Childhood Embodiment: An Ethnography of SEN Provision

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Contents

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Abstract

This thesis explores the experiences of a group of children with a range of special educational needs within two mainstream schools, using a variety of ethnographic methods. The thesis is sited within the relatively new paradigm of the social study of childhood, which acknowledges children as competent social actors. It explores children's capacity for agency within the structural space of the school, and rejects the notion of the disabled child as passive and dependent. Children's own views are discussed, and the thesis demonstrates how they make sense of concepts such as 'difference' and 'disability', noting how children are influenced by factors such as the primacy of the body in consumer culture and wider social attitudes to disability. Central to the thesis, however, is the crucial nature of the body in adult-child and child-child interaction. Within schools, children are 'civilised' and controlled through the medium of the body and, similarly, children draw upon the body as a means of resistance. During social interaction, all children use the body as a signifier of the social self, as a symbolic resource for playing jokes upon their peers, to evidence changes in status, and to highlight aspects of the 'non-standard' body. They also use aspects of bodily difference to wound and taunt. Whilst *all* children are subject to these onslaughts upon bodily identity, it is those with special educational needs, whose bodies may appear or behave differently, who are potentially more susceptible to their effect. However, the thesis shows that the experiences of children with special educational needs were not necessarily mediated through those needs, but through particular social skills such as empathy or humour. This thesis demonstrates therefore the manner in which the quality of experience for all children, but specifically those with special educational needs, is mediated through their expertise in particular skills of embodiment.

INTRODUCTION

According to Okely, 'there is considerable reluctance to consider autobiography as a serious intellectual issue within British anthropology' (1992:1). Autobiography or reflexivity has been dismissed as 'mere navel gazing' or narcissism, but Okely (1992) contends that self-adoration is a totally different concept from self-awareness and that a critical scrutiny of the self is a necessary part of the fieldwork experience. The notion of the anthropologist as a kind of 'white-coated scientific observer', committed to the positivist ideal, is surely unrealistic when applied to the practice of 'long-term immersion through fieldwork' which is:

> 'generally a total experience, demanding all of the anthropologist's resources: intellectual, physical, emotional, political and intuitive. The experience involves so much of the self that it is impossible to reflect upon it fully by extracting that self'.
>
> (Okely, 1992:8)

The relevance of the researcher's self and past experiences to the fieldwork experience cannot be ignored, or self-consciously relegated to footnotes. In *Childhood Identities*, James unfolds an account of 'cultural ideas of Otherness and identity in childhood which grew out of a most personal encounter with impairment' (1993:2). She describes how the idea for the research developed in the manner which C. Wright Mills deemed to be integral to the sociological imagination, that of the fruitful distinction between 'the personal troubles of milieu and the public issues of social structure' (1959[1970]:14). My own 'personal troubles' have also arisen out of an individual experience with impairment, which has influenced my life, my career and ultimately my research project. Okely (1992) claims that the anthropologist's past is only relevant in terms of the anthropological enterprise, including the choice of area and study, the experience of fieldwork, analysis of data and writing up. My past experiences have undoubtedly influenced all of these areas.

My story began when my youngest daughter, previously a happy healthy child, awoke one morning suddenly and inexplicably unable to walk or move her limbs. After extensive investigations, it was discovered that she had an abnormal cluster of blood vessels at the back of her neck, inside her spinal column, which had ruptured, probably as the result of a heavy fall at school in a physical education lesson. This blood had formed a clot at the base of her spine, which was pressing on nerves and preventing her from moving. Apparently this 'invader' had been present in my daughter's body from conception, and had been waiting, like a time bomb, for the right moment to explode. After three lengthy operations, during which most of the cluster was removed by laser, she began the complicated and painful process of re-learning how to walk. Unfortunately, because the main operation had been so lengthy, my daughter was left with facial scars, and the damage incurred to her nervous system meant that she continues to walk with a fairly pronounced limp.

As a mother, I was reduced to standing by on the sidelines and watching helplessly as this beloved daughter's identity changed almost overnight, from an outgoing, happy child unconcerned with human mortality, to one who was withdrawn, angry, terrified of all things medical and anyone wearing a white coat in particular, and temporarily obsessed with the possibility of dying, despite all our best efforts to shield her from such thoughts. Bluebond-Langner (1978) demonstrates how we as parents strive to protect our children from the knowledge of the true extent of their illnesses, but that how they nevertheless come to a realisation of what is happening to them through the small nuances of other people's behaviour, such as a mother's eyes red from weeping, or the receiving of unaccustomed or unexpected gifts. Thankfully, Gillian's fears of death were unfounded, and she gradually returned to a modified version of her 'normal' self, although it was many years before she lost the fear of giving herself up to sleep at night.

On discharge from the hospital, she was still unable to walk, and we were issued with a wheelchair and instructed to return to the hospital on a daily basis for further physiotherapy. The problems of acquiring a parking space in the hospital grounds brought forward from me the tentative suggestion that we might apply for a 'disabled' sticker. This was met with horror and the exclamation: '*I'm not disabled!*', from a child who was at that moment unable to walk unaided and therefore using a wheelchair. Moreover, her refusal to move her legs when placed upright between a set of parallel bars in the hospital gymnasium, and her insistence on simply standing and screaming at the top of her voice, elicited a suggestion from the chief physiotherapist that she should be taken the following day to the 'Handicapped Children's Centre', which was smaller and so a potentially less threatening environment. At this suggestion, Gillian promptly placed one foot in front of the other and began the gradual process of walking, an action which appeared to me to be a further rebuttal of the 'handicapped' identity about to be thrust upon her[1].

These experiences presented me with a multitude of unanswered questions. What was it about the identity of 'a disabled child' that Gillian found so abhorrent? From whence had come her conviction that disability is not culturally valued within our society, or indeed the knowledge that this negative evaluation prevails? As parents, her father and I had always attempted to stress that all human beings, irrespective of their class, colour, gender or bodily ability, should be perceived as equal, whilst simultaneously acknowledging that our children were of necessity open to the negative images they observed both in and on the media that entered our home. However, if such perceptions did not emanate entirely from the home environment, what other possibilities presented themselves? Were they implicit in the foundations of the socialisation process itself, or was it during interaction with their peers that children reached an understanding of what it is to be 'normal'? Furthermore, what part did the process of education play in teaching children about the importance of possessing a 'normal' body?

These questions led me to consider the paradox of the ways in which children learn about identity and personhood itself. How do they come to an understanding of the notion of 'self' in all its many forms - the individual self, the social self, the bodily self, the moral and spiritual self? And which of the many arenas in which children move - home, play or school - makes the greatest contribution toward the development and the realisation of the self? Mead (1934) claims that children develop an awareness of self through play and games, as they gradually begin to see themselves as others see them, from the viewpoint of the 'generalised other'. But at what point in the development of children do they realise that the appearance and behaviour of the individual body is crucial to others' definition of them as a person? It is often acknowledged (e.g. Cuckle, 1997) that very small children play together quite happily without apparently noticing bodily difference. Children with Down's Syndrome are usually integrated successfully into mainstream primary schools, but are then transferred into special schools at the secondary stage. It would appear that one important reason for this trend is that as they age and develop, their bodily 'differentness' and 'inappropriate' behaviour become more apparent and intrusive to both peers and school staff.

Thinking about these issues, therefore, led me to question the importance of the school experience in the determination of bodily difference. Children's understandings of social relationships and identities - of what it means to be a 'proper child' in the eyes of themselves and others - are gleaned from many social arenas, i.e. the school, the home, the peer group, the community, the wider social environment. However, it is within the school setting that children are most subject to adult efforts to produce future citizens who subscribe (at least superficially) to notions of equality and acceptance. Observing the surface of school life as a parent, one is struck by apparent measures to instil into children an awareness of certain moral issues, such as equality of opportunity, through the vehicle of both PSE (personal and social education) lessons and whole school assemblies. However, adults also learn wider cultural values pertaining to issues such as disability, so how is this learning passed on in the process of teaching? And to what extent do other children's attitudes to the body and disability (which may be absorbed in the usually less structured environment of the home) contradict the 'politically-correct' exhortations of school staff? Gillian's refusal to accept the disabled role fuelled in me a desire to look beneath this surface veneer, if indeed that is what it is.

My daughter's experience, then, presented me with a device for looking at the body and its contribution towards identity in the school situation. Nowhere are children's bodies scrutinised more closely than in the school setting. Medical examinations, optical and dental checks, visits by dental hygienists and school nurses all emphasise the importance of the growing (and, by implication, 'standard') body of the child in its quest for achieving the goal of adulthood and autonomy. This must raise questions for children whose bodies refuse to conform to the 'norm', either in appearance, behaviour or ability. Furthermore, if children do come to a realisation of the importance of the standardised body, by what means are individual bodies judged to be normal or otherwise? Is it a process of looking and observing the presentation of the self in the classroom? And once judgements are made, does this lead inevitably to competition and conflict between children? This multitude of questions led me to undertake participant observation in particular classrooms. Through the processes of observing, interviewing and shadowing individual children, I too was socialised into the school as an ethnographer, with the explicit intention of gaining an insight into the social world of children and their search for identity.

This thesis therefore set out to explore the underlying quest within schools to produce the 'schooled' or 'standardised' child, and the role that schools undertake on behalf of society to 'civilise' children and create within them a uniformity of self and personhood. Leading on from this was the wish to investigate the experiences of those whose bodies may appear or behave differently to the 'norm', in other words those children designated as having some form of special educational need. How would these children fit into the 'body of the school'? Embodiment is only one of many learning experiences, so how were these children perceived and treated by school staff and other children, and what kind of negotiations did they undertake in their attempts to be accepted by others?

Chapter 1 looks at the development of particular theories of childhood within specific disciplines, especially that of sociology, and the way these have changed over time. It sites the thesis within the 'social constructionist' model which argues that children should be perceived as competent social actors in their own right. The chapter then goes on to explore the ways in which all children are 'fitted into' theories of education in general, and the school setting in particular, before moving on to discuss theoretical issues arising out of policies for integrating children with special educational needs into the educational system. Chapter 2 studies notions of disability, together with the concept of 'stigma', which operate in the outside world, before focusing on the two theoretical approaches to disability, i.e. the 'individual' and the 'social' models. It then highlights the ways in which educational policy attempts to fit the 'different' body of the child with special educational needs into the main 'body' of the school. Chapter 3 outlines the methods that were utilised in order to relate these theories to the lived experiences of children with special educational needs in particular schools with particular integration policies. Chapter 4 looks at child-adult interaction within schools, and discusses the methods used by school staff in general to control and (attempt to) 'civilise' children through the medium of the body. By detailing examples gathered during fieldwork, it goes on to illustrate the ways that children also rebel through utilising their bodies as a form of resistance. Chapter 5 focuses on child-child interaction, by exploring the ways in which *all* children use the body both as a signifier and as a medium of expression, and the implications of this for those children whose bodies are different in some way. Chapter 6 builds on the previous chapter by outlining the specific embodied experiences of six children with particular special educational needs. The thesis concludes by drawing all these different strands together to determine how the quality of experience for all children, but specifically those designated as having special educational needs, is mediated through their expertise, or otherwise, in particular skills of embodiment.

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[1] I have since learned that the name of the Centre has had to be changed (to the Child Development Centre), due to its negative connotations for both parents and children.

CHAPTER 1

THE WORLD OF THE CHILD

The aim of this thesis is to explore the following questions:

i) Why is the different/disabled body/identity culturally devalued?

ii) How do children come to an understanding of this devaluation?

iii) What part does the education process play in this understanding of the need to possess a 'normal' body?

iv) To what extent are children influenced by the emphasis on the 'normal'/perfect body in Western culture?

v) How do those children whose bodies, either in appearance or behaviour, do not conform to certain cultural norms, experience life in the school setting?

The importance of the thesis lies in its exploration of what it is to be a child in late modernity, and its examination of the ways in which childhood as a phenomenon is socially constructed, subject to different cultural, political and social influences. By focusing on one particular arena which impacts upon the developing identity of the child - the school - and by looking at a cohort of children with a range of special educational needs, this thesis sets out to explore the enactment of childhood of particular kinds in the particular setting of schools with a particular integration policy. However, although the focus of the thesis is children's understanding of the importance of the body within the school setting, the influences of other social arenas - the home, the leisure area, the wider social space - will be glimpsed throughout.

It is important to emphasise here that the term 'special educational needs', hereafter referred to as SEN, is used to denote a 'continuum of need' (DES, 1978), ranging from a child's difficulty with reading/spelling through to acute physical disability, and including emotional and behavioural difficulties. A child with SEN is therefore not necessarily a *physically* disabled child. This thesis will

However, ideologies of childhood within the social and educational world are impinged upon by changing attitudes towards children themselves but, although sociological and educational theories may change over time and space, vestiges of previous debates about the 'nature' of children adhere to current educational policy and public attitudes, and childhood itself remains a product of its particular social context. This thesis is underpinned throughout by the 'social constructionist' approach which argues that there exists a plurality of childhoods, within which children should be perceived as competent social actors in their own right, and not just as 'receptacles of adult teaching' (Hardman, 1973:87; Qvortrup et al, 1994). However, at the same time, it heeds the note of caution sounded by James, Jenks and Prout, which urges that, whilst social constructionism is able to 'prise the child free of biological determinism' (1998:28), care must be taken to also see the child as an embodied, material being (see Chapter 2)[1]. James and Prout, in their argument for a 'new paradigm of childhood', contend that 'childhood, as distinct from biological immaturity, is neither a natural or universal feature of human groups but appears as a specific structural and cultural component of many societies'. Furthermore, 'children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives' (1990:8). This 'new' way of thinking about childhood has emerged in response to the fact that, whilst it is misleading to suggest that childhood *per se* has been absent from sociological discourse, the child's own voice has been conspicuous by its absence. A body of empirical knowledge about children, underpinned by developmental theories, has been built up by social *scientists* in the form of psychological experiments, longitudinal surveys, and psychometric and sociometric tests. However, children themselves have remained somewhat of a 'muted group', i.e. an elusive or unperceived group (Hardman, 1973). This thesis aims therefore to redress this imbalance by observing the behaviour of, and listening to the voices of, children themselves, whilst also considering the structural spaces which they inhabit in the school setting, and in relation to ideas of disability and embodiment.

possibility of contradiction or conflict in the socialisation process. However, the new paradigm of childhood offers an alternative way of conceptualising children, not as passive beings but as active participants in their own social development.

Theories of childhood

In arguing that childhood remains a highly contentious topic, James, Jenks and Prout (1998) map out a theoretical path that details different paradigms of childhood. They begin with theories of the presociological era, which comprise the common, everyday models that still prevail in the social world. They go on to outline transitional theories, through to the relatively 'new' theories that pertain to the age of the sociological child. These theories are set out below.

The Presociological child

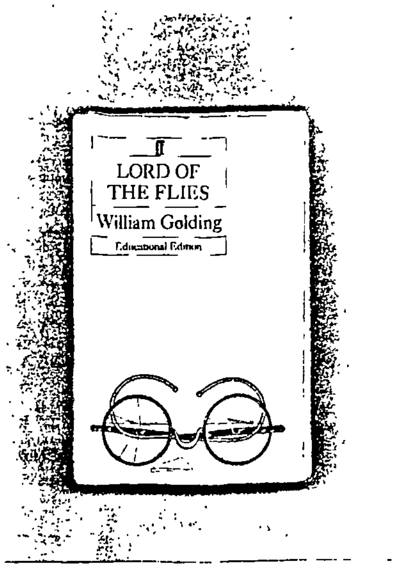
Classical philosophy, developmental psychology and psychoanalysis offer models of childhood untouched by social structure. Notions of Old Testament original sin led to the image of the *'evil child'*, wilful, demonic and requiring to be tamed. Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954[1962]) succinctly captures this image, whereby children, left to their own devices and without the benefit of adult supervision, revert to the 'law of the jungle'. Writing in the introduction to the Educational Edition, Gregor and Kinkead-Weekes claim that the author is 'examining what human nature is really like if we could consider it apart from the mass of social detail which gives a recognizable feature to our daily lives'(1954[1962]:iii). To counteract the wilfulness and wild nature of children, and the ensuing threat to social order, child-rearing practices informed by this model require the child to be disciplined and punished. In direct contrast is the concept of the *'innocent child'* of Rousseau's Emile; angelic, inherently good and full of reason. Rather than chastising this paragon of virtue, we should cherish, learn from, and protect him/her from the harsh realities of the world. According to Jenks, within this notion of the child as unique and individual rest the foundations of 'all child-centred learning and special-needs education from

Montessori, the Plowden Report, A.S. Neill and the Warnock Report, and indeed much of primary teaching in the last three decades' (1996:73). Children in this model do not need to be beaten or chastised into submission, but cherished, facilitated and enabled.

Emerging from Rousseau's innocent child is the concept of the *'immanent child'*, predicated on John Locke's more realistic vision of childhood. Locke disputes the claim that children are in possession of inbuilt reasoning capabilities, and argues that reason emanates from experience. Nonetheless, he acknowledges that children do have a set of interests and needs, and a capacity for reason. In common with Rousseau, Locke's thesis represents the foundation upon which was constructed 'child-centred education', whereby children 'discover' things for themselves rather than being 'taught at'. From within the discipline of developmental psychology, for example at the turn of the 20th century, emerged the concept of the *'naturally developing child'*, which rests on two common sense assumptions; firstly, that children are natural rather than social beings and secondly, that this naturalness influences the maturation process. Through the theories of Jean Piaget, the child is seen to progress through specific stages along a well-defined developmental path. The 'inadequate', incomplete stage of childhood is gradually replaced through experience by the 'real' state of human being; the competent, intelligent adult. Through the remit of developmental stage monitoring, children are tested, assessed and compared with the 'optimum' condition of the 'normal' child. The final model of the child in presociological theories is that of the *'unconscious child'*; a response to the impact of Freudian philosophy and one which offers a contrast to previous forward-looking theories in that it is premised on events of the past. Although including some developmental stages and complexes, Freud's concept of the adult personality is built upon the events of past childhood events. The 'id' represents past images of the 'evil' wilful child, which is tamed and repressed by the ego and superego. The argument follows that the explanation and blame for deviant adult behaviour rests in childhood, and less than adequate parent-child relationships.

Throughout this thesis there will be found resonances of these pre-sociological theories, which still persist in the social world and abound in educational theory. However, these discourses of childhood are not mutually exclusive but overlap and intertwine. The notion of the 'evil' child is frequently rehearsed as the 'explanation' for many SEN, especially emotional and behavioural difficulties, which are often perceived as resulting from a lack of discipline, particularly in the home, and in Chapter 6 the 'problems' that particular children present in schools are linked directly to less than adequate parenting (see also James, 1998). Children allowed to 'run wild', without the requisite parental control, are a problem for schools if they are to successfully carry out their designated role '*in loco parentis*'. This theme is reflected in the amount of time devoted to 'classroom control' and 'behaviour modification' in teacher training and the proliferation in texts devoted to this subject (e.g. Denscombe, 1985; Watkins and Wagner, 2000). Within the idea of the 'evil' child, and linked specifically to Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, it is pertinent to the later discussion around childhood embodiment to note that the child subjected to the most derision by his peers was the unfortunate 'Piggy' who, according to the author, was 'very fat', wore thick spectacles, and suffered from asthma (1954[1962]:12-13). On the cover of the Educational Edition (which was produced specifically for educational study), an illustration of Piggy's broken spectacles sums up the essence of the story - an examination of children's basic 'nature' left to its own devices in the absence of adult (and by implication 'civilising') influence.

Piggy's broken glasses



Evidence of children's 'cruelty' to each other, usually out of sight and hearing of teachers, will be presented during the thesis. When staff were faced with suggestions that children were bullying each other, they often attempted to minimise its impact or put it down to mere 'teasing'. During one scenario, a member of staff admitted that on occasions, when faced with a child who fitted the classic 'victim' model, and who continually reported others' bullying of him, she actually felt like attacking him herself (see Chapter 6).

The notion of the 'innocent child' also appears throughout the thesis. As I shall show (see Chapter 4), school staff attempt to reason with children and appeal to their 'better natures', reflecting popular ideologies of children as inherently 'good' or even as being able to be 'changed', if only the appropriate methods of behaviour modification can be discovered. This idea is at the heart of educational policy, which sees problems as residing within children (or because of poor parenting) rather than within the educational system itself. However, Locke's belief in the 'cruel, spiteful and incompatible dispositions of children' (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998:15) will also be glimpsed in this thesis (see above), directly counter to popular notions which 'sentimentalise' children as being innocent and inherently altruistic (Cooper and O'Keeffe, 1998). Adults experience unease when faced with the possibility of child-child cruelty, even though there are claims that 'bullying is rife [even in] infant classes' according to a recent report by psychologists (The Guardian, 8.9.99). Public reactions to the James Bulger case, in which a toddler was killed by two other young children in 1993, demonstrated that 'the murder was not just disturbing, but was, quite literally, unthinkable ... because it occurred within the conceptual space of childhood which, prior to this breach, was conceived of ... as innocence enshrined' (James and Jenks, 1996:315). Consequently, in order for adults to rationalise such an event, public perceptions of the young perpetrators were enshrined in notions that they must be anomalous, or even 'non-children'.

By far the greatest echoes of the 'naturally developing child' are to be found in all aspects of current educational practice, whereby children are tested and assessed throughout their school career, but this applies to a much greater degree if they are suspected of having SEN. In an area where the discipline of educational psychology holds sway, children can be seen to be examined, tested and subjected to batteries of psychological tests to determine whether they deviate so much from the 'normal' child that they are in need of 'special' provision. As noted by Rose:

> 'Psychologists have increasingly provided the vocabularies with which the troubles of children have been described, the expertise for diagnosing and categorizing such children, the languages within which the tasks of mothers and fathers have been adumbrated, and the professionals to operate the technology of childhood regulation. Psychology has played a key role in establishing the norms of childhood, in providing means for visualizing childhood pathology and normality, in providing vocabularies for speaking about childhood subjectivity and its problems, in inventing technologies for cure and normalization'.
>
> (1989:131)

Thus, psychologists (and to some extent medical professionals), by studying the minds and bodies of children, have gained credence in educational judgements of 'normality' and 'abnormality' (see also Chapter 2). Norms of conduct and performance established by 'experts' order the progress (or lack of it) of individual children and enable differences between them to be charted and monitored. Those designated as 'abnormal', although no longer referred to as 'educational imbeciles' or 'feeble-minded' (Rose, 1989) or necessarily segregated in specialised institutions, continue nonetheless to be seen as requiring 'special' educational provision even within mainstream settings.

Finally, in the realm of the 'unconscious child', again the wilful child (or the one with emotional and behavioural difficulties) is seen to be suffering from a surfeit of untamed 'id' and/or to be a result of inadequate parenting skills. Medical responses to childhood 'wildness' include the administration of drugs such as 'Ritalin', which, it is claimed, transforms children who refuse to comply with authority into 'angels', despite the fact that such drugs have serious side effects and little is known about their long-term effects on children's health (The Guardian, 12.10.99, see also below). 'Bad' behaviour is medicalised and attempts are made to 'fit' different (i.e. not 'normal' and therefore in need of 'treatment') children into the 'normal' system through the use of drugs which make them docile and 'teachable'. Suggestions of inadequate parenting have also been offered in debates around inappropriate behaviour in schools. Rose (1989) notes that 'moral panics' surrounding concern over the young, from juvenile delinquency in the 19th century to child sexual abuse today, have been manipulated and exacerbated by professional groups in order to increase welfare surveillance in the home and to establish and increase their empires. Current debates concerning the need to conduct classes in parenting skills for those deemed to be inadequate, and government proposals to imprison parents who fail to ensure that their children attend school (The Guardian, 30.9.99) reflect a growing trend which places the blame for children's inadequacies squarely at the door of their parents (Valentine, 1997a).

These, then, are the common-sense populist views of the child which operated in the past and which still abound in contemporary cultural and educational spaces, adding fuel to the argument that childhood *is* a socially constructed phenomenon. However, the new social studies of childhood have suggested how we, as social scientists, whilst still acknowledging previous theories, may yet be able to explore the ways in which childhood is constructed within society. Four main ways of seeing and approaching the study of children have been identified, which differentially engage with ideas of structure and agency. These issues recur throughout this thesis in terms of how children as agents come to grips with the different structural conditions of education, the school, and the social policies through which 'schooling' is experienced.

The Sociological Child

The first approach is based upon the notion of the '*socially constructed child*'. To understand this or any other phenomenon as being socially constructed, it is necessary to distance oneself from 'common-sense' meanings of social life. Assumptions concerning the essential, 'taken-for-granted' nature of childhood must be suspended, in order to explore the plurality of childhoods that children experience. There exists no one, definitive ideal type of child, only individual children who inhabit a world in which meaning is arrived at through their own creations and in interaction with adults. Social constructionism also frees the child from biological determinism and posits him/her in the realm of the social, although care must be taken not to ignore the position of the embodied, material child. The second approach, that of the *'tribal child'*, 'sets out from a commitment to children's social worlds as real places and provinces of meaning in their own right and not as fantasies, games, poor imitations or inadequate precursors of the adult state of being' (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998:28). Children's views are sought and taken seriously, in what Mayall (1994a) terms 'children's childhoods' and, as with anthropologists studying 'other' cultures, adherents to this approach guard against imposing their own cultural constructs upon their subjects. Theories of the *'minority group child'*, the third approach, links children to other social minorities, such as women, by situating children firmly in the political field of a relative powerlessness (Mayall, 1995). Sociology has begun to challenge those areas within which certain inequalities, for example age, race, sexuality, gender and physical and mental ability, were previously deemed to be 'natural' and therefore 'to be expected'. This approach aims to forward children's interests, but again caution must be exercised for, by campaigning for children as a group, individual children's experiences may be overlooked. Finally, the *'social structural child'* approach claims that children 'are a constant feature of all social worlds' (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998:32). It seeks to explore the conditions that operate for children within a particular society or for children in general. Children are determined by the society in which they live. They have a number of characteristics in common, thereby enabling comparison between children's childhoods.

These different perspectives on childhood reflect the increasing importance of children on the social and political agenda. James, Jenks and Prout claim that, 'indisputably, over the last two, or at most three, decades childhood has moved to the forefront of personal, political and academic agendas and not solely in the West' (1998:5). The most important aspect of this proliferation of interest in childhood has been the notion of children as social agents, shaping as well as being shaped by their particular material and cultural circumstances. Central to this notion has been a move away from the idea of socialisation, whereby the child is perceived as a kind of incomplete or unfinished adult who will only achieve completeness and competence in the fullness of time. However, this idea of children's emergent agency is arrived at through a process of increasing individualisation, whereby children are perceived as separate beings with a right to a participative voice. Unfortunately, there often exists a wide gulf between rhetoric and reality, as outlined by Nasman:

> 'Children are identified, registered, evaluated, and treated as individuals, in some contexts as adult citizens but in others not. One could say that children are historically at the beginning of a process towards individualisation where men have long had an established position and women have achieved one during the end of the last century and increasingly so this'.
>
> (1994:167)

Through the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and in English law (the Children Act of 1989), the wishes and desires of children are expected to be taken into account when decisions are made about their welfare. This notion of children's agency is also enshrined in the Code of Practice (1994), which deals with the identification and assessment of their SEN.

However, the gulf between rhetoric and reality is often wide. Therefore, this potential recognition of the child's agency and freedom to choose is embedded within yet another paradox - the continuing perception of children as vulnerable and dependent. Although on the one hand we give children greater legal powers to order their own lives, on the other we attempt to control and confine them within the home to a greater extent than ever before. For example, responding to media influences, which raise the dual spectres of increased road traffic and the proliferation of 'stranger danger' (Valentine, 1997b), parents increasingly perceive public spaces as ones from which their children must be protected. Thus children's freedom to explore and play outside the home is curtailed, as parents transport them to and from school and leisure activities, which are also subjected to greater adult control[2]. Even within the confines of the home, debates about the influence on children of television, video, computer games and Internet pornography increase parental anxiety about the safety of their offspring (McNamee, 1998).

Rose (1989) notes that such concerns about children impact upon their lives, and those of their parents, from birth. Parents have a legal duty to register their birth, must subject them to the surveillance of health visitors and other health professionals, must ensure they receive an education and, if suspicions of neglect, abuse or criminality arise, justify their child-rearing practices to agencies of social work or family courts. On the other hand, closed circuit television now monitors both public and private space to address the potential threat to social order that groups of children are perceived to pose. Many shops are seen to display notices which bar entrance to the premises to those children unaccompanied by an adult, or to more than one school child at a time. Children, then, are perceived by adults to be at the same time threatened by, and threatening to, the wider society (see also Scraton, 1997).

The above notions of childhood and children themselves impact upon children's own lived experience, acknowledging them both as social agents or citizens with rights and yet also as dependent and vulnerable. For children with SEN, this paradox is further compounded. They possess a body which either appears or behaves differently, thus increasing their potential vulnerability. Yet at the same time, educational policy is about not recognising their difference, and allowing them the same rights as other children to a 'normal' education. The result is conflicting ideas about children and those with SEN. This thesis will explore how these tensions are played out in a particular social space; that of education. Therefore the next section looks at studies of schooling.

The Structure/Agency Debate Within the Sociology of Education

Shilling points out that:

> 'since the 1970s there has been considerable debate among sociologists of education about the macro-micro gap in educational analyses. However, educational research remains divided largely into the study of large-scale phenomena such as social systems and national policies on the one hand, and case-studies of individual schools and social interaction on the other. This split has had a number of unfortunate consequences for the development of the field. Most importantly, the dominant conceptions of structure and agency employed in the sociology of education are characterised by a dualism which makes it difficult to conceptualise adequately the processes involved in social change'.
>
> (1992:69)

This dualism to which Shilling refers has led to a tension within sociology as practitioners have sought to combine structural analysis and interpretive accounts. Studies of educational research are deemed to address either large-scale structural process and policies on the one hand and, on the other, small-scale interaction patterns, leading to an assumption that social life is lived on different levels. Also, this splitting of social life problematises the conceptualisation of social change as a dynamic process involving both structure and human agency. Structural accounts, such as those by Bowles and Gintis (1976), view the education system within a framework which is over-determined by broader social structures and which tends to ignore individual agency, as does the work of Bernstein, which concentrates upon linguistic structures, again to the detriment of human action. Within post-structuralist and postmodern accounts of education, individual agency is also lost in 'the determining power of discourses and texts in our post-industrial, 'information' societies which structure both consciousness and action behind people's backs' (Shilling, 1992:72).

In contrast, ethnographic studies, by providing 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1975, see Chapter 3) of small-scale interaction in single classrooms, backed up by complementary in-depth interviews, have reinstated the notion of human agency into educational research by taking seriously the intentions, strategies, actions and accounts of events carried out by individuals, and have situated the reflexive, acting subject at the heart of the sociological project. However, ethnographic studies have tended to neglect the fact that individual action is not carried out in isolation from the wider social structure, and attempts to introduce structural influences into interpretive accounts have been less than successful. Where these do appear in ethnographic studies, there is often an accompanying assumption that events in the case-study either contribute directly towards their maintenance, or that the structure has 'caused' the processes under consideration. Since the late 1970s, attempts have been made to address and overcome the structure/agency dualism within educational research. Work such as that of Hargreaves (A)(1978), which studied 'coping strategies' as a means of linking structural features to classroom issues, attempted to bridge the structure-agency gap. Although partly successful, this work nonetheless sees structures still operating to determine boundaries and limit 'unrealistic' strategies of teachers.

The next section, therefore, will explore examples of structural and agency approaches. I will then look at those which attempt to overcome the divide, as this thesis will do, through showing links between structure and agency in relation to special education policy and the lived experiences of children with SEN.

THE 'SCHOOLED' CHILD

According to Bernstein:

> 'Educational knowledge is a major regulator of the structure of experience. ... Formal educational knowledge can be considered to be realised through three message systems; curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation. Curriculum defines what counts as valid knowledge, pedagogy defines what counts as a valid transmission of knowledge, and evaluation defines what counts as a valid realization of this knowledge on the part of the taught'.
>
> (1971:47)

The curriculum is seen as an organisation of knowledge which determines not only a unit of study (or subject) but also the interrelationship between subjects. A 'map' of knowledge is defined through the construction of syllabuses and courses, and the student is taught how and at what pace to travel. Bernstein identifies two types of curricula: the collection type - strongly bounded units of knowledge transmitted through a rigid hierarchical division of staff labour - and the integrated type - a more fluid structure in which topics are introduced into a relationship of interdependence between teachers and pupils. By so doing, he demonstrates how educational change occurs in changing distributions of power and control within schools and therefore within society itself. He therefore utilises these two concepts of power and control to shift from a micro to a macro analysis (MacDonald, 1977).

Bernstein et al (1971) further discuss the manner in which schools transmit two cultures; the instrumental and the expressive. The instrumental culture concentrates upon the acquisition of specific skills, particularly those that are deemed to be vocationally important, whereas the expressive culture of the school involves the transmission of particular norms and values, such as the aims of education etc. Whilst the instrumental culture is potentially divisive, the expressive culture is generally cohesive, due to its identity as a source of shared values. It is therefore subject to particular rituals, which are deemed by Bernstein et al to take two forms; consensus rituals (such as assemblies and ceremonies, dress codes, symbols, plaques and, most importantly, rituals of reward and punishment) give the school its discrete identity and subscribe to the dominant value system of the wider society. The other form, differentiating rituals, mark off specific groups within the school from each other, usually in terms of age, gender, age relation or social function. They also 'deepen respect behaviour to those in various positions of authority, and create order in time. ... The rituals control questioning of the basic of the expressive culture and so are conditions for its effective transmission and reception' (Bernstein et al, 1971:160).

This idea of specific school rituals 'creating order in time' is echoed by James, Jenks and Prout's argument that 'schools provide an ordered temporal passage from child to adult status' (1998:41). Children in Western societies are obliged to spend a large part of their time in schools, a spatial positioning which allows the management and control of an extensive group within the population. As Hendrick so succinctly puts it:

> 'Schooling has always involved much more than the accumulation of academic knowledge. It has been central to the processes by which childhood has been socially constructed and, therefore, its history has much to tell us about the nature of the relationship between children and society'.
>
> (1997:63)

He argues (Hendrick, 1990) that the evolution of the notion of juvenile delinquency and the introduction of compulsory schooling, although not strictly contemporaneous, were nonetheless ideologically related. Those deemed to be delinquents, usually children of the lower classes, were also judged to be not 'real' children, in terms of a concept of childhood that rested on middle class notions of dependency. Resulting legislation was aimed therefore at returning delinquents to their true position, the condition of childhood, which was 'as much concerned with images and establishing norms as with real rates of delinquency' (Hendrick, 1990:45). Crucial to this return to childhood was the part played by the introduction of compulsory schooling, which contained and controlled potential delinquents for a large part of their childhood and early youth. At the same time it enabled the State to invest in the 'futures' of children and emphasised the role of schools in producing human capital. However, within this ideology, children with SEN pose certain problems, as this thesis will demonstrate, especially in relationship to factors such as league tables and performance indicators.

Schools are deemed to be places in which children learn not only the subjects taught in the formal, overt curriculum, but also the important messages contained in the 'hidden' curriculum (Bowles and Gintis, 1976), which is seen to mediate between the individual and the social order. Children learn the rules governing the distribution of power within the wider society, to accept systems of privilege and status, and how to relate to others through a system which orders knowledge and values. More importantly, through the education system, children also learn to recognise their place within the future material world of work, where unequal distributions of power exist. Conflict analysts, then, see education as part of the structure of society within which social actors have minimal agency.

The consensus perspective also views education as part of the social structure which enjoys primacy over the individual. According to Durkheim, individuals act as they do in compliance with the demands of society, which are enshrined in a moral code, the 'collective conscience'. Social institutions such as the political, economic and education systems provide a basis for distinguishing what is and is not acceptable social conduct, and the means by which the common values of a particular society are reproduced. With regard to education, a Durkheimian perspective would, for example, seek to examine the relationship between the *structure* of a particular society and the *function* of education as a subsystem of that society; in terms of its contribution towards the maintenance, legitimation, transmission and internalisation of the moral order (Meighan, 1986). Therefore, a subject will only be placed on the curriculum if it is part of the common collective culture. A child is seen as a '*tabula rasa*', a blank sheet awaiting inscription, a process which forms part of his/her socialisation.

