstrates that, where the onus is on societal change to respond to urgent environmental problems, we may not be able to rely on education through participation in all contexts, even if we acknowledge that it represents the best long-term approach for actively engaging more people. In considering the 'place' of E.E. therefore, we need to look realistically at *when* it

offers the best processes to engender behavioural changes, as well as considering *where* E.E. should be fostered.

This means we must find ways of helping people to participate in the processes of creating more sustainable ways of living via the way they operate their businesses (Roome and Oates, 1996), the provision of social services (including youth services) (Grundy and Simpkin, 1996), the activities of local authorities (Agyeman et al, 1996), and via the ways we as a society represent ourselves and are represented in the media (Howson and Cleasby, 1996; Morgan, 1997). E.E. in these arenas is developing, but the organisational cultures of some of these institutions demands that government legislation must continue to be used as an effective tool too.

Finally, these observations raise questions about *who* to engage in E.E. This thesis looked exclusively at the daily activities of *children* whilst critiquing the role of schools in E.E. Broadening the question to consider how to bring about behavioural change clearly makes demands on all of the elements of society listed above. Furthermore, children are still one of the least empowered groups within society. Most of the organisations and activities which have potential for empowering children through participation in environmental projects are established and operated by adults. Given that children 'learn what they live' by reflecting and responding to interactions with everything in their environment, these adults must provide a range of role models with which children can identify.

However, Winnicott's theories of transitional space suggest that, as we get older, we spend less time in these transitional spaces as we establish for ourselves 'a set of codes for practice in the external world' (Aitken and Herman, 1997, p.83). Aitken and Herman continue, '... the result is that adult perspectives become more solidified, fixed and immutable' (p.83). Within the context of my own research, these assertions make sense. As the children become more familiar with a set of social and material practices, generating a range of social schemas which operate in

the different arenas of their lives, they have less reason to observe or question the basis upon which these schemas are formed.

Therefore, E.E., in throwing open the challenge to these children to examine their personal values and experiment with their daily behaviour, is likely to remain most effective during the time in our lives when we are most receptive to 'change'. For children who are still 'becoming' in this world, i.e. establishing personal identities based on a set of material practices and social relationships, E.E. would appear to be one tool for those wishing to help shape these identities to respond to environmental and pro-social imperatives. But this leaves us in a 'Catch-22' situation if adults, upon whom children look to as role models, are no longer 'capable' of making similar responses to E.E.

At this point, we can return to Winnicott for advice:

... life is a long series of coming out of enclosures and taking new risks and meeting new and exciting challenges (Winnicott, 1965a, p.36).

This thesis has provided an insight into the potential within the realm of E.E. to improve the uptake of environmental behaviours from childhood. But the challenge of finding more effective ways of encouraging the majority of the population, those already awarded the title of 'adult', to come out of their 'enclosures' still remains in urgent need of address.

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Children's
Environments

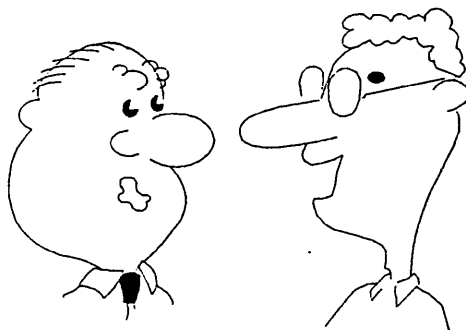
This project is being run by Rachel Gurevitz from the Department of Geography at University College London with the help of pupils from _____ School, _____ and _____ School. It is being funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

This survey is looking at the activities of young people in your local area. Each person who fills in this questionnaire is a unique individual and it is your experiences that are wanted so please only put down your own thoughts to answer the questions.

These questionnaires will be completely confidential - under no circumstance will they be shown to your teachers or parents so please write as much as you can about yourself, being as honest as possible.

This research is designed to help inform geographers and environmental educators about the everyday experiences of young people, something which they have a limited understanding of at the moment. The only people who can teach them more about this are the people who have these experiences - YOU! So your assistance in this work is vital.

Thank you for your help.



PART 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Are you: male ☐ female ☐ (tick the appropriate box)
2. How old are you? years.
3. Where do you live? Please give the street name and area/village.

4. What kind of home do you live in?

Is it a: flat

terraced house

semi-detached house

detached house

other _____

5. Do you have a garden at home?

Yes

☐

No

☐

If yes, go to question 6. If no, go to question 8.

6. Approximately how often would you go into your garden to do something?

IN WINTER:

every day

a few times a week

only at weekends

once a month

hardly ever

IN SUMMER:

every day

a few times a week

only at weekends

once a month

hardly ever

7. What kind of things do you do when you go into the garden? Describe as many activities as you can, including the **different kinds** of games you like doing.

SUMMER	WINTER

PART 2. OTHER OUTDOOR PLACES.

8. How do you travel to and from school?
You can tick more than one box if your journey involves more than one kind of transport.

car	☐
bus	☐
tube	☐
bike	☐
walk	☐

9. Who do you usually travel to and from school with?

by myself

with friends

with a brother/sister

with a parent/guardian

10a. Please make a list of the places you like to go in **your area** after school, at weekends and during the school holidays. This should include places you go to alone, with friends and with parents or brothers/sisters. (Remember - **your teachers and parents will not see this survey, so don't be afraid to put down places that you think they might not approve of!**)

[illegible]

10b. Please describe the kind of activities you like doing in these places and who you are usually with when you do them.

Activities	Who I am usually with (eg. friend, parent, older brother, sister etc.)

3

11. Think about things where you live that are part of nature. Write as much as you can to describe what natural things you have at home, in your street and local area.



- 12a. How many times have you gone away on holiday in the last 12 months?

I have been away times in the last 12 months.

- 12b. Which places and countries have you been to?

4

13. When you go on holiday away from home, what kinds of places do you like going to best and what kind of things do you enjoy doing and seeing there?

Kinds of Places	Things you like to <u>do</u> there	Things you like to <u>see</u> there

14. Do you belong to any clubs or organizations?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please go to question 15. If no, go to question 16.

15. Please list the organizations you go to and describe the kinds of places you go and activities you enjoy doing with them.

NAME OF CLUB/GROUP	PLACES AND ACTIVITIES

PART 3. FAMILY BACKGROUND

16. Who do live with at home? Tick the relevant boxes on the left. You may spend some time in 2 homes if your parents are divorced or separated, in which case you should tick the left and right columns, one for each home.

MAIN HOME:

No. of days a week there ☐

Mother

Father

other guardian

brothers (ages)

sisters (ages)

Other family members (describe)

SECOND HOME:

No. of days a week there ☐

Mother

Father

other guardian

brothers (ages)

sisters (ages)

Other family members (describe)

17. How long have you lived in your present home(s)

Main home ☐ years

Second home ☐ years

18. If you have lived less than 7 years in your main home, where did you live before this? (area and country)

19. Which religion (if any) do you belong to?

Christian

Muslim

Hindu

Jewish

Other (please state)

None

20. Which of the following best describes you?
(you can tick more than one box)

Asian British -----
Black British -----
White British -----
Other European -----
Asian -----
Caribbean -----
African -----
Arab -----
Chinese -----
Other/mixed origin (please state below) -----

21. In which country were your parents/guardians born? This question is being asked because it is useful for the researcher to know if your parents grew up in a country with different kinds of outdoor places.

Mother/guardian* _____ Father/guardian* _____

*Delete as appropriate

22. What jobs do your parents have? If you put 'unemployed' please also say what they used to do.

Mother's job _____

Father's job _____



PART 4. HOBBIES AND PASTIMES

23. When do you usually watch TV and videos? (tick as many boxes as necessary)

a. **During the week:**

Before school

After school, before supper

Whilst having supper

Between supper and 9.00 pm

After 9.00 pm

b. **Weekends and school holidays:**

Early morning (breakfast time)

late morning (up to lunch time)

A few hours in the afternoon

Most of the afternoon

During supper

Between supper and 9.00 pm

After 9.00 pm

24a. What kind of things do you enjoy watching on TV and video? Please give a list of the type of programme (eg. sports, drama, wildlife, horror, game show etc.) as well as the names of particular programmes you enjoy.

Name of programmes/video	Type of programme

24b. If there are other kinds of programme you enjoy that you didn't write above then you can add them here:

25. Do you, or a member of your family, have a computer or game console?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, go to question 26. If no, go to question 27.

26. What kind of things do you like doing on your computer or game console?
Please describe the kinds of games and activities and give the names of
some of your favourite ones.

27. When you are not watching TV or playing on your computer, what other
things do you like to do (by yourself or with other people) when you are
at home? Include any hobbies that you have.