Educationalists of the liberal persuasion argue that the structure of schools is in direct opposition to the way that children learn. For instance, according to Holt:

> 'The child is curious. He (sic) wants to make sense out of things, find out how things work, gain competence and control over himself and his environment, do what he can see other people doing. He is open, receptive, and perceptive. He does not shut himself off from the strange, confused, complicated world around him. He observes it closely and sharply, tries to take it all in. He is experimental. He does not merely observe the world around him, but tastes it, touches it, hefts it, bends it, breaks it. To find out how reality works, he works on it. He is bold. He is not afraid of making mistakes. And he is patient. He can tolerate an extraordinary amount of uncertainty, confusion, ignorance, and suspense. He does not have to have instant meaning in any new situation. He is willing and able to wait for meaning to come to him - even if it comes very slowly, which it usually does. School is not a place that gives much time, or opportunity, or reward, for this kind of thinking and learning. Can we make it so? I think we can, and must'.
>
> (Holt, 1967[1973]:169)

Holt goes on to advocate that, because they learn independently, out of interest and curiosity rather than to please or appease adults, children should be allowed more control over their own learning, both in content and manner of learning. These principles have also been espoused in the thinking of A.S. Neill in the setting up and management of Summerhill school. Rejecting the ethos of conventional schools, which he claimed produces 'docile, uncreative children who will fit into a civilization whose standard of success is money' (Neill, 1960[1985]:19-20), Neill set out with one main idea, i.e. to make the school fit the child, rather than *vice versa*. Lessons are optional and, although a timetable exists, it is for the benefit of the teachers. There are no class examinations, although sometimes exams are set 'for fun'. Everyone has equal rights. At general school meetings, the vote of a six-year-old child carries as much weight as that of Neill himself and, although the school does have rules and regulations, these are decided by all concerned. By giving children the freedom to choose when and where they learn, Neill argues that they are also free to reach their full potential in their own way. In his book, Neill includes an account of a visit by two HM Inspectors, who commented on the 'delightful shock' they experienced upon entering a classroom and finding children ignoring them, after years of seeing classes jump to attention. However, they claimed that the teaching of juniors at the school was 'poor', to which Neill responded that children were free to do other things such as climbing trees and digging holes, whilst adding that these same juniors go on to pass the Oxford admission examinations with very good grades. For Neill, children need to go through a period of play before they are ready to settle down to work[3].

Ivan Illich also argues for the 'deschooling' of society, with the 'disestablishment' of formal schools as such, arguing that by attending them, pupils are "schooled' to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new' (1971[1975]:9). He claims that most 'learning' takes place outside the classroom, whereas within schools, 'knowledge' is turned into a commodity through the effect of the hidden curriculum. In other words, learning *about* the world is more highly valued than learning *from* the world; the learner is perceived as a trainee rather than an explorer. However, the term 'deschoolers' as applied to Illich and his ilk is something of a misnomer. Writers such as Holt claim that a deschooled society is not necessarily one without schools as, if some individuals learn well in schools, that is the appropriate place for them to be. Rather the term implies that no-one should be compelled to attend school but that alternative ways of learning should be available. Holt himself advocates home-based learning, whereas Illich favours learning networks and resource centres based on the public library model. Learning 'webs' would consist of computerised information about resources, activities, courses, and interested fellow learners and, with the advent of home computers, this suggestion becomes more feasible. Goodman (1971) favoured mini-schools, based on the model of the Danish Little Schools, whereby a small group of learners, teachers and parents organise themselves into a 'democratic learning co-operative with state financial support' (Meighan, 1986:375). Such discussions highlight the tensions already being played out in classrooms and, as this thesis will show, further conflicts arise with the need to 'fit' children with SEN into the equation.

But where does the individual child's agency (and, more to the point, his/her rights) fit into these structural debates? According to Freeman:

> 'It is a matter of puzzlement how, in the general thrust to actualise children's rights, there should have been such an obvious neglect of them in the sphere of education. In these days of citizen's charters, when we are all 'consumers', those who have conceived our almost annual Education Acts have put parents rather than children at the forefront. The Acts are Acts which enhance parents' rights, not children's. Whatever the issue in question it is not the opinion of children which is sought'.
>
> (Freeman, 1996:43)

Ironically, it is within the area of *special* education, where children are often deemed to be either physically or cognitively incapable of expressing their wishes, that a child's right to be heard is most often espoused. According to Russell, the *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* (DfE, 1994) states, for the first time in education guidance, that 'special educational provision will be most effective when those responsible take into account the *ascertainable* wishes of the child concerned, considered in the light of his or her age and understanding' (quoted in Russell, 1996:121, emphasis added). However, research carried out by Wade and Moore (1993) into the experiences of children with SEN indicated that less than a third of mainstream teachers admitted to taking account of the views of their pupils, with some even commenting that they regarded such a practice as time-consuming and of little practical value.

Yet research which studied teachers' experiences of consulting all pupils (e.g. Davie et al, 1994; Vulliamy and Webb, 1991) found that despite initial teacher scepticism (consultation with students being viewed as analogous to 'consorting with the enemy'!), senior managers were ultimately impressed by the insight and common sense displayed by pupils. This reluctance to consult children, according to Scraton (1997), is embedded within our society:

> 'It is not simply that adults conspire to exclude or marginalize children and young people from the processes of consultation, decision-making or institutional administration but that there is no conceptualization or recognition that such processes might be appropriate'.
>
> (1997:164)

Whilst many schools (including the secondary school in the current study) now ensure that students are represented on the school council, unfortunately not all schools operate in such a democratic manner. Research carried out by Alderson (1999) into civil rights in schools discovered that 52% of pupils in the survey reported having a school council. However, only 20% felt that their council was effective, and children as young as eight years old were able to distinguish between a democratic and a token council. Moreover, the survey found that fewer than 5% of pupils taking part had heard more than 'a bit' about the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and suggested that the low response rate from schools (49 out of a total of 250 approached) is indicative of their lack of interest in children's agency.

However, studies have shown that the democratisation of schools can have a positive effect on children's behaviour towards each other, a fact especially pertinent to this thesis. At Highfield School in southern England, a primary school with many behaviour problems, the headteacher introduced circle time activities to facilitate children's participation and negotiation in establishing rules and plans to improve the school, and set up a school council to address more general issues. Children were accorded respect and consequently behaviour improved, as a subsequent OFSTED report noted (Mayall, 2000b). In general, circle time activities involve whole classes (or specific groups) of pupils sitting in a circle together with their teachers, support assistants and facilitators. The idea behind the circle is that it is democratic, with all participants perceived as equal and no-one in a position of greater power. The facilitator asks the group a question, after which a 'talking stick' is passed around and participants invited to respond. 3 main rules operate: i) only the holder of the stick may speak, ii) everyone else must listen and iii) everyone's view must be respected, however different from one's own. For many of the children, this may be their first opportunity to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings in the school setting. Teachers where this is practised also report improvements in children's behaviour, both individually and towards each other. Indeed, teachers often use circle time to resolve problems which arise during the period between circle time sessions, especially where bullying or fighting are involved. Another initiative which can further good relationships between children is the introduction of peer mediation. Rather than approaching teaching or non-teaching staff to resolve bullying issues (which is often seen by pupils as unproductive), children are able to speak to members of their own peer group, who have been trained in conflict resolution, about such matters. Again, staff in the schools involved consider that the introduction of peer mediation can lead to better relationships between pupils (Moseley, 1997).

Pollard (1985) suggests that children face many contradictions in the socially ascribed role of 'child' (particularly the 'school child'). Societal aims stress what the child *needs* to be taught for the benefit of society, whilst individualistic notions emphasise personal growth and self-esteem. A deeply ambiguous concept of childhood exists, with children on the one hand perceived to be immature, dependent and therefore of low status (see also Hockey and James, 1993), whilst on the other hand they carry adult hopes for the future and are consequently regarded as valuable and important. Pollard (1985) argues that many ambiguities of the child's role may be particularly emphasised in the highly evaluative area of the classroom, which is powerfully influenced by such structural features as the pupil-teacher ratio, levels of resources, teacher/parent expectations, school design and legal constraints. The daily realities with which children may have to cope include the 'crowd' of others in their class, teacher power, frequent assessments and evaluations, and being expected to 'learn' whatever knowledge is deemed appropriate for them. The structural position of children within classrooms is not one of strength. Their role is ambiguous and they may be subjected to a variety of contradictions in the face of which they have to establish and maintain their identities. In secondary schools, they are moved around the school according to the curriculum and the timetable, which map out and order their activities in terms of space, time and content. However, as I shall argue in Chapter 4, control is based more upon spatial, rather than temporal, management of children. Children can be seated in the classroom in rows, broken down into 'tables' or groups for specific levels of learning, sent to the 'home' or reading corner, or 'out' to play, put at the front to enable them to be overseen more effectively, sent out of the room or to an alternative space if deemed to be misbehaving and, ultimately, excluded from the school space altogether.

Nonetheless, within accounts of children's agency, many writers have outlined the ways in which children resist the control mechanisms of school authority. Pollard (1985), for example, identifies certain defence resources which tend to develop as childhood culture, which may be derided by teachers and other adults, not only because they fail to understand it, but also because in the school context it is deemed to be in opposition to the teacher's 'needs' of pupil concentration, learning and order. However, the most important aspect of children's culture, according to Opie and Opie, is that it is their own, 'not intended for adult ears ... it is at once more real, more immediately serviceable, and vastly more entertaining than anything which they learn from grown-ups' (1959:1). In a follow-up study (Pollard and Filer, 1996), insights gained in the previous (1985) work were deepened in an intensive longitudinal case study involving five children's experiences of learning at home and at school. Pollard and Filer discovered that these could not be generalised; although they were members of the same age-set within the school, each child's experience was unique, and their learning outcomes dependent upon the opportunities facilitated by their own social relationships and environment.

Mayall (1994a) also studied the experiences of children at school and at home, focusing upon their own participation in health care and the ways in which they learned about health-related behaviours. The study takes into consideration 'the interplay of agency and structure, in order to consider where children stand as actors, negotiators and acted-upon' (1994a:116). Children at home were allowed to negotiate with the adults in their lives within a social context governed by personal relationships. Children's burgeoning independence was valued by their mothers both as evidence of their offspring's increasing capability and to relieve their own burden. However, within the school setting, 'adult authority is more salient and less challengeable than at home' (1994a:122). Although many teachers perceive their work as 'child-centred', the school's goals and delivery of the curriculum depend upon an unquestioning acceptance by children of pedagogic authority. If children challenge school norms, the fault is seen to lie within the children, or their homes. Within this structure lies little scope for negotiation. Therefore, children's social positioning and experience within the two settings varies considerably and is governed by different kinds of interaction and scope for negotiation, which impacts upon their capacity for agency. Davies (1982), in a study focusing on children's agency to resist the authority of school staff, found that those playground areas which teachers found hard to supervise were utilised by children for games deemed by them to be unacceptable to adults. Inside the classroom, some games had been developed to be played during school work. These included under-the-table games such as shoeswapping (see also Chapter 5) and playing with small toys, or games of 'Tig' played by throwing missiles consisting of paper torn from wax crayons. However, these types of activity were seen as part of children's own culture, strategies for making school fun in their own terms, despite the 'sensible' dictates of adults[4].

The next section will look at SEN provision, and begin to explore the ways in which these issues of structure and agency are played out by and for children with SEN within the UK education system.

THE 'SPECIAL' CHILD[5]

In the UK, education is compulsory for all children between the ages of 5 and 16 years. The most significant change to the education system as it applies to all children since the Education Act 1944 has been the introduction of a National Curriculum, and the requirement that it be taught in all schools, including special schools, in England and Wales. The National Curriculum has been progressively introduced since 1989, purportedly to ensure that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, and to raise levels of pupil attainment. The National Curriculum is divided into 4 'key stages'. At Key Stage 1 (age 5-7 years) and Key Stage 2 (age 7-11 years), the National Curriculum consists of the 'core' subjects of English, mathematics and science, and the 'foundation' subjects of art, geography, history, music, physical education and technology (including information technology). Pupils, unless they attend a special school, must also study the Basic Curriculum subject of religious education, which is the only compulsory subject in the Education Act 1944. Assessment in the National Curriculum is assessed in 2 ways, i.e. continuous Teacher Assessments (TAs), which are administered and recorded by the class teacher for all subjects, and Standardised Assessment Tasks (SATs), which are taken at the end of key stages 1 and 2 and administered by the class teacher. The results are communicated to the DfEE, who publish a summary of the results in the form of 'league tables', the implication being that parents are able to use this information in the choice of school for their child.

A further major reform in 1988 has been the introduction of 'local management of schools' (LMS), which has devolved budgets from the LEA to individual schools. This has meant that schools are now wholly responsible for allocating funds, from which they are required to meet the costs of teaching and non-teaching staff, maintenance of school buildings, purchase of materials and in-service training of staff. It is claimed by many educationists (see for example Scraton, 1997 and Chapter 7) that these changes in legislation have led to larger class sizes, deterioration in the fabric of school buildings, a lack of material resources such as books and equipment and a greater competition between schools for an increasingly smaller number of pupils. More importantly for this thesis, the impact upon children with SEN has been significant. However serious their difficulties, they are nonetheless required to follow the National Curriculum, although their work must be differentiated in line with those difficulties. Furthermore, for schools managing their own budgets, the education of children with SEN costs more per head that does that of other pupils. Although this additional cost is offset for those children with statements (approximately 2% of the school population) in the form of extra funding, the needs of those children with SEN but without statements (18% plus) must be met out of the existing school budget. More insidiously, a school with a higher percentage of pupils with SEN may occupy a lower position in the league tables. Consequently, schools may question whether or not it wishes to have such pupils on its roll.

According to Potts:

> 'Special education ... can be defined in various ways: as a set of institutions, a set of categories of learner or a firm body of expert knowledge; as a system of positive discrimination or as a system of social control'.
>
> (1998:117)

The word 'special' has been in general usage with regard to educational issues since the early 1890s, when the first schools for Special Instruction for Defective Children were established in Leicester and London (Tomlinson, 1982). By the early 1900s, there was a move towards the greater segregation of 'defective' children, especially those considered to be morally defective. The assumption that the lower classes were more likely to produce defective children became more pronounced, particularly when the influence of the eugenics movement raised questions about the possible hereditary nature of defectiveness. Political anxiety that defective children posed a danger to society ensued. 'Defect' gradually became linked to moral depravity, crime, prostitution and pauperism, and the solution was envisaged in the form of permanent institutional care to control the 'feeble-minded'. As children for the first institutions were only sought in working-class elementary schools, it was inevitable that the first 'special school' children were almost exclusively from the working-class stratum of society. However, in 1907, when the School Medical Service was established, the medical inspection of all children was designated a duty of all school authorities.

The 1944 Education Act can be viewed as a major effort by educationalists to move as many 'defective' children as possible out of the perceived domination of the medical profession and place them under an educational aegis. A new set of categories was introduced, increasing the previous number from four to eleven, and one new category - the 'maladjusted' - gave new scope for educational psychologists and introduced the Child Guidance movement (Tomlinson, 1982). After the second world war, the category which expanded the most rapidly was that of 'educational subnormality', with over two-thirds of referrals of 'handicapped' children in the 1960s coming into this category. The 1970 Education (Handicapped Children) Act also brought 'severely subnormal' children within the education system. During the 1980s, further categorisation was undertaken but, at the same time, egalitarian distaste for segregation and the expense incurred in providing for a growing number of children in special schools led to intensified debate on 'integration', or provision in mainstream schools for those previously excluded.

The major recent event in special education was the publishing of the Warnock Report (DES,1978). According to Tomlinson (1982), this constituted an attempt to present special education as a variant of the 'normal' education system, which deplored the stigma attached to special schooling and recommended the abolition of statutory categories in favour of a broader concept of 'special educational need'. However, descriptive labels were still to be attached to children, and the non-statutory category of 'child with learning difficulties' was to embrace the previous category of educationally subnormal children and those classed as remedial in mainstream schools. As Booth notes:

> 'The idea that special education is about identifying categories of special need and relating special curricula to them is prevalent. Despite official rhetoric in the 1978 Warnock Report that such categorisation obscured and misdirected the analysis of the difficulties in learning of children ... it remained a guiding principle for practice even within that report. It has been given new overt encouragement within the Code of Practice (DfE, 1994)'.
>
> (Booth, 1998:82)

The categories currently in operation include: emotional and behavioural difficulties, severe learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, hearing impaired, visually impaired, physically handicapped, speech and language problems, health problems/delicate, autistic, dyslexic/specific learning difficulties and 'other'. Although children are no longer referred to as 'idiots', 'imbeciles' or 'mental defectives', nonetheless the concept of categorising and labelling them persists (see Chapter 2 for a fuller discussion), thus demonstrating the socially constructed character of childhood in general and children with SEN in particular. As I will argue in Chapter 4, all children struggle for agency within the structural space of the school, but how much more must the child with SEN do, for whom all decisions have traditionally been made in the process of gaining a 'label'?

It was envisaged by the Warnock committee that the proportion of children with SEN at any one time would amount to 20% of the school population, of which 2% would require extra provision as set out in a 'statement of special educational needs', with the remaining 18% catered for out of existing school funds. It was also stressed by Warnock that as many children as possible should be included in the mainstream education system to avoid the stigma and marginalisation associated with special schooling. However, the Warnock Report received criticism from sociologists, who argued that it was underpinned by a strong medical/psychological emphasis (Barton, 1986). Barton notes that Kirp (1983) questions the composition of the committee itself, claiming that members:

> 'were chosen to represent particular professional viewpoints: medical, psychological and teaching in particular. He notes that only one of the Committee's members was a parent of a handicapped person and that there was no member of the black community, no lawyer and no handicapped person on the Committee. ... it should come as no surprise that the Report fails to give serious consideration to systems issues and encourages a reliance on professional judgement. Its basic message is 'trust professionals''.
>
> (quoted in Barton, 1986:280)

Although the procedure for identifying and assessing children's SEN is currently under review, at the present time children undergo a 5-stage system which, in the absence of any significant progress being made by the child and subject to a decision by the statementing officer, leads to a statement of SEN. This statement labels the child within a particular category of need but also, I would argue, posits him/her within a particular categorisation of 'child' and into a discrete political, economic and social structural space. The first three stages of the process are school based. At stage 1, initial concern is expressed by a parent, teacher or other professional, and strategies are put in place within the classroom to address those concerns. If, after review, the child fails to make progress, s/he is moved to Stage 2, which is characterised by greater involvement by the school's SENCO (SEN Co-ordinator) and the drawing up of an IEP (Individual Education Plan), which sets targets for the child to achieve and a date on which to review progress. If, after further review, the child's problems continue to cause concern, s/he is moved to Stage 3, when the school is able to draw on the advice of outside agencies, such as the educational psychologist, the SEN Support Service, or a Pupil Referral Unit in the event of behavioural difficulties.

These first three school-based stages are funded by the SEN budget allocated to each school, based on the number of pupils attending and the allowances paid to families for clothing and free school meals (based on the assumption that social deprivation may lead to a greater likelihood of SEN). However, if it is felt that a child is still failing to make progress, s/he is deemed to require funding over and above that received by the school, and is placed onto Stage 4, the first of the two statutory stages. During this stage, the LEA (Local Education Authority) decides whether a statement of SEN, which is funded separately, is required. Advice is sought from all involved with the child, i.e. his/her parents/carers, the school, the educational psychology department, the health authority, the social services department, and any other agency involved. If, after considering this advice, the Statementing Officer decides that a statement is unnecessary, s/he issues a 'note in lieu' and the child returns to Stage 3. If, on the other hand, it is felt that the child needs extra provision, s/he is placed on Stage 5, and the school is allocated a sum of money, according to a 'banding' system, which must be used to address his/her specific needs. Provision usually takes the form of additional specialist advice and individual classroom support. The child's progress is reviewed by the LEA on a yearly basis, although this may be brought forward in exceptional circumstances. Throughout the process, the Code of Practice emphasises that parental involvement is crucial[6].

It can be seen, then, that the assessment, identification and categorisation of children with SEN is a long, drawn-out and complicated process, which may or may not result in a 'statement' outlining the child's 'special' needs and the strategies for addressing these, strategies which are usually decided by the school and occasionally the parent. Although the Code of Practice enshrines the notion of including the child in decisions concerning him/her, this rarely occurs (Wyse and Hawtin, 2000). The LEA, using information from the school, the educational psychologist and the medical officer, usually come to a decision seen to be 'in the child's best interests'. Tomlinson (1985) has claimed that the rhetoric of special education 'may be humanitarian but the practice can be mainly one of control' (quoted in Barton, 1986:279). Children whose 'different' bodies and/or minds do not fit into the 'ordered' generality of the school are perceived to require additional resources in the form of individual assistance or special equipment. Successive governments have espoused the principle of integration (into a mainstream school) wherever possible, despite the fact that integration is often deemed to be an 'add-on extra' rather than an integral part of a school's ethos. When integration appears difficult, or fails altogether, the fault is seen to lie either within the child or the lack of resources, rather than in the system itself. This will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 2.

The Integration/Segregation Debate

According to Howarth:

> 'The integration of children with significant difficulties or handicaps into mainstream schools is for some a matter of human rights. Others see it as an ideological movement which is prepared to sacrifice individual children upon the altar of an abstract principle'.
>
> (1987:xi)

One of the most frequently debated policy concerns currently within special education revolves around the integration of children with particular forms of need into a mainstream setting. Integration itself may take many forms: social (lunchtime integration, shared leisure facilities), locational ('special' units sited within mainstream schools) or functional (shared lessons/classes) (Leicester, 1994). Legislation by successive governments has advocated increasing integration of children with SEN into mainstream schools. However, legislation surrounding SEN provision as a whole has so far failed to reinforce rhetoric with practical applications. Commenting on television upon the most recent legislation (1993 Education Act), which culminated in the issuing of a Code of Practice for children with SEN, a head teacher remarked that he was: '*presented with Rolls Royce legislation but given methylated spirits to put in the tank*' (Yorkshire Television, World In Action, 30.9.96). When faced with this comment, the SENCO at the secondary school in the study agreed: '*Yes, the Code of Practice promised me a Rolls Royce and what I actually got was a second hand Skoda*'.

The 1944 Education Act, despite enshrining a philosophical commitment to the notion that children with SEN should be educated, wherever possible, within a mainstream setting, nonetheless played the most important role in establishing a complex segregated system of SEN provision organised around a collection of eleven basically medical categories of disability (see above, see also Oliver 1996; Tomlinson, 1982). Later on, the Warnock Report (DES, 1978) and the ensuing 1981 Education Act both advocated the principle of integrated provision. However, the Act stated unequivocally that a) no additional resources would be made available to enable it to be instigated and that b) the education of other, non-disabled, children should not suffer as a result. In fact, since its passage, the numbers of children being educated within special schools have shown little change (Clark et al, 1997). Oliver, himself an advocate of integration on human rights grounds, claims that this state of affairs represents more than:

> 'a technical debate about the quality of educational provision. Its failure to explicitly develop any connections with the functional integration of individuals into society and its relationship to the citizenship rights and duties of disabled children, has been a major omission'.
>
> (1996:82).

For Oliver, the most important reason for this omission is that the debate has been commandeered by a wide range of professionals, including politicians, policy makers and academics, rather than by disabled people themselves. He adds that even his own discipline of sociology, which 'has a justifiable reputation for criticising everything in sight including itself, has focused little on the exclusion of disabled people from society and its institutions' (1996:83; see also Oliver, 1990). In discussing the attempts of disabled people (including sociologists) to enter the integration/segregation debate, Oliver claims to advance a more appropriate sociological understanding of the issue, by highlighting the emergence of two views of integration: the 'old' view, that of politicians and professionals with vested interests (see also Tomlinson, 1982), and the 'new' view of disabled people themselves. The old view sees integration simply as a matter of policy; the framing of the appropriate, properly resourced and implemented legislation, changes in school organisation to include whole school policies on integration, the training of teachers in extra knowledge and the different skills needed to teach children with SEN, modifications to the curriculum, and finally the acceptance and tolerance of children with SEN themselves[7].

The contrasting 'new' view of integration rejects all of the above by challenging the very notion of normality in education and in society generally, claiming that integration is a political as well as an educational process. Although many of the above changes are necessary, there must be accompanying changes in the whole ethos of the school. It must become a welcoming environment whose purpose is to educate *all* children, whatever their particular needs or abilities, not merely those who conform to an increasingly narrow band of selection criteria. This ethos must be accompanied by a commitment from teachers to work with all children, whose differences should not merely be accepted or tolerated, but positively celebrated and valued as part of the wide diversity of humanity. By advocating these changes in policy and practice, Oliver endorses the current trend within special education which rejects the term 'integration' - the placing of children with SEN into an existing but modified system of education - in favour of 'inclusion', which evokes an all-embracing system of schools capable of educating children with a wide variety of physical and mental aptitudes (Oliver, 1996).

Similarly, Hegarty (1987) points out quite rightly that a major difficulty with the notion of integration is that it focuses on the individual pupil as someone who requires integration, rather than the school itself which may need to change its existing regime. Furthermore, it suggests a process whereby something needs to be done *to* a pupil with SEN, as integration is deemed to be his/her problem, with the school's success measured in terms of how adequately s/he has been absorbed into the mainstream, rather than how well the mainstream has been adapted in order to accommodate him/her. This focus on the individual as needing something 'special' or 'extra' is highlighted by the 5-stage assessment process whereby a pupil deemed to have SEN is given an '*individual* education plan' by which it is proposed to meet his/her needs judged to be outside the 'normal' educational provision. This tendency to concentrate on the individual pupil highlights a corresponding debate within the disability movement itself, which advocates a move away from the 'bio-medical' or 'individual' model of disability towards a more appropriate 'social model'. These arguments will be discussed more fully in Chapter 2.

Many commentators dispute the possibility of successful integration taking place in the current educational climate. Riddell (1996) claims that structural factors such as competition between schools for a declining number of pupils, the 'market forces' model of education, local management of schools (LMS) and increasing selection criteria, mitigate against the inclusion of pupils with SEN. Such pupils may not only constitute a drain on dwindling resources, but may also threaten to impinge unfavourably upon schools' league table results (see Chapter 7). Baroness Warnock herself, the chair of the 1978 report which attempted to revolutionise educational provision for children with SEN, claims that the original concept of the report - equality of education for all children, where 'equality' means equality of entitlement rather than identity of provision - has been lost along the way to Thatcherism and the philosophy of the market place. Warnock (1991) despairs of the way in which the individualism of the 1980s was accompanied by corresponding attitudes towards education:

> 'Thus in education one could no longer afford to be soft. Whatever could not be shown to be efficient must go ... There were to be no more hand-outs, no free lunches, no assumption that free education was a right. Nothing except the spirit of self-reliant independence, nothing but a determination to get on, better yourself and make money (in order to own your own house, buy your own car, send your children to fee-paying schools) would qualify you for admiration'.
>
> (1991:148-9)

However, as Warnock points out, in the market-place some are inevitably losers: 'in the market the underdog does not have his day ... so, educationally, there is no place for the dim, the disadvantaged, the disabled, or the slow' (1991:151).

Touching as she does on parental power to select the most appropriate school for their child, Warnock also highlights another controversy within special education. Successive governments have utilised the notion of parental choice as the means of ensuring competition and accountability within education (Riddell, 1996). However, the manner in which this impinges upon children with SEN is unclear. There are indications that, rather than taking on the mantle of a 'new social movement' to ensure equality of opportunity for all children with SEN, voluntary organisations and parents of children with specific disabilities are tending to revert to an individualist discourse which draws on views of learning difficulties as individual deficits requiring specialist intervention (e.g. dyslexia).

However, not all parents of children with SEN automatically favour integration. For many parents, the idea of their vulnerable child being expected to cope in the rough and tumble of a large comprehensive school is untenable. Goodison (1987), speaking as a parent of a brain-damaged child, rejects the notion of integration as a target for all children, irrespective of the nature of their 'need'.

Her own daughter was at first successfully integrated into a mainstream primary school, but as her contemporaries grew older and more boisterous, she began to struggle. In relation to academic progress, playground interactions and friendships, she was increasingly marginalised, and at eight years old was transferred to a small 'family' type special school, where she can remain until she is sixteen or older. Those advocating integration for all point to many successful examples but, according to Goodison, these success stories tend to originate in primary schools, where classes are smaller and less competitive, and less prone to the name-calling, bullying or violence endemic in many secondary playgrounds where there may be over one thousand pupils.

Goodison acknowledges the fact that special schools have been condemned for being 'too sheltered, cosy and protected, away from the hurly burly of ordinary life. They promote dependency and make the transition to adult life harder' (1987:19). However, whilst agreeing that her daughter *is* protected - from prejudice and the pressures of a large comprehensive school - Goodison argues that her daughter and her peers can express themselves in a hurly burly of their own making. They are liable to be emotionally expressive and explosive, but are allowed to develop in an atmosphere that is stimulating and far from 'cosy'. She is not sheltered from failure, nor pampered. Precisely because success is sometimes unattainable, failure is no longer overwhelming, and whereas in a mainstream school she was perceived as a special case, in the context of the special school she is ordinary and no allowances are made.

This whole debate raises the question of how equality is achieved. Those advocating total integration imply that children will only achieve educational equality when they all attend the same schools. However, Goodison (1987), like Warnock (1991), contends that where needs are different it is a mistake to confuse equality with similarity. Sometimes, in order to achieve equality, disadvantaged groups may need different contexts and a level of separation in order to develop their own strengths and identities. A frequently used argument for total integration, aside from the human rights perspective, is that it is also beneficial for mainstream children (and teachers) in that it may bring about attitudinal changes on their part (Vlachou, 1997). Vlachou's study, which explores teachers' and mainstream children's attitudes to integration, shows that teachers placed great emphasis on the social aspects of integration, whilst at the same time demonstrating conflicting and often confused attitudes towards the subject. Children with SEN were deemed to be 'different' to mainstream children by teachers who, nonetheless, simultaneously claimed to treat them 'the same' so that their mainstream peers would not view them as different. Some teachers valued integration as a human rights issue, whilst for others it was a matter of privilege. Others stressed the 'normalising' aspect, although there was a sense of guilt in the use of the word 'normal' and a feeling that parents may be being lulled into a false sense of security:

> 'I think it's wonderful for the parents when the child comes into, I shouldn't say normal school, I know we shouldn't but we do. But sometimes it might give parents a false illusion that one day their children will be normal'.
>
> (Vlachou, 1997:105)

Teachers were also ambivalent about the exact nature of the friendships which formed between disabled and non-disabled children, commenting that 'they are not really bonded in special friendships' and 'I'm not sure whether it's a kind of patronising friendship where the mainstream children sort of patronise the less-able children' (1997:138).

These examples demonstrate the confusion which exists around the subject of integration. For some it is an indisputable question of human rights, the iniquity of excluding specific groups of children to a form of marginalised education on the grounds of their disability. For others, it is a matter of schools' ability and willingness to educate all children, whatever their needs, in an all-encompassing form of education free from discrimination. For most, it is a question of children mixing with their peers, whether able-bodied or disabled, in order for an ideology of tolerance and acceptance to be fostered. On this point, however, Leicester, whilst advocating integration on moral grounds, nevertheless sounds a warning note: 'Of course we must not exploit special children by treating them as means and not as ends; that is, turning them into learning aids upon which mainstream children, as it were, practise their 'compassion'!' (1994:304). Furthermore, as Barton and Tomlinson (1984) point out, given the inequalities within society at large, and given that those practices are largely established within the education system, especially at secondary level, if integration is to be successful, then its realisation must focus on these unacceptable features of society in general and the education system in particular (see Chapter 7).

Theorising Special Education

Allan et al (1998) claim that theorising within special education has been largely dominated by two polarised models: an individualistic (or 'medical') model which focuses on 'within child' factors, and a 'social' model which seeks factors outside the child and reflects discourses on rights (see also Chapter 2). These 'models' of disability, the individual and the social, might also be seen as 'personal troubles' or 'public issues' (Wright Mills, 1959[1970]). Oliver (1988) and Barton (1993) claim that, to some extent, individualistic models of disability have given way over recent years to social theoretical models such as 'social constructionism', which focuses on factors such as teaching methods and attitudes, and 'social creationism', which views disability as oppression and takes into account the many material, environmental, social and psychological disadvantages experienced by disabled people. However, those such as Riddell (1996) have argued that, during the post-Warnock era, demands for statements of SEN and representations from voluntary organisations invoking categorisation have marked a reversal from social to individualistic notions of disability.

Parents may also be instrumental in reversing the trend from social to individual models of disability. By joining voluntary organisations, they are able to exert considerable influence over LEAs, but these organisations tend to be grouped within specific medical conditions such as autism, Down's Syndrome etc., and their advocacy fails to include children within alternative categories. Allan et al also note that 'there is a growth of parents who are searching for acknowledgement among professionals that their child has a particular problem hitherto unidentified' (1998:25). Parents whose child is experiencing difficulty with reading often seek a diagnosis of dyslexia, and those with a particularly clumsy child may argue that s/he is dyspraxic. Those parents who may have been pilloried by school staff for the 'naughtiness' of their child may be comforted by a diagnosis of ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) or ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). 'Deviant' behaviour is increasingly 'medicalised' (Slee, 1995) and, whilst recognition of these 'conditions' may well bring additional resources, it nevertheless also reinforces individualism. The failure of certain children to fit neatly into the ordered environment of the school can only be rationalised by drawing upon explanations of 'sickness' or bodily deviance from identified norms (see also Chapter 2).

Allan et al (1998) utilise a Foucauldian perspective to facilitate an analysis of the ways in which 'special' identities and experiences are constructed. Foucault offers up a 'box of tricks' (1977, quoted in Allen et al, 1998) which enables analyses of both the official discourses on SEN and those operating 'on the ground' within schools and classrooms. Embedded within official discourses are complex power/knowledge relationships and 'disciplinary techniques', e.g. the 'medical gaze' which serves to construct the patient, the mad person and, according to Allen et al, the child with SEN. *Hierarchical observation,* which 'constructs a perfect gaze', allows children with SEN to be placed under constant surveillance, and also enables professionals to show concern for their welfare and monitor their progress (or otherwise). *Normalising judgements* allow professionals to distinguish between those children with and without identified SEN, whereby the 'cut-off point' for those requiring a statement of SEN is not always clearly defined or standardised throughout the educational system. Those who are not statemented may often be deemed by parents and professionals to be disadvantaged by 'not having a label. In a climate of resource constraints, distance from the norm has become valued' (Allen et al, 1998:27). The *examination*, or multidisciplinary assessment, 'establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them' (Foucault, 1977, quoted in Allan et al, 1998).

Allen et al (1998) claim that Foucault's use of genealogy (1976, 1977) focuses on power/knowledge relationships within institutions and illustrates a shift in his interests from discourse to 'discursive practices', and from a macro to a micro level of analysis. His later work on ethics (1987, 1988) studies individual agency and the 'technologies of the self', which inform choices and action. Thus Allen et al argue that a Foucauldian analysis of special education enables a macro/micro understanding of the way in which specific children's identities and experiences are constructed both at official level, in policies and statements, and through their day-to-day encounters with teachers and peers. As Foucault contends, however, 'these power/knowledge relations can only be observed at their points of resistance. Therefore, the researcher needs to look for evidence of individuals challenging identities or opting for alternative experiences' (Allan et al, 1998:28).

CONCLUSION

This thesis sets out to explore throughout the ways in which the structure of SEN policy is experienced within schools at a very personal, biographical level by the children involved, and the challenges they mount to the system. Allan et al note that it is important that 'the voices of children with special educational needs and their mainstream peers are foregrounded. These are normally silenced by professional discourses and some effort is required to incite the pupils to speak' (Allan et al, 1998:30). They also indicate that we must acknowledge the important role of mainstream pupils in constructing the experiences and identities of those with SEN. Consequently, this thesis will explore the experiences of *all* children in resisting structural influences within a particular school setting while, more especially, focusing on the ways in which those children designated as having SEN engaged with the system. Davis et al (2000), suggest that, because the voices of disabled children have largely been absent from previous research:

> 'The picture is painted of a homogeneous 'disabled child' who is often denied the same rights and choices as other children ... cut off from the opportunities to interact socially in the same way as other non-disabled children. ... A serious critique has been raised that disabled children are prevented from developing social skills and self-confidence because their lives are controlled by other people'.
> (2000:206)

On the contrary, this thesis acknowledges throughout that pupils with SEN, in common with their mainstream peers, have the capacity for agency in the structural space of the school, and the ability to construct their own identities and define their own experiences. The thesis will also go some way toward addressing the theoretical gap identified by Davis et al (2000), in that 'very few writers within the paradigm of the new sociology of childhood write about disabled children's lives and very few writers in the field of disability studies display an interest in writing about children's lives' (2000:203). This will be achieved by acknowledging *all* children as competent social actors, and by listening to the voices of children 'disabled' by the structural processes inherent within the education (and 'special' education) system.

The next chapter will therefore focus upon notions of embodiment, difference and disability which operate in the wider society, before going on to explore the ways in which educational policy attempts to fit the 'different' body of the child with SEN into the main 'body' of the school.

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[1] Prout (2000) develops this argument further by emphasising that 'social life has a material as well as a discursive (or representational) component' (2000:1), and that 'the theme of the body as socially and biologically unfinished reconnects what social constructionism separated' (2000:5).

[2] A recent report by the NSPCC was accused by other children's organisations of fuelling parental anxiety about child molestation (The Daily Telegraph, 3.8.99). It was pointed out that the risk of a child being killed by a stranger is no greater than it was in the 60s, and that a child is more likely to be harmed by someone in his/her family than by a stranger. About 6 or 7 children are murdered by strangers each year, whereas more than 80 are killed by parents, carers, or someone known to them. Nonetheless, fears about strangers persist.

[3] Many years later, Summerhill school continues to come under attack. In a damning report from OFSTED (the Office for Standards in Education), which claimed that children made insufficient progress due to 'erratic attendance at lessons', the inspectors commented that accommodation was inadequate, gratuitous swearing by children was allowed to go unchecked, and supervision standards were poor. Somewhat paradoxically, however, the report also concluded that 'pupils related well to the staff and each other and participation in decision-making gave them a 'practical understanding of citizenship'' (Guardian, 28.5.99). As 'citizenship' is now one of the elements schools are being expected to address, it is difficult to foresee how those institutions which rely upon teacher authority and autonomy will fare.

[4] I intend to argue (see Chapter 4) that these kinds of activities, although they do represent an integral part of children's own culture, nevertheless belong to the child's repertoire of acts of resistance towards the school, i.e. adults', world.

[5] Together with Corbett, I question the use of the term 'special' to describe children with particular physical or learning needs. As Corbett notes, it is a 'negative naming rendered harmless by an implication of niceness' (1996:49). Portraying disabled individuals as unfailingly and unceasingly 'nice' denies their existence as complex, vulnerable and diverse human beings. The term is used here rather as an ironic reference to the way in which the education system marginalises certain children by placing them in a specific category defined by the 'special' label.

[6] The Government's most recent document on special educational needs (*Meeting Special Educational Needs: A Programme of Action*, 1998), whilst enshrining the need to work with parents to achieve excellence for all children, proposes to introduce radical changes both to the special needs system and to expectations of provision. A revised Code, to come into effect in the academic year 2000/2001, will aim to adapt the 5 stage model, which is often perceived as 'a series of hurdles which children with SEN have to vault on their way to a statement, and even as a natural progression. The word 'stage' encourages this expectation' (1998:16). To this end, it is proposed that the current stage 1 will be removed, thereby reducing the school-based elements from three to two - 'School Support' to correspond largely with the current stage 2, and 'Support Plus' to similarly correspond with the current Stage 3. Concern is also expressed at the rapid rise in the number of children with statements of SEN, although it is acknowledged that many parents consider that statements are the most effective way of securing provision. The Government therefore intends to 'strengthen school-based support and monitoring to enable parents, schools and LEAs to feel confident in moving gradually away from the current reliance on statements' (1998:18).

[7] Acceptance of children with SEN in mainstream schools is often considered to be a difficult area. There have been several high profile cases whereby parents have challenged decisions by LEAs to place children into special schools against the advice of the professionals. Katie and Andy Clark, for example, are prepared to give up their jobs, sell their home and uproot their children from a close village community in order to place one of them, Nadia, who is deaf and has cerebral palsy, in the school of their choice (Guardian, Parents Section, May 27th, 1998). Staff at the village school claimed it lacked the facilities to accept her, and other mainstream schools said she was 'either too disabled or too deaf and that to include her would prove detrimental to the other children's education'. Parents of other children at the village school accused her mother of failing to come to terms with the fact that she had a disabled child, and some threatened to remove their own children to a different school if Nadia was accepted. Consequently, after turning down the proffered place at a local special school, the family is moving one hundred miles away to take up the offer of a place in a mainstream school.

CHAPTER 2

THE SCHOOLED BODY, THE DISABLED BODY AND THE 'SPECIAL' BODY

This chapter will explore theoretical aspects of embodiment, disability and stigma in order to explore and understand their impact upon the lives of children in schools, and children with SEN in particular. It will argue that childhood (and hence children's experiences of childhood) is heavily mediated and circumscribed by the body and how it behaves at school. For children whose bodies may not conform to cultural norms, this is further complicated by the importance of bodily perfection in modern society. The chapter will provide the setting for the ethnographic sections of the thesis, which will utilise these theories to explore the importance of the body in relation to identity and special schooling. It will also build on the previous chapter to explore the manner in which embodiment contributes to the cultural construction of childhood itself.

THE BODY

Theories of embodiment

According to Csordas:

> 'Due to the destabilizing impact of social processes of commodification, fragmentation, and the semiotic barrage of images of body parts, the human body can no longer be considered a "bounded entity". In the milieu of "late capitalism" and "consumer culture", with its multiplicity of images that stimulate needs and desires and the corresponding changes in material arrangements of social space, the body/self has become primarily a performing self of appearance, display and impression management'.
>
> (1994:2)

Csordas claims that, since the early 1970s, the body has assumed an increased presence within social science and related disciplines. However, the 'old' view of the body as a fixed, material entity subject to the rules of biological science has transmuted into a notion of the body as both a fluid, contextual marker of identity and as an experiential agent within social structural space. Csordas reviews the ways in which fellow anthropologists have used the concept of the body as an analytic tool that focuses upon 'perception, practice, parts, processes or products' (1994:4). He alludes to Mauss' (1950[1979]) classic notion of techniques of the body, whereby the ways in which the body is used by individuals subscribe to the concept of the body as at once tool, agent and object. Mauss outlines 'the ways in which from society to society, men (sic) know how to use their bodies' (1950[1979]:97). Such actions as swimming, walking, digging, marching, running, using the hands etc. are culturally specific and learned through imitation during childhood. Csordas also notes that parts of the body, such as hair, face, genitals or limbs, are of interest to anthropologists for the symbolic and social significance they bear. Moreover, 'a great deal of cultural meaning can be distilled from the treatment of body products such as blood, semen, sweat, tears, faeces, urine and saliva' (Csordas, 1994:5). Csordas also notes how Douglas (1966[1992]) outlines the way in which elements of anatomy and physiology can be taken up into the symbolic domain. Douglas argues that the human body is a metaphor for the social system as a whole and that, in times of national crisis, there is likely to be a corresponding concern with the maintenance of bodily boundaries and purity.

Within sociology, Shilling (1993) claims that the body has been somewhat of an 'absent presence', rather like the human heart, i.e. hidden from view but serving ultimately to nourish and keep alive that which surrounds it. Although facets of embodiment have been glimpsed within particular sociological discourses, the physical, fleshy body has nonetheless rarely figured as an object of explicit sociological concern. Within classical sociology, for example, the body has not been deemed to be an appropriate subject for investigation in its own right, although a concern with the structure and functioning of particular societies, and the nature of social action itself, has included an implicit dimension of human embodiment. However, Shilling claims that: 'in conditions of high modernity, there is a tendency for the body to become increasingly central to the modern person's sense of identity' (1993:1). In recent years, the sociology of the body has evolved as a distinct area of study, accompanied by a corresponding rise of popular interest in the body. Media images, for example, encourage the care, control and enhancement of the body through diet and fitness regimes or, more drastically, through the use of plastic surgery. Shilling notes that, while social interest surrounding the body is not an entirely new phenomenon (during times of war, for instance, governments have displayed concern regarding the nation's health and fitness), nonetheless contemporary interest in the body reflects an increasing *individualisation* of the body, in other words, a concern with the body as a medium of individual identity. In the West, bodies have come to be seen as projects to be worked upon, or malleable entities that can be shaped and honed through the vigilance of their owners.

Turner (1996) highlights four possible reasons for increased sociological interest in the body. Firstly, the decline of bourgeois capitalist industry and the increasing importance of service industries have been linked to changes in lifestyle which emphasise consumerism and leisure. A shorter working week, compulsory retirement and an emphasis on the benefits of sport and recreation have led to a decline in the work ethic and an interest in keeping fit, looking good and postponing the ageing process (Featherstone, 1991, see below). Secondly, the feminist critique of women's subordinate position in society, historically linked to their fundamental biology, has raised questions about the importance of the body. If gender inequality is socially constructed, there is no essential difference between men and women. However, some radical feminists argue that, for women, social life is experienced through different bodily experiences, such as menstruation and childbirth, and that these factors cannot be ignored. Thirdly, the ageing of human populations, due in part to improved medical provision and the impact of high technology medicine, has problematised the 'ownership' of particular bodies and body parts. Artificial insemination, transplants, and medical intervention to prolong life have all extended the boundaries of the body and raised philosophical and ethical issues. Finally, late twentieth century epidemics such as HIV and AIDS, as well as presenting an economic burden to the health service, have again raised problems of moral responsibility in relation to the aetiology of major disease. All of these factors, according to Turner (1996), contribute to an increasing interest in, and sociological theories around, the body.

With reference to the discussion around agency and structure in the previous chapter, Shilling also notes the centrality of the body's capacities and management in the exercise not only of human agency and constraint, but also in the formation and maintenance of social systems. An individual's experience of life is inevitably mediated through his/her body. Shilling draws on the work of Goffman to demonstrate how our ability to intervene in social life is predicated upon bodily management through time and space, 'we have bodies and we act with our bodies' (Shilling, 1993:22). However, whilst emphasising the capacity for human agency through the body, Shilling notes that bodies also vary on an individual basis, a distinction that is especially pertinent to this thesis. As I shall show, children within schools do not necessarily experience agency to the same extent. Those whose bodies may appear or behave differently may not be able to engage with the structural features of the school in the same way as their 'normal' peers, or enjoy the same amount of power to contribute toward change.

According to Lyon and Barbelet (1994), increasing theoretical concern with the body has been largely one-sided, focusing as it does on the body as an outcome of social processes. Foucault (1979, 1980) and Elias (1978), for example, each conceive of the body in this way, but have little to say about the body as a social agent. Foucault outlines the manner in which the power of society is inscribed upon the body (see below), whilst Elias takes account of the role of emotion in the socialisation of 'natural' bodily functions, such as eating, spitting, nose blowing, and relations between the sexes, and demonstrates how these are shaped through historically driven social forces. Feelings of embarrassment and shame provide a social function in checking and therefore 'civilising' bodily functions. Thus, like Foucault, Elias perceives the body as primarily a passive recipient of social processes. However, Lyon and Barbalet argue that:

> 'emotion has a role in social agency as it significantly guides and prepares the organism for social action through which social relations are generated. The body cannot be seen merely as subject to external forces; the emotions which move the person through bodily processes must be understood as a source of agency: social actors are embodied'.
>
> (1994:50)

Whilst not denying the body as an object of social power, Lyon and Barbalet contend that it is not simply a passive recipient of society's mould, and so external to it. The individual and collective capacity for social agency emanates from the lived experience of embodiment, 'persons experience themselves simultaneously *in* and *as* their bodies. ... Emotion is central to an understanding of the agency of embodied praxis' (1994:54, original emphasis). Bodies, then, can be seen as representing not only the text upon which social structure is inscribed but also, through emotion, the site of human agency.

According to Shilling (1993), Goffman (1963[1990]) also emphasises the body as integral to human agency. However, whilst outlining the ways in which the body enables people to intervene in, and manage, the flow of interaction, Goffman nonetheless claims that:

> "shared vocabularies of body idiom' (or conventional forms of non-verbal language) which guide people's perceptions of bodily appearances and performances, provides a sense of the social constraints under which body management occurs'.
>
> (quoted in Shilling, 1993:82)

Goffman endows the body with three main characteristics. Firstly, it is the material property of individuals, providing them with the ability to monitor their bodily appearance and performance in order to facilitate social interaction. Secondly, the meanings attached to it are determined by 'shared vocabularies of body idiom' (Goffman, 1963[1990]:35) such as dress, bearing, physical movement and gestures, which label and hierarchically grade individuals accordingly. These first two features indicate that human bodies enjoy a dual location: bodies are the property of individuals but are nonetheless given meaning by society. This dichotomy lies at the heart of Goffman's third feature, the body as mediating the relationship between the individual's self-identity and his/her social identity. The social meanings inscribed on particular bodies, in turn, become internalised and exert a powerful influence upon an individual's sense of self-identity and self-esteem. This concept is particularly important to this thesis; children who continually receive messages that they are undervalued in schools in terms of their physical or academic achievement may come to believe these messages. In the quest for perfect bodies and academic performances that enhance a school's position in the league tables, some children, through no fault of their own, may begin to doubt their self-worth.

Body language, or non-verbal communication

The crucial nature of body language during social interaction has been, and continues to be, increasingly recognised in social skills training for interpersonal interaction, especially for those engaged in the 'helping professions'. Patterson (1993) has suggested that there are five basic functions of body movements, or kinesics, namely 'information giving, regulating interaction, expressing affective states, indicating social control and facilitating task goals' (quoted in Hargie et al, 1994). Eye contact is a particularly important element of interaction, as exemplified by a number of phrases in popular usage, such as 'making eyes at' and 'if looks could kill'. This latter element of looking was often utilised by the children in the study, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 5. However, many of these facets of non-verbal communication are culturally specific. Eye contact, for example, plays an important part in social interaction in the West, but in some Eastern cultures denotes immodesty on the part of women who look directly at men. Similarly, people of low status are not expected to give eye contact to those of higher status.

Polhemus (1975) points out that, in 1873, Charles Darwin asserted that 'all the chief expressions exhibited by man (sic) are the same throughout the world' (1873:359, quoted in Benthall and Polhemus, 1975). Darwin indicated that this universality of bodily expression was due to the fact that it was transmitted genetically. However, subsequent research has uncovered a wealth of data which contradicts Darwin's evidence and conclusions. Ethnographic fieldworkers, such as Mauss, have observed occasions wherein bodily techniques have been taught either consciously or unconsciously. Mauss himself outlines one scenario when he taught a young girl of his acquaintance to spit in order to relieve the symptoms of a cold. This knowledge was absent from her culture. Mauss, unlike other ethnographers who based their evidence of bodily expression upon linguistic or communication models, utilised a Durkheimian model to study the human body. This assumes that the members of a particular society will share certain understandings of, and attitudes towards, the body, i.e. that there will exist a shared consensus of what constitutes a 'healthy' or a 'beautiful' body.

Thus, in general terms, far from being simply a biological, material entity, the body can be seen variously as a metaphor for the social system itself, an object of social control, a bearer of social meaning, a marker of identity, a site of human agency and a medium of expression. However, what differences in bodily agency, if any, exist for children and, more specifically, what scope is there within schools for children to exercise agency through embodiment?

THE CHILD'S BODY

For James, Jenks and Prout:

> 'What marks off a child from an adult is taken to be the successful practice and performance of internalized, even unconscious control over the body and its various functions. This means, therefore, that young children who have not yet learned the specific (and historically variable) techniques of bodily control are culturally uncivilised'.
>
> (1998:160)

As Elias indicates, many behaviours such as eating with the fingers or defecating immediately in response to a bodily urge, which we now associate with children, were once also performed by adults. However, in contemporary society, children must be 'civilised', i.e. must learn to control these practices, if they wish to be seen as proper adults. Thus, according to Bourdieu (1986), the 'habitus', including ways of walking, talking, sitting, is formed unconsciously and is the root of the socialisation process (see Chapter 5 for a fuller discussion). However, James, Jenks and Prout (1998) argue that to perceive cultural reproduction as simply imitation is to deny children the potential for embodied agency.

James' own work (1993) on childhood identities demonstrates through a fieldnote the manner in which children use the body as a social signifier, and as a source of power over others:

> 'Milly is in my group today. She has been crying and tells me that she doesn't like Toby and Mike. They keep finding very small things and saying that she is that size. She is a slight child but not particularly small. Indeed, she's possibly no smaller than Patsy, who doesn't seem to suffer the same treatment'.
>
> (1993:117)

During the fieldwork that informed this thesis, such examples of children's use of the body to gain power over their peers were abundant (see Chapter 5). As James points out, it is the case that '*any* child, not just those whose bodies are visibly and demonstrably non-conforming, runs the risk of being remarked upon or picked out' (1993:125, original emphasis). However, this attention to minute and subtle details of others' bodily appearance and behaviour can cause distress for those children with visible conditions such as eczema or epilepsy. These child-child interactions that focus upon the 'different' body will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 5.

However, children's embodiment is not simply a feature of child-child interaction, but also forms a major part of adult-child relations. Mayall (1996) uses Young's (1980) analysis of the way in which women live their bodies as object to illustrate child-adult relationships: 'how children's bodies are constricted and defined to suit the adult-controlled social worlds, both at home and at school' and how 'children learn that their social value depends partly on the evaluation of their embodied activity' (1996:87). Children's 'body work' at home (working to achieve bodily control) enables them to learn the ways in which bodily behaviour connects with the social order. Bodily achievements, such as walking, learning to excrete at and in socially acceptable times and places, and eating with fingers, spoons and cups, are greeted with approval. Older children also receive approbation as they attempt to achieve bodily control in the social context of the school, which, according to Mayall, simultaneously devalues and regulates particular bodies. In discussing their potential for agency, Mayall notes that children are subject to power relationships with adults, which:

> 'limit their ability to make a place and space for their embodied selves. As a social group, children's daily experience at school is conditioned by the division of adult labour - which devalues the bodily. The paradox of the child-centred regime is that it is based on adult-centred notions of child development within psychological frameworks'.
>
> (1996:112)

Whereas the home offers approval in terms of bodily achievement as an end in itself, the school perceives bodily control as a means to an end. In Chapter 4 I will demonstrate the particular ways in which children in schools are controlled through the medium of the body, and also how they then utilise the body as a means of resistance.

The child's body at school

In his discussion regarding the body as an 'absent presence' within sociology (see above), Shilling (1993) claims that this absence has had a negative impact upon the quality of sociological research in general, but upon the sociology of education in particular. Despite the influence of Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1986) and his analysis of the way in which 'cultural capital' is embodied within children, Western sociologists have developed theories of education which adopt a Cartesian dualism by focusing upon language and the mind, rather than upon human embodiment. Although producing a wealth of information about educational inequalities linked to social class, such theories have compounded the belief that schooling is about the mind and one particular kind of knowledge - the academic - whilst bodily implications of educational knowledge have been neglected. Yet school staff daily focus their attention upon (especially young) children's bodies, e.g. the need to sit still and be quiet, dress themselves properly, eat their lunch, and visit the lavatory at specified times. For Shilling, 'the *moving, managed* and *disciplined* body, and not just the speaking and listening body, is central to the daily business of schooling' (1993:22, emphasis in original). As I will demonstrate in Chapter 4, these techniques of bodily control were used on a daily basis in the two schools studied during fieldwork for this thesis.

Within schools, the underlying intent of the curriculum, which orders the spatial and temporal lives of children, is to ensure that schools are inhabited by 'docile bodies' (Foucault, 1977). The timetable, or 'time-space path' (Gordon, 1996), is utilised to determine the location of any particular pupil at any one time, and to order the movement of cohorts of pupils through the school building from one classroom/lesson to the next. Rules and practices that constitute the 'curriculum of the body' (Gordon, 1996) detail what kind of embodiment is acceptable (you must not run, you must not chew gum etc.) In her discussion concerning the control exercised over girls in an elite boarding school environment in the 1950s, Okely describes the ways in which girls' bodies were 'subjugated and unsexed' (1978:128). Feminine flesh and curves were concealed by a 'barrel-shaped' tunic (designed to hide burgeoning signs of sexuality), thick brown stockings and two pairs of knickers. Great emphasis was placed on pupils' comportment, and much of their time was spent in marching and drilling. Furthermore, girls were expected to sit, stand and walk in an erect manner, with chin up, back straight and shoulders well back, and for success or failure in this department they were awarded good and bad 'deportment marks'. Okely observes that this 'language of the body' was accurately observed by school authorities; however much a pupil may outwardly appear to be conforming to the rules of the institution, if her carriage or demeanour betrayed a lack of true conviction, she was taken to task by her superiors.

The importance of bodily comportment and movement within schools has also been demonstrated in a more recent setting by Gilborn, in relation to Afro-Caribbean pupils, who affected 'a particular style of walking (with seemingly exaggerated swinging of the shoulders and a spring in the step)' (1990:27). The style appeared to be exclusive to Afro-Caribbean males, and was always deemed to be 'inappropriate' by (white) members of the teaching staff. Although it did not specifically contravene school rules, it often led to criticism of pupils who adopted it. Pupils would be exhorted to 'get a 'move on', 'stand up straight' and 'walk properly', although the style of walking was perceived by the pupils concerned as simply a 'good feeling'. Gilborn is unable to determine whether the teachers' negative connotation of the style of walking was either a response to, or a catalyst for, its use as a form of resistance. Nevertheless, it can be seen that the manner in which pupils comport themselves can be perceived by school staff in a negative manner, and as a threat to their own authority, even where this may not be the intended consequence of the pupils concerned.

Shilling (1993), following Goffman, argues convincingly that certain professionals, including teachers, are required to be experts in body management. Similarly, Neill and Caswell claim that:

> 'non-verbal skills are invaluable for teachers in 'getting the message across' to classes and understanding the messages pupils are sending - messages of interest or messages of confrontation, which are first expressed non-verbally. With increasing interest in classroom competence, teachers need to understand the use of gesture, posture, facial expression and tone of voice. These have become especially important for effective teachers in a climate where respect has to be earned rather than coming automatically with the job' .
>
> (1993:preface)

They then go on to delineate the ways in which teachers may effectively use 'gesture, posture, facial expression and tone of voice' to establish a good relationship with pupils, and to determine the non-verbal messages they are receiving from pupils. Strategies and exercises are suggested to enable teachers, especially new classroom teachers, to decipher the 'meanings' behind pupils' body language, and to counteract any possible challenges to their own authority. In one scenario, two boys arrive late for a lesson and in a dishevelled state, with their ties undone, shirt tails out and chewing gum. The teacher is advised to subject the pupils to a series of 'status-reducing exercises' - insisting they stand up straight, remove their hands from their pockets, fasten their ties and maintain eye contact, in other words, maintain an apposite bodily demeanour. The teacher is assured that utilising these strategies will demonstrate that s/he holds the power to do such things and, 'in the process, strips the pupil of his assumed power' (1993:23). Thus, the classroom is shown to be the site of a complicated power struggle in which the body constitutes an undeniably potent weapon.

By outlining such a power struggle, Neill and Caswell emphasise the importance to teachers of gaining control over pupils' 'unruly' bodies, echoing Foucault (1977), who also highlights the necessity of 'docile bodies' to the smooth and efficient management of institutions such as schools. By tracing the transition at the end of the eighteenth century from the public spectacle of theatrical torture to the use of power through imprisonment, Foucault outlines the transfer from the 'liturgy of punishment' of the body to control of the mind. Power reached out to regulate throughout a variety of institutions such as the prison, the asylum and the school, through the auspices of the 'disciplinary gaze':

> 'The workshop, the school, the army were subject to a whole micro-penality of time (latenesses, absences, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behaviour (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body ('incorrect' attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness), of sexuality (impurity, indecency)'.
>
> (1977:178)

As banishment was superseded by confinement, Bentham's panopticon represents the symbol of the all-seeing completeness of power and surveillance, and Slee, outlining the manner in which theories and practices of discipline within schools has altered, claims that 'the import of this architectural device was not lost on educators' (1995:35). Although the structure of school buildings differs from the panopticon, surveillance is managed through such devices as causing the non-compliant body to become increasingly visible. Surveillance within schools has facilitated not only greater disciplinary control over pupils, their movement around school, and the manner in which they spend their time at school, but has also extended outwards in an ever widening arc which expedites greater surveillance of their lives outside school.

Following Foucault's arguments, Slee (1995) goes on to trace the manner in which the use of corporal punishment was abolished within schools in England and Wales in 1986 and replaced by other, seemingly more humane forms of discipline such as suspension, exclusion and the burgeoning professional 'industry' of behaviour management. In other words, rather than punishing the body itself, it became preferable to remove the offending body altogether.

However, Slee argues that such 'contemporary adornments' may be seen as a reconstitution of the 'old alchemies of control' (1995:34), or simply the same mechanisms of control but in a different, more humanitarian guise. Corporal punishment is rejected as inhumane but, under the growing influence of educational psychology, which controls children's bodies through controlling the mind, especially those deemed to have SEN, it is now possible to police children, and their families, to an extent previously unimagined. Disciplinary mechanisms seep out from their institutional space and begin to encroach on non-institutional spaces and populations. Educational psychologists, social workers, welfare workers and health professionals augment disciplinary control over pupils through detailed knowledge of them obtained by surveillance which includes personal files and home visits. James graphically describes how school staff visiting their pupils' homes discovered that such visits 'often simply confirmed their worst fears and underscored received stereotypes of particular local housing estates or neighbourhoods or provided information about a family which, hitherto, had been gleaned through gossip and hearsay' (1998:149). James argues therefore that home visits, rather than serving to open up a wider communication between home and school, simply subjected the child to closer scrutiny.

In the account for the development of medicine, the gathering of information on particular children originated ostensibly with a concern for their health. Outlining a 'political anatomy' of the body, Armstrong (1983) describes the manner in which children's bodies came increasingly under the auspices of the medical gaze. Following Foucault's arguments concerning changes in the ways in which the body was treated as an object and target for power, Armstrong argues that bodily activities were temporally ordered by devices such as the time-table, which regulated cycles of repetition in institutions such as schools, workshops, prisons and hospitals, thus enabling individual bodies to be disciplined into efficient and effective structures. Techniques of surveillance, such as tests in schools, ensured that bodies and minds were individualised and thus rendered manipulable. Discipline, and therefore power, evolved during the relationship between 'an individualised body and a disembodied gaze' (1983:4). Disciplinary power remains invisible whilst those individuals who come under its sway are rendered visible.

However, the body of the child, which had become the focus of the panoptic vision and a concern of medical discourse towards the end of the nineteenth century, was also subjected at the same time to various moral and pedagogic attentions through the introduction of compulsory education. The school was an opportune environment in which to exercise surveillance over the child and, simultaneously, to examine actual bodies through the school medical service which was established in 1908 (Armstrong, 1983). This service was provided through two separate clinics, one for treatment and the other for inspection. Under the auspices of the treatment centre, children's bodies were examined, illnesses diagnosed and appropriate treatment provided, whilst the inspection clinic screened all schoolchildren for incipient diseases, organised visits to children's homes by school nurses, and functioned as a co-ordination centre, where children's records were established, maintained and updated. In addition, inspection clinics evolved into assessment as well as diagnostic centres purporting to offer, within a medical discourse, explanations for educational failure. Thus the link between systems of medical and educational surveillance were forged.

Campaigners such as Margaret McMillan also encouraged the link between medical inspection (and care) and education, to the extent that:

> 'when she asked in 1895, what was 'the use of doing anything with a child until you have washed it', she was not making a simple bid to clean up the child of the residuum, but rather expressing an understanding of neurological function whereby sensation was deadened by dirt. The children of the poor had been rendered half-dead by the industrial system. Water would, quite literally, awaken the child's body - 'disease and death would fly from that meeting and

> recognition, and Pleasure (that great brain stimulus) would start new rhythms of life in the stagnant body''.
>
> (Steedman, 1990:198)

McMillan began lobbying for a bill dealing with the medical inspection of schoolchildren in 1904, claiming that child health and nurture should be sited firmly within the educational rather than the public health aegis. Influenced by the ideas of Friedrich Froebel, who perceived children as organic entities requiring space, clean air, brightness and movement, McMillan set out to establish clinics, open air camps and schools which would allow children (specifically working class children) to flourish. At the Deptford Centre, groups of children would arrive in the late afternoon, and play in the fresh air, after which they would be subjected to 'washing rites' and then put out to sleep in the garden. In the morning they would be given breakfast[1], and then sent to school. So from the beginning of the last century, the need to control children's bodies has been equated with their ability to perform well in school.

Child-adult relationships, therefore, are mediated through the body, especially in the school setting, and the expectation focused on the child's developing capacity to control the body. This fact has implications for those children who, for whatever reason, are unable (or indeed unwilling) to 'civilise' their 'childish' bodies. An added dimension for such children is the emphasis on bodily perfection in consumer culture, and the cultural devaluation of 'different' or disabled bodies.

The Quest for the 'Perfect' Body

According to Synnott:

> "Beauty is only skin deep'; 'appearances are deceptive'; 'all that glitters is not gold'; handsome is as handsome does; and 'never judge a book by its cover': folk wisdom and popular culture warn insistently against taking beauty 'at face value'. None the less, pressures to look good seem to have intensified ... Furthermore, the

> beauty 'hype' continues, fuelled by poets and philosophers, major corporations and beauticians. ...Prejudice and discrimination against the ugly are virtually a cultural norm'.
>
> (1990:55-6)

In today's society, the pressure to 'look good' is all around us (Feathersone, 1991), and children are not exempt from this physical expectation that abounds in the 'outside' world. Bombarded on all sides by media and fashion images that peddle slenderness and physical perfection (Woodward, 1997), the age at which children become aware of stereotypical images of what it means to be socially 'acceptable' in terms of appearance is becoming progressively younger. Clothing manufacturers are accused of exploiting young children, especially girls, in their desire to appear 'cool' and trendy in their own eyes and those of their peers. Current concerns revolve around the fact that little girls are being subjected to a potentially lucrative market in 'baby cosmetics and mini fashion plates', which plays upon their terror of 'not fitting in' (Sunday Times magazine, 5.12.99):

> 'The whiff of cheap glamour hangs over racks of scaled-down 'high fashion' clothes for 9 to 14-year-olds: transparent pink chiffon crop tops, shiny Lycra slip dresses, sequinned shifts with spaghetti straps, platform shoes and strappy wedges. A mother ... [points] out garments to her little girl of about seven. The child is clad in a bikini top, tight flared trousers, pale lipstick, glittery face makeup and platform sandals'[2].

Young children come to understand the pressure to conform to bodily norms and, as I shall argue in later chapters, these norms of the body are reinforced in the 'school' world, and subsequently utilised in the child's world to judge others in terms of their physical appearance and moral attributes[3].

Emphasis on the regulation of individual bodies reflects the dominance of the body in defining personhood and identity in consumer culture. Featherstone (1991) notes that the subjugation of bodies through diet and exercise regimes stresses the importance of body maintenance and appearance, which 'suggests two basic categories: the inner and the outer body' (1991:171). The inner body is concerned with health and the optimum functioning of the body in the face of disease, abuse and the ageing process, whilst the outer body refers to appearance and the movement and control of the body within social space. Within consumer culture, the two become united, and the prime motivation for the maintenance of the inner body becomes the enhancement of the outer body's appearance. Individuals are exhorted through advertising media to feel good and therefore look good, and by so doing, to become more socially acceptable. With appearance being taken as a reflection of the self, the penalties of bodily neglect are a lowering of one's acceptability as a person, and possible condemnation by others for laziness, low self-esteem and even moral failure.

Writing in The Guardian (18.2.97), Briscoe claims that:

> 'body obsession has reached epidemic proportions. The body is mutable, no longer a given configuration of flesh, features and genes, but the chosen canvas of the decade, the clay of a booming industry, its internal workings forming the bloody landscape of a wilderness'.

Briscoe contends that, as our perceptions of beauty become ever more rigorous, with models ever slimmer and lips ever fuller, our belief in the perfectibility of the body also increases. By 'breaking jaw bones, injecting collagen, peeling facial flesh and vacuuming fat with a cannula', these standards of bodily perfection are not only made attainable, but are ever more expected of individuals. The use of anti-ageing surgery is advocated for increasingly younger patients, and Briscoe claims that rapid changes in science and technology mean that the body becomes more malleable, and our demands upon it as a vehicle of personhood are increased. Young people especially use their bodies as a canvas on which to inscribe their identity, either in terms of clothing, hair styles and colours, or alternatively in terms of tattoos and piercings.

Shilling (1993) describes how bodies have been increasingly 'civilised' over time (see also Chapter 4) and also points to the three key progressive concepts in this process: socialisation, rationalisation and individualisation. Socialisation refers to the ways in which children are taught that some 'natural' bodily functions are distasteful or offensive, and so must be hidden away in specially designated areas of social space. Thus the body comes to be viewed in social rather than in biological terms. Rationalisation implies that feelings are controlled as individuals learn to become more rational as opposed to emotional. Lastly, individualisation denotes that bodies are seen as encasing the individual as separate from others, and emphasises the importance of maintaining a socially acceptable distance[4]. Shilling's view of the body is particularly useful for this thesis, in that it highlights the stages through which children are expected to travel in their quest to become 'civilised' beings.

The body is used as a reference point, then, by adults and children alike, in order to express identity and to make judgements about others, and these judgements are not confined simply to appearance itself, but are mobilised to determine moral characteristics. However, if individuals are assessed in terms of their bodily 'perfection' (or otherwise), how does this impact upon those whose bodies may deviate greatly from the norm, in terms of difference, illness or disability?

Images of Disability in the Outside World

The World Health Organisation has defined *impairment* as an abnormality in bodily function, *disability* as a restriction of ability to perform an activity as a result of the impairment, and *handicap* as the inability to perform a 'normal' social role (Oliver, 1990). However, the restricted functioning of disabled people may be the result of the way society is organised, rather than the presence of disability itself. There may be a tendency to assume that individuals with some kind of impairment have special needs, but these needs only become 'special' within a context which excludes, marginalises or fails to take them into account in the first place. Thus disability is not a result of the physical impairments of an individual but is socially created (Nettleton, 1995). Disabling environments may be both physical and social. The built environment may be largely intended to cater for the able-bodied, with disability generally deemed to be unacceptable in Western societies (Barnes, 1990). Even health promotion campaigns may reinforce negative stereotypical images and promote the stigmatisation of people with disabilities, e.g. in the United States a poster promoting the use of seat-belts in cars read: 'If you think seat-belts are confining, think about a wheelchair' (Wang, 1992:1098, cited in Nettleton, 1995). In the UK, the annual Christmas drink-driving campaign in 1996 was constructed around images of 'a young woman hideously scarred after an accident caused by her drunken boyfriend' (The Mail on Sunday, 8.12.96). Thus attempts to encourage individuals to act in a safe and healthy manner both draw on and reinforce the stigma of disability or flawed appearance, the implicit notion being that to be disabled, or to present a less than perfect bodily demeanour, is to be a lesser person.

According to Barnes (1990), there exists in Britain, as in most industrialised societies, considerable cultural bias against people with disabilities, which is evidenced by their institutionalised exclusion from mainstream economic and social activities. Hahn claims that 'two critical values in 20th century Western society that especially influence the treatment of disabled people are personal appearance and individual autonomy' (1988:41). Individuals who fail to conform to prescribed standards of physical attractiveness and functional independence are perceived as not simply biologically inferior but also 'not quite human' (Goffman, 1963[1990]:15). Characteristics identified in disabled people may arouse strong emotions in non-disabled observers concerning their own appearance or physical autonomy. 'Existential anxiety' is aroused in non-disabled individuals by notions of the potential loss of their own functional capabilities ('there but for the grace of God go I') and, according to Hahn, outweigh the fear of death, which is, after all, inevitable. On the other hand, 'aesthetic anxiety' results from concerns evoked by individuals whose appearance deviates markedly from the 'normal' human form or displays physical traits regarded as unattractive. These fears reflect both the tendency to shun those with unappealing bodily features and the stress engendered by

Western society's search for supernormal standards of bodily perfection (Hahn, 1988).