28. Do you have any pets? If so, please tick the list as appropriate below.

	Tick	
Cat	___	Please tell me about these animals or any other animals you have or used to have:
Dog	___	
Gerbil	___	
Hamster	___	
Mouse	___	
Bird	___	
Fish(in tank)	___	
Fish(in pond)	___	
Rabbit	___	

29. Can you think of the names of any environmental campaigning groups or
environmental charities? If you can, write down their names below:

30. Do you or members of your family belong to any of these groups?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know ☐

If yes, which ones?

31. Do your parents/guardians have any of the following **outdoor** hobbies or interests? (Tick as many as relevant)

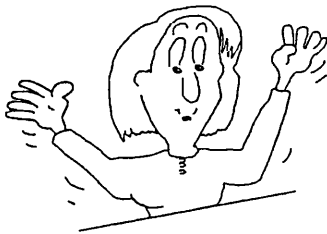
Gardening
Walking
Cycling
Golf

☐
☐
☐
☐

Jogging
Camping
Fishing
Other Sports _____

☐
☐
☐
☐

Others _____



All finished!

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HELP

THERE MAY BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP WITH MORE WORK ON THIS PROJECT IN A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES. IF YOU THINK YOU WOULD LIKE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THIS, PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER IN BLOCK CAPITALS BELOW:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NO: _____



University College London
26, Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AP.
Tel: 0171-387-7050
Fax: 0171-380-7565
Postgraduate Room: 0171-637-0540
email: r.gurevitz@geography.ucl.ac.uk

Headmaster,
High School

25 January 1996

Dear Mr.

I have made some progress in my research over the last couple of months and am now at a stage where I would like to pilot some of my research tools and gain some experience with the activities that I hope to employ for the research project. I am writing to provide further information of my hopes and intentions, and to request a meeting with you and/or a member of the Geography department to discuss these further with you, at your convenience. As I hope to be working with the first year intake at . perhaps either Ms or Mrs . would be the most appropriate members of the Geography department to correspond with. Both of these teachers already know me reasonably well, and both were at

In terms of a timetable, ideally I would like the opportunity to spend a few weeks in the school observing activities in the playground, assessing and mapping open space within the school grounds and piloting a questionnaire with one class. This will form the preparatory work which I can then assess and adapt in order to begin the main fieldwork at the beginning of the next academic year, in September. I would be grateful if we could discuss the details of this in the next couple of weeks, and perhaps I could begin this work immediately after half term, if it meets with your approval.

There will be a number of issues relating to research ethics that I will need to discuss. For example, informing pupils of my presence in school, whether it is necessary to inform parents of the class in question that they have been asked to fill out my questionnaire, informing other teachers in the school of my presence etc. I will also be observing children's activities outside of school time, and will be making contact with the local police to ensure that they are aware of my activities.

I would also like to request some important information from you; the sphere within which the present first year live. This information is necessary in order that I can view the open space resources available to children within this catchment.

I am very grateful for your time and co-operation in assisting me with my research. I can be contacted on the Postgraduate room number above, or on 0181-907-4115 at home on evenings and weekends.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Ms Rachel Gurevitz



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London WC1H 0AP.
Tel: 0171-387-7050
Fax: 0171-380-7565
Postgraduate Room: 0171-637 0540
email: rgurevit@geography.ucl.ac.uk

Mr
Headmaster,
School,

14 June 1996

Dear Mr:

I am a postgraduate researcher in the Department of Geography at University College London, and I am writing to ask whether it would be possible for your school to assist me in some ongoing research. I am looking at the places and activities that 11-12 year old children go to and engage in outside of school in contemporary Britain.

To date I have begun piloting my work in one school, School GMS, (London Borough). I am working there with assistance from the Geography Department in order to gain access to Year 7 pupils. I am using one double Geography lesson with each class in the year to administer a questionnaire. This is the only commitment I require from the school. My work will progress by identifying approximately 15 children who state on the questionnaire that they wish to assist further with the research. At that point I will write to these children and their parents asking their permission to carry out several exercises with them at their homes which will help us to discuss where these children go and what they do outside of school.

This work is part of a larger set of ideas being developed for my PhD thesis. I have been investigating the rationale behind and design of environmental education activities. Many practitioners and researchers in this field have suggested that it is difficult to design educational activities to make children more environmentally aware and desiring to alter their lifestyle if we do not have a clearer idea of what children's environmental opportunities and activities are at present. My research aims to contribute something towards filling in that picture.