Stereotypical perceptions of disabled people portray them as either 'superhuman' or, more commonly, 'less than whole', with such negative perceptions reflected and transmitted through language, e.g. disabled individuals are often referred to '*in-valids*' or invalids (Hurst, 1984). Such perceptions are rooted in the very fabric of social interaction. The generalised ideal of bodily perfection and competence that is displayed in mass culture through the media and literature reinforces the negative stereotypes which disabled people may be forced to endure (Barnes, 1990). Consequently, living with disability may be associated with social isolation and stigmatisation, to the extent that:

> 'to become disabled is to be given a new identity, to receive a passport indicating membership of a separate tribe. To be born handicapped is to have this identity assigned from the moment of discovery and diagnosis. Both involve a social learning process in which the nuances and meanings of the identity are assimilated'.
>
> (Thomas, 1982:38)

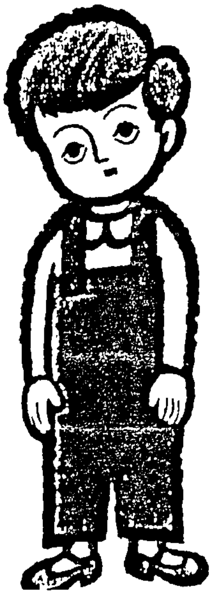
Synnott (1990) argues that, although folk wisdom and popular culture caution against taking physical beauty at 'face value' as it is only 'skin deep', nevertheless pressure to look good appears to be increasing. Moreover, everyday language often equates beauty with goodness (an individual may be described as 'divinely beautiful'), and ugliness with evil (e.g. 'ugly as sin'). For children, the absorption of such ideas begins at an early age, with their literary heritage often perpetuating the myth of beauty and ugliness as not only physical but also moral attributes. The Ugly Sisters in 'Cinderella' and the wicked witch in 'Snow White' are not simply ugly; they personify evil, whilst Captain Hook in 'Peter Pan', Long John Silver and Rumplestiltskin are disabled as well as wicked. The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1981), the Phantom of the Opera (1983) and Frankenstein (1817) also equate disability with malevolence, despite the fact that all three characters are essentially benevolent. According to Longmore (1985), portraying villainous characters as disabled reflects and reinforces three common prejudices, namely that i) disability is a punishment for evil, ii) that disabled people are embittered by their fate and iii) that disabled people resent non-disabled individuals and would destroy them if possible.

However, the image of the malevolent and maladjusted disabled person may be countered by that of the individual who has 'come to terms with' his/her disability and 'learned to live with it'. This can result in the person gaining 'superhuman' (but ironically just as 'unhuman') attributes in the process (Longmore, 1985; Oliver, 1990). Non-fictional television programmes, such as telethons, may depict disabled people as heroes and heroines overcoming enormous obstacles to achieve 'success' and, although these 'real-life' accounts of courage may seem to be the antithesis of maladjusted and embittered fictional characters, both are 'unreal'. Children are not exempt from these notions of the superhuman hero/ine, as they are paraded on television in programmes such as 'Children of Courage' and 'Children in Need' as either deserving of our admiration in challenging passive stereotypes of disability or in need of our (financial) charity. In terms of charity advertising, Eayrs and Ellis (1990) contend that, whereas in industry and commerce products are presented in the best possible light, in human services the assumption appears to be that the best outcome will be achieved through using images that invoke feelings of pity and guilt in the viewer. They cite an example of a Mencap poster depicting a young girl with Down's Syndrome and bearing the caption, 'Twenty children born on Christmas Day will always have a cross to bear' (1990:350).

However, Corbett and Ralph (1995) claim that Mencap, in an attempt to empower people with learning disabilities, is striving to change the old, negative image to one more in keeping with current perceptions of disability civil rights. The 'old' Mencap image focuses upon representations whereby:

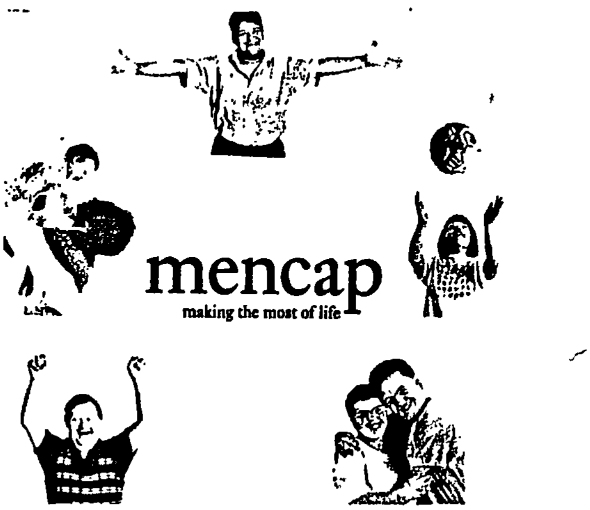
> 'children are displayed in a *perpetual childhood state.* 'Little Stephen' looks sad and pathetic: his hands hang limp, his eyes are wide and sorrowful (like those tear-filled images so popular in modern child pictures) and his clothing suggests a *workhouse* uniform. It is a pitiful, but clearly deferential stance, certain to convey pathos and to exact sympathy'.
>
> (1995:156, emphasis in original)

'Little Stephen'



By way of contrast, the 'new' Mencap logo depicts a series of five 'new positive pictures of real people engaged in common everyday activities ... [which] aim to capture the spirit that Mencap represents ... joy, success and independence' (1995:157).

The New Mencap Image



However, whilst applauding the change of image, and the replacement of ‘‘Little Stephen’, the pathetic *crippled* child whose image represented Mencap until 1992’ (1995:159, emphasis in original), with more positive images and the ‘making the most of life’ strapline, Corbett and Ralph nonetheless question Mencap’s use of stereotypically narrow images. These they claim are not representative of a wide age range or of the range of disability levels. I would, in addition, question the equation of childhood with incompetence, vulnerability and lack of agency. Through this notion childhood is constructed as a disability in itself, thus further undermining the experiences of those children with *actual* disabilities, as this thesis will explore.

Shakespeare (1997) contends that cultural representations of disabled people result in their objectification, whereby they are perceived as passive objects rather than as subjects. In 17th, 18th and 19th century Britain, the ‘freak’ show upheld society’s perception of disabled people as non-human. Contemporary society, whilst eschewing the idea of the freak show, nonetheless continues often to portray disabled people as objects of pity in order to motivate non-disabled individuals to contribute to charity. Children in the above charity ‘shows’, although not necessarily presented as pitiful, are nevertheless ‘exhibited’ in order to generate money for particular projects. It might be argued that these should be funded by government agencies rather than by individuals responding to sentimental depictions of children 'in need'.

Coward (1984) suggests that disabled people are subjected to the 'gaze' of non-disabled individuals, which is premised on power. Non-disabled people define themselves as 'normal' in relation to disabled people who are not, and who are therefore defined as 'other'. Such perceptions of disabled people allow able-bodied individuals in positions of power, such as medical professionals, to make judgements about their access or otherwise to services, on the grounds of their disability. A child with Down's syndrome, for example, was refused a heart transplant by one hospital because it was felt by consultants that such patients may not be able to cope with the demanding procedures required after surgery, or that their quality of life may not justify the operation. However, the child's father claimed that she had been refused because, as a disabled person, she is deemed to be a 'second class citizen' (The Guardian, 26.7.99). Such messages are reinforced by prenatal tests offered to pregnant women to determine whether their child has Down's syndrome, and to offer them a termination if the tests prove positive. Benneton's high profile promotion featuring a young girl with Down's syndrome was perceived by some to be exploitative, whilst the company defended their promotion as raising the profile of people with disabilities in a positive way[5].

Such demands for equality are part of a wider initiative in which disabled people are questioning their lack of power within society and are becoming more politically active (Anspach, 1979), in order to challenge the taken-for-granted image of themselves as passive, helpless and powerless (Williams, 1989). These activist groups are composed of disabled people themselves, who are challenging stereotypes through their own efforts, rather than those of non-disabled people acting on their behalf in charity organisations and self-help groups. Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare claim that:

> 'direct action by disabled people has a number of important elements. First, it is a way of focusing the general public's attention on the institutions and environments that create disability: the inaccessible transport, the demeaning television charity spectaculars, the inadequacy of the disability benefit system. Second, it is an overtly political act, showing that disability is a matter of social relations, and not simply the outcome of medical conditions. Thirdly, it is a chance for disabled people to 'do it for themselves', without the help or participation of non-disabled people, thus prefiguring the claims of the disabled people's movement to autonomy, independence and power. Fourth, it is an empowering process for participants, creating a sense of solidarity, purpose and collective strength'.
>
> (1999:176)

Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare contend that public opinion finds it difficult to come to terms with disabled people as activists, preferring to perceive them as passive and happy with their lot. They also note that the press, after one particular demonstration, cautioned that although the public may be sympathetic towards disabled people (after all, no-one *chooses* to be or to become disabled), militants should take care not to alienate or inconvenience members too greatly. However, whether these initiatives are described as 'new social movements' (Oliver, 1990; 1996), 'liberation struggles' (Shakespeare, 1993) or 'identity politics' (Anspach, 1979), Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare claim that disabled people, in common with other oppressed groups, are subject to 'felt stigma' or internalised oppression, often beginning in childhood.

The concept of 'stigma'

According to Goffman:

> 'Society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of each of these categories. Social settings establish the categories of persons likely to be encountered there. The routines of social intercourse in established settings allow us to deal with anticipated others without special attention and thought. When a stranger comes into our presence, then, first appearances are likely to enable us to anticipate his (sic) category and attributes, his 'social identity''.
>
> (1963[1990]:11-12)

The notion of 'stigma' has been a powerful concept since its inception by Goffman. He suggested that individuals who are in some way different from the norm are subjected within the wider social world to stigmatisation, which results in a 'spoiled identity' and engenders unease during face-to-face interaction with 'normals'. By analysing the stages through which the stigmatised pass in their 'moral career', i.e. the changes in self-perception and acquisition of the devalued identity, Goffman set out a social learning process whereby those deviating from society's norms gradually realise their 'difference' and begin to adopt coping strategies.

The original Greek meaning of the term 'stigma' referred to bodily signs which signified something unusual or undesirable about the bearer's moral status. The signs were cut or burnt into the body to identify the individual as a slave or a traitor, who was ritually polluted and to be shunned, especially in public. With the onset of Christianity, the term was accorded two additional meanings; it was used to describe marks on the skin resembling the wounds of Christ, which were deduced to be bodily signs of holy grace, and also as a medical term to refer to bodily signs of physical disorder. Today, however, the term is usually applied to the disgrace itself rather than to the physical evidence of it. A stigma is therefore any undesired differentness which separates the individual from the rest of society, or 'normals', who discriminate against him/her whilst simultaneously constructing an ideology to justify such treatment. Stigma terms such as 'cripple' or 'bastard' are freely used as a source of metaphor in social discourse without reference to their original meaning, for example, children in playgrounds frequently taunt each other with the epithet 'spastic' or 'spaz', with the result that the expression has become a term of abuse in some quarters[6].

Goffman also acknowledges the existence of other groups within society, the 'own' - those who share the stigma - and the 'wise' - individuals who are normal but are associated with the stigmatised individual, usually by family ties. Parents of disabled children may discover that they are perceived by the wider society as also deserving of stigmatisation, and those families that include a disabled child may be viewed from that perspective alone, 'a handicapped child is a handicapped family' (Booth, 1978:205). Speaking on a television programme (Kilroy, BBC1) in 1995, siblings of children with disabilities detailed their experiences of the 'courtesy stigma' (Goffman, (1963[1990]:44), especially in the school context. They were subjected to bullying by their peers, and experienced difficulty in forming friendships, as the disability of their sibling was perceived to be contagious. One boy was taunted that, because his brother had Down's Syndrome, he too must have the condition, although this was patently untrue (see also Bluebond-Langner, 1991). Due to their unhappy school situation, many of the children considered that their work had suffered, and felt neglected at home because of the excessive amount of attention that parents were forced to lavish on the disabled child. They often felt lonely and isolated, and unable to invite friends home because of the intrusive nature of the disabled sibling, who was often responsible for destroying their possessions or displaying aggression.

Some children were concerned that the burden of responsibility would eventually become theirs upon the death of their parents. Although most of the non-disabled children were fiercely protective of their siblings, and felt that their parents were able to cope with the disability within the family, it seemed that the problem was exacerbated in the outside world. Vosey (1975) details the manner in which parents endeavour to maintain a picture of 'normal' family life, and their attempts at 'impression management' (Goffman, 1959[1990]). Mothers, especially, may attempt to construct a seemingly 'normal' family lifestyle, avoiding situations in which their obligations to the child may seem obtrusive, and severing relationships with those who do not demonstrate empathy. Parents of disabled children usually differ from many others with a 'courtesy stigma' in that they have not normally sought their position and, far from being expected to refuse, are actively encouraged to welcome associated responsibilities.

Parents may also experience conflicting obligations. On the one hand they teach the child to perceive him/herself as essentially 'normal', whilst on the other they act as 'stigma coaches' (see also Schneider and Conrad, 1980), guiding the child in the strategies needed to manage potential stigmatisation. These aims may engender conflict over time. Thus for example, the temporary relief of day-care provision may increase the likelihood of 'the permanent mortification of the special school' (Vosey, 1975:133), whilst underplaying the true nature of the child's disability to family and friends may preclude their later involvement with the care of the child. Furthermore, although parents' general aims may be to minimise the impact of the child's condition, particular situations may necessitate stressing or even exaggerating particular difficulties, for example when attempting to obtain a Statement of Special Educational Needs (see Chapter 1). Vosey (1975) points out that parents in this situation may be suspected of misrepresenting the child's capabilities. For instance, if they stress his/her normality they may be accused of 'not facing up to reality'; conversely, if they represent the child as more disabled than s/he appears to others, they may be charged with being 'over-protective'.

Vosey also suggests that the child may be affected by parents' strategies, both directly in that s/he may adopt these him/herself, and indirectly, in that they may become self-fulfilling. In both respects, problems may arise which are in no way unique to the disabled child. Firstly, the parents' representation may be inappropriate to the child's 'actual' condition, either in the present or the future, and parents may claim more for the child than s/he is able to fulfil. Secondly, the parental image of the child may conflict with the identity they present to others, e.g. in Vosey's (1975) study, one mother called her son 'fat boy' to his face, whilst claiming to others that he was 'just sturdy', and instructing the child to tell others 'you're not fat'. Thirdly, parents may continue to manage the child's persona and performance in more areas and for longer than 'normal'. If they are successful in developing tactics for dealing with certain situations, parents may prevent the child from entering those which are unfamiliar or unpredictable, and may confine the child within the 'safe' internal circle of family and friends. However, this begs the question of how they then prepare the child for entry into the outside world, especially the world of the school, where s/he may experience discrimination or stigmatisation by other children. Vosey claims that the disabled child is triply disadvantaged; firstly because of the stigmatisation itself, secondly because the disability may prevent him/her gaining a normal repertoire of interpersonal skills and thirdly, as children refine their strategies in interaction with peers, the disabled child rarely acquires the competence to deal with his/her own possible incompetence.

James (1993) notes that some parents, rather than minimising their child's 'differentness' in the way Vosey describes and conceptualising it within a framework of normality (the 'differently normal' child), may instead present their child as 'normally different'. These were parents whose child's SEN had been dismissed by health and education professionals as nothing more than common childhood complaints. Their child's 'differentness' was deemed to be unexceptional and falling within the normal range, consequently not requiring specialist attention. As a result, parents emphasised their child's differences as significant and substantial. In the face of resistance from professionals, these parents felt that their fears were being dismissed, or that they were 'making a fuss', or seeing a non-existent problem. Many spoke of a 'long, drawn-out battle' before their concerns were acknowledged. During interviews for the present study, such accounts were regularly reinforced by parents.

Goffman (1963[1990]) however fails to explain why only certain illnesses are perceived as stigmatising. Berger and Luckmann (1967) claim that such illnesses may be seen as deviant and as thereby constituting a threat to the social order, or 'symbolic universe'. Individuals suffering from such illnesses are subjected to 'universe-maintaining mechanisms' such as 'normalisation' (Scambler, 1984), which attempts to force those whose bodies are in some way different to change and become more like 'normal' people. Educators of hearing impaired children, for example, have traditionally encouraged 'oralism' and attempted to suppress the use of 'signing', which draws attention to the child's 'different' use of his/her hands. Children with Down's syndrome may undergo plastic surgery to make them appear more 'normal' in the eyes of the wider society (The Guardian, 5.6.97). Thus, bodies that are perceived as different are regulated to fit into the accepted view of the 'normal' body:

> 'Standing up is considered infinitely better than sitting down, even if you're standing in a total frame that weighs a ton, that you can't move in, which hurts and which takes hours to get on and off and looks ugly. It's assumed that that is what you want and 'there's a tremendous emphasis on a child who's had polio or whatever to walk ... It's that that's what is best for you'.
>
> (Sutherland, 1981:75, cited in Abberley, 1987)

Oliver (1993) has recently condemned the regulation of children's bodies by the use of 'conductive education', a process of enabling motor impaired children to walk by the re-education of the nervous system through a strict regimen of exercise. He rejects the constant uncritical use of the notion of normality by those advocating such programmes, and their insistence upon adapting individuals instead of environments. Although Oliver acknowledges that conductive education does offer a positive approach, something 'that special educators have, so far, lamentably failed to offer disabled children and their families' (1993:164), he feels that special educators would be better engaged in assisting disabled children and their families to develop a sense of pride in their disabled identities, rather than striving for a parody of normality[7]. Nonetheless, Beardshaw (1993) speaking from the viewpoint of a mother of a daughter with cerebral palsy, argues that conductive education has stimulated her child to move away from the passivity that a lack of control over her own body has encouraged since birth. Rather than pursuing 'normality', she claims that the programme has enabled her daughter to reach her fullest potential.

It is evident that children with SEN, together with their peers, are subject to a variety of images and notions which prevail in the outside world, such as ever more rigid ideals of bodily perfection, stereotypical perceptions of disability, and stigmatisation. However, how do these issues that abound in the outside world impinge upon the daily lives of children? Furthermore, how do children with SEN experience and 'fit into' the policy decisions that emanate from the political arena, such as whether or not to integrate them into the mainstream arena? Integration has proved to be a key theme within special education and, for children with SEN, represents a particular political perspective about what it means to be a child with particular disabilities. The next section will explore this issue in preparation for the ethnographic study which follows, and which provides an empirical account of the experience of embodiment for children with SEN within the political and social policy initiatives in schooling and special schooling.

The embodiment of Special Educational Policy

As noted in Chapter 1, Hegarty (1987) argues that a major problem with the notion of integration is that it conceives of the individual pupil as someone requiring integration, rather than perceiving schools as needing to change their ethos in order to offer an appropriate education to that pupil. This tendency to concentrate on the individual pupil highlights the corresponding debate within the disability movement itself, which advocates a move away from the 'bio-medical' or 'individual' model of disability towards a more appropriate 'social model'. The latter may be subdivided further into the 'social constructionist' and the 'social creationist' theories of disability. Oliver outlines the three theories thus:

> a) *Disabilities are an individual problem*
>
> This definition underlies most approaches in the field of professional practice adopted by teachers, social workers, doctors, occupational therapists and psychologists. Stated simply, this position suggests that it is the individual with a disability who has the problem and intervention aims to provide him or her with the appropriate skills to cope with it.
>
> b) *Disabilities are socially constructed*
>
> This definition has been used by many academics and researchers who have taken an interest in special needs... According to this argument the problem lies in the fact that some human beings define other human beings as disabled, and therefore treat them differently. Change the way people think about disability, and you eliminate the problems of disabled people.
>
> c) *Disabilities are socially created*
>
> ... This position argues that society disables people with impairments by the way it responds to those impairments. The inaccessibility of buildings stems from decisions to design them in particular ways and not from the inability of some people to walk. The solution to this particular problem is to create a barrier-free environment, not to attempt to provide disabled people with the skills necessary to cope with steps.
>
> (Reproduced from Oliver, 1988)

According to Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare (1999), by the beginning of the 20th century, the individual approach to disability was securely entrenched. The 'individual' or 'medical' model focuses upon a particular bodily 'abnormality', disorder or deficit and the manner in which this in turn prompts some degree of functional limitation. For example, people who are unable to move their arms due to impairment cannot wash or dress themselves, and are consequently classified as an 'invalid'. However, once they have been categorised thus, the disability becomes their defining characteristic, or 'master status' (Becker, 1963), and their incapacity is generalised. This 'personal tragedy' model views the individual as a victim; vulnerable, passive and dependent upon others. The perceived solution lies in curative and rehabilitative medical treatment, whereby the individual becomes an object of professional scrutiny. Medical 'experts' define strategies to overcome or at least minimise the negative consequences of the disability, and administrative 'experts' translate the individual's incapacity into specific 'needs' - for welfare benefits and services, or in the case of children - for educational provision.

Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare claim that:

> 'the individual model presumes that disabled people are largely inert: acted upon rather than active. They can do no more than rely on others for 'care' and charity. Any intervention in their circumstances depends on policy-makers and service providers. They are encouraged to adapt and adjust as individuals to their 'disability'. This disadvantage is perceived as an individual, not a collective, matter. This further presumes an uninformed lay client deferring to a professional expert, and ignores the existence of power differentials and the possibility that lay and professional interests might diverge. The disabled person in the individual model is rendered childlike in their perceived inability to speak for themselves'[8].
>
> (1999:26)

During the 1970s and 1980s, disabled activists and their organisations mounted a critique of the individual, medical model, by arguing that it is society which disables individuals with impairments, and developed what came to be known as the social approach to disability. They claimed that any meaningful solution must be directed towards bringing about change within society itself, rather than within individual people. The social model looks at a set of causes established externally to the individual: that is, obstacles imposed upon disabled people which curtail their opportunities to participate in society. Rather than perceiving disability as a personal tragedy for the individual, disability activists argue that we should be more concerned to monitor the effects of physical, social and economic social. barriers that bring about social exclusion, and implement anti-discrimination policies. The two models can be contrasted thus:

Individual model	**Social model**
personal tragedy theory	social oppression theory
personal problem	social problem
individual treatment	social action
medicalization	self-help
professional dominance	individual and collective responsibility
expertise	experience
individual identity	collective identity
prejudice	discrimination
care	rights
control	choice
policy	politics
individual adjustment	social change

(adapted from Oliver, 1996: table 2.1)

According to Oliver (1988), the practice of special education is underpinned by the individual model, whether it be the teaching process and professional practice or the categorisation and assessment of the children themselves. However, Oliver argues, the Warnock Report, by breaking the direct link between disability and educational problems:

> 'socially constructed the categories 'special educational needs' and 'children with learning difficulties' ... [although] it could be argued that only the labels have changed; the underlying reality of an education system unable or unwilling to meet the needs of all children remains the same'.
>
> (1988:20).

Nonetheless, Oliver claims that it is possible to identify a shift in recent educational discourses from the individual through social constructionist towards social creationist thinking.

However, in pressing for a social model of disability, campaigners such as Oliver have been accused of ignoring the body and bodily impairment as playing no relevant part in determining the experiences of people with disabilities. In the words of Shakespeare:

> 'The achievement of the disability movement has been to break the link between our bodies and our social situation, and to focus on the real cause of disability, i.e. discrimination and prejudice. To mention biology, to admit pain, to confront our impairments, has been to risk the oppressors seizing on evidence that disability is "really" about physical limitation after all'.
>
> (1992:40).

Crow, herself a disabled feminist, admits that she criticises the social model with trepidation, in that such criticisms may be taken out of context and used to support the medical model of disability. Nonetheless, she claims that 'external disabling barriers may create social and economic disadvantage but our subjective experience of our bodies is also an integral part of our everyday reality' (1996:59). Some campaigners have chosen to present impairment as irrelevant, neutral or, in certain circumstances, positive, in the belief that admitting that impairment leads to pain and difficulties may undermine the strong, positive (Supercrip?[9]) campaign images. Crow argues, however, that an acknowledgement of the implications of impairment and a recognition of disabled peoples' subjective experiences of pain and corporeality would not undermine the reality of oppression or weaken disabled peoples' alignment with other civil rights movements. It would instead contribute towards a broadening and strengthening of the current social model.

Similarly, Hughes and Paterson, claiming that 'the social model of disability proposes an untenable separation between body and culture, impairment and disability' (1997:326), suggest instead a 'sociology of impairment', which would encompass an embodied, rather than a disembodied, notion of disability. These writers deem it ironic that at the same time that sociology appears to have discovered the body (Turner 1984, 1992; Shilling, 1993), sociologically informed studies of disability have cast it out into the discursive wilderness. In the social model, the body is deemed to be synonymous with the impairment, in other words, defined in purely biological terms. It is 'a pre-social, inert, physical object, palpable and separate from the self ... devoid of history, affect, meaning and agency' (1997:329). Yet Hughes and Paterson claim that impairment is more than a medical issue, being both an experience and a discursive construction, a fact not addressed by the social model of disability. The distinction between impairment and disability produces a series of binary opposites occupying territories with clearly marked boundaries:

The biological	The social
impairment	disability
the body	society
medicine	politics
therapy	emancipation
pain	oppression
the medical model	the social model

(Hughes and Paterson, 1997:330)

However, disability *is* experienced from the perspective of impairment, 'one's body is one's window on the world' (1997:335). Contemporary social movements are discovering that Cartesian ways of thinking about the body and society are no longer feasible, as contemporary politics are concerned with the surveillance and governance of bodies, both individually and as populations (Foucault, 1979). The emerging sociology of impairment offers a way forward for disability politics which acknowledges, rather than ignores, disabled peoples' subjective bodily experiences.

French (1993a), whilst agreeing with the basic tenets of the social model, nonetheless points out that some of the most profound problems encountered by people with particular impairments are practically impossible to solve by social manipulation. A mobility problem is caused by the presence of steps rather than an individual's inability to walk; an inability to access information may be due to a reluctance by others to use sign language rather than a person's hearing impairment. However, French offers up examples of her own experiences as a visually impaired person to demonstrate that the problems caused by some impairments are more difficult to classify as socially produced or soluble by social action: she cites her 'inability to recognise people, being nearly blinded when the sun comes out, and not being able to read non-verbal cues or emit them correctly' (1993a:17). Her attempts to manipulate the social environment (e.g. informing friends that she may ignore them in the street due to her inability to recognise them) have not been totally successful. She points out that these difficulties are not due entirely to her impairment, as they involve the responses of others, but neither can they be modified by environmental or social manipulation; they occupy a middle ground.

In a separate paper, French (1993b) details how, throughout her childhood, she was compelled by adults to deny the fact of her bodily impairment and subscribe to a pretence that she could see more than she actually was able. When she struggled unsuccessfully to perform specific tasks, she was labelled a 'malingerer' by frustrated adults who doubted her claims. The result was that she denied her disability and attempted to act 'normally'; 'while the adults were working themselves up about whether or not I could see the rainbows, my anxieties must never be shared' (1993b:70). She perceives this denial of disability not as a psychopathological reaction, but as her rational response to adult attempts to integrate her into a world they perceived as fixed. On entering a special school, French discovered that the children were still expected to strive for 'normality', but the fact that she was with other partially sighted children, in an environment where limited sight was not an issue, was a joy and a great relief : 'For the first time in my life I was a standard product and it felt very good' (1993b:71). Thus it is argued that experiences of pain and bodily impairment cannot be sacrificed on the altar of the social model; both adults and children must be able to acknowledge the fact that, although attitudes towards disability may be influenced by wider social issues, nonetheless their own experiences are mediated through the body. However accessible we make school premises, children who are wheelchair users are not able to run around the playground with their peers.

Moreover, according to Davis et al (2000), this debate raises serious concerns with regard to disabled children, and their capacity for agency, as the social model of disability does not fit well with the theories of the new sociology of childhood:

> 'First, by defining disability as materially determined (caused by structure) the social model of disability does not incorporate an understanding that disabled children may be capable of affecting the structures surrounding their lives. Second, by promoting a universal concept of disability which suggests that the problems that disabled people encounter can be addressed by structural changes which recognizes their rights as citizens and renegotiates existing power relations, it homogenizes disabled people. If these ideas were applied to the study of disabled children, ... the outcome could be that the fluid and diverse nature of their lives might be overlooked'.
>
> (2000:206)

The social model of disability, then, although removing from the individual child the 'blame' for his/her impairment, nonetheless may also homogenize disabled children and fail to acknowledge the individual child's capacity for agency, which is crucial to this thesis. The sociology of impairment, on the other hand, offers scope for recognising children's individual embodied experience, whilst simultaneously siting those experiences within the structural policies of the education system in general and SEN provision in particular.

The Labelling Debate

The current debate within the disability movement is pertinent to the present discussion of SEN education, in that it relates to the manner in which provision for children with SEN is located within the medical model. Children within special education have traditionally been subject to discourses of bodily control which subscribe to the 'medical' rather than the 'social' model of disability (Oliver, 1990). As noted in Chapter 1, medical accounts have dominated the categorisations used during assessment, and the rise of special schools and child guidance clinics was governed by medical professionals. During the 'statementing' process (See Chapter 1), children's bodies are examined and categorised according to disability, and their 'special educational need' identified. However, as noted by Barton, 'needs in any society are related to values - to power. Decisions about people's needs involves value-judgements' (1986:279). He notes that Tomlinson (1985) has argued that an ideology of special needs not only obscures conflicts and contradictions, it may also be utilised in supporting various practices and policies of the wider social context.

Slee (1995) maintains that, in order to deal with the perceived dysfunctionality of the aberrant child, notions of 'normality' are used to regulate and define children, their bodies and their behaviour, and also to privilege the professions who design and police normality. But Rose also argues that 'normality is not an observation but a valuation' (1989:131). Moreover, the judgement of normality is far from random, but linked to social values and institutional imperatives, and managed through procedures of bodily examination and assessment of 'non-normal' children:

> 'Our conceptions of normality are not simply generalizations from our accumulated experience of normal children. On the contrary, criteria of normality are elaborated by experts on the basis of their claims to a scientific knowledge of childhood and its vicissitudes. And this knowledge or normality has not, in the main, resulted from studying normal children. On the contrary, in tracing the genealogy of normality we are returned to the projects of the government of children that provided the platform for the take-off of expertise. It is around pathological children - the troublesome, the recalcitrant, the delinquent - that conceptions of normality have taken shape'.
>
> (Rose, 1989:131)

Consequently, educational psychologists operating under the 'naturally developing child' model discussed in Chapter 1, have played a key role in establishing the norms of childhood, by claiming a specific expertise in the measurement and assessment of children, their minds and perceived abilities.

These norms are built upon the assumption that particular children either adhere to, or deviate from, some kind of benchmark of 'normality'. As a result, the Code of Practice, in formulating a definition of special educational need by which children may be judged and possibly found wanting, states:

> 'A child has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.
>
> A child has a learning difficulty if he or she:
>
> a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than *the majority of children of the same age*
> b) has a disability which either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for *children of the same age* in schools within the area of the local education authority
> c) is under five and falls within the definition at a) or b) above or would do if special educational provision was not made for the child'.
>
> (DfE, 1994:5, emphasis added)

Thus it can clearly be seen that children's needs are seen to be individual and are decided upon in relation to the ability of other, supposedly 'normal' pupils.

As seen in Chapter 1, prior to the Warnock Report (DES, 1978), the field of special education was dominated by the medical model, which perceived the problem as residing in the body of the child. Consequently, children were perceived in terms of their impairment alone, and accompanying terminology included expressions such as 'diagnosis' and 'treatment'. Children were tested, assessed and subjected to medical examinations, in order that a label could be applied and accompanying resources allocated. However, the Warnock Committee is believed to have been influenced by a general social concern prevalent at the time, with regard to the adverse effects of labelling on the rights and opportunities available to individuals and minority groups (Norwich, 1990). It therefore decided to:

> 'recommend that the term children with learning difficulties should be used in future to describe both those children who are currently categorised as educationally subnormal and those with educational difficulties'.
>
> (DES, 1978:43).

However, Norwich (1990) contends that this is a strange kind of reasoning, which rejects the previous category of 'educationally subnormal' as imprecise and then substitutes for it an even less clearly defined concept of 'moderate learning difficulties'. This, he argues, is not abandoning categorisation, but simply changing the labels for the categories. Despite the Warnock Committee's good intentions and the attempt to rid children of potentially stigmatising labels, it appears that special education is unable to move away from the classification of children which emphasises some bodily or mental defect. This fact is highlighted during the assessment process. All children, whether their perceived 'problem' is deemed to be cognitive, physical, emotional or behavioural, are subjected to a routine *physical* examination by the LEA's community paediatrician.

Ainscow (1993) claims that the perspective that informed this legislation, and which therefore guides responses to the difficulties experienced by some children, is that of the 'individual gaze'. This results in difficulties being located within the child rather than in the school itself, thereby echoing the debate concerning the 'individual' versus the 'social' model. Individual pupils are perceived to be unable or unwilling to take advantage of the educational opportunities offered to them, due to inherent deficits which consequently attract some kind of label. As I argued in Chapter 1, children's agency is taken from them during the political process of gaining a label and the accompanying resources. Ainscow argues that attempts by the Warnock Committee to abolish labels has failed, resulting in the introduction of a new set of categories: 'in particular, the term 'special educational needs' has become a super-label used to designate a large number of pupils as being in some way special and, by implication, disabled' (1993:5). He therefore suggests that, rather than defining educational difficulties in terms of individual children, problems should be seen in terms of curricular tasks and activities, and classroom conditions. This represents an extension of the individual versus the social model thesis offered by Oliver (1988), which defines difficulties as residing in the environment rather than in the individual with a disability. Thus the main concern would be focused upon those lessons that can be learned from the difficulties experienced by some children within the limitations of provision currently made for all pupils, whereby changes instigated for the benefit of those experiencing difficulties would ultimately improve the learning experience for all children.

Responding to Ainscow, Norwich (1993) counters that he outlines practical developments and strategies to improve learning for all children, but ignores the question of whether effective mainstream schools can be fully inclusive. Whilst agreeing that Warnock (DES, 1978) sought and failed to eliminate labels, Norwich claims that, in wishing to define *all* general labels and labelling practices as negative, Ainscow seeks to abandon all labelling. This approach leaves open and unanswered practical questions of how identifying and meeting individual needs can be accomplished without the use of general concepts which highlight similarities and differences between individuals. Norwich notes it has been said that:

> i) From one view, we are all the same.
> ii) From another view, some individuals are like other individuals and different from others.
> iii) From yet another view, we are all different.
>
> (1993:20)

He suggests that the anti-labelling perspective in Special Education only accepts the first and third viewpoints, wishing to deny the second, and argues that all three views are necessary. As long as one and three are not disregarded, then the second view is tenable, if the concepts of similarity and difference are not seen as absolute and final. Unfortunately, in practice, within special education children continue to be assigned labels which place them in a homogenous group according to impairment and fail to acknowledge differences in ability and need within that group.

Becker (1963) considered that an individual perceived to be deviant is one to whom a label has successfully been applied. Attaching a label which connotes educational deficiency and failure to learn to a child may provide teaching staff with an excuse for their failure to teach that child (Hobbs, 1975). By attributing failure to some inherent condition of the child, labels allow teachers to dismiss the possibility that their lack of teaching skills or some fundamental failing within the education system may be important causes of the child's failure to progress. Tomlinson (1982) claims that some categories of need are not fixed and objective, but are socially constructed by professionals with vested interests, who possess the social power to place certain children into a particular stigmatised and devalued form of education. Norwich (1990) however, disputes such claims, arguing that they reflect an inability to work with human limitations in a positive way. It might be pertinent here to enquire whether setting out from a standpoint which perceives SEN as 'limitations' rather than simply as different attributes of particular children could ever be viewed as 'positive'? Furthermore, is this actually the crux of the whole argument?

CONCLUSION

It is the contention of this thesis that, as argued in the previous chapter, childhood itself is a social construct. This chapter has built upon that argument to demonstrate that, in general, childhood shares many characteristics of a disability; in other words, both children as a group and disabled people are perceived to be passive, helpless and vulnerable. Indeed, Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare contend that 'the disabled person in the individual model is rendered childlike in their perceived inability to speak for themselves' (1999:26). So not only is childhood a social construct, so too is disability and, by definition, that part of the education system which deals with 'disabled' or 'special' children. The education system, which is founded upon the need to control and civilise children's bodies, is further complicated by the need to fit children with SEN, whose bodies may be disordered and therefore resist attempts to control them, into a system not designed to take them.

Throughout the thesis, then, the voices of children with SEN will be foregrounded, as they explain and describe the ways in which they experience SEN policy. The main aim will be to allow them some measure of agency within the structural setting of the school. At the secondary school in the study, the experiences of children with SEN were mediated through a 28 page document which set out the policy designed to facilitate the integration (or inclusion) of these children's 'unruly' bodies into the 'ordered body' of the (mainstream) school. However, Clive, a wheelchair user due to cerebral palsy, describes his experience of that policy whilst attempting to manoeuvre himself, his wheelchair and his teachers' aide up to the second floor of the school for a particular lesson:

> *'we were trying to get upstairs, and Mrs Jones* (his teachers' aide) *was struggling to lift me onto the school wheelchair because mine wouldn't fit on, and Mr Brown* (one of the teachers) *came past and said, 'Whatever are you trying to do with that contraption?' and just walked off. What made me mad was that we were trying to get upstairs to **his** lesson. I asked him why he couldn't take the lesson on the ground floor and he said it wasn't fair to the other pupils. I can't understand it, it's only a room!'*

Clive's heartfelt plea, as I shall show, illustrates perfectly the complexities and frustrations that exist for children with SEN being 'fitted into' a mainstream school. Although he was a wheelchair user, and struggled to articulate his thoughts, nonetheless Clive was not a passive individual being 'done unto'. He was an intelligent young person who was able to 'see through' the rather feeble rationalisations of school staff who were reluctant to move from their own particular teaching space. Together with his family, Clive fought restrictive practices in the school and within the system itself to eventually emerge from his experiences with a raft of good GCSE passes and a place in Year 12 to study for A levels, together with a declared intention to progress to university. His experience with the lift, although frustrating at the time, subsequently changed school policy, as the lift's eventual total breakdown and abandonment led to lessons which included disabled pupils being held on the ground floor of the school (for a fuller discussion of Clive's experiences, see Chapters 4 and 6).

It can be seen then, that children with SEN, in common with all children, experience structural constraints within the educational system, but that, through their individual agency, the structure of the school, in the form of specific policies, can be changed. The following chapter outlines the methodology used in recounting their story.

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[1] This feeding of schoolchildren appears to have come full circle, with some local schools now providing 'breakfast clubs' for pupils before school begins, after concern was expressed that some children were arriving at school hungry.

[2] The article goes on to express concern about the 'skeletal' appearance and possible anorexic condition of Victoria Beckham, erstwhile 'Spice Girl' and media personality, and that 'as a role model for countless young girls, her diet, which some might regard as a private matter, had become a subject of legitimate public debate' . Thus the private has become public; the way individuals, especially women, manage their appearance is no longer a personal concern, but a matter for public debate. The Spice Girls, a pop group comprised of five young women, enjoyed enormous popularity in the late 90s, especially with prepubescent girls. Claiming to espouse feminist principles, one of their rallying cries revolved around the importance of 'girl power'. As with other critics, the article implies that, despite their feminist claims, the girls are nonetheless subject to social and patriarchal pressure to conform to stereotypical ideas of slimness.

[3] Young girls' concerns regarding their appearance were evidenced during the research, when participants were shown photographs of other children (see Chapter 5). During one interview, one girl (who was of 'average' build) was shown a picture of a severely malnourished African child. She commented, 'You kind of feel jealous, and like, I'm dead fat and she's real skinny, like'. She was able to disregard the fact that the child was probably hungry and admire her for her slim build.

[4] However, young children, who have not yet been totally 'civilised' in the ways of the body, still take great delight in discussing bodily functions perceived as 'rude', show no compunction in openly demonstrating their feelings, and use their body as a medium of expression. Children in the study, although beginning to be 'civilised' in terms of their bodily expression, nonetheless took great pleasure in talking and joking about bodily functions and excreta. They particularly enjoyed their capacity to involve me as an adult (who could potentially be 'shocked') in their discussions, and were quite ruthless in their comments concerning both my, and other children's, bodily features.

[5] Controversy has also surrounded the use of disabled people on the modelling catwalk, e.g. a disabled model, Aimee Mullins, taking part in a fashion show 'on prosthetic legs designed by Alexander McQueen' (The Guardian, 11.11.99). Mik Scarlet, himself a wheelchair user, claims that presenting the right image in terms of clothing is equally as important to disabled as to able-bodied people, 'If you're going to get picked on for having a limp, you're going to get picked on

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doubly if you have a limp and you wear crap clothes'. Consequently, a new initiative which caters for the specific shopping needs of people with disabilities has been set up. However, rather than establishing separate 'disabled' departments in mainstream stores (such as the maternity or petite sections), the company will enable disabled people to choose a garment in store, and then have it modified to their own particular needs.

[6] The Spastics Society changed its name to 'Scope' in 1994, claiming that it hoped the change of name would achieve a more positive image for people with cerebral palsy (Guardian, 4.11.94).

[7] It was intended to subject my own daughter to a programme of corrective plastic surgery in order to 'eradicate' the facial scars incurred during her main operation. However, she rejected this course of action after the first procedure, claiming that 'I'm putting myself through this for other people. I can live with the scars, and if other people can't, that's their problem!'

[8] Unfortunately, once again the child is rendered passive and lacking in agency.

[9] Some disabled people are 'reclaiming' such terms as symbols of pride and a strong group identity rather than as stigma terms (Corbett, 1996).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

> 'The self, the 'I', is part of writing and research, and interacts with ideas and people. But 'I' can also stand back and reflect critically on that process.'
>
> Shakespeare, P. et al (1993:4)

This thesis is underpinned by the notion that the researcher's biography plays a part in the research process that is both unavoidable and impossible to ignore (Okely, 1992; Shakespeare et al, 1993; Steier, 1991). The reasons behind the origin of the research, the methodology used, the fieldwork practice, the analysis and eventually the writing up are unavoidably impinged upon by the researcher's past life experiences, which have formed the basis of his or her lifeworld. The process of undertaking and accounting for research, of necessity, impels the researcher to engage in the complex and personal task of reflecting back on, and hopefully making some sense of, not only the research experience, but also his or her own life. In other words, research constitutes a circular process (Ely et al, 1991), which is reflected from participants to researchers and from researchers to participants (Steier, 1991).

This idea is in direct contrast to previously held beliefs within the social sciences that only the use of the positivist method could legitimate a claim to scientific status. 'Knowledge' and 'truth' were fixed and 'out there', waiting to be discovered, and it was the scientist's task to absorb it passively and objectively, 'untainted' by his or her own values and past experience. During the past few decades, however, mounting criticism against the irrationality of expectations of neutrality and objectivity in the study of society and social actors has led to the increase in a 'naturalist' methodology (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Naturalism dictates that, as far as possible, the social world should be studied in a natural setting, undisturbed by the researcher, and with the primary source of data evolving from these 'natural' settings rather than 'artificial' settings such as experiments or formal interviews. It is implicitly understood that the social world cannot be reduced to a set of causal relationships which can be observed and measured, as human action is based on, or impinged upon by, social meanings - motives, intentions, attitudes and beliefs. Hence, to understand human behaviour, it is necessary to develop an approach which allows the researcher access to the meanings that guide behaviour.

Such methodology has been largely influenced by anthropology through the use of ethnography, which stresses the importance of understanding the meanings of social action in cultures other than our own; where not only do we not know *why* people are behaving as they do, we may not even know *what* they are doing. Here, previous understandings of knowledge concerning human action may be shown to be inadequate and, conversely, previously ignored areas of ignorance may assume great significance. However, such experiences are not restricted to those carrying out research in different societies. According to the naturalist method, the value of ethnography as a social research method is:

> 'founded upon the existence of such variations in cultural patterns across and within societies, and their significance for understanding social processes. Ethnography exploits the capacity that any social actor possesses for learning new cultures, and the objectivity to which this process gives rise'.
>
> Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:

Thus, even where the group or setting is familiar, the ethnographer can treat it as 'anthropologically strange', in order to question the assumptions taken for granted as a member of the culture.

However, for this to take place, it is also necessary to simultaneously recognise the reflexive nature of social research: we are part of the social world we study (Hammersley, 1983). Our findings will be influenced by our background and experiences, by encounters in the field, and by the role we adopt in the research setting. Furthermore, the principle of reflexivity demands that the researcher is aware of his or her decisions and their underlying motives, with the result that s/he may be forced to re-evaluate or indeed restructure research goals. In addition, the researcher's activities during fieldwork should be included in the final report, in order for the reader to identify any inherent biases. The reflexive process, then, requires the researcher to be aware of his or her self during the whole of the research experience.

Okely, in 'thinking through fieldwork', convincingly argues in favour of the anthropological approach to research. She notes that such an approach rarely involves a concrete hypothesis, but rather 'theories, themes, ideas and ethnographic details to discover, examine or dismiss' (1994:19). Okely offers up Agar's (1980) alternative description for such a process as a 'funnel approach', whereby from the beginning of fieldwork the anthropologist is receptive to the full range of information and all manner of individuals. Within this 'holistic' framework, participants in the research are allowed to voice their concerns and experiences in their own words and context. As a result, themes and patterns gradually evolve, both during and after fieldwork. Okely admits that 'to the professional positivist this seems like chaos' (1994:20), but claims that the anthropologist draws on the totality of the research experience, which is 'recorded in memory, body and all the senses. Ideas and themes have worked through the whole being throughout the experience of fieldwork' (1994:21).

So how does my own biography contribute towards the research experience recounted in all its myriad forms? In this thesis, as detailed above, I was guided towards the research topic by the experiences of my youngest daughter both during and after an abrupt encounter with serious illness. The mother of three daughters, I had previously worked with other children in play-groups and in my own daughter's schools in the capacity of parent helper, and as a member of parent committees involved in fundraising activities. Until my daughter's illness, however, I must confess to having no particular interest in disability, and certainly no knowledge of the concept of SEN, as these topics had not previously impinged upon my life. I have since realised that most parents similarly lack knowledge of such matters until they are propelled, usually reluctantly, into the 'special needs' arena. For me, the concept of special education arose when my daughter, following her illness and resulting treatment, was well enough to return to school. It was felt at first that she would need to be 'statemented' (see Chapter 1) in order to receive funding for the services of a teacher's aide, as she was still unable to walk unaided and so was using a wheelchair. In the event, statementing was unnecessary, as she was initially wheeled around the school by the non-teaching assistant, and quickly regained her mobility, albeit with a fairly pronounced limp. At around this time I became a school governor, and was asked to take on responsibility for children with SEN, to which I duly acquiesced. I attended the relevant governor training courses, and embarked upon a fairly steep learning curve with regard to the complex processes involved in special education.

My position as 'SEN governor' soon brought home to me the somewhat marginal position of children with both physical and learning difficulties. On a training course I was informed by a governor from a nearby school that he and his fellow governors *'don't have to bother ourselves with special needs as we have a doctor for a special needs governor and he deals with all that'*. It seemed to me that, at this school, the children with problems were tidied neatly away into a box labelled 'special needs', out of sight of the main body of governors, who obviously got on with the important business of educating the more 'deserving' pupils. I subsequently insisted that SEN issues became a routine agenda item for my own board of governors, although this is not compulsory, so that at every board meeting my fellow governors were made aware of any issues and problems that the children in their governance were experiencing.

As my daughters grew and became more independent, so placing fewer demands upon my time, I was able to return both to employment and to the studies I had been forced to relinquish at sixteen in order to earn a living. I became a non-teaching assistant in a large comprehensive school, where part of my duties involved working with children with SEN and, after studying on a part-time basis for two years, I was able to enter the second year of a full-time degree course, studying sociology and social anthropology. I was drawn to the module entitled Health and Identity and, as I listened to the concepts advanced during lectures and tutorials, the unformed ideas I had had during my daughter's illness gradually began to clarify and take shape. I came to the realisation that illness and disability *are* socially constructed, and also to an understanding that an individual's identity and state of health must necessarily impinge upon each other. When the subject of an undergraduate dissertation arose, it seemed a foregone conclusion that my subject would be concerned with children with SEN and, for the research, I returned to one of the schools in which I had worked to undertake a small-scale study of various children with differing forms of need.

I was able to study five children in all, 'shadowing' them during and between lessons, and informally interviewing them. However, the child who interested me most was a girl with Down's syndrome who was integrated into the school for three sessions each week. Her mother, who was striving against all the odds for total integration, nevertheless felt that the small amount of inclusion her daughter had so far been granted had resulted in an enormous growth in her self-esteem. She told me, '*She literally grew two inches* [which] *had an awful lot to do with how she carried herself, not just a physical spurt of growth, but in her posture, everything*'. As a researcher I was able to observe this child's sense of identity flourish, simply in her ability to be involved in the 'normal' everyday activities that the other children appeared to take for granted. However, I was also made aware of the reservations held by some members of the teaching staff towards this girl, many of whom felt that much of her behaviour, which was linked to her condition, was 'inappropriate' in relation to the other pupils. Many teachers felt, for example, that her tendency to hug the other pupils and show them affection illustrated the fact that she had failed to learn the cultural expectations linked to demonstrative behaviour that her fellow pupils had assimilated earlier during the educational process. This led me to question the ways in which such cultural norms concerning 'difference' are established and learned, especially during the time children spend in school.

Once my first degree was completed, and with the memories of this initial experience of fieldwork still relatively fresh, I decided to embark upon a postgraduate course of study, in order to explore these questions further. In attempting to consolidate the research questions, and also to identify a specific focus for the study, I was reminded once again of my daughter's experiences. Her position had always appeared to be most marginal during times of transition, such as when moving from one class to another, and especially during the move from primary to secondary school. As other children became familiar with her, her personality shone through and helped to forge friendships, in which the importance of outward appearance gradually diminished. However, as she once again entered a new space, the process perforce began anew. Other children's curiosity had to be assuaged and the task of making friends undertaken again.

Despite her wish not to be treated differently, Gillian was at times placed, against her will, in a marginal position by some of her peers, usually in classes other than her own. She would often arrive home distraught because another child (it must be said usually a boy) had walked behind her mimicking her unsteady gait, or had drawn attention to her appearance by assigning her nicknames such as 'Scarface'. Whilst these situations inevitably incited all my maternal instincts to take action, and an accompanying realisation that this was inadvisable, I simultaneously reflected on such events on a more philosophical level. Questions revolving around children's apparent tendency to attack or ridicule any individual whose appearance or behaviour differed from their own remained unanswered. I therefore decided to explore the manner in which identity, especially of children whose bodies were in some way different from those of others, was either maintained or re-established during the primary-secondary school transition.

Since embarking upon the research, my knowledge of SEN issues has expanded considerably, due to my continuing duties as an SEN governor, and also through direct contact with families under the auspices of the 'Named Person' scheme. Under this scheme, which is co-ordinated by a local parent partnership agency, individuals are trained to become 'Named Persons' in order to support families of children who have been identified as having some form of SEN. The Code of Practice (1994), which outlines the procedures to be carried out in order to identify and assess children's needs, stipulates that parents should be offered the services of a 'Named Person' to guide them through the assessment process. During the research, I undertook training and have been involved with several families on a personal and professional level, and have witnessed at first hand the problems that many of them experience in obtaining funding to address their children's difficulties in school. I have also become more aware of the social isolation and marginality that many such families experience.

This awareness of the plight of many children and their parents has also been informed by the paid employment I have undertaken during the last few years. For some time I was employed as part of a multi-agency support team working in schools with children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The work also involved visiting parents and carers in their homes to discuss their child's situation at school. Most latterly, however, I have been establishing and managing a Parent Partnership Service, working to support parents of children with SEN in whatever form their situation demands. This might entail giving information and advice, assisting with form-filling and letter-writing, negotiating with schools and the LEA to secure the best provision or, ultimately, representing and supporting parents at the SEN Tribunal, which legislates in disputes. This work has informed the thesis, adding to the conclusions that were becoming clearer over the course of the analysis and writing up period.

My biography, then, has not only decided the course that my research should take, the methodology to be used, and the standpoint I am taking, it is continuing to inform the social and political background of my work.

The child's right to be heard

It has been noted by many commentators (see for example Beresford, 1997; Morrow and Richards, 1996) that the implementation of the Children Act 1989 and the UK ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has raised the profile of children's decision-making, and emphasised parents' and professionals' duty to listen and act on those decisions. However, Morrow and Richards also comment that 'empirical sociological research studies based on data collected from children themselves are relatively few and far between' (1996:92). According to Morrow and Richards, sociology as a discipline has also neglected children themselves, with the result that the relative absence of discussion concerning such methodological issues is hardly surprising. As Lansdown (1994) points out, in Western society we traditionally have not had a culture of listening to children, and this presents a dilemma for social researchers. Thus, until relatively recently, there have been few attempts to understand children's worlds in their own terms by eliciting their views and taking what they say at face value. However, since 1996 this situation has improved and there has been a steady flow of studies which have sought children's views, most notably the ESRC Research Programme on Children 5-16: Growing into the 21st Century, a collection of 22 linked research projects looking at different aspects of children's lives in contemporary society and underpinned by the ethos of children as competent social actors. Furthermore, recent research volumes (see for example Christensen and James, 2000 and Childhood and Society, 1997, 11:1) have addressed the question of the possibility and desirability of child research methodology which would enable children to participate in the production of research data and allow their views to be presented.

Discussing the role of the child researcher, Fine and Sandstrom (1988) note that their situation is fraught with problems, many of which are underpinned by the unequal nature of the child-adult relationship. In traditional ethnographic settings, it is assumed that participants are, or should be treated as, equal in social status to oneself. However, in researching children, such a policy is not completely viable, due to unavoidable factors such as the differences in age, physical maturity, cognitive development and attainment of social responsibility of the two parties involved. Because of the structure of age roles in Western society, therefore:

> 'like the white researcher in black society, the male researcher studying women, or the ethnologist observing a distant tribal culture, the adult participant observer who attempts to understand a children's culture cannot pass unnoticed as a member of that group'.
> (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988:13)

Fine and Sandstrom postulate that it is the authority division which characterises research with children. They define four possible research roles, involving differing degrees of authority, that may be adopted by researchers: the supervisor, the leader, the observer and the friend. They advocate the use of the latter role, in which the researcher attempts to 'become a friend to one's subjects and interact with them in the most trusted way possible - without having any explicit authority role' (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988:17). They note that some commentators stress the possibility of real equality of friendship between children and researchers (see Goode, 1986) in the adoption of the 'least adult role' (Mandell, 1991a), but insist that there are methodological benefits to be gained from retaining differences between researchers and children, such as the ability to behave in 'non-kid' ways or ask 'ignorant' questions. Mayall (1998) questions the tenability of actually adopting the 'least-adult role', whereby generational issues are diffused and researchers distance themselves from authority figures such as teachers. She advocates instead that researchers work *with* generational and power issues, by presenting themselves to children as 'unusual adults', neither parent nor teacher, but as someone who is interested in, and who wishes to learn about, their social worlds.

Researching children's lives within the school setting involves the researcher in a wide range of power relationships, with the researcher sited on a continuum of power. To gain entrance to the research setting, s/he must first approach a number of adult gatekeepers for permission to enter particular schools - the local education authority, the local police force, and the head teacher and staff of the school. Once entrance to the school has been achieved, the researcher must then approach parents for permission to observe and interview children. At this point, the balance of power would appear to shift, as the researcher then assumes power over the children who participate in the study, i.e.

Most power **Least power**

L.E.A./Police School gatekeepers Parents Researcher Children

However, whilst acknowledging the apparently minimal amount of power allowed to children, especially in the structural space of the classroom, it must be noted that the choice of methodology somewhat mediates this situation. Prout and James, in their groundbreaking work which posited children as competent social actors and thinkers in their own right, assert that 'ethnography is a particularly useful methodology for the study of childhood. It allows children a more direct voice and participation in the production of sociological data' (1990:8). Similarly, Mayall (1994b; 2000) notes that ethnography constitutes one of the most promising methods of researching children; listening to their spontaneous conversations, observing their activities and participating as far as possible in these allows the researcher to build up a more complete picture of the child's world, whilst talking to them informally adds a subjective meaning to their activities and actions. Moreover, children utilise their own methods to subvert and resist the power of adults in the research process, by setting up their own agendas during informal interviews, and manoeuvring conversations down avenues of their own choosing (Mayall, 2000; Alderson and Goodey, 1996). With reference to this thesis more specifically, Davis et al (2000) contend that the use of ethnographic methodology enables researchers to challenge the perception that disabled children are incapable of social action.

Hammersley (1985) suggests that one particular feature of ethnography which distinguishes it from other forms of social research and lends itself particularly to research within educational settings is the use of multiple sources of data. The researcher is able to utilise whatever sources are available; s/he may study interaction in classrooms and corridors, playgrounds, and staffrooms; s/he may engage in formal and informal conversations with pupils, teachers and parents; and s/he may also make use of relevant documents. In this way, 'the use of multiple sources of data ... offers the possibility of triangulation as a means of assessing the construct validity of the various data items' (1985:154). Ethnographers also study one particular setting over a relatively long period of time, thereby allowing time for participants to become familiar with their presence and so hopefully minimising reactivity, i.e. the impact of the researcher's presence on the proceedings. Adopting a fairly wide focus for data collection allows the researcher to become familiar with routines and timetables, attend meetings, and engage in conversations and observe events whose relevance to the research focus may not appear instantly obvious. In the school setting, attendance at parties, school trips and events outside of school may reveal data which only becomes clear during the later analytical stage.

The benefits of triangulation and the use of multiple sources of data in overcoming doubts concerning the validity of children's accounts are also highlighted by Pollard (1987). He notes that this issue is always of concern to interpretive sociologists, regardless of the age of their participants, but that research by developmental psychologists, especially those of the Piagetian school, has brought into question the validity of children's perspectives. Pollard concedes that although this perspective dominated up to the late 1970s, there is now a growing body of psychological research which accepts forms of interpretive competence and social understanding of even very young children. However, he claims that the strongest source of evidence concerning validity is that of triangulation. In his own study, he was concerned therefore to observe the actual behaviour of children as well as collecting accounts from a wide range of participants. Nonetheless, he cautions that even where this is undertaken, the researcher is still required to make judgements, for example as to the amount of exaggeration in which children have indulged, especially in the presence of others they may wish to impress, or in situations which demand a recouping of dignity. According to Pollard, further judgements about the quality and nature of the data may be involved during the analytical process. However, he concludes that:

> 'one thing that simply cannot be done, though, is to devalue subjective data in itself merely because it comes from children. Indeed, I would argue that provided the researcher working with children can demonstrate that he or she *has maintained the necessary reflexivity* ... in data-gathering situations, then there is no reason to doubt the inherent validity of the data gathered any more than that collected in work with adults'.
>
> (1987:100, emphasis added)

Some ethical considerations involved in studying children

For James, Jenks and Prout, the ethical considerations involved in studying children are 'never far from the surface of the discussion and have a clear bearing on child research' (1998:187). Such considerations usually revolve around the twin central issues of informed consent and protection (Morrow and Richards, 1996). As already noted, obtaining informed consent for children to participate in research usually involves a fairly circuitous route involving local education authorities, school gatekeepers and parents, in other words, those deemed to bear responsibility for children. This idea sets children in a marginal social position of helplessness and vulnerability, as does the notion of children being in need of care and protection, with the result that they may be seen as being 'at risk' if they place 'too much trust' in adult researchers (James et al, 1998). Ultimately, children are deemed to be the 'property' of their parents, with no autonomy or competence to make informed decisions.

In line with this perceived necessity to 'protect' children during the research process, Fine and Sandstrom identify three main issues that arise in qualitative research:

> 1) the responsibility of the adult in dealing with possibly harmful situations;
> 2) the implications of the adult 'policing role'; and
> 3) the problems of obtaining informed consent from one's informants and explaining the research in a comprehensible fashion.
>
> (1988.:26)

Obviously, ethical considerations dictate that a researcher must ensure that children do not suffer harm as a result of their participation, but the question of a researcher's behaviour in 'natural' situations is also relevant. Children can be cruel and aggressive, especially when they have an audience, so how far should researchers react to, and possibly intervene in, such behaviour during their studies? Should they intervene in situations that involve bullying or racist/discriminatory attitudes? How far should they allow themselves to be 'used' by authority figures in a policing or informative role? Researchers may be forced, however unwillingly, into positions of authority over their participants, which may impinge upon their own ethics or their standing with participants. If they refuse, and adopt the position of non-disciplinarian, this may compromise the position of the authority figure involved. Problems also arise over the vexed question of obtaining 'informed consent' from children, who may not possess the cognitive ability to understand the intricacies of sociological research, or who may feel constrained to participate, especially in the structural space of a school setting (Morrow and Richards, 1996).

Further ethical questions arise around the topic of undertaking research with children with SEN. These children have traditionally had decisions made for them, whether by teachers, educational psychologists, social workers or parents, who tend to decide what is 'in the child's best interests' (see Chapter 1). Although the Code of Practice (1994) advocates that professionals seek the views of the children involved in special education, in my experience this is rarely done. If children as a social group are in a marginal social position, how much more marginal and powerless are those who are perceived to be not quite 'whole' in some way? Furthermore, how far can researchers influence policy decisions regarding such children? Barnes evaluates qualitative research in relation to the emancipatory research model, drawing on his own experiences of research in day centres for disabled young people, and comes to the conclusion that 'interactionist methods are generally acknowledged as the most suitable for researching the experience of disability' (1992:117). Barnes supplemented his participant observation with semi-structured interviews with young day centre users, thus allowing them to describe the subjective meanings behind their experiences.

These considerations were at the forefront of my mind when I began the delicate task of negotiation involved in gaining access to the social worlds of children.

The experience of fieldwork

The present study, then, started out with certain implicit principles, i.e. the importance of autobiography and reflexivity to the research process, the use of ethnographic methodology, and the concept of children as competent social actors. The intention was to study the ways in which the primary-secondary transition was experienced by children with a range of SEN, and whether this differed in any way from that of other children. This would be undertaken by following a cohort of children as they passed through the transition. I would spend the term before and the term after the transition observing the children during lessons and other activities, and interviewing them both individually and in groups. Due to the study being 'fixed' in time around the actual transition (it would take place from Easter until Christmas), I decided to carry out a small pilot study with the children who had made the transition the previous year to the main study group. This took place at the secondary school which was to be used during the study. It must be acknowledged here that, in the event, the actual transition lost some of its focus as I gradually became aware of the crucial nature of children's embodiment. However, as will be discussed later, the transition did serve to point up the ways in which children's experiences around the body differed in the more impersonal environment of the secondary school after the 'family' atmosphere of the primary school.

Access to the schools

Both schools are situated in Greenville, a small town of approximately eleven thousand inhabitants near the north-east coast of England. The town has developed over recent years due to an influx of workers connected with the proliferation of local industry, mainly of the oil and chemical variety. It is a mainly working class area, with pockets of middle class developments, and a relatively high level of unemployment. Greatfields, the secondary school in the study, serves the whole of Greenville and surrounding areas, and pupils transfer to the school from six feeder schools, of which Littlefields is one. I was known by the head teachers and staff of both the primary and secondary schools. My three daughters had passed through both schools, I had previously served as a parent governor at the secondary school and at the time of the study was serving as the SEN governor at the primary school, where I had also previously been employed as a senior midday supervisor.

Having gained permission from the Local Education Authority to carry out the research, I then applied for police clearance. This was left to the discretion of both head teachers who, because they knew me already, and because I had previously been cleared for my work in schools, agreed to waive it. The experience of gaining access to the schools themselves was very different between the primary and secondary school. I had previously approached the head teacher of the primary school, who had simply agreed to my being in the school and had instructed me, '*Just turn up when you're ready*'. Gaining access to the secondary school, however, proved to be a more involved and time-consuming procedure. Permission was sought and obtained from the board of governors, after which I was asked by the head teacher to explain the research to a number of different groups, such as teachers, the school's SEN governor and the teachers' aides whose job it was to oversee the children with SEN.

The pilot study

Before beginning the pilot study at the secondary school, and after an initial meeting with the SEN co-ordinator and the head teacher himself, I was given a copy of the SEN register in order for me to select my participants, and so that permission could be sought both from parents and the children themselves. I selected ten children in total from all five stages of the register, ensuring that these were concentrated in three forms. This enabled me to spend two weeks in each of the forms, a period of six weeks in all. The gender ratio of the group was two girls to eight boys, a reflection of the ratio operating generally within special education. The head teacher then contacted each child's parent for permission for his/her inclusion in the study, and this was obtained either by letter or telephone. I was then asked to meet those parents who wished to speak to me in person, although in the event only one mother came to the meeting. Although happy for her son to be included in the study, she informed me that she was a teacher herself, and impressed upon me the fact that he had a *specific* learning difficulty (dyslexia) and was otherwise very capable (a claim which was eventually borne out by the fieldwork).

A letter was then sent out to the parents of every other child in Year 7, informing them of my presence in some of their child's lessons and inviting anyone who objected to contact the school. In the event, none did so. Next, a letter was circulated to every teacher involved with Year 7, asking those who would prefer me not to attend their lessons to indicate as such, but again, none did so. As all the arrangements for the study were now in place, a date was set for me to begin. Unfortunately, the school then underwent an OFSTED inspection, and it was felt that it would be unfair to staff for me to be in school at this time, so I was asked to postpone it.

I eventually began the pilot study at the beginning of December. I was then finally able to explain my project to the children themselves. As I felt that the concept of a PhD was relatively difficult for children of this age to understand, I explained that I was writing 'a kind of book' which would talk about how children coped when they went from primary school 'up' to the secondary school. I stressed that anything they told me would be kept secret between us, and that if I used anything they had told me in the 'book' they would be given different names. I also emphasised that if I approached them and they preferred not to talk to me, that would be all right and I would not be offended. Although assuring them of confidentiality, I had previously talked to the head teacher of the procedure that must be followed in the event of a disclosure by a pupil concerning problems at home. It was stressed that I had an obligation to report this, should the occasion arise, and this presented me with a dilemma that prompted much heart-searching. I decided at the outset that, in the event of such a disclosure occurring, I would utilise the principles of my counselling training, i.e. that if it became evident that a child was about to inform me of an incident which could be classed as a potential child protection issue, I would inform the child immediately that I would be obliged to pass on such information. This would allow the child to then decide whether or not to continue.

When the fieldwork began, I was welcomed into the classrooms and lessons by both pupils, and teachers, who seemed grateful for 'an extra pair of hands'. I sat with the children for the 'teaching' part of the lesson and then, when they were set a specific task, I moved around the classroom and offered help to those who requested it by raising their hands. Whilst listening to the teacher, I tried to place myself at the back of the room in order to have a good vantage point, but I was usually inundated with requests from children of both genders to sit next to them. They appeared to enjoy the extra attention my presence gave them, and children who struggled with their work soon came to realise that I was a source of extra help. On one occasion, I asked a pupil who was having problems with her maths if I could sit next to her, to which she replied, '*Yes, you can live there if you like*'. When the class split up for certain lessons, arguments often broke out between the children as to which group I should accompany. Although I decided not to accompany the children at play times, in order to allow them some space on their own, I did sit with them at the lunch break, and again they would argue about who would sit and talk to me.

My initial concern before beginning the fieldwork had been that the children would simply ignore me or refuse to talk to me (see Alderson and Goodey, 1996), but in the event the opposite was true, even though pupils had to forfeit their lunch breaks to attend interview sessions. When they discovered that I was using a recorder to tape the interviews, I was inundated with requests to '*talk into your machine*'. I commented to the head teacher that I had been pleasantly surprised at the children's response. He pointed out that many of the children in the school, due to their socio-economic backgrounds, were not used to being talked to, and certainly not to having their experiences and opinions sought and discussed. I also acknowledged that my presence was perceived as a diversion during an (often routine) lesson. Children often remarked that they liked me with them because, in their words, '*it makes it more interesting*'. However, on many occasions the children would divulge personal information to me rather than a member of staff, such as when Marcus told me that his mother had been taken into hospital the previous evening with a blood clot on her lung. I discovered during the course of the day that the school staff, who were unaware of this fact, were puzzled by Marcus' uncharacteristically bad behaviour. Again I was put in the position of deciding whether to divulge information that a child had given me, but on this occasion I felt justified in talking to his form tutor, who was responsible for his pastoral care, on the grounds that Marcus had imparted the information to a group of children, which included me, rather than to me alone. This incident is an example of the ethical considerations which arose, on a regular basis throughout the fieldwork, and presented me with much heart searching.

Whilst carrying out the pilot study, I also questioned children about their general views on children with SEN. As part of this, I also attempted to ascertain their perceptions of disability. During one lunch break, I borrowed a 'spare' wheelchair from the physical education department, and worked with a group of children (without SEN). They took turns to ride in the wheelchair, which initially engendered great hilarity, but after some time they complained that their arms were beginning to ache from pushing themselves around. We then travelled around the school, which caused a great deal of frustration as we encountered swing doors and steps. We had previously agreed that no-one would attempt to assist the child in the wheelchair, but leave him/her to their own devices and, although many ingenious solutions to problems were reached, all agreed that the experience of sitting in the wheelchair, although enjoyable at first, had soon become tiresome.

When the pilot study came to an end, the head teacher asked for feedback, and I provided him with a copy of a paper I had presented at a recent postgraduate conference. He then asked me to meet those members of staff who were interested to discuss the main points in the paper. I gave a brief summary of my tentative findings during the pilot study, which had focused on the fact that, although the school operated a well-defined anti-bullying procedure, many incidents which revolved around children's bodily features were not reported, as these were perceived as 'teasing' rather than outright bullying. The two members of staff who were available during breaks for children to discuss their 'bullying' problems with, declined to agree with this statement, and argued that in fact the opposite was true. At this point I investigated and analysed the Pupil Behaviour reports for the previous year, which substantiated my assertion that children were failing to report apparently minor incidents of teasing around aspects of the body.

The main study

After the pilot study came to an end, I reflected on what I had learned from the experience and attempted to refine the research questions for the main part of the study. I entered the primary school after the Easter break, and began to get to know the children who would be my main participants. These pupils were in two classes, and the head teacher circulated a letter to all relevant parents informing them of the study and requesting any parents who objected to contact him. Again, none did so. The pupils were then assembled so that I could explain the purpose of my research. I used the same format as I had used in the pilot study, again explaining that participation was not compulsory. A slight problem arose, in that the children who would be making the transition to the secondary school were grouped into one full class and three quarters of the other. The remainder of this latter group comprised children who were at the top end of the previous year group, but who would not be transferring until the following year. However, I made a conscious decision not to intentionally exclude these children from the participant observation, as they enjoyed being included and it would have been difficult to ignore them, although I did not actually interview them.

I began by being with the children in either one classroom or the other for three days each week, and then increased this to four days. Although I had intended to attend for the full five days toward the end of the term, I decided against this once I realised how much of a threat I appeared to present to the two teachers involved. I was able to understand their feelings as, unlike at the secondary school where I had observed a specific teacher for only one lesson at a time, here I would be sitting in a classroom for a full day at a time. Like the secondary school, the primary school had also recently undergone an OFSTED inspection, when teachers and their methods had been under close scrutiny. Although I went out of my way to assure them that I was not there to observe them, but their pupils, I soon became aware that this statement was rather naïve. The actions of the teachers of necessity impinged upon the experiences of the pupils, and I now realise that it is practically impossible to separate the two. One of the staff members concerned confided to me that she found my presence rather intimidating, despite my assurances that I was observing pupils, and asked that I alternate between her class and the other rather than spend a full week in either one. She then added, '*If I want to try something a bit different I think 'Oh, I'll save that for a day when Brenda isn't here*''. However, despite their reservations, all the staff at the school accommodated me and willingly answered my numerous questions. I, in turn, attempted to make myself useful in the classrooms, accompanied groups to the swimming baths and once covered a break time whilst a staff photograph was taken.