It has been clear during the piloting of my work that working in one, suburban area is insufficient for the purposes of the project. I would like to work with children a short distance away from London who live in a more rural environment. Your school was recommended to me by Professor W.R. Mead, a previous head of our department who has a long history of involvement with the area around and . I enclose a letter of recommendation from Professor Mead for your information.

with this research. I require approximately 1 hour with each Year 7 class in order to administer the questionnaire. I do not foresee the need to ask anymore from the school, as the rest of my work would take place in the homes of willing children and their families. However, High School has been helpful in being able to provide a room where work can be carried out in situations where it is not possible to meet a child at their home. It would be extremely helpful, though not essential, if the same were possible at

I would like to begin my work at the school in October, a few weeks after school has restarted and activities have settled down. I will be out of the country from June 25th until July 25th, and realise that this only leaves approximately 1 week before I depart to speak with you on this matter. I hope to be in the area on Tuesday, 18 June in order to gain a better picture of the area and its facilities. I apologise for the extremely short notice, but perhaps I could telephone you on Monday afternoon to ask if it would be convenient to meet on Tuesday to discuss this further. If this is not convenient, perhaps I could speak with you at another time during next week in order to try and confirm whether you would be willing to let me work at your school and to answer any queries you may have. I will, of course, be willing to share the results of my work with you in whatever format you would most appreciate.

I look forward to speaking and meeting with you soon.

With many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Rachel Gurevitz



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7 January 1997

Dear

Last term at High School we met during one of your Geography lessons when you helped me with my research by filling in a large questionnaire for me. I am very grateful for the time and effort that you and your class gave me to do this.

At the end of the lesson I asked students who might be interested in doing other activities for this research to write down their names and addresses for me. This is why I am now writing to you, to tell you more about the project.

You may remember from the questionnaire that the research is finding out how people your age use your time, places you like to go and things you like to do outside of school. In the next stage of the project we will be doing some other activities, in small groups, including drawing and photography, to look at this subject in more detail.

If you are still interested in becoming an Assistant Researcher on this project, you would be required to come to a total of 3 lunch-time meetings (only ever once a week) which would take up most of that lunch break, and the activities would require you to do some work outside of school time. I would not expect this work to be more than about 3 hours spread over about 5 weeks, so it shouldn't be too much, and is designed to be enjoyable. You will not be asked to do lots of writing - you have already done that in the questionnaire.

At the moment I have 80 pupils at who expressed an interest in being an Assistant Researcher and, although I would like to be able to take everyone who wishes to help, I can only take a maximum of 40 pupils. Therefore, if you are still interested in taking part, please fill in the slip at the end of this letter, and ask for your parents/guardian to sign it, and send it back to me at the address on the slip. This does not force you take part, and you can choose to stop taking part at any time - you don't have to come to all the meetings and do all the activities if you change your mind.

I hope that if you choose to take part you will have the chance to learn about different ways to do projects in a fun way, and could also include this work in your school Record of Achievement. If you decide not to take part you do not have to reply to this letter, and I send you best wishes and thank you for your help so far.

If you wish to become an Assistant Researcher you must reply by Friday, 17th January at the latest.

You should then hear whether you have been selected for the project in a letter from me the following week, which will tell you when you should come to your first meeting.

If you or your parents have any questions you wish to ask me then please call me on 0171 637 0540 or 0181 907 4115 between 10.00 am and 10.00 pm.

I look forward to seeing you at school in the next few weeks,
Yours sincerely,

Rachel Gurevitz
Researcher, Children's Environments Project.

PLEASE SEND TO: RACHEL GUREVITZ, DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY,
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, 26, BEDFORD WAY, LONDON WC1H 0AP.

TO ARRIVE NO LATER THAN FRIDAY, 17TH JANUARY.

NAME OF STUDENT: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

I WOULD LIKE TO BECOME AN ASSISTANT RESEARCHER ON THE CHILDREN'S
ENVIRONMENTS PROJECT: **YES/NO**

Please draw a circle around any of the following days when you would **NOT** be able to attend a lunch time meeting because you have other regular activities that day (eg. orchestra, sports club etc).

TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY

(Make sure you only circle days you are **NOT** able to come)

One of the activities requires the use of a camera. I will be able to provide cameras for students who don't have their own, and will provide films for students who do have cameras. I need this information in advance:

I DO/DO NOT HAVE MY OWN CAMERA. (delete where appropriate).