Apart from spending time in the classroom and eating lunch with the children, I also attended many of their out of school activities. I accompanied them to sports matches against other schools and to a concert given by a visiting orchestra, sold raffle tickets and made tea at fund raising events, and attended a session at the local youth club. I was also heavily involved in events revolving around the school transition. I sat in with the group when the deputy head teacher from the secondary school came to talk to them about the transfer, and accompanied them on their induction day. At the end of the term I went on their school trip to a local beauty spot, attended and helped at both their end of term disco and their leavers' party, and joined in their leavers' assembly on the final day. As the children transferred to the secondary school, I was with them from their first day, when I joined them in the playground before school and talked to them of their worries and anticipation of their new lives.

Before beginning the fieldwork, I deliberated about the role I would adopt in the research setting. Although sympathetic to the concept of Fine and Sandstrom's 'friend' (see above), I eventually decided that such a role, which incorporated no explicit authority, would be difficult to fulfil, and that the 'least-adult role' was not feasible as it was impossible to ignore the fact that I was a mature woman who was already familiar to the children. I ultimately decided to adopt Mayall's 'unusual adult' role. I explained to the children that I was not a teacher, but someone who was interested in discovering how the transfer from primary to secondary school was experienced by children with different abilities, and that the best way to do this was to make the transition with them. They frequently tested my rejection of the 'teacher' role, by informing me of their fellow pupils' transgressions, but on such occasions I simply reiterated that I was not a teacher and that if they wanted to tell someone they should tell Mrs. X, the actual teacher. They also tested my obviously adult persona, by relating 'rude' (to them) jokes and riddles and watching closely for my reaction (see Chapter 5).

As they became more familiar with me and began to place their trust in me, the children gradually also began to confide in me, as they had done in the pilot study. On many occasions they entrusted me, rather than their teachers, with information, such as the time that Cleo sought me out to tell me that her dog had died the previous evening, and how sad this had made her. Her teacher, who later discovered this information from elsewhere, was quite upset that it had been entrusted to me rather than to her, as she saw herself as the children's main confidante. Children also told me about their worries, the events that occurred in their lives away from school, and showed me all their minor injuries, even requesting on occasion that I inspect their throats to determine whether they were inflamed (see also Christensen, 1993). However, this trust that the children were placing in me also presented me with yet another dilemma. They questioned me constantly about the transfer to the 'big' school, and I began to be concerned that they were perceiving me as someone who would be able to protect and cushion them through the transition. An added concern was that many of their parents also saw me as an advocate for their children, who would 'look out for them' during the move. Rather than confronting this issue, and stating that in fact this was not my intended function, I tended to let it ride, which reflects an ethical dilemma I never did resolve.

Fine and Sandstrom claim that 'participant observation with children poses different problems than research with adult subjects ... [and] that these dissimilarities can be emphasised by the "three Rs" of participant observation with children: responsibility, respect and reflection' (1988:75) . Children must be 'protected' from the consequences of their actions, and the presence of an adult signifies to other adults that the children are being cared for. Although not wishing to 'police' children's behaviour, participant observers cannot morally stand by and watch a child being hurt. I decided beforehand that, wherever possible, I would not intervene in children's interactions unless I believed that one of them was suffering harm, for example by bullying tactics or direct aggression. Soon after the transition, I was waiting with a group of children to be given admittance to their form room for registration period. Suddenly, an older pupil came running past, grabbed one of the new pupils, and hurled him with a great deal of force into and through the toilet door. He was hurt and upset, and I quietly pointed out to the culprit that I considered his behaviour to be unacceptable. During fieldwork, pupils would often 'test' me, by performing acts of rebellion in my presence (e.g. throwing their bags down the stairwell or swinging on door jambs), whilst simultaneously watching to see whether I would react by, to use their vernacular, 'dobbing them in'. Fortunately this proved to be unnecessary on my part as there were always plenty of their classmates prepared to fulfil this function.

The question of respect also arose during the fieldwork. Fine and Sandstrom (1988) point out that those working with children often fail to accord them respect, but that researchers must discard the 'natural' adult tendency both to take children for granted and to measure their behaviour and accounts according to adult standards. I therefore consciously decided that I would take what the children told me at face value, and would respect their ability to give 'informed and voluntary consent' (Alderson, 2000). I would also attempt to substantiate their claims by the use of triangulation, by watching to see whether what they actually did equated to what they claimed to do. However, the question of respect for children was highlighted for me in a very uncomfortable fashion; when I was present in some lessons at the secondary school a member of the teaching staff spoke to the children in a most derogatory and demeaning fashion, referring to and addressing them as 'things'. Although another member of staff laughingly pointed out to me that this was all part of the other teacher's 'inimitable teaching style', and although the children appeared not to object, I found it most insulting, and felt that it threw into relief children's lack of power (and their acceptance of this) in the school setting.

Fine and Sandstrom, in discussing the "three Rs" of participant observation, also suggest that adult researchers possess an advantage when studying children, as 'the fact that we have all been children gives this research a patina of mundane life' (1988:76). This differentiates research with children from that of most others in that, as against our own experiences as children, we may not have experienced the emotions, social position or even the culture of other groups. However, whilst valuing the role that reflection plays in the research process, I would argue along with James et al (1998) that there is a danger in perceiving the experiences of children as homogenous and childhood itself as a unitary category. Children's experiences are impinged upon by such factors as class, gender, ethnicity, and ability, as the relatively new sociology of childhood recognises and acknowledges. There is not one, but many, childhoods. Furthermore, I would suggest that Fine and Sandstrom's categories should be applied to any kind of social research, rather than being restricted to the 'special' circumstances of childhood research. Representing the methodology of research with children as somehow 'different' only contributes to the marginal position of children themselves.

However, whilst acknowledging that research with children should be approached in a similar vein to any kind of research, I would agree with James' assertion that:

> 'whilst ethnographic research and qualitative interviewing are the pre-eminent research strategies for studying children's lives, children's limited social experience, combined with their unequal structural position in society, may mean that we need to refine these methods and techniques ... Children use other mediums of communication - drawings and stories for instance - ... [and] sociological approaches to children's art or written work open up a number of methodological possibilities'.
>
> (1995a:15)

During the period at the primary school, and later at the secondary school, I was able to use techniques such as drawings and stories to elicit children's views. At the beginning of the fieldwork period, the participants were undertaking SATs (Standard Assessment Tasks) and so the time available for the study was constrained. However, once these were completed, and as the term drew to a close, the children were able to spend a greater amount of time with me. They wrote stories describing their worries and expectations of the secondary school, and participated in both individual and group interviews. Lewis (1992) has discussed the advantages that group interviews have over individual interviews, in that they help to reveal consensus views, they may engender richer data by allowing participants to challenge the views being put forward, and may be used to verify, or indeed question, data obtained from other sources.

It was suggested by one of the teachers involved that I might interview children during hymn practice each week, and once pupils realised this was happening, they were queuing up to participate. Although I was pleased with this response, I soon discovered that the children in fact detested hymn practice, and welcomed any excuse to miss it. Nonetheless, I used this time profitably by interviewing children in groups, usually of their own choosing, as they wished to participate in their friendship groups. The interviews, which were held in the empty classroom, were very loosely structured, with pupils chatting about school, their activities outside school (such as relationships, their families, their leisure activities etc.) and the coming transfer to the secondary school. It was soon evident that children had their own agenda. Mayall notes that 'children may in conversation go far beyond the limits the researcher has outlined for access purposes' (2000:134). Children in the current study were adept at steering the conversation around to topics *they* wished to discuss. For example, when talking to a group of three female friends, I repeatedly attempted to discuss issues concerning their worries at school. However, two of the girls determinedly brought the topic of conversation around to their home lives, relating to me lurid details of their families splitting up, and violence towards their mothers etc. It occurred to me that I may have been the only person who had actually listened to their personal accounts of these traumatic events, and that they were using me as a kind of counsellor. Although this sometimes proved rather worrying at the time, on reflection these accounts provided a rich seam of data, by demonstrating the acute differences between the children's experiences at school and at home, and by providing a backcloth for their behaviour at school.

In an attempt to continue the work carried out in the pilot study, I also questioned the participants on their attitudes towards disability issues in general, and children with SEN in particular. For this part of the research, I was able to take each child individually into the parents' room, a quiet part of the school where it was possible to talk without interruption. Pupils were shown a series of photographs of children which had been gleaned from newspapers and magazines. Some were pictures of children with disabilities, but these were interspersed throughout, and not in any particular order. Whilst explaining that I realised it might be difficult to tell from a picture, I asked the participants to say whether they thought they would like the person in the picture for a friend, and why. I also acknowledged that it might be deemed immoral to make judgements about a person simply from a photograph, but that on this occasion and for the purposes of my research, it was acceptable, and that what they told me was just between ourselves. I was able to interview the whole group of forty children in this way. The results of this exercise will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Towards the end of the term at the primary school, I decided to select twenty children on whom the study would focus once the group had transferred to the secondary school. All children on the SEN register, nine in all, were chosen, together with eleven others who were selected for a variety of reasons, e.g. because they appeared to be especially capable and outgoing, because they were withdrawn or socially isolated, or because they had been bullied. The group included ten boys and ten girls. I have chosen not to discuss the particular problems of the children on the SEN register, as I consider that these were individual to the child concerned and cannot be universalised to describe the experiences of every child with that particular problem. Once these children were identified, a letter was sent to each of their parents, briefly describing the purpose of the research, and seeking their permission for their child to be included.

This exercise prompted much discussion between the children and their friends, as it was perceived by them to be extremely prestigious to be included in the study. I found it very difficult to explain to them the reasons behind my decisions, and I realised that those not selected felt excluded. All of the parents but one agreed to their child's inclusion, and this child was very angry at her mother's refusal. A conversation followed which demonstrates children's ability to subvert and ridicule adults' attempts to control situations:

Paula: *I hate my mum. I want you to ignore that letter and let me take part.*
BS: *I can't do that.*
Paula: *Why not?*
BS: *It's not ethical.*
Paula: *What's that?*
(A discussion followed on the ethics of research)
Jack: *How many mums and dads said no?*
BS: *I can't tell you that either.*
Jack: *Why not?*
BS: *Because of ethics.*
(At this point Jack continued to press me)
Jack: *Why can't you tell me?*
BS: (in frustration) *Because I can't tell you my private affairs.*
Jack: *Ooh, are you having a private affair? Wait till I see your husband, I'll tell him!*

This theme was then taken up by some of the other children, and it became a running joke throughout the research. On a Monday morning, the children would often enquire about my activities during the previous weekend, and when I told them of some event I had attended, they would ask, '*Was that with Mr. Simpson or your private affair man?*' By teasing and playful interrogation about my private life they would often take control of the situation and undermine any authority I might have had. However, I took this as a confirmation that they did in fact accept me as 'an unusual adult' (see above), in that I never witnessed them behaving in this way with other adults with whom they came into contact.

As discussed above, each child's parents were sent a letter describing the aims of the research and seeking their permission for their child to be included once the group transferred to the secondary school. They were also given the option of further discussion, either at the school, at their home, or by telephone. Several parents requested a telephone discussion, with which I complied, and in many of these instances parents were actually concerned about their child's welfare during the transition and appeared to perceive my position as that of someone who would be able to 'keep a friendly eye' on their child. Two sets of parents requested a home visit, and I discovered that they were especially worried about their particular children. One was a boy who had suffered a long term absence from school due to bullying by older pupils, and had transferred to the primary school in the study during the final term. The family of the other child, a girl, had been involved in a high profile debacle with the local media after their younger child had been excluded from the primary school at a very young age. Both these sets of parents wanted to impress upon me that there were convincing medical reasons underlying their child's predicament, and again appeared to perceive my involvement as opportune.

During the school holidays, I transcribed the interviews I had recorded, and began to undertake some initial analysis. When the children returned to school, I joined them in their classes at the secondary school. Because I had previously cleared the ground during the pilot study, and ensured that everyone involved was aware of what was happening, my transfer from primary to secondary school was relatively seamless, although I was asked by the head teacher to address a meeting of the staff before term began. This relative ease of transition compensated for the apparent lack of progress and frustration I had felt during the preparation for the pilot study. The children in the study were grouped into seven classes, along with children who had transferred from the remainder of the feeder schools. The parents of these other children were sent letters informing them of the research and requesting that they should communicate any reservations to the school. Once again, none did so.

I was able to speak to a considerable number of parents at events organised by the school, i.e. an open day and tour of the school for prospective parents, a parents' open day and a parents' evening held before the transition, and a cheese and wine evening for parents after the transition. Once actual fieldwork began, I decided to spend a total of two weeks of five days with each of the seven groups. I accompanied the children to their various lessons, to physical education and games sessions, to swimming lessons, sewing and cookery classes, and craft and technology lessons. I attended their Christmas show and disco and, towards the end of the fieldwork session, I went with the year group on their annual outing to the local county show. I also went with one of the boys and his mother to the local hospital to investigate an eye problem that was interfering with his ability to read and spell competently. Soon after the fieldwork finished I was asked to accompany the group to the pantomime at a nearby town. As a background to the study, I was also able to visit a local special school for children with severe physical difficulties.

The experience of fieldwork at the secondary school was quite different to that of the primary school. Although I was welcomed into classes with the children, there was a greater sense of urgency once the group had transferred, together with an apparent lack of time for both children and adults alike. The groups spent a great deal of time rushing from one lesson to the next, and from one area of the school to another. Consequently, the only available time I had for interviewing children was during their registration period at the beginning of the school day, and during the lunch break. Other breaks were far too short to be of real use, and anyway I felt that the children needed a break from me and my incessant questioning. However, I was able to make good use of break times, as I spent these with the teachers' aides in their common room, and was able to elicit their viewpoints and experiences at this time. The study took place during a rather turbulent period in the school's SEN provision. Cuts in spending on SEN provision, and a policy of phasing out teachers' aides, who were expensive to the system, and replacing them with child support assistants, had had repercussions on the school's ability to provide support for children with SEN.

It had been pointed out to the school's managers that providing a child with support from a child support assistant, rather than a teacher's aide, meant that the child could enjoy more hours of support than previously. Consequently, a number of the school's teacher aides had left the school for positions at other schools, whilst others were being 're-employed', often against their will, as child support assistants. In this rather disorganised scenario, support was being provided on a relatively *ad hoc* basis, rather than as the result of a properly organised timetable. I was therefore often observing, and providing help to children, in classes that included a child with SEN who lacked the proper support. Teachers appeared grateful for my support. It was also noticeable that those children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, although disruptive and unwilling to work when left to their own devices, often responded to me on a one-to-one basis, and usually worked well if given help. I took this to indicate that, on the occasions they failed to understand or were unable to complete written work, they became frustrated and began to rebel by disrupting the class. I also felt that those children, who should have received support but failed to, often embarked upon a cycle of misbehaviour or learning problems which they would not have done had the proper support been available.

Soon after the fieldwork at the secondary school began, it seemed that the initial hypothesis for the research was changing. Although intending to explore the experiences of children designated as having some form of SEN during the transition, and to compare these with those of the other children, several issues arose. The first was that, during the transfer to the 'new' school, *all* children had some kind of individual need, and this was not especially connected to lack of academic ability. Some of the children who were particularly able experienced more problems than those deemed to have SEN. The second, and most important for this thesis, was the apparent importance of the body to *all* children in respect of their social identity. Although previously aware of this, I had not focused on it overmuch, and the realisation came only gradually. I was bombarded with data that emphasised how reliant children are on possessing an 'average' body, how school staff control their charges through the use of the body, and how consequently children rebel and resist by using their body and bodily functions. Therefore, this aspect came to the fore during the fieldwork at the secondary school, and the importance of the impact of the actual transition receded into the background.

Interviews with children were held in an empty classroom during the lunch break, and this proved to be noisy due to other children playing outside. Interviews with school staff, who were extremely busy, were restricted to informal chats during breaks between lessons, with one eye on the clock and a realisation that the next session was imminent. Nonetheless, all of the staff were helpful and co-operative and interested in the study. I was allowed access to relevant confidential documents, and invited to meetings which discussed the problems of the children I was observing. However, as the fieldwork progressed, and as a direct result of these meetings, I became aware that I was becoming gradually more depressed. As someone who came from a fairly 'settled' family background, and who had experienced relatively few problems with her own children, I was jolted out of my cosy 'middle-class' complacency.

The situation of some of the children in the study was desperate. Many of them came from very poor backgrounds, with parents who had divorced and had often entered into new and sometimes multiple relationships. Many of the parents were single mothers, or were unemployed and struggling financially, or seemed to have lapsed into a fatalistic torpor. Sometimes a child was passed around from parent to estranged parent, often because one of them was unable to 'control' the child, whose self-esteem became increasingly dented, and whose subsequent behaviour deteriorated. One of the study group was subjected to continuous bullying, and was eventually prescribed medication for depression. Another boy, discussing the regular taunting he received from his peers, mainly due to his shabby appearance, told me, '*Sometimes I wish I'd never had a life*'. I deliberated whether I should take action, or remain the impassive observer. My natural optimism was tested on an almost daily basis, as I contemplated what appeared to be an almost innate cruelty of children towards each other. I was also conscious of the fact that, at the end of the fieldwork, I was able to walk away, whilst the children themselves were trapped in that situation, often with little hope of escape.

CONCLUSION

I completed the fieldwork at Christmas, and began to reflect on and analyse what I had observed and been told by the children themselves. I returned to the secondary school the following June, to ascertain how the children were progressing. I spent one day in each of the seven forms, again accompanying the children to lessons, and interviewing those in the study group during lunch breaks. After this final period of participant observation, I began the process of analysis in earnest. Although all was well at first, I again found myself sinking into depression, as the fieldnotes and personal memories of some children's experiences were revisited. Although attempting to distance myself from the children themselves and instead probe their behaviour and attitudes and the possible causes of these, I continue to be affected by thoughts of individual children[1]. However, this is not to say that the experience was wholly painful. On the contrary, most of the time spent with the children was a delight, as they welcomed me into their midst, related amusing anecdotes and teased me in a good-humoured but incisive manner. As Fine and Sandstrom contend:

> 'What better way in which to spend a second childhood than to spend it with those similar to those with whom one spent the first. While children are constructing their own worlds, they sometimes permit us to stand with them to enjoy the monuments they have made'.
> (1988:76-7)

This was certainly my experience, which proved to be one I shall never forget. Surveying the fieldwork from a distance, I realise that I have subsequently come to terms with the experience, which has shaped for me a quite political agenda with regard to childhood in general and SEN provision in particular.

The thesis now turns to the ethnographic chapters. According to Geertz:

> 'from one point of view, that of the textbook, doing ethnography is establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary, and so on. But it is not these things, techniques and received procedures, that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in ... "thick description"'.
>
> (1975:6)

Geertz contends that, although all of the above techniques are important, it is during analysis that material from ethnographic fieldwork displays the meanings of what was said and done. Conceptual or ideological accounts are created from the data - in this case, concepts of the child in relation to notions of disability and identity.

The next chapter looks first at the school setting itself, and the ways in which children are managed and controlled through the auspices of the body. It then explores how children utilise aspects of embodiment to resist and rebel against these attempts to control them.

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[1] This personally painful element of the study was recently brought once again into sharp relief, when I heard of the suicide of one of the children involved. By a remarkable coincidence, I subsequently found myself involved, through my work, with this child's family. Thus my research experience continues to haunt me.

CHAPTER 4

EMBODIMENT IN THE SCHOOL WORLD

This chapter argues that, due to its organisational and institutional structure, the school is a locus of discipline, control and power, some manifestations of which are more obvious and clear-cut than others. In the everyday life of the school, the most overt display of power is that of teaching staff in relation to pupils but, delving beneath the surface of school life, many other power relationships are revealed. Pupils, for example, possess the ability to resist their teachers and also to wield different forms of power over their peers; boys dominate girls and *vice versa*; and hierarchies of autonomy exist between pupils of varying age sets. 'Parent power' is a much-used catch-phrase in the current educational arena. Both national and local government agencies possess overarching powers to determine such fundamental issues as general educational policies and individual school budgets. What may not be immediately obvious, however, is the centrality of the body and bodily discourses to the power relations played out within schools. The argument underpinning this chapter will be that, although corporal punishment in schools has been abolished, nonetheless children's bodies are utilised by school staff to control and contain them within the structural space of the school. Furthermore, I will argue that, in direct response to these measures, and as a demonstration of their capacity for agency, children then draw upon their bodies in various ways to resist these attempts to constrain them.

Lukes (1974) argues that power itself has three dimensions or faces. The first view of power focuses on behaviour in decision making issues which involve a conflict of (subjective) interests. The second face of power does not concern decision making but rather concentrates upon non-decision making behaviour, where power may be used to prevent certain issues being discussed, or decisions about them taken. From this second point of view, power is exercised by preventing those involved from considering all possible courses of action, or by limiting the range of decisions they are able to make. The third face of power, according to Lukes, is exercised by shaping desires and manipulating the wishes of particular social groups, in order to persuade them to accept a situation which may be harmful to them. Lukes' definition of the concept of power, therefore, is that 'A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests' (1974:34). In other words, power is exercised over those whose interests are harmed in the process, whether or not they are aware that this is happening.

In the education system, children are of course subject to the first and second outward and obvious manifestations of power. However, it is the third face of Lukes' analysis which is most relevant to their situation and to this thesis, in that decisions about their education and the way in which it is delivered are largely made 'in their best interests', and on the (implicit) understanding that these decisions may sometimes go against their own wishes and desires. At the recent Annual Review for one of the children for whom I act as Named Person, a great deal of discussion took place between the child's mother and professionals involved in the 'case' - his teachers, the SEN staff, and an educational psychologist. After a process of going round in circles in an attempt to 'solve' this child's 'problems', it was tentatively suggested that the views of the child himself should be sought. At first this elicited horror; it was felt that the child, who was thought to be 'suffering' from ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) would scarcely be able to sit still in one place, let alone express an opinion about his situation. In the event, it was decided to invite him into the meeting. He entered the room quietly, sat down at the table, and proceeded to answer questions in a thoughtful and honest manner. Unfortunately, his honesty prompted unease amongst the 'experts'. Asked what he liked about school, he replied, *'Home time'*; asked about what he disliked most, the reply came, *'Having to come here'*. For this child, then, the education system had proved irrelevant, but voicing his opinions engendered unease amongst adult professionals. Is this the reason why, despite the exhortations of the Children Act (1989), we fail to consult children on their views, as the replies we receive might disturb our preconceived notions that our (adult-centred) actions are taken with their best interests in mind?

Schools are charged with many duties and demands in the name of society. According to Scraton (1997), their main function is to:

> 'socialize children towards legitimate adulthood; the state assumes *loco parentis*, transmits its message (the national curriculum) to a captive audience, and prepares its charges for social responsibility and work experience in society'.
>
> (1997:21)

As I argued in Chapter 2, schools are expected to 'civilise' children and to instil into them the necessary values which contribute towards social and cultural reproduction. In order to fulfil this role, schools require children to accept, without question, forms of discipline in schools. Children must also understand and accept that their capacity for agency is of necessity undermined by the power inherent in the system and granted to school staff. As I outlined in Chapter 1, conflict theorists such as Bowles and Gintis argue that, through the use of the hidden curriculum, children learn the rules governing the distribution of power within society. They also learn to recognise their place within the future material world of work, where unequal distributions of power exist. Postman and Weingartner (1971) outline some probable consequences, in terms of attitudes absorbed by children, of the hidden curriculum. Students may well learn that:

- Passive acceptance is a more desirable response to ideas than active criticism.
- Discovering knowledge is beyond the power of students and is, in any case, none of their business.
- Recall is the highest form of intellectual achievement, and the collection of unrelated 'facts' is the goal of education.
- The voice of authority is to be trusted and valued more than independent judgement.
- One's own ideas and those of one's classmates are inconsequential. Feelings are irrelevant in education.

- There is always a single, unambiguous Right Answer to a question.

(quoted in Meighan, 1986:67)

In other words, in the structural space of the school and through the system and its policies, the power belongs to the teachers; the child/pupil is powerless. If this is so, it begs the question: how do schools manage to succeed in containing the large majority of pupils within a system that detracts from their capacity for agency? Furthermore, why is the number of children rejecting the system, although on the increase, therefore not even greater than it currently is?

Corrigan (1979) explored this issue, and came to the conclusion that, for most of the boys involved in his research, there was no real acceptance of school values at any time. On the contrary, the crucial factor in explaining classroom interaction had much more to do with the power differential between staff and pupils, two groups of people who were at the school for very different reasons. The boys were only really there because they had to be. However, when asked about their feelings on returning to school after the holidays, 48 boys proclaimed they were glad to be returning, with only 44 not glad. These responses came as a surprise to Corrigan, although he went on to discover that, of the majority of boys claiming they were glad to be returning, only 10% expressed any pro-school sentiments. The rest spoke of the boredom of holidays and the attraction of friendships at school. However, the majority of the boys *were* involved in a set of power relations with the school and with the teachers; 54 of the total of 93 boys claimed that they looked forward to returning to school because they enjoyed 'mucking the teachers about' and 'carrying on' in class. This last represented:

> '*at one and the same time* taking no notice of the teacher, being aware of the teacher's power, and doing what the teacher doesn't want you to do. The only link between these three is that the boy is asserting his right, in the given power situation of the classroom, to take part in whatever action he feels like. That action is not dominated by values of a pro- or anti-school nature; instead it is about the power situation perceived and experienced in that school'.
>
> (1979:58, emphasis in original)

However, Corrigan does not place all of the 'blame' for this situation with the teachers themselves. On the contrary, he places them in the most difficult position, in that the education system in which they work has been:

> 'formed partly as an instrument to tie down working-class youth; [however] the evidence of these Smash Street Kids is that it doesn't work too well in this function in the present period. ... As long as the overall relationship between the working class and the state (that is that of subordination) remains the same then teachers will be placed in a position of power over their pupils'.
>
> (1979:152).

Wilson (J) and Cowell (1990) also perceive teachers as operating under a multitude of pressures: the fact that they have to work hard for little reward, and are under constant pressure, not only from pupils and 'society', but also from parents, local education authorities, inspectors, advisers, the demands of the examination and assessment system and educational theorists. However, Corrigan (1979) sees the force for change in the hands of the teachers themselves. He suggests that they need to educate and listen to the rest of the working class about educational issues, and that this can be done by including parents, community organisations and political parties in discussions about the whole nature of education in a capitalist society. More recently there have been moves towards this position, in that schools have become more open to parents, who are included in the life of particular schools, as are local community and business groups. Both schools involved in this research, for example, worked to involve parents and others in the community, but these initiatives were being undermined by other government strategies such as league tables and a reluctance to release adequate funding to schools. These topics will be discussed more fully elsewhere.

The notion of power and discipline within schools is underpinned by the idea that what is done to children in the name of education is being done 'in their best interests', even where this may not be apparent to children themselves. Control is therefore one side of a coin of which the other is the notion of 'care'. Although modern schools display some characteristics of the repressive nature of the Victorian school, nonetheless they also encompass the modern (child-centred) concepts of counselling and pastoral care. The notion that we should comply with the edicts of the Children Act (1989) by seeking out and complying with children's wishes is contradicted by the idea that children are vulnerable and in need of protection, often from themselves. J.S. Mill encapsulates the idea that it is ethically appropriate to deny children certain rights:

> 'The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised society, against his (sic) will, is to prevent harm to others. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinion of others, to do so would be wise or even right ... This doctrine is meant to apply only to human beings in the maturity of their faculties. We are not speaking of children or of young persons below the age which the law may fix as that of manhood or womanhood. Those who are still in a state to require being taken care of by others, must be protected against their own actions as well as against external injury'.
>
> (1975:10-11)

Mill's argument justifies the need to 'protect' children (from themselves) by denying them the right to engage in potentially harmful activities such as drinking alcohol, smoking or driving a car etc. Attendance at school is compulsory and children must do as they are told. In this respect we (society) are 'being cruel to be kind', and children will thank us in the fullness of time, when they are of an age and maturity to realise the long term benefits of education. Thus there is a justifiable need for children to remain powerless within the education system. However, this position has implications for children with SEN. If children as a group are deemed to be vulnerable and of necessity powerless in the education system, how much more powerless are those who, through no fault of their own, do not fit neatly into the system? The argument running through this thesis is that, although *all* children do demonstrate their capacity for competent social action, those whose bodies do not conform to the requirements of schools for an ordered 'body' of students may experience greater difficulties than their mainstream peers. If 'care' and protection (and the other side of the coin, control) is seen as necessary to protect *all* children in their vulnerability, how much more care and control is needed to protect those who are deemed to be 'extra' vulnerable?

These are the theories which underpin discipline systems within schools. As I argued in Chapter 2, power and control in schools is mediated through the use of the child's body. The next section will look at the ways in which these theories are translated into practice within the structural space of the school.

FORMS OF DISCIPLINE WITHIN SCHOOLS

I have argued that education is underpinned by the way in which institutional power is mediated through concepts of care and control. Children must be disciplined in order for them to be educated, a process which is undertaken in their long term best interests (even though they may not appreciate this fact at the time) and also to further social and cultural reproduction. So whilst they are being taught within a regime that focuses on control and constraint, they simultaneously receive pastoral support and, incidentally, a 'moral' education.

Wilson (J) offers a definition of discipline which he claims is of particular relevance to practical teaching, i.e. 'as an educational objective in its own right and not just as a facilitator for education. One might perhaps categorise it under moral or physical education' (1981:43). Watkins and Wagner (1987) take this idea a step further by arguing that considerations of discipline, whilst still engaging the whole school staff, should in the long term be placed squarely at the door of the pastoral team. Given that the broad aim of pastoral care is to help pupils to become well-rounded citizens who are able to benefit more widely from their school experience, the pastoral curriculum is one particular and broad aspect of pastoral care. To this end Watkins provides a thematic concept which emphasises developing aspects of the self as:

- the bodily self
- the sexual self
- the social self
- the vocational self
- the moral/political self
- the self as learner
- the organisational self

(1985, cited in Watkins and Wagner, 1987:141)

Using these themes to organise the content of the learning on offer through the pastoral curriculum in order to promote pupils' personal and social development and their success as learners in school would, according to Watkins and Wagner, have a powerful effect on pupil behaviour in school. Gilborn et al, in their study of discipline in five secondary schools, claim that within these schools discipline is not narrowly conceived as the imposition of rules by those in authority but is acknowledged to be an enabling and integrating principle: 'discipline is what links institutional purposefulness and orderliness with individual purposefulness and orderliness' (1993:110). By underlying the 'caring' aspect of institutional power, schools claim to espouse the principle that pupils receiving a pastoral and social education will not only become more well-rounded citizens with a further developed social awareness, they will also learn *self*-control and *self*-discipline.

Unfortunately, these measures are in direct opposition to the academic intent of schools, which focuses upon individual achievement and competition among pupils rather than group success. On the one hand, schools employ what Wolpe terms 'simple instruments of discipline' (1988:23), such as classroom registers, school assemblies and uniforms which oversee particular pupils and emphasise their belonging to the 'body' of the school. On the other hand, they adopt a 'normalising judgement' which involves the ranking and grading of pupils and 'marks the gaps, hierarchizes qualities, skills and aptitude, but ... also punishes and rewards' (Foucault, 1977:181). In the school setting, these judgements are effected by the National Curriculum, streaming, setting, the allocation of marks and, ultimately, the examination system. These judgements assess pupils and reduce them to, in Foucault's words, a coherent 'normative order', which sets pupils in competition with each other and values their ability to achieve academically over their potential to develop as well-rounded citizens.

The next section will explore the specific ways in which power in schools is mediated through non-verbal communication and the control of pupils' bodies, which are moved around in time and space according to a set timetable orchestrated through a system of bells and buzzers.

Controlling the use of space and time

Jenks points out that 'clearly the implementation of discipline at the societal level cannot be random and spontaneous, it requires a number of concerted strategies to ensure a uniform application and result' (1996:73). He then convincingly outlines the manner in which children's bodies in general are disciplined through the exercise and manipulation of time and space, whereby 'the whole being of a child is delineated and paced according to a timetable' (1996:76). Children's bodies are controlled by being placed into specific places - the bedroom, the car, the dining-room, the classroom - and by their bodily functions ordered into specific time slots - ablution, nutrition, excretion and exercise. The underlying intent of the school curriculum, which orders the spatial and temporal lives of children, is therefore to ensure that schools are inhabited by 'docile bodies' (Foucault, 1977).

The school timetable, or 'time-space path' (Gordon, 1996), is aimed at maintaining the correct use of space, and directing pupils to appropriate spaces at designated times. It determines the location of any particular pupil at any one time, and orders the movement of cohorts of pupils through the school building from one classroom/lesson to the next. School rules dictate how students should comport themselves, and a considerable number of these rules revolve around notions of spatiality, time and embodiment. Rules and practices that constitute the 'curriculum of the body' (Lesko, 1988) detail what kind of embodiment is acceptable (you must not run, you must not chew gum etc.). Hargreaves (D) (1978) graphically illustrates the way in which the 'paracurriculum' (or 'hidden' curriculum) is mediated through the use of space in schools as 'both a symbolic expression of, and as a mechanism for creating and maintaining, the power relation that exists between teachers and pupils' (1978:101). He notes that Sommer (1969) details the way in which:

> 'the straight rows tell the student to look ahead and ignore everyone except the teacher; the students are jammed so tightly together that psychological escape, much less physical separation, is impossible. The teacher has fifty times more free space than the students, with the mobility to move about. He writes important messages on the board with his back to the students. The august figure can rise and walk about among the lowly who lack the authority even to stand without explicit permission'.
>
> (Sommer, 1969, quoted in Hargreaves, 1978)

School assemblies are also used to communicate power and authority to pupils. They enter the hall to solemn (or to what was explained to me as 'calming') music, and they are expected to sit, on the floor, in rows, with the youngest at the front and the oldest at the rear. The head teacher stands at the front, and the rest of the staff are ranged around the sides of the room, on chairs, where they are able to police their charges and deal immediately with 'inappropriate' behaviour. Miscreants are silenced with a 'look' (see also Chapter 5) or a verbal reprimand, whilst those who continue to misbehave are made to stand, thus ensuring their increased visibility.

Hargreaves (1978) notes how space in schools is divided into discrete territories, and that pupils are quickly made aware that it is the staff who 'own' these territories. Even 'joint' areas such as classrooms are usually termed 'my room' by teachers, who also have free access to what might be seen as the closest equivalent to pupils' own space, the lavatories. Activities carried out in other 'joint' areas, such as the dining room, are also subject to regulation. Pupils enter the room in designated sittings, stand in line to collect their food, and are policed throughout their lunch break by teachers and midday supervisors. Most modern secondary schools have abolished cloakrooms, so pupils do not possess even a peg or locker of their own, and so must carry coats, books and equipment around the school with them. Wherever they are, pupils are subject to surveillance and control, even in the playground during breaks, and must be seen to be 'going somewhere' at all times, rather than simply loitering with or without intent.

Holly (1973) describes how conventional secondary schools adopt one of two variations on the use of space, according to whether or not pupils are 'streamed' for specific subjects:

> 'The first approach, adopted where the personnel of teaching groups tends to change for different subject sets, may be termed the 'pupil-nomadic' approach. Under this system groups of pupils move about the school from one lesson to the next, forming and reforming according to the subject set in which they find themselves. In a large, glass-walled, multi-storey comprehensive school this periodic migration can take on awe-inspiring dimensions with myriads of uniformly-attired ants moving purposefully and apparently instinctually at the buzzing of a bell. ... The second approach to the accommodation of teaching groups is older and typifies schools where the form, however narrowly or broadly streamed, is taught together for all academic subjects. This may be termed the 'staff-nomadic' approach. The pupils remain in their own form room and await, more or less patiently, the arrival of the subject specialist. The only movement of pupils is for subjects that that absolutely require specialist rooms, like science and physical education, or during free times'.
>
> (1973:14)

With respect to time, Holly argues that it is carefully 'parcelled out' between subject departments into sections of thirty-five or forty minute periods and governed by the automated buzzing of bells between each period, with the end result resembling an elaborate game such as ice-hockey. Consequently, human relationships tend to be governed by games-like considerations which derive from a fundamental alienation of the whole educational process. These time divisions place important constraints on the flow of time and the learning process itself. Hargreaves (1978) indicates that time must be spent wisely and not wasted, and that the use of buzzers and bells[1] to divide up the work day, with 'breaks' sandwiched in between, teaches children to distinguish between work and play; lessons are work times taking place in work rooms (classrooms), whereas play takes place at playtime in its own appointed place, the playground. From my own observations in schools, I would add that, although 'work' sometimes occurs during playtime (i.e. computer or special interest clubs and societies), play, in the form of chatting or 'messing about', must never be allowed to encroach upon work time. The very concept of 'messing about', which teachers draw upon frequently, insinuates mess or disorder spilling into the ordered space and time of the classroom. According to Hargreaves (1978), the 'paracurriculum' thus prepares the pupil for the world of work in factories or offices, which may be punctuated by 'clocking on and off'.

Hargreaves claims that not all classroom management adheres to the above, as more 'progressive' or 'open' classrooms attempt to distribute power more equitably. The assignment of seats at the beginning of the academic year can be a symbolic act which sets the scene of future power relations. The teacher may allocate seats or allow the pupils to choose and change their seats at will, and may decide to abandon their own desk at the front of the room. Time may be allocated for pupils' own use. At the secondary school used during fieldwork, one member of staff occasionally allowed pupils 'free' use of the twenty minutes registration time, although there were still restrictions on 'unnecessary' movement and noise. Within the 'Assertive Discipline' system (see below), groups complying with the rules were allowed 'free' lessons during which they could choose their own activities such as videos or games instead of the usual subject lesson. However, although designated as 'free' lessons, again the parameters were determined by the teachers.

These are the strategies of the hidden curriculum, it is argued, that are used by schools to enforce institutional power. Children's bodies are manoeuvred throughout the structural space of the school, and discipline is enforced through the use of rules and regulations pertaining to children's embodiment. The chapter will now look at the specific strategies used by the two schools studied during the fieldwork phase.

DISCIPLINE AT LITTLEFIELDS AND GREATFIELDS SCHOOLS

LITTLEFIELDS SCHOOL

The Behaviour/Discipline Policy at Littlefields School (the primary school in the study) was intended to reflect the school's standards of required behaviour and discipline and their application. According to the policy, 'the traditional view of discipline as "law and punishment" is only part of this school's standards of discipline' (School document 1). Discipline was viewed as a positive, whole-school aspect which reflected the general ethos and attitude of the school, its staff, pupils, parents and governors. In order to ensure their safety and well-being, and in order to educate them to their full potential, children were expected to fulfil certain expectations as they were nurtured towards *self*-discipline. The Discipline Policy was linked to, and informed by, the Personal and Social Education (PSE) Policy, which referred to the school as 'a disciplined environment in which children are responsible for their actions whilst being sensitive to the needs of others' (School document 2). As I argued above, care and control are deemed to be two sides of the same coin, and this was demonstrated by the fact that the Discipline Policy at this school was linked to the PSE Policy.

Children at the school were subject to classroom rules which, it is suggested in the above document (1), should be established by teachers in consultation with pupils. It was expected that:

1) children will enter the classroom sensibly and quietly, and will go straight to their desks to commence work.

2) children will remain silent throughout registration and answer politely to their names.

3) children will remain silent when the teacher talks to the whole class.

4) children will sit up and on all four legs of their chair.

5) if a question is asked, children will raise their hands to answer.

6) children will respect others' property and ask before borrowing.

7) children will work sensibly, be polite and show consideration to fellow pupils.

8) there will be a quiet working atmosphere.

9) at the end of lessons children will await instructions from the teacher.

10) chairs will be put under desks, work areas left tidy and children will leave quietly and in an orderly fashion.

Rewards, whether in the form of star charts or simple positive praise, were given 'in recognition of desirable qualities, both academic or social'. Sanctions were used to discourage anti-social behaviour such as bullying, swearing, running or shouting in school, spitting, racial abuse, theft and vandalism. These sanctions operated on a sliding scale of severity for increasingly serious misdemeanours. For less serious offences, children may be reprimanded, moved to a different place or 'sin-bin', deprived of privileges such as playtime or given additional work. If their behaviour did not improve, staff may isolate them from their peer group, invite their parents into school for discussion, send them to the deputy head and ultimately to the headteacher. Excessive poor behaviour was noted by the headteacher in a 'behaviour book'. Here the implicit assumption was that this applied only to 'bad' behaviour, as 'good' behaviour normally allows the child to remain 'invisible'. Possession of a 'behaviour book' could lead to parental involvement, detention, Report 1 (on which a pupil had comments written after each lesson and reported with it to the headteacher) or Report 2 (as above but sent home for parents to sign). As a last resort, children were temporarily and then permanently excluded from the school. Paradoxically, excluded children (and their peers) often saw this as a reward, rather than a punishment, in that children who had transgressed were removed altogether from the discipline and control of the school and allowed, in their words, '*to play out all day*'.

As can be seen from the above, almost all of the rules for expected behaviour revolved around the notion of children being expected to develop control of their own bodies. In order for members of staff to be able to teach effectively, pupils must learn to enter and leave classrooms in a quiet, orderly fashion, refrain from shouting out in response to a question (an action which it was noted during fieldwork was especially frowned upon), sit up straight and generally behave in a 'civilised' manner. 'Uncivilised' behaviour was punished by the removal of the child's body from his/her desk, the classroom, the playground, and ultimately, the school itself. So education forms part of a system which sees childhood as a period of control and passivity, during which the child's body is 'finished' and admitted into adult society, and society's expectation of the education system is that of transforming children from 'natural' to 'cultured' individuals, and from 'savage' to 'civilised' beings (Elias, 1978, 1982).

Pupils at Littlefields School were generally taught by one teacher for all subjects, although at the time the fieldwork was undertaken staff were carrying out an experiment in 'streaming' (which can also be seen as a mechanism of control). During one English lesson, the most and least able pupils in each of the two Year 6 groups were withdrawn into a separate group and taught by a different teacher. Also, during one Maths lesson, the lesser able children were withdrawn and taught by the headteacher. The school day was divided into subject blocks and punctuated by the ringing of a hand-bell (which was carried out by one of the older pupils according to a rota). Each of the two Year 6 groups occupied their own classroom, which was used for all lessons apart from Assembly and PE (which took place in the Hall), music (a separate music room which housed the school's instruments) and games (the school field). Pupils had their own coat peg and an adjoining space for shoes, PE gear etc. adjacent to the classroom, and this space was used, along with the classroom walls, to display examples of their work. The school Hall was also used as a dining-room.

Pupils were expected to move from area to area in orderly lines. After meal or play breaks, they had to line up in the playground and enter the school in a quiet manner ready to begin work. On one occasion, pupils entered the classroom in an unsatisfactory manner, i.e. '*messing about and talking*', according to the teacher, so they were made to practice lining up, and then to go outside and return in the 'proper' manner. The teacher commented: '*when the school first started lining up, everyone was jealous of this class because you were so good at it, but now you are the worst class of all*'. Thus there was an element of competition between the respective forms as to which one comported itself correctly. Teachers frequently moved those pupils who transgressed during lessons, especially through shouting out answers rather than raising their hands, from their desks to sit upon the carpet area in the corner of the classroom, thereby using distance to achieve control. Repeated misdemeanours resulted in pupils being removed from the classroom altogether and sent to stand outside the headteacher's room to be dealt with by him.

It was evident during observation at the school that much of the behavioural expectation was conveyed to pupils through the vehicle of morning assemblies, which often took the form of moral discourses focusing on aspects of embodiment and spatiality. Whole school assemblies were held four times weekly and great emphasis was placed on the manner that children entered and left the hall. They were expected to enter and stand quietly, and to wait to be told to sit down, after which they should sit still and wait to be addressed with their eyes facing to the front. Pupils seen to be talking were often instructed to stand, thus ensuring their conspicuity. When the assembly had ended, children were required to stand quietly and wait in lines until it was their turn to leave.

The service itself began with the singing of a hymn, after which the children were addressed usually by either the headteacher or deputy head. These 'sermons' generally took the form of either a story with a moral ending, a fable illustrating the triumph of good over evil, and occasionally short playlets acted out by a group of the children themselves. One such playlet was in two scenes. The first depicted the correct way to behave during lunch-time, with children sitting and 'eating' properly and holding a conversation, and the second showing the 'wrong' way to conduct themselves; shouting, pushing each other around and eating in an uncivilised manner. On other occasions, anecdotes were used to demonstrate 'difference' and disability, and the fact that the school would not tolerate children using insults such as 'spaz' or 'spazzy' (i.e. verbal indiscipline), or any kind of racial intolerance. The headteacher reiterated that '*one school rule is that there is no racial abuse, jokes or references to colour*'. To reinforce this last point, he commented on the fact that the school provides financial support for a young boy in Africa, and that he is improving in his school work, which is probably due in no small way to the help he receives from the efforts of Littlefields schoolchildren.

During these assemblies, personal safety in relation to the body was also constantly emphasised, such as the inadvisability of playing near electricity pylons, and the need to exercise caution when crossing the road. Transgressions in behaviour were often dealt with during assembly, such as the occasion on which money and a drinks carton were discovered to be missing from pupils' bags in the cloakroom, or when children were involved in fighting in the playground. This last was a particular problem with boys, who indulged in what they called 'toy' fighting. The headteacher stressed that this could be equally as dangerous as 'real' fighting. On one occasion a child had been kicked three centimetres from his eye. The headteacher warned: '*the perpetrator could have had the loss of someone's sight on his conscience for life*'. He emphasised that the next act of aggression would lead to detention for the culprit, and if the same person was aggressive on a second occasion, s/he would be excluded. He reiterated that the playground was intended for *play*, and was not a boxing arena. At a later date, a pupil who attended a local judo club gave a demonstration. Again it was emphasised that this was an appropriate use of controlled force, carried out in an appropriate place, which was not the school playground. Finally, during assemblies, reminders were often issued about school dress, and the fact that some boys were gradually introducing the wearing of football shirts and shorts, which were deemed as inappropriate forms of school wear (i.e. linked to 'play' rather than 'work'). Through these examples it is clear that children's bodies are perceived by school staff as active agents which need to be tamed and disciplined, both with regard to behaviour and appearance. Children as a whole are perceived as making up the 'body' of the school, whereas the individual body of the pupil (and by implication the way it dresses and behaves) is seen to represent the school itself.

GREATFIELDS SCHOOL

As the children transferred from the primary to the secondary school, it became obvious that the secondary school also employed strategies of bodily control. There was no radical difference in their intentions, although some of the content differed. The Pupils' Handbook for Greatfields School declares that:

> 'we expect our pupils to work hard, to behave well and to take full advantage of the opportunities which are available to them. ... In some departments a system called Positive Discipline operates. Lists of rewards and 'negative consequences' are displayed in classrooms to ensure that pupils are left in no doubt about our expectations. Pupils may 'earn' rewards for co-operating and for displaying a high level of commitment to their work. ... Conversely, pupils who choose to misbehave can expect to receive punishments on an escalating scale. ... The best kind of discipline is self-discipline and we encourage our pupils to display positive attitudes and behaviour'.
>
> (p.23)

The concept of Assertive Discipline is derived primarily from the work of Lee Canter and is outlined in his (1976) work, *Assertive Discipline: A Take-Charge Approach for Today's Educator*. It is related to, and informed by, the practice of Assertion Training, where the focus is on three general response styles of individuals: non-assertive, assertive and hostile. A non-assertive (or passive) response style is one where individuals do not clearly express their wants or feelings, nor do they reinforce their words with the necessary positive action. A hostile response style is one whereby individuals do express their wants and feelings, but in a manner which humiliates others or abuses their rights. In contrast, by utilising an assertive response style, an individual is able to both express wants and feelings and reinforce these with positive action if necessary.

In 'Assertive Discipline' these ideas are transposed into the classroom, in order to enable teachers to meet their own needs and wants, as well as benefiting students. Canter (1976) claims that a teacher can need a quiet classroom as much as a child can want to talk, or that a teacher can need a child to remain in his/her seat as much as that child can want to wander around the room. A teacher therefore has the right to ask for these things. However, because the role status of the teacher has declined in recent years (Neill and Caswell, 1993), s/he can no longer take for granted the respect of pupils. This has to be earned and can be achieved by the teacher clearly and assertively setting the parameters of what s/he expects from the child and what the child can expect in return from him/her. Consequently teachers are urged to determine the kinds of behaviours (usually up to five) expected from pupils that will enable them (the teachers) to function to their full potential. These behaviours, and the rewards for compliance, are displayed in the classroom along with a list of escalating sanctions for non-adherence to the 'rules'. It is suggested that rewards can include raffles, end-of-term parties or 'free' lessons (when pupils can play games, watch a video or listen to music). The most frequently used method of reinforcing satisfactory pupil responses is that of 'Marbles in a Jar'. When the class is behaving in the manner which the teacher wishes, s/he drops a marble into a glass jar. This produces a sound which lets pupils know not only that they are behaving well but also that the teacher recognises this fact. When the jar is full of marbles, the class has earned one of the aforementioned rewards. Many of the subject departments at the school were utilising the Assertive Discipline approach (see below).

Controlling the use of time and space

Whereas the timetable at Littlefields had been relatively 'fluid', and determined to some extent by the teacher, the school day at Greatfields was divided into blocks of thirty five minute lessons. Pupils often had 'double' lessons which spread over two periods. The end of each teaching period was signalled by the ringing of an electronic bell as against the hand bell rung by senior pupils at Littlefields. Pupils were taught in form groups by subject specialists in English, History, Geography, Religious Studies, Drama, Music and Art. They followed a 'rolling programme' with other form groups which covered subjects such as Craft and Technology (CT), Food Studies, Information Technology (IT) and Physical Education (PE). They also had one lesson per week of PSE, where they discussed (usually moral) aspects of smoking, drug use, sexuality and traffic awareness. Aspects of personal safety and health were also stressed here. Pupils were 'streamed' by ability in Maths, French and Science in groups that were decided upon before their arrival and based on the results of their SATs and the opinions of their primary school teachers. After a few weeks, many children were moved into lower ability groups as it was felt that they were not coping well in their present group. This appeared to cause a certain amount of distress to some of the children in the study group. However, when questioned, staff claimed that pupils would eventually realise that this was for their own good, and that it was better for their self-confidence not to have to struggle with a particular subject. This was another example of children being put into positions that are perceived to be 'in their best interests', although distressing for the children and damaging to their self-esteem.

The school used a 'pupil-nomadic' approach (Holly, 1973), with pupils moving around the building to specific subject areas. Consequently, during breaks between lessons, large numbers of pupils were moving between areas. To alleviate potential congestion, Year 7 pupils (including the children in the study group) were not allowed to use certain corridors and areas of the school, as these were designated for the movement of older year groups. During fieldwork, it was noticeable that acts of resistance to school rules and unkindness to other pupils occurred mostly in these relatively unsupervised, interstitial areas. On the unavoidable occasions when year groups were obliged to use the same corridors, year 7 pupils, especially those of small stature, were often knocked into, sometimes apparently deliberately, by older pupils.

One important aspect regarding the use of space at the school was that, unlike at the primary school, children had no space that was theirs alone. Each form had a designated classroom where they met for registration, but this was for only twenty minutes every morning and ten minutes every afternoon. After registration, these rooms reverted to subject area classrooms. Pupils did not have their own pegs or lockers, and consequently had nowhere in which to leave their coats, bags, PE or baking equipment. As a result, they were forced to carry all of their possessions around the school with them. During a day on which their timetable included PE, Music or Food Studies, or possibly all three, some pupils often struggled to carry their PE kit including a towel for showers, a musical instrument, and ingredients for cookery, together with exercise books, text books, and writing equipment[2].

During fieldwork at the secondary school, it was noticeable that pupils tended to set great store by some of their possessions, particularly their school bags, and items of stationery such as pencil cases, pens, rubbers, pencil sharpeners etc. It was an almost daily feature of the fieldwork that one of the children would show me one such item and ask for my opinion, especially if it was newly acquired. However, in the secondary school, the most important item of equipment appeared to be the school bag, which seemed to take on an identity of its own to most of the children[3]. In the absence of any other space of their own, the bag became the repository of the child's identity. A fieldnote makes this point:

> 'Patrick pointed out that he had a new bag. It now appears the fashion amongst the boys to have 'boot bags' with the name of their favourite football team emblazoned all over them. These bags appear to be far too small for the amount of books and equipment they have to hold, so the boys are cramming everything into them'.

Most of the boys at the school were fanatical in their support of particular football teams, so the bag as a signifier of their identity was more important than the amount of equipment it could hold.

When asked about the fact that pupils had no space of their own, the headteacher replied that the school had abolished the use of personal lockers due to vandalism and theft. He also defended the use of the 'pupil-nomadic' approach as being necessary in contemporary schools due to areas being subject-specific and the increased use of technology. Most subject areas had their own specialised equipment and many teachers used computers and videos as teaching tools. It was therefore impossible for staff to move around the school, and pupils were required to move to particular subject areas. However, the headteacher did acknowledge that Year 7 pupils had no special place of their own within the school, and promised to look into the feasibility of providing them with such a space.

Bodily Control

From the first day at the secondary school, pupils were made aware that, as at the primary school, bodily control and compliance was paramount. During their first assembly, their Year Co-ordinator reiterated the rules that they should follow at all times. They should stand in quiet orderly lines outside form rooms and act in a responsible manner, enter in *civilised* single file (Elias, 1978, 1982), sit sensibly on chairs with all four legs on the ground and sit in silence while the register was taken. As they progressed to each new lesson, they were presented with another set of rules, all of which formed part of the school's policy of Assertive Discipline (see above), and which related to aspects of bodily self-control, e.g.

1. Obey instructions/follow directions.
2. No shouting out or speaking without permission.
3. Keep your hands, feet and objects to yourself.
4. Stay in your seat unless you have permission to move.
5. No chewing.

Some subject areas, such as the Art department, used a more positive approach to discipline. Rather than displaying a list of activities in which pupils should *not* engage, they emphasised what they termed the 'Do be's' (do be nice, do be friendly, do be attentive etc.) Along with each set of rules was a list of negative and positive sanctions which would follow if pupils either contravened or adhered to these guidelines. Failure to conform resulted in a pre-determined set of consequences, i.e.

First transgression	a warning
Second "	name on the board and five minutes detention
Third "	ten minutes detention
Fourth "	sent out, parents contacted, twenty minutes detention
Fifth "	sent to foyer, dealt with by senior management, forty minutes detention.

Here it can be seen how pupils who transgressed the rules of the bodily curriculum were subjected to a hierarchy of punishments which led to them becoming increasingly 'visible'. Okely (1978) describes how the pupils in her research received 'punishment by exposure'. Girls with the 'right' attitude to authority were rewarded by being allowed to merge into the group, whilst those who transgressed received a 'disobedience' or 'late' mark, the reason for which was read out in front of the whole school, and emblazoned on the notice board for all to see. Those discovered to be talking whilst lining up for meals were made to stand in the main passage with their backs to the rest of the school, but conspicuous to all. Alternatively, they were forced to stand in the aisle of the dining-room, remain standing while the rest ate their meal or, the ultimate humiliation, to stand on high-table, again with back turned but wretchedly

visible. As at the primary school, children who were misbehaving at Greatfields school were moved to the front of the room, or in the case of serious or repeated episodes of bad behaviour, outside the classroom altogether. During a PE lesson, two boys who were fighting were made to stand in opposite corners of the gymnasium with their faces to the wall, again demonstrating the way in which teachers move children around in space to enforce discipline and control.
Under the 'Assertive Discipline' programme, first, second and third transgressions, although they resulted in pupils being made more conspicuous to their fellow pupils, were punished in a private, non-visible manner which exercised bodily control via the removal of pupils' time control. Following fourth and fifth transgressions, however, pupils were punished by having their bodies gradually made more visible. A fourth instance of misbehaviour entailed pupils being sent to stand outside the classroom, on view to those in adjoining classrooms and passing members of staff. On committing a further misdemeanour, they would be sent to the school foyer. This meant that they would be made visible not only to all members of staff but also to any visitors to the school. Thus their bodies were gradually made more visible as they were moved from relatively private to public space.

Any further transgressions led to pupils being placed 'on report'. This entailed the use of different coloured report cards, relating to the severity of the misbehaviour, which were presented to each teacher for their comments at the end of the lesson. On the other hand, those pupils who adhered to the rules received a different 'good behaviour' stamp in their diaries at the end of the lesson. When totalled, the stamps eventually led to rewards such as raffles or 'free lessons' when pupils were allowed to play games or watch a videotape of their own choice. Teachers of lessons involving a 'practical' element and/or experiments, such as drama, music, design and technology or science, were able to utilise an extra dimension to elicit good behaviour. Teachers in these lessons would intimate that all practical work would cease unless pupils remained quiet and attentive. Additionally, pupils would be compelled to undertake theoretical or written work, thus being punished by exercising their minds and restricting their ability to exercise greater bodily freedom and take part in activities which they obviously enjoyed.

As at the primary school, messages about the propriety of behaviour and appearance were often conveyed during the assemblies at Greatfields School. Pupils in Year 7 attended two assemblies per week; once as a year group and once with pupils from Year 8. Again, the emphasis was on entering in a silent, well-behaved manner, sitting quietly during the assembly, and leaving the hall in silence. Occasionally, control was exercised through the use of repetition. Pupils were instructed to sit down, then stand up again and repeat the procedure if they were considered not to have performed it in a suitable manner. As at the primary school, the main reason given for most of the rules and regulations was a concern for the health and safety of pupils' bodies. The headteacher stressed that many areas of the school presented hazards for pupils: science laboratories contained dangerous chemicals, in corridors pupils were at risk of being crushed, and staircases and stairwells presented many problems, caused mainly by pupils themselves e.g. dropping heavy bags from the top landings could kill another pupil, and spitting down the stairwells could cause other pupils to slip. Children would see notices around the school advising which pupils were allowed to go into which areas. This was to alleviate the possibility that pupils would be crushed due to the sheer volume of numbers. The headteacher emphasised that they must obey these notices at all times: '*If there is an accident, I will have to send for the caretaker to clean you off the floor*'.

Through these small everyday examples, it can be seen that discipline was enforced by expressing a concern for pupil safety. Children's disordered bodies are perceived as 'dangerous' and troublesome agents which must be controlled, especially in interstitial areas such as corridors and staircases where surveillance by teachers is, of necessity, enforced to a lesser degree than more formal areas such as classrooms. Due to their inability to resort to *corporal* punishment to control children, school staff are forced to utilise a real or supposed concern with the welfare of pupils' actual *bodies*, i.e. a different kind of control, to enforce discipline.

One aspect of this concern with children's bodies involves enforcing discipline by appealing to their 'better natures', or to what is 'better' than nature, the social. On one occasion, two boys had been sent to the headteacher after they had persisted in dropping their bags from the top floor of the staircase. In their absence, their form tutor informed their classmates that:

> *'throwing bags down is dangerous, as a bag weighing one and a half pounds dropped down forty feet would be doing a hundred and twenty miles per hour at the bottom. If anyone was hit on the head it would be extremely dangerous. ... If you break the rules, you will get grassed up so fast it will make your eyes water. People grass you up because it's their safety that's in question. It's foolish to expect to get away with it and* [the headteacher] *has laid it on the line clearly, it's not just teachers being killjoys'.*

By using the pupils' own terms of reference, and pointing out that such constraints were for their own safety and not simply idle whims on the part of teaching staff, the form tutor was appealing to the pupils' sense of fair play and attempting to make the rules appear reasonable in their eyes.

The need for 'docile bodies' in the school setting is clear from fieldnotes which point to numerous occasions on which pupils were exhorted to exercise bodily control: *'Sit up and sit still, eyes to the front, button your mouths, pin back your ears, engage your brains, calm down and listen'.* Time and space are constantly utilised in the control of unruly bodies. At both schools, children were warned that if they misbehaved, wasted time, and failed to finish their work during the allotted time-span, they would be kept inside during break or lunch periods, in their 'own' time, to complete assignments or to write out lines as a punishment. Those children who disobeyed the rules were also subjected to a form of bodily control which removed them from the 'normal' space occupied by their peers and transferred them to an 'outside' space. Evidently only docile bodies are permitted to remain invisible. Bodies that are unruly and do not conform are made visible by being placed out of 'normal' time and space, which has important implications for those children with SEN, whose unruly bodies may be beyond their control.

Bodily control through dress

Although in the past pupils at both schools were allowed to wear any clothing they wished within certain defined limits, recent years (possibly as a result of Thatcherism) have seen the introduction of specific rules concerning school dress. These were introduced in an attempt to outlaw certain excesses which it was felt had crept in, and also to alleviate the bullying of pupils whose parents were unable or unwilling to provide them with items such as 'designer' clothes. Consequently both schools operated a well-defined dress policy, including jewellery, and it was evident during fieldwork that great emphasis was placed on pupils' embodiment and self-presentation. Pupils' individuals bodies were seen as representing the 'body' of the school, and so were expected to conform to a particular designated image. Both schools had their own logo, which was emblazoned on books and uniform.

Attempted deviations from the policy were dealt with promptly. Pupils at the junior school were reprimanded for incorrect clothing, although they were never sent home. At the secondary school, however, unsuitable clothing was only tolerated on the basis that school wear was being laundered and the clothing worn was only temporary for that day. Pupils were expected to produce an explanatory note from the parent, and a form was issued to the pupil to present to members of staff who queried their attire. Shirts must be tucked into trousers or skirts at all times, one rule which many boys encountered difficulty in adhering to, especially after breaks when they had been playing football in the playground. On entering the classroom with their shirt tails outside of their trousers, they were repeatedly admonished by teachers to 'tuck' their shirts in. Pupils at both schools were expected not to wear make-up or nail varnish, and only small stud earrings were allowed. These had to be fitted during the long summer break so that they could be removed for PE lessons as a safety measure; alternatively, they had to be covered with sticking plaster. Hair braids and plastic 'friendship bands' were not to be worn. It was expected then, that children's bodies, as well as conforming physically, should literally appear as uniform as possible and refrain from displaying any signs of individuality, despite the fact that in academic matters - matters of the mind - children are continually encouraged to achieve individual success (see above).

So it can be seen that discipline is maintained in schools through the use of many diverse strategies to control children's bodies. Their behaviour and appearance are monitored in order to ensure that they 'fit into' the uniform body of the school. However, this view of the education system as purely passive fails to take account of the agency of children (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998), and the manner in which children can resist attempts by teaching staff to regulate their bodies. Following Gordon (1996), it became evident that because discipline was enforced through correct embodiment, the cultural emphasis on the fragility, sickness or 'wild nature' of children's bodies was often invoked by children themselves to circumvent school rules. Pupils were only formally allowed to contravene the normal 'time-space path' if they were able to show, with corroboration from their parents, that they were subject to certain illnesses or bodily conditions. For example, children were not allowed to visit the lavatory during lessons (c.f. Mayall 2000) unless they could present a note stating that they had a bladder 'problem'; similarly, girls who were menstruating could avoid showers at the end of a PE lesson only if they possessed such a note. One boy who had recently undergone chemotherapy for leukaemia and had experienced hair loss was allowed to wear a cap, thus contravening the usual dress code. Children whose parents claimed that they were allergic to chemicals in the swimming baths were able to forgo swimming lessons (although there was some doubt cast on the validity of this claim). Similarly, participation in games, PE and drama lessons could be avoided by the presence of illness or medical problems. However, teachers usually worked on the basis that if children were well enough to attend school, they were well enough to participate in these lessons, and one teacher remarked: '*It is no good saying that you can't do PE because you've got a blister or a boil on your bottom. If you want to be excused I expect to at least see a piece of pot* (i.e. plaster of Paris) *or something serious*'. Minor conditions such as rashes or verrucas were not considered serious enough to facilitate a pupil missing lessons, and children's access to the sick role (Parsons, 1951) was sometimes in question (Prout, 1986).

However, by far the greatest form of resistance to authority by pupils manifested itself in an informal manner, by way of relatively small acts of defiance which involved the use of their bodies, bodily functions or waste products. Hebdige has commented that 'the challenge to hegemony which subcultures represent is not issued directly by them. Rather it is expressed obliquely, in style' (1979:17). Both boys and girls habitually flouted the dress code by wearing plastic 'friendship bands' on their wrists, sometimes up to a dozen on each arm, and these were a source of contention amongst the staff. However, it became evident after the transition that the use of the body as a source of power and resistance was gendered. Whereas girls generally resorted to more covert forms of resistance such as bodily adornment which contravened school rules on dress, boys were more likely to use their bodies as an instrumental source of rebellion, especially those boys designated by others as the 'Hard Boys'. These pupils were often in trouble with teaching staff due to their tendency to fight, misbehave and generally disrupt lessons. 'Hardness' was deemed by pupils as being both a male and a female characteristic, although boys were more likely to be designated as 'hard', with the alternative category of 'Boffin' (studious, hardworking and/or clever) more likely to be assigned to girls. 'Hard Boys' usually lost no opportunity in disrupting proceedings at the secondary school by: belching, breaking wind, spitting, pulling faces, yawning, snoring, coughing in an exaggerated fashion, pretending to sneeze loudly, making noises with their mouths or hands, drumming their fingers on the table, and shuffling their bodies on chairs causing them to squeak. Occasionally, pupils in the 'Hard Girls'' faction would also use some of these tactics, but to a much lesser extent. A fieldnote demonstrates pupils' ability to interrupt the teacher's flow and disrupt a science lesson:

> As we enter the laboratory, Mrs. Carter says that some of the group will have to be moved around to different parts of the classroom, ostensibly so that they are better able to see the board, but I think it is probably an attempt to split up the more troublesome element. She says that Simon will have to move, so Simon says, '*All right, I'll move*', and moves his stool two inches to the right. George is sprawled out on the workbench, and Mrs. Carter tells him not to lie on the bench but to sit up. He does so, but starts rocking on his stool to make it squeak. Freddy makes a big thing out of breaking wind, so George holds his nose and makes a performance out of moving away from the smell. Simon is told to sit up and take his face out of his hands.

After previously identifying the disruptive element in the group, Mrs. Carter had planned a strategy to separate them and thereby to stamp her authority on the lesson. However, by their embodied use of space, the boys sabotaged her efforts to control them, and a large section of the lesson was lost as she attempted to bring the class back to order.

Boys were also adept at manipulating space by utilising their bodies or bodily functions to remove themselves either from lessons or from the space they had been allotted, occasionally even injuring their bodies. At the primary school, during a music lesson which he disliked, Billy deliberately stabbed himself with a pencil, drawing blood, and was forced to leave the lesson and visit the nurse. Also at the primary school, the children were sitting on the carpet for a lesson, and Patrick asked if he could stand up because he was suffering from cramp. The teacher gave consent, providing he did it 'sensibly'. After receiving permission to stand, Patrick stood behind the bookcase, squatting down and occasionally peeping over the top. The other children, aware that they would not be personally punished, revelled in the spectacle, thus indulging in bad behaviour 'by proxy' (see below).

Once at the secondary school, the 'Hard Boys' continued to achieve their objectives through blatant manipulation of their bodies. They would insist that they needed to visit the lavatory, despite the usual school rule (see above). On one occasion, one boy repeatedly showed the teacher a small scratch on his finger, which he claimed was stinging, and asked to visit the nurse. Eventually the teacher relented and allowed him to go, and he missed a large part of a lesson he disliked. Boys who repeatedly misbehaved were eventually sent out of the classroom, but this strategy tended to backfire on staff members and ultimately demonstrated pupils' ability to utilise surveillance strategies for their own ends. Miscreants sent outside merely took the opportunity to pull faces at their classmates through the glass panel in the door, one boy going a step further and sticking a pencil in each ear. Once outside the classroom, pupils would often put their heads back inside the door and claim that they needed the lavatory. The teacher invariably refused, but boys would protest, '*I'm going to pee myself if I don't go, sir*'. In the last instance, teachers would be forced to acquiesce as they could not risk an 'accident' or a complaint from parents. Pupils were well aware of this fact.

However, I only witnessed two incidents involving girls that may be construed as the use of possible illness to avoid lessons. In the first instance, Alice confided to me that she was worried because she had forgotten to bring her trainers for PE. When it came to the actual lesson, her friend reported that Alice was with the nurse, as she felt sick. This may have been coincidence but it did appear rather convenient, although the phrase 'worried sick' springs to mind[4]. The second incident occurred in similar circumstances. During a maths lesson, the teacher asked Rhiannon, who was fairly timid and not very successful academically, to come to the front of the class and write a sum on the board. She refused and, when pressed, became very agitated and began to cry. The teacher asked me to take her to the lavatory, where she remarked: '*My mum said that when I'm dizzy I have to go home*'. She claimed she felt dizzy and that she was unable to see properly. I took her to the nurse, who eventually sent her home. Once again, the illness seemed to appear suddenly and without prior warning, begging the question as to whether these two girls had realised, in common with some of the boys, that claims of physical illness could enable their escape from potentially hazardous situations, and that the body could be used as an empowering vehicle.

In direct contrast to the 'Hard' Boys', an unusual aspect of some of the other boys' behaviour was their tendency either to burst into tears or sulk, features usually associated with girls' behaviour (Askew and Ross, 1988). At the primary school, these boys, if reprimanded by a teacher, would fly into a rage, put their heads down onto their desks and cry, especially if they felt they had been dealt with unfairly. Harry and Neil were reprimanded for 'messing about' and threatened with lines, whereupon Neil protested that he hadn't done anything wrong, put his head onto his hands and began to cry angrily. Later, in the line waiting to enter the hall for assembly, Neil continued to mutter angrily, with tears streaming down his face. This kind of behaviour occurred on numerous occasions and, apart from one instance, was always related to boys. They became very angry if they felt they had been wrongly accused, and expressing their anger appeared to be more important to them than allowing the rest of the class to witness them crying. These boys also showed a tendency to sulk if they were reprimanded or felt they had been wrongly handled by a teacher. The Year Co-ordinator at the secondary school remarked that, during twenty-seven years of teaching experience, she had never previously encountered this kind of behaviour from boys.

Another way in which some of the boys expressed a challenge to authority was through changing their hair styles, again a method more traditionally used by girls. This strategy was adopted solely by members of the 'Hard Boys'' group. Soon after the transition, it was noticeable that, one by one, they arrived at school with their hair bleached blonde. The staff at first took the line of least resistance (the Year Co-ordinator remarking that the less the school made of this tactic, the sooner it would burn itself out) so the boys went a little further. The hair colour progressed from blonde to bright pink or orange. As the staff had predicted, this behaviour gradually seemed to lose its attraction as the term progressed and, during follow-up fieldwork, it was evident that these boys had returned to their 'normal' hair colour.

If this was the manner by which boys mounted a challenge to authority, not only in ways usually identified with boys in the school setting (Spender, 1989), but also by using strategies generally associated with girls, then what of the girls themselves? Hebdige's work (1979) has received criticism in that it fails to include the experiences of girls (Blackman, 1995). McRobbie and Garber (1976) pose the question as to whether this is simply because girls interact amongst themselves to form a distinctive culture of their own and offer a different type of resistance, which is more in keeping with non-subcultural male groupings. Girls observed during the study did usually use their bodies in different ways from the boys to resist control. Although they were also obliged to wear school uniform, they tended to rebel in relatively small ways; by altering or adding to the proscribed dress code, although this varied slightly as to whether they belonged to the 'Boffin Girls' or 'Hard Girls' factions. Girls in both groups used their hairstyles to mark out their self-identity by wearing brightly coloured 'Scrunchies' (fabric covered elastic bands which held their hair in ponytails), slides or headbands, some of which displayed their names in different colours. They also wore brightly coloured socks which often bore motifs, such as Disney characters or similar icons of teenage culture, although these were invariably hidden by their long trousers. Also, during lessons which they found to be boring, girls would engage in a game whereby they changed shoes under the table with their female neighbours, until they were all wearing odd shoes. Because staff were unaware of this practice, and because the boys were excluded, it represented to the girls a source of secret power expressed through the body. Those girls belonging to the 'Hard Girls' faction, however, were more outwardly confrontational. They would wear brightly coloured nail varnish or earrings other than the regulation small studs. These girls would also regularly contravene the rule which disallowed chewing, although they would often protest that they were not actually chewing gum, but small pieces of plastic or other items, thus attempting to 'side-step' rather than actually break the rules.