FOR PARENTS: I agree to let my child participate as an Assistant Researcher on the
Children's Environment's Project: **YES/NO**

PARENT'S SIGNATURE: _____



Department of Geography
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

26 BEDFORD WAY • LONDON WC1H 0AP

Tel: 0171-387 7050 • Fax: 0171-380 7565

10 November 1996

Dear Parent,

I am a researcher from the department of Geography, University College London, carrying out some research with Year 7 at [redacted] School. I am looking at children's activities and use of different places beyond the school. In my work I am considering new approaches to environmental education by suggesting that peoples' actual everyday activities need to be better understood and used as a basis for effective education.

I am looking at these everyday activities with 10-12 year old children because I am interested in looking at a group who are about to enter or have just entered secondary school, where some formal environmental education is presently focused.

I spent an afternoon with Year 7 classes a few weeks ago where all the pupils assisted me by completing a questionnaire in class about their activities and interests. Your child offered their home address details at the end of this questionnaire to indicate that they might be interested in helping me with later stages of the research. We will be having our first meeting at school between Tuesday 19th and Friday 22nd November where we will discuss the project and what the children's roles as assistant researchers will be. Your child has already indicated that they wish to attend the first meeting at school, and I have been able to schedule the meetings so that they do not miss any of their regular lunchtime activities. Those that wish to continue will be given their first assignment which will involve some time at home with a collage exercise (this will be explained fully at our meeting). All the tasks are designed to be fun as well as informative.

Should you or your child be unhappy about carrying out this exercise or continuing with future activities then I will understand completely if they choose to stop assisting at any time. Children can choose to carry out all the assignments or leave at any stage. We will be having 3-4 meetings between now and the first few weeks of next term.

At our second meeting I will be introducing the second and final group task which involves keeping a photo diary for several weeks. I will be able to provide single-use cameras for those that need them, but I know that many children have and would prefer to use their own cameras, in which case I will provide the film. I would be grateful if you could complete the tear-off slip which your child should bring to the first meeting.

If you have any queries regarding this research, please do not hesitate to contact me at the following numbers: Work: 0171 637 0540; Home: 0181 907 4115.

Yours faithfully,

Rachel Gurevitz
Researcher

Name of child: _____

I am/am not willing to let my child participate in this project as an assistant researcher (please delete as appropriate)

My child does/does not have access to a camera which they will use if they take part in the photography assignment. (please delete as appropriate: if your child does not have access to a camera then one will be made available to them for the purposes of this exercise).

Signature of parent: _____



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26 January 1996

Dear

I am writing to inform you of the progress that your child and others at [redacted] School have made in offering their help as Assistant Researchers on the Children's Environments project that I have been running there since the beginning of the year. All of the children have clearly worked hard, first producing a wonderful set of drawings about their holiday experiences, and then by keeping a photo-diary of their activities before and during the Christmas holidays.

As the researcher, I have been collecting this work, and have kept records of the group discussions we have had at lunch time when we show our work to each other and talk to each other about our pictures and photos. I have not had the opportunity to study this work in any depth yet, but it is clear that the children's work provides a fascinating insight into their daily activities and particularly emphasises the kinds of people and places that are most important to them.

Mr [redacted], the Headmaster, is eager that we display aspects of the project work in school, and I hope to return to the school in approximately 3 weeks time in order to organise this. Most of the children are eager to produce the wall display themselves, and I hope to work with them with their photos and selected quotes from the discussions we have had in order to create the display.

It has been a real delight to work with all the children at [redacted] School, and it appears that they have enjoyed, and continue to enjoy participating in the project. There is a third phase to the project which I cannot organise at the school; so far we have looked at activities and places of importance on holiday and in the local area, but I also wish to explore the home itself. I would like to meet with a small number of children individually in their homes so that we can talk about their activities at home and in the garden. When I meet with these children we will discuss the best way of looking at this subject, but it will either involve drawing up a plan of the house and then talking about activities while drawing things onto the plan, or it may involve going around various parts of the home and talking about activities as we enter each room.

Clearly these activities, particularly the latter possibility, will involve my presence in your home to an extent that would be similar to your child having a friend over to play. I will, of course, require your consent and willingness to allow me into your home in this manner. I would need to meet with your child once or twice - I would like to go through their photos again with them in greater depth, and I would like to conduct the home and garden activities assignment with them.

At present I am writing to all parents who children confirmed that they would like to take part in the home project - I may not be able to see all these children due to my own time constraints, and taking into account the possibility that you may not wish to consent to this home project. However, I would like to reassure you that all of this work will be completely confidential - I will not be identifying individual children or homes by their real names at any point during the project. Furthermore, this project is being carried out for PhD research in Geography; the only results which will be broadcast to other organisations will be those findings which are relevant to the development of environmental education. I hope that these assurances will help to make my presence in your home a possibility.

If I select your child as a potential assistant for the home assignment, I will be contacting you by telephone in the next two weeks to request your permission to proceed and to arrange a convenient time to hold the meetings. I would be delighted to answer any queries you have regarding these activities or, if you prefer, you could confirm the nature of my work with my supervisor, Dr. Jackie Burgess on 0171 387 7050, x5508.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Rachel Gurevitz
Researcher, Children's Environments Project



TRAINING CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that

has successfully completed the
required training and has qualified as an

ASSISTANT RESEARCHER

on the Children's Environments Project

Signed _____
Researcher, UCL

Date _____

ASSIGNMENT 1 FOR ASSISTANT RESEARCHERS

What I do on my holidays

Please use the large piece of paper you have been given to create a really big and detailed display showing as many different things about your holidays as you can think of. You could include:

- Places you went and things you did and saw on holidays away
- Playing with your friends in the local area/ at home
- Playing by yourself or with brothers and sisters
- Family day trips
- Shopping trips
- Youth groups or holiday camps
- Interesting or exciting events
- Conversations you remember

Your display can be made up of:

- Drawings
- Short sentences to describe your drawings
- Longer pieces of writing to talk about an event or conversation or explain something that is hard to draw
- Pictures from magazines that help to show your holiday experiences
- Family holiday photos (with your parents' permission!)

You can arrange your display in any way you want. The different things might be arranged randomly, or you might want make an important one bigger or put it at the centre or top of the page - whatever you feel like doing.

IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE: Don't worry, just draw a cross over the bit that went wrong. Or, you could re-do the picture or story on some blank paper and stick it on top of the original mistake.

IF YOU GET STUCK: You could show your parents this sheet and ask for their help or you can give me a call after 6.00 pm on 0181 907 4115 to ask for help.

You must remember to bring the sheet with you for our next meeting on

GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN!

Rachel Gurevitz, Researcher, UCL.

ASSIGNMENT 2 FOR ASSISTANT RESEARCHERS

Keeping a photographic diary

This task is designed to help us learn about the places young people go, what they do and who they are with when they are not in school or inside their house. The research assistant is required to do the following to help with this task:

YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN A CAMERA OR FILM. You must try and remember to take this camera with you wherever you go for a few weeks, until the film is finished (you have between 24 and 27 pictures to take).

EVERY TIME YOU LEAVE YOUR HOUSE, whether its to go down the shops, visit friends or relations, go on a trip or outing, go out to play etc. - **absolutely every time you leave the house** - you must try and take a photograph as a record of that activity. You can choose whatever you want to take a photo of. It might include:

- A view of the place or building you went to
- Friends or people you were with
- Ask someone to take a photo of you somewhere/doing an activity
- Anything interesting that you saw while you were out

You must also keep a record of the photos you have taken on the diary sheet provided.

Have fun with the camera - you can tell other people what you are doing and why - don't be embarrassed to use it.

If you accidentally forget to take the camera with you one day, don't worry, but try to write down on a piece of paper where you went, who you were with and what you were doing (and anything else about what happened that you think might be interesting) as a reminder so we can include it in the 'diary'.

If you get stuck: You can show your parents this sheet and ask for their help or you can give me a call after 6.00 pm on 0181 907 4115 to ask for help.

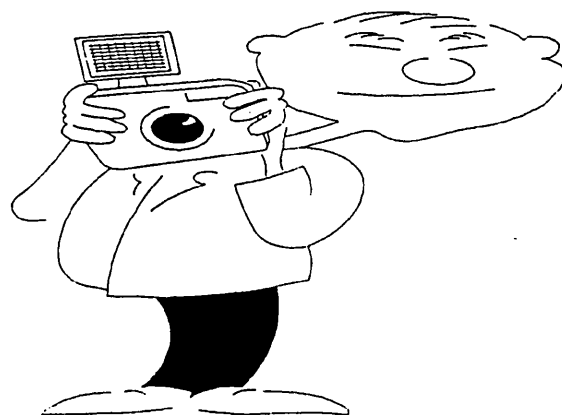


PHOTO DIARY

[illegible]



Department of Geography
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

26 BEDFORD WAY • LONDON WC1H 0AP

Tel: 0171-387 7050 • Fax: 0171-380 7565

12 May 1997

Dear

I am writing to thank you very much for the excellent work you did as an Assistant Researcher on the Children's Environments Project. 'Assistant Researcher' was certainly your much deserved title, as without the assistance of you and other pupils at [redacted] I would not have a research project at all!

Not only were the collages and photo-diaries that many of you produced full of information about the activities and interests of people your age, but the discussions that I had with some of you at the beginning of the project about how to design the project, and the huge amount of information that some of you gave me when I interviewed you at home were really useful and interesting.

I know that a small number of you still have cameras and films from the project - please read the enclosed letter for advice on what to do about these. Also, I know that some of you expressed an interest at our last school meeting last term to meet at home for an interview. Unfortunately, I had difficulty reaching some of you - I know that some of you were away on holiday for much of Easter - and in the end I did not have time to try and contact all of you. I hope I did not disappoint too many people - your contributions in the rest of the project were still just as important. However, if any of you who did not see me at home feel that you really wanted to take part in those meetings, please check with your parents and then arrange to speak to me on 0181 907 4115, and I'll see if it's possible to arrange something.

Finally, I've enclosed a sheet of paper for you to include in your school Record of Achievement. Please put this away safely. On the sheet you will see that it explains your role in the project, and it also explains the purpose of the project. I hope that this explanation will make it clear as to exactly what you were contributing to and what will be done with the information you have helped to collect.

I hope that you enjoyed taking part in the project and gained something from it. I was delighted by the number of you that were willing to give up lunch breaks to help me, and by your enthusiasm and helpfulness during the project. Many, many thanks!

Wishing you all the best for your future,

Rachel Gurevitz
Researcher.



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THIS DOCUMENT CERTIFIES THAT

TOOK PART IN THE CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTS PROJECT
AS AN ASSISTANT RESEARCHER

The Children's Environments Project took place from October 1996 to April 1997 and was part of a PhD research project in Geography. The project aimed to do two things:

a) Information about the kinds of places used and the activities of children aged 10-12 was gathered in order to provide a better understanding of this group of children for all kinds of organisations that work with or for children. This would include groups that work or campaign for children's access to local open spaces, making the local area safer for play, designing entertainment and activity centres that children will enjoy, and other kinds of organisations that might want to find interesting ways to get children involved in their activities eg. environmental or nature groups, sports groups, clubs etc.

b) The project was also looking at environmental education. A lot of environmental education today is full of ideas about better ways to live to help the environment, but it doesn't usually take the way we presently live our lives into consideration. It can be very difficult for us to change our habits, especially when our parents, teachers, friends and things we see on television have a lot of influence over what we do. Children don't always have control over things they do, things they eat, etc. and it can be difficult to give up things that we have got used to having and doing. In this project, by looking at the kinds of things that influence what we like to do and where we like to go at the moment, perhaps we could think of new ways of doing environmental education that make some environmentally friendly activities a more automatic part of our daily lives.

As an assistant researcher, _____ volunteered their time to help with the project. They completed a questionnaire, joined in group discussions about how to design the research project, and were given assignments to produce a collage of holiday activities and keep a photographic diary of all the places they went for one month. Some of the assistant researchers also gave individual home interviews, providing the researcher with large amounts of information about their lives. Their contribution was invaluable, both for helping to design a project that was interesting and enjoyable for their age group whilst also being effective at gathering large amounts of information. The research would not have been possible without them.

Finally, in taking part in the project, the assistants got to try out methods that are quite unusual in school geography. They got a small taste of University cultural geography, and applied traditional geographical subjects (eg. how places are used, what kinds of facilities are needed or enjoyed by different people, and how we think about other countries and places abroad) to their own lives. We know lots about how businesses locate and their needs, how adults live, travel, commute to work etc, how countries have developed over the decades and centuries, and how adults use leisure time. The way that children use their time, the facilities they use and the places they go have not been given as much attention. But they are important, and the assistant researchers in this project have helped to provide some of that information.

Signed:

Rachel Gurevitz, Researcher, Dept. of Geography, University College London

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