Transitional Embodiment

Before the actual transition took place, senior staff from the secondary school came to the primary school to speak to children and staff about the transfer. Whilst the deputy headteacher discussed with the children different issues concerning the forthcoming move, and answered their questions, the prospective Year Co-ordinator consulted primary school staff about the ability and behaviour of the children themselves. Topics discussed included the results of pupils' SATs, children who were on the SEN register, those experiencing difficulty with their lessons, and children exhibiting worrisome behaviour. Consequently, records were forwarded to the secondary school which accorded children a ready-made identity. After the transition, some staff sought to identify the social backgrounds of pupils, and staff asked children whether they were an older pupil's brother or sister. One teacher actually apologised to a pupil in advance in case he referred to the pupil by his brother's name. Another member of staff, who had previously taught at the school for a number of years, had retired, and was working there on a supply basis, appeared to pride himself on his ability to identify pupils, their siblings, and even their parents, many of whom he had taught.

Thus many pupils find themselves ascribed a familial identity (see also James, 1998) which can prove a handicap to those children whose siblings have fared unfavourably (or conversely, done particularly well) whilst attending the school. There is recent evidence that children may be judged as well-behaved or disruptive according to their names (Sunday Times, 3.8.97). A survey conducted by the Sunday Times amongst secondary school teachers discovered that more than two-thirds of staff admitted to being influenced by children's names. The report found that children who were unfortunate enough to be named Mark, Neil, Max or Rebecca were expected by teachers to be unruly, whilst those named Edward, James, Fiona and Annabel were envisaged as well behaved. A more worrying aspect was that more than half of those questioned claimed that their initial judgements proved to be correct, which begs the question of whether children are subject to a self-fulfilling prophecy once labels have been ascribed (see Chapter 2). Nevertheless, it is clear that children's identities may be established *before* they arrive at the secondary school, and children may have little control over this.

A particular feature of children's embodiment during the transition was an emphasis on bodily size and ability. James (1993) discusses the way in which children are the subject of such remarks as '*Haven't you grown*?', '*Aren't you a big girl?*' etc. and that:

> 'the stereotypical import of such statements is clear: the bigger one is, the better one is and the more social - literally the more personable - one becomes. The received emphasis for children is clear. It stresses the importance of the growth and development of the physical body in the present for future social identities'.
> (1993:110)

Children about to transfer to the secondary school were often reminded by primary teachers about the new space they were about to enter and the consequent 'grown-up' identity they were about to assume. Teachers frequently hinted to children that their 'childish' identity would have to be left behind when they transferred to the secondary school: '*You are not little babies now, so there is no need to fiddle*' or '*You are acting like a class of nursery children*'. This new status was also reflected in the teachers' expectations of children's ability following the transfer. During Maths lessons, pupils were chastised for using expressions such as 'share' instead of 'divide'. It was claimed that the use of the expression 'share' was more appropriate for much younger (and therefore smaller) children, and staff urged that pupils should start to use the 'proper word' henceforth. Whilst colouring in a map, children were exhorted to make their colouring neat: '*Some of your work is no better than Infants' colouring*'. One child was told repeatedly that he should join up his writing as he was a Year 6 pupil now, and another who claimed she was unable to complete a particular task was told, '*Don't say that, young lady, you won't be able to say that at the Comp.*'. Such examples illustrate clearly that transitional identity is concerned centrally with issues of time, space and relocation. The spectre of the secondary school was present throughout the children's final term at the primary school. They were admonished to learn their tables, as knowledge of these would be vital at the new school, as would the practice of completing homework on time, and the ability to spell correctly: '*This will stand you in good stead for the Comp.*'. Children were about to enter a new space, which presented a new threat of visibility if the body refused to behave correctly.

After the transition to the 'new' school, staff continued to reinforce the notion that pupils had now assumed the identity of 'secondary school pupils' and should have left their 'childish' ways behind. During one of their first lessons, the teacher remarked that one rule, which might prove difficult to keep, was the one which required them to remain in their seats, as they had probably been used to walking around the classroom at their primary schools. However, he stressed that they were 'bigger now', so this should not prove too difficult. Physical size was used to signify a potential increase in self-control, although a mere six weeks had elapsed since the children had left their previous school. Misbehaviour was often ascribed to the fact that they had not successfully relinquished their previous 'primary school' identity, and had perhaps not yet achieved the requisite amount of bodily control. Once, when children insisted on chatting during a lesson, the teacher enquired:

> '*why is there all this talk? You're not at the junior school now. I know you have to remember what you learned while you were there, but if your behaviour becomes more juvenile, you should return to the juvenile school ... you're not in the junior school now, where you sit at little desks*'.

Discipline was therefore continually enforced by the use of stereotypical images of body size and age, translating bodily self-control into attendant academic ability and identity. In actual fact, the children in the study discovered that there was not a great deal of difference between the two schools, and academic expectations were not noticeably higher at the secondary school. Indeed, the children often claimed that some of the work they were doing had actually been covered at their previous schools. This leads to the worrying question of whether children's bodies are also being disciplined through a control of the mind, a notion which appears to substantiate Foucault's thesis (see above).

It is posited that these are the ways in which *all* children are subject to control at school through the medium of the body. This chapter has argued that forms of control established in the primary school are followed through in the secondary school, and that the transition is utilised by school staff to play up and reinforce body image for all children. The chapter now explores how this argument applies to children with SEN, whose bodies may be more uncontrolled, and therefore possibly more *uncontrollable* in the structural space of the school, than those of their mainstream peers.

BODILY CONTROL AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

As I argued in Chapter 2, children within special education have traditionally been subject to discourses of bodily control that subscribe to the 'medical' rather than the 'social' model of disability (Oliver, 1990). During the 'statementing' process (see Chapter 1), children's bodies are examined, assessed and categorised according to disability, and their 'special educational need' identified. Notions of bodily 'normality' are drawn upon by educational psychologists operating under the 'naturally developing child' model in order to place those with SEN into a system designated by the government which, I will argue later (see Chapter 7), is not designed to accommodate them. Labels which focus upon some impairment or aberration within the individual child are attached to the child so that resources may be allocated to address a perceived 'need'. Thus the 'problem' is sited firmly within the body of the child, rather than in the policies or practices of either the government, the LEA, the school or the teacher. The ways in which these SEN policies are played out in schools through the medium of the 'special' body will be the subject of the next section.

From the Macro to the Micro - The Embodiment of Special Educational Policy in Schools

The main problem that children with SEN present to schools is their anomalous position - their 'out-of-placeness'. As Douglas (1966[1992]) notes, phenomena that are not easily categorised engender anxiety and unease, and these were the emotions encountered repeatedly amongst school staff (and to some extent, other pupils). Schools as social systems are not geared up to cope satisfactorily with children who cannot be slotted neatly into the main 'body' of pupils. Consequently, in an attempt to deal with children with SEN, LEAs and schools revert to an individualised model of disability. Pupils are labelled with a specific disability or problem, slotted into the banding system (see Chapter 1) and placed into mainstream schools which, under the current system, usually struggle on a daily basis to accommodate them satisfactorily. The children then generate anxiety amongst school staff who, given the constraints of present educational policy, are often at a loss as to how to deal with them. Schools and teachers may plead, with some accuracy, that buildings are inaccessible and/or that staff suffer a chronic lack of specialist training and time to devote to so-called 'special' children. Parents, on the other hand, may utilise a human rights perspective to insist that their children are educated in a mainstream setting which, although not ideal, they perceive to be more beneficial than a special school. Meanwhile, the children themselves become caught up in a number of ideological arguments not of their making and certainly not subject to their control.

At Littlefields school, children with SEN were integrated, although staff and governors often met resistance from the LEA in their efforts to acquire statements for those children considered by staff and/or parents to be in need of specialist provision. The school had in the past successfully accommodated a number of children who were wheelchair users, and consequently the school buildings had been adapted to provide wheelchair access. However, at the time of the fieldwork, a pupil with Asperger's Syndrome (a form of autism) attended the school. This child had a statement with a banding level which funded only a part-time support worker. This meant that, during the unsupported time, he often created havoc in the classroom and severely disrupted the teaching process. There was increasing concern for the safety both of the child himself and his classmates, as he would often indulge in potentially hazardous activities, such as throwing scissors across the classroom or pushing them into the electrical sockets. His mother, with whom I spoke, felt continually anxious about his behaviour at school, and pointed out: '*He's autistic all of the time, not just for a part of the week, why can't they* (the LEA) *see that?*'. After many representations being made to the LEA by the school, the parent, and the SEN governor, this child was placed on a higher banding level which allowed for full time support. However, his case is representative of the many battles played out within mainstream schools to acquire the funding that schools perceive as necessary to provide for adequate support for children with SEN[5].

Having gained an excellent reputation for dealing with pupils with SEN, Littlefields School now found itself with a large proportion of such pupils (between 35 and 40% of the school population). At the time of the research, a system operated whereby the parents of any pupil who had already been excluded from one school could select another school, which was required to accept him/her. Consequently, the parents of excluded primary-age pupils saw Littlefields school as a viable alternative, and the school was being inundated with pupils with identified behavioural problems. Unfortunately, the funding already allocated to these pupils often did not accompany the child but was retained by the previous school until the end of term, meaning that the child had to be accommodated and educated with no extra resources[6].

It became clear that the physical and social integration of pupils with SEN was carried out fairly successfully at the primary school, due to several factors; the school was relatively small and built on one level, the staff were committed to the ethos of integration (given that they received appropriate levels of funding) and the classmates of children with problems were familiar with their difficulties and had learned how to respond to them. One of the reasons that the above pupil with Asperger's Syndrome was able to cope in the mainstream classroom was that his classmates had known him for many years and were aware of his difficulties. During the period that he was unsupported for part of the time, they watched his behaviour for any potential dangers, and informed the teacher of these. Thus his body became more visible. They had also learned to ignore any bodily behaviour outside of the norm in which he might indulge. Children at the primary school, then, had gradually learned to accommodate peers with SEN as part of the familiar pattern of school life.

However, the situation changed when the children transferred to the secondary school as part of a cohort of two hundred pupils from six different feeder schools. The school, a large comprehensive, covered a wide spatial area, with buildings designated for different subject areas fairly widely dispersed. It was sited on three floors and, although a stairlift was available at the time of the research, it was unreliable and, during the course of the research, it failed altogether and became inoperable. The whole question of the lift was a vexed one. Apparently it had been installed without any consultation with its future users and was impractical for its purpose. Also, it had been abandoned without recourse to any kind of inquiry as to whom was accountable for its failure, repair or replacement. Its design was such that pupils were placed, in their wheelchairs, on a platform attached to the banister of the staircase they needed to ascend. A motor drove the platform slowly up the stairs, with the person accompanying the child walking at the side of the platform. Following the breakdown of the stairlift, the school was supplied with a 'Gimson' Stairlift; a free-standing motorised device which was operated by the aide and which transported both pupil and wheelchair upstairs. However, some wheelchairs being used by particular pupils would not fit onto this machine, so these pupils' bodies could not be transported to the different levels. Finally, it was decided that wheelchairs users would have to conduct their lessons on the ground floor. Unfortunately, this meant that these pupils would inevitably miss lessons in the library and Information Technology suite, as both were sited on the first floor. Although books could be brought down from the library, and a lap-top computer used, their lessons were held in isolation from their peers, and their bodies set apart from those of their peers, thus defeating one of the main ideals of integration.

These examples highlight the problems encountered by children with disabilities and difficulties as government, LEA and school policies attempt to accommodate the 'unruly' bodies of such children into the ordered 'body' of the school. These children's bodies make control more difficult and present additional challenges to the time/space order, thus mitigating against integration/inclusive education. These challenges will be examined in the next section.

Special Educational Needs - Issues of time and space

The body of the child with SEN may present problems to the school even before s/he is actually admitted, in that not all schools are able to provide access to their premises for children with particular SEN. Although the Code of Practice states that parents may express a preference for the school they wish their child to attend, and that the LEA must comply with that preference, there are three escape clauses which in effect mitigate against parental choice. The LEA does not have to comply if they can prove that the school is:

> 'unsuitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs, or the placement would be incompatible with the efficient education of the other children with whom the child would be educated, or with the efficient use of resources'.
>
> (DfE, 1994:90)

These exceptions in effect preclude against inclusion and parental choice, as a child who is a wheelchair user could be excluded from a school without wheelchair access if a neighbouring school was able to provide such access. It could be argued that providing and installing ramps at the first school could be seen as inefficient use of resources in the light of the neighbouring school already having ramps installed. Children whose bodies are outwardly 'disorderly' (i.e. those with emotional and behavioural difficulties) may be excluded from particular schools in the light of arguments that their presence in the school is interfering with the efficient education of the other children. A less overt and more pernicious concern with efficiency might be that those children with learning problems may be deemed to be affecting a school's position in the league tables by lowering examination results. So the disordered or disorderly bodies of children with SEN may be deemed to be operating against the 'efficient' management of the education system, and may be marginalised, or even excluded altogether, from the system.

At Greatfields School, as already noted, the bodies of those children who used wheelchairs presented problems to the staff. Aides were disgruntled when teachers refused to have wheelchairs users in their lessons without the full support of a teachers' aide. The aides considered that this represented an inefficient use of resources (i.e. their skills and time), as many of the wheelchair users coped well academically, and only required assistance in moving around the school. Aides contended they could use their time more effectively by assisting one of the less academically able pupils until it was time to collect the child in the wheelchair for the next lesson. The SENCO (SEN Co-ordinator) informed me that staff refusal to accommodate children in wheelchairs originated in the science department, where they were deemed to be more physically vulnerable in situations involving explosive or corrosive chemicals. Their disabled bodies meant they were always seated and were therefore on a lower level than their able-bodied classmates, who usually stood at the workbenches during experiments and could move quickly away from potentially hazardous situations. Here can be seen an example of the body becoming an 'excuse', or condensed symbol of a political struggle, in which the children became victims. In the event, the SENCO noted that, during five years of supporting science lessons, he had known of only one occasion where a dangerous situation had arisen and this had been dealt with satisfactorily. He felt that the current impasse concerning disabled pupils had arisen because the responsibilities of staff had gradually been increased over the years. When children using wheelchairs had first been integrated, they had entered schools with funding for full-time support from teachers' aides, but this had gradually been eroded, with the result that staff were objecting to the expectation that they would assume extra responsibility. This dissatisfaction with the situation relating to children in wheelchairs had filtered into the other departments in the school, who were now claiming that the children were at risk, in case of fire, if not accompanied at all times by a teachers' aide. The SENCO commented that, as far as the fire regulations were concerned, there seemed to be a general reluctance on the part of the relevant authorities to decide upon the relevant policy.

At the end of Chapter 2, I highlighted the experiences of Clive, a wheelchair user, as he attempted to negotiate the stairs using a 'Gimson' stairlift assisted by his teacher's aide. Before the incident with the lift, Clive had often discussed the constant struggle he and his parents were experiencing. Although he had previously enjoyed the services of a full-time teachers' aide, this support time had been reduced due to budget cuts imposed on the school. This meant that at times there was no-one to take him to lessons, or to assist with the writing of notes during lessons, which he found difficult due to his poor fine motor skills. It had been suggested that he should dictate his class notes into a Dictaphone machine for his aide to type up later, but this was also problematic as his speech was unclear due to his cerebral palsy. Clive's frustration at the situation was palpable. In his opinion, the whole system had not been thought through properly. He considered that he had been placed on the wrong banding level, and that the banding system itself was 'out of touch', as it did not differentiate within each band between the very complex difficulties experienced by pupils with SEN, but treated them as a homogenous mass. Although staff focused upon the wheelchair as the problem, for Clive his school experiences were shaped by his lack of his bodily ability to manoeuvre stairs or write up notes. Clive described how he became very angry and distressed at the dismissive attitude of one member of staff who remarked upon the struggle Clive and his aide were experiencing in attempting to reach his particular teaching area.

It was also evident that, as well as disturbing the *spatial* order of the school, the disordered bodies of children with SEN also interrupted the tempo of the day in mainstream schools. Use of the stairlift to transport children in wheelchairs to upper floors fractured the smooth running of events. A flashing alarm warned other pupils that the staircase was temporarily out of action because the stairlift was in use. This meant that they must wait either at the top or the foot of the staircase until the stairlift was no longer in use rendering the staircase usable again, or use an alternative staircase at the other end of the block. Because of the delay to other pupils (the stairlift took several minutes to ascend/descend the stairs), support staff usually waited until the main body of pupils had passed by. As a result, not only were the mainstream pupils delayed, but the pupil using the wheelchair would often arrive late for lessons.

However, the greatest problems in incorporating children with SEN into mainstream schools occurred when dealing not with the *disordered* bodies of children with physical disabilities, but rather with the *disorderly* bodies of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties[7] or those on the autistic spectrum.. Although the ethos of Greatfields School was that it was open to all pupils, whatever their difficulties, attitudes amongst staff members with regard to those with SEN was mixed, focusing on issues which arose such as lack of time, resources and training. Staff teaching Brent, another boy with Asperger's Syndrome, were uneasy about their lack of training in how to cope with an autistic child in the classroom, and how they might accommodate him without additional staff support. On one occasion I accompanied a group of boys, including Brent, to the swimming baths (see Chapter 6). The staff member appeared anxious about Brent's presence in the group and seemed uneasy about the unpredictability of Brent's body and his own inability to cope without extra help. He had informed the pool staff of the situation, and there was always someone watching this particular group, and Brent in particular. It was not possible for Brent to have specific assistance from pool staff as this would incur additional costs. Thus, although a child with SEN was included in the usual school activities, it was apparently under sufferance.

An older child with autism also appeared to engender this kind of unease. Aides remarked that staff were unhappy if he attended their lessons without support, as he became excitable and tended to disrupt proceedings. Lessons such as history proved especially troublesome as he possessed no concept of time. During these lessons the aides often took him to the nearby shopping precinct to practice skills involving money, suggesting that these skills would prove more useful to him and stand him in better stead than abortive attempts to teach him history. Generally, staff appeared at a loss as to how best to occupy his time.

The non-disabled pupils often also seemed at a loss as to how to deal with the behaviour of their peers with SEN. On arrival at Greatfields School, pupils were interspersed with those from the other feeder schools, and they were usually only familiar with a few other children in their class. The children with SEN were also dispersed throughout the year groups, with children who usually did not know them or their particular problems. It may be argued that this was the best way to integrate them. (One of the teachers claimed that she did not familiarise herself with particular children's difficulties beforehand, as she did not wish to prejudge the situation, but wished to accept children at face value.) However, it became clear that some pupils were puzzled by the behaviour of some of their peers with SEN and the manner in which they should react to this (see Lewis, 1995). In my opinion, much of the bullying which took place with regard to the appearance of children with SEN was often due to this unfamiliarity.

The first class that I shadowed after the transition included Brent, the boy with Asperger's Syndrome, and Colin, who had a fairly pronounced cleft lip. These two boys came from the same feeder school and became firm friends, in the face of a considerable amount of name-calling from a group of ('Hard') boys in the same class. During the course of the fieldwork, Brent experienced several problems. In the first week, he was often late for lessons as he had lost his way to the classroom. In the different classrooms the pupils used, Brent was often to be seen sitting alone with an empty seat beside him. During one particular assembly, I saw a classmate watching him with a puzzled expression on her face. Indeed, Brent's behaviour was often a source of bewilderment to his peers, and he became the butt of name-calling. I was able to discuss Brent's situation with his mother, who worked at the school. She claimed that Brent had expressed a wish to attend a different school, as he was unhappy at Greatfields due to the teasing and often outright hostility to which he was sometimes subjected. She also reported: *'He gets upset because some of the other boys try to get him to do things that he shouldn't. He doesn't do them though, because he has a strong sense of what's right and wrong'*. Here can be seen a further and poignant example of 'bad behaviour by proxy', whereby non-disabled pupils were able to enjoy the results of wrongdoing without being personally implicated (and therefore punished). In the case of pupils with behavioural problems, their peers would delight in their antics to discredit the teacher and their ability to cause mayhem in the classroom, without personally suffering the consequences of bad behaviour. This is shown later in detail (Chapter 6), when Simon, a boy statemented due to emotional and behavioural difficulties, was urged by his peers to misbehave and challenge the teacher. When he capitulated he was reprimanded, and his classmates enjoyed the disruption without suffering the consequences. These were borne by Simon alone[8].

Mainstream Views on 'Disordered' and 'Disorderly' Bodies

At the end of the exercise with the photographs (see Chapter 5), I asked the study group a set of questions designed to elicit their views on inclusive education. I asked them to imagine children with specific problems:

i) a child using a wheelchair,
ii) a child unable to hear,
iii) a child unable to see,
iv) a child with learning difficulties and
v) a child with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

I then asked them to decide whether, in their opinion, each child should attend a mainstream or a special school.

The results are set out in Table 1:

Table 1: Which school do you think children with particular difficulties should attend? *(figures are percentages)*

	Using a wheelchair	**Unable to hear**	**Unable to see**	**Learning difficulties**	**Emotional/ behavioural difficulties**
M/stream school	70	20	17.5	55	17.5
Special school	7.5	70	77.5	35	50
Depends on severity	15	5	5	10	12.5
Special to m/stream	7.5	5	0	0	10
M/stream to special	0	0	0	0	10
Total	100 (n = 40)	100 (n = 40)	100 (n = 40)	100 (n = 40)	100 (n = 40)

I was impressed by their thoughtful and sophisticated replies. Many of the children wished to elaborate upon the severity of the specified problems. With regard to i) above, for example, they often differentiated between a child who had simply broken a leg and one who was permanently using a wheelchair due to a condition such as cerebral palsy, thereby raising questions I had not foreseen. When assigning children with disabilities to mainstream schools they also specified that they must receive appropriate help and support. They also wanted to know whether the hypothetical children ii) and iii) were totally deaf/blind, or only partially. For those whose impairments were total, children felt that, in their own best interests, these should attend a special school, where they would benefit from specialised equipment and expertise, such as teachers proficient in sign language and books in Braille. They were also worried that these pupils, if placed in mainstream schools, might fall and hurt themselves, might lose their way, or simply feel 'left out'.

When questioned about pupils with learning difficulties, those who considered that the child would fare better at a special school felt that teachers would have more time to explain matters, and children would 'be able to go at their own pace'. With regard to the child with emotional and behavioural difficulties, those who felt that this pupil should attend a special school considered that the teacher should be stricter and children would not be able to hurt others or disrupt their lessons. Four children (10%) thought s/he should attend a special school and graduate to a mainstream school if his/her behaviour improved, whilst another four (10%) replied that s/he should be given a chance in a mainstream school and transferred to a special school only if his/her behaviour did not improve sufficiently. This transfer between particular types of schools was often mooted as a means of exploring how children coped in a particular setting, with the option of transferring them if necessary. In this respect, children themselves appeared far more flexible in their attitudes than many LEAs.

It was clear that the children gave these questions considerable thought based, I suggest, on their own experiences of observing children with specific SEN at school, and the manner in which they perceived these children had or had not coped. Often, when I solicited their views upon a particular category, they would compare this with their memories of an actual child, as in: '*Oh, you mean like X, she was in a wheelchair and she was all right*'. In their experience, actual children using wheelchairs and those with learning difficulties had coped satisfactorily in their mainstream school. Children with hearing and sight problems were, however, outside their experience. They were unable to envisage such pupils coping with the built environment, and were concerned for their safety. They also perceived these children cut off from their peers due to their communication difficulties. As for the child with emotional and behavioural difficulties, this was also within their experience, but often under circumstances which elicited frustration on their part. They had had their lessons and play times disrupted by such pupils, and so were more ambivalent about their presence within the school. Therefore, they often favoured a segregated setting for pupils with behavioural problems, which they deemed to be more disciplined.

These findings would suggest that those theorists advocating inclusive education as beneficial for mainstream children in bringing about attitudinal changes on their part (see Chapter 1) may be correct in their argument. The children did consider their own previous experiences with children with particular SEN, and there was a correlation between experience and positive or negative viewpoints in terms of inclusion. However, as Leicester (1994) succinctly points out, children with SEN are *not* learning aids upon which mainstream children should be able to practise their compassion, and we are left with the question: For whose benefit does (and should) SEN provision exist? If, as a result of inclusion, mainstream children do become more tolerant toward people with disabilities and difficulties, this would be a reason for celebration. However, the experiences of children with SEN themselves are often less than positive in mainstream schools and as this thesis indicates, this suggests that we still have a long way to go toward including all children with SEN.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that the question of inclusion is fraught with difficulties for all concerned. The only certainty is that the present system is unsatisfactory, to say the least. School transition throws into relief the problems surrounding inclusive education; at secondary school, pupils are no longer cute, often docile little children sitting in wheelchairs accepting others' decisions on their behalf. Children grow into teenagers with minds of their own, and their growing bodies present problems to those in authority. Frustration was encountered at Greatfields School, for example, due to the fact that the hoist provided at the swimming baths to swing Clive into the water could not now be used as he had become too heavy for his aide to lift him into it. The transition also highlights the difficulties of children with disorders on the autistic spectrum, and the problems they encounter when transferring from the small 'family-type' primary setting, to the usually large, often geographically diverse and more impersonal environment of the secondary school (see Chapter 7). Children with SEN are in an anomalous position; refusing to be slotted neatly into the 'body' of the school, which can only cope with children whose bodies can be made docile, are able to climb stairs and can make their own way around the building. Despite the rhetoric surrounding special education, and the willingness on the part of some school staff, the present system is under-resourced and staff are under-trained. The main sufferers are the children themselves, who are in the invidious position of being placed into a system which is not designed, and is often unable, to accommodate them.

In sum then, this chapter has investigated and explained the ways in which children at school are enmeshed in intricate webs of power which, through the body, exercise control in a real or supposed concern for their welfare. Following the abolition of corporal punishment, power has shifted from direct chastisement of the physical body to the use of surveillance methods which, it has been argued, are even more powerful in their ability to control the lives of children and their families, extending as they do beyond the reaches of the school environment into pupils' homes. The separation of the public and private spheres has thus been irrevocably eroded. However, this is not to say that children are passive victims of the process. On the contrary, children in the study demonstrated daily in the classroom their potential for agency, and their ability to actively resist the restrictions placed upon them. Just as such restrictions often took the form of rules concerning embodiment, space and temporality, many forms of resistance also revolved around children's embodiment and their capacity to utilise their bodies in manipulating space and time.

The disordered or disorderly bodies of children with SEN, however, presented an added challenge to teachers' attempts to control them. These particular bodies fractured the smooth flow of the time/space continuum in various ways. The disordered bodies of children using wheelchairs, although relatively docile, presented particular problems in conformity: to write their own notes, walk upstairs, move around or remove themselves from classrooms in case of fire. Nonetheless, these bodies were relatively controllable, in direct contrast to those of their more disorderly peers, those with emotional and behavioural difficulties or those diagnosed as on the autistic spectrum (including Asperger's Syndrome). Those children with these conditions were more of a challenge to school staff, and in many ways, to their peers. So it can be seen that the 'structure' of SEN provision is embodied in denials of children's potential for agency.

Having explored in this chapter the nature of adult-child relationships and interaction, the following chapter will look at the ways that children interact amongst themselves, and the manner in which possession of a different body may impinge upon child-child interaction.

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[1] At the secondary school used in the research, even the bells were claimed to 'belong to' the teachers, who stated, when children began to pack up their belongings on hearing the bell, 'The bell is there to remind *me* of the time, not to tell you it's time to go'.

[2] A report from the charity Backcare claims that children carrying heavy bags to and around school face potential health problems in the future because schools no longer provide pupils with desks or lockers. Some pupils were carrying up to 60% of their body weight on days when they

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carried sports or musical equipment. The research indicates that by the age of 14 years about half of pupils would be experiencing back discomfort (Sunday Times Education, 30.4.00).

[3] When my own daughters were at the school, I was always puzzled as to why purchasing their school bags should take such a large amount of time and effort, and why the suggestion that baking equipment should be taken to school in a plastic supermarket carrier bag was greeted with horror (although on the occasions that such a bag was actually used, there were varying degrees of acceptability or otherwise e.g. it was 'cool' to use a 'Next' carrier bag but 'uncool' to take an 'Asda' or other supermarket bag). Working in the school made me aware of the importance of 'the bag'.

[4] Alderson similarly notes that the children in her study vividly combined physical with mental health. When picked on and called thick, the children noted that 'You feel sick and bad' (2000:246).

[5] It may also be pertinent to add that this child's mother, faced with the prospect of her child having to cope in a large mainstream comprehensive school, is currently attempting to secure him a placement at a local special school incorporating a specialist autistic unit.

[6] However, this situation has now changed, as the Schools Standard Bill, which came into force in September 1999, includes a 'two strikes and you are out' clause, which allows heads to refuse to accept pupils who have previously been excluded from two other schools (Guardian, 19.2.98).

[7] There are claims that the numbers of children within this group are spiralling out of control, leading to an increase in the amount of exclusions (previously known as 'expulsions') being carried out by schools. Between 1990 and 1995, there was a four-fold increase in the number of exclusions; during 1997 there were an estimated 13,500 (Sunday Times, 5.4.98). Schools conscious of their league table performances are reluctant or even unwilling to persevere with pupils with behavioural problems, who damage the school's reputation, may present a safety hazard to staff and other pupils, and interfere with the education of others. So although schools are generally willing to include pupils with physical or learning problems, those with behavioural difficulties, who 'are being seen increasingly as an underclass' (Sunday Times, 4.1.98), are not so welcome.

[8] A recent report (Guardian Education, 3.2.98) about the inclusion of a girl with Down's Syndrome into a school in Hertfordshire outlines problems similar to those encountered by Brent and Simon. On the school bus, a group of boys had called her stupid and 'taught' her to ring the bell. Parents of other children and members of staff objected to her presence at the school, with teachers arguing that they lacked sufficient training. The SENCO at the school reiterated the fact that, for inclusion to be possible and successful, 'this government must provide the relevant resources if it is to avoid the mistakes the last government made over care in the community'. The child in question is attended by a full-time support worker, but the SENCO points out that the school's capacity to deal with disabilities is limited, in that it does not possess specialist staff who are trained to cope with children with disabilities, and that the building does not provide wheelchair access. However, on a more positive note, the child's classroom assistant claims that her classmates have not voiced any objections to her presence. On the contrary, one boy who had a reputation for 'getting into scraps with other kids' had found the girl with Down's Syndrome putting conkers into her mouth, and had taken them from her. So, according to the assistant, he had not responded in his usual manner but instead had done something constructive to remedy the situation. This led the author of the article to conclude that, if integration is to work on a wider scale, it must be seen as being beneficial to all pupils, not merely those with special needs. This contention echoes Allen et al's (1998) argument, noted in Chapter 1, that we must acknowledge the role played by mainstream pupils in determining the experiences of children with SEN. To this end, this thesis set out to explore not only these experiences, but to set them within the wider context of the interaction patterns of both mainstream and those with SEN in the structural setting of the school.

CHAPTER 5

EMBODIMENT IN THE CHILD'S WORLD

Chapter 4 explored the ways in which child-adult relations are mediated through the vehicle of the child's body. Control is imposed upon pupils by the structural constraints of the school, and teachers' use of bodily restrictions which seek to 'civilise' the child. Children also use their bodies as a form of resistance to these attempts to regulate (and control) their temporal and spatial existence within the school setting. This chapter will study further the child-child relations which are simultaneously undertaken within the school, and the ways in which these relationships are established and developed through childhood embodiment. In the same way that children's interactions with adults are founded upon an awareness of the centrality of the body to children's agency, so too are their relations with each other. The chapter will also explore the ways in which interaction is impinged upon by notions of disability and illness, and the possession (or otherwise) of SEN.

In his treatise on social identity, Jenkins (1996) draws on the theories of Mead, Goffman and Barth to stress that:

> 'individual identity - embodied in selfhood - is not meaningful in isolation from the social world of other people. Individuals are unique and variable, but selfhood is thoroughly socially constructed: in the processes of primary and subsequent socialisation, and in the ongoing processes of social interaction within which individuals define and redefine themselves and others throughout their lives'.
> (1996:20)

Mead (1934) insists that we can only see ourselves through the eyes of the 'generalised other' and, therefore, society is founded upon this basic concept of identification. Further, Mead contends that mind and selfhood are attributes of *embodied* individuals, and Jenkins concurs that the human body is 'simultaneously a referent of individual continuity, an index of collective similarity and differentiation, and a canvas upon which identification can play' (1996:21). Thus the notion of identity serves a dual purpose: the establishment of similarity on one hand, and the construction of difference on the other. Identity formation is firmly rooted in the socialisation process. Notions of selfhood established during infancy and childhood are definitely embodied and, although established individually, are validated by others. Hence the importance of Goffman's (1959[1990]) concept of 'impression management', and Barth's (1969) argument that identity cannot be established in isolation, but has to be accepted by significant others during social interaction before it can be said to have been assimilated (Jenkins, 1996).

Similarly, for Bourdieu (1986), it is during socialisation that individuals learn the rules of successful social interaction, which represents a dual process of freedom and constraint, i.e. 'neither wholly conscious nor wholly unconscious, rooted in an ongoing process of learning which begins in childhood, and through which actors know - without knowing - the right thing to do' (Jenkins, 1992:72). Successful interaction, therefore, comes about through a kind of second nature or osmosis which begins in infancy, whereby social actors understand, albeit subconsciously, the usual pattern of how things are done/happen. Bourdieu recognises the fact that, although individuals possess a certain amount of free will and self-determination, their thoughts and actions are constrained to a significant extent.

In an attempt to build a bridge between the structure/action dichotomy, which debates supra-individual structures versus individual decision-making, Bourdieu offers the notion of the 'habitus', the domain of habit, which he defines:

> 'in terms of the way we have developed and internalised ways of approaching, thinking about and acting upon our social world. Over time we come successively to learn from and incorporate the lessons of our lived experience, which then help to guide our future actions and behaviour and dispose us to thinking in a certain way. As our experience comes to be consolidated and reinforced, the habitus becomes more durable and internalised as we *habitualise* the way we think and behave'.
>
> (Connolly, 1998:17-18, original emphasis)

In other words, the habitus, although acting on an unconscious level, organises the social experiences of individuals and encourages them to think and act in certain ways. Connolly (1998) offers the example of a child brought up in an abusive family setting, where violence becomes part of that child's world-view and underpins her reactions to future situations, where her choices about possible responses will be guided by her lived experience. The example also illustrates how Bourdieu uses the notion of the habitus to address the way in which individuals, although free to make certain choices, are inevitably constrained within those choices. The child in the example is actively in control of her life but, faced with a potentially violent situation, may well respond in terms of her own past experience.

However, in order to fully understand the ways in which the habitus is developed, it is also necessary to consider the concepts of 'capital' and 'field'. Bourdieu conceives of four basic types of capital: economic, cultural, social and symbolic. *Economic capital* is understood in the basic Marxist sense whereby those individuals controlling the economic wealth of a society also possess power within that society; *cultural capital* refers to the possession of what is deemed to be legitimate knowledge and behaviour, which commands respect and status over others; *social capital* is seen in terms of resources gained through relationships and/or connections with significant others; and *symbolic capital* equates to the prestige and honour associated with possession of one or more of the other forms of capital once it has been recognised as legitimate by others (Connolly, 1998). So the habitus develops through the continual struggle to acquire and retain particular forms of capital.

However, as Connolly notes, 'one of the problems we are still left with is the fact that there are different forms of capital - many of which tend to contradict one another' (1998:22). The ways in which particular forms of capital are valued are contextual, for example, forms of capital which are valued within peer group settings may be devalued in the wider context of the classroom. A boy who is streetwise and aggressive may gain status amongst his peers but will attract the identity of a 'problem pupil' to his teachers. To understand these differing contexts, Bourdieu suggests the notion of 'social field'; the social arena in which struggles for different forms of capital are played out. The boundaries of particular fields are not fixed but are inherently contested by those within the field, in terms of what is at stake and who is drawn into its domain.

However, the crux of Bourdieu's argument is that the classificatory schema which contribute to the essence of the habitus (speech, deportment, habit) are unconsciously embodied, and they exist in and through interaction with others (ways of talking, ways of walking etc.). Moreover, the 'practical taxonomies', which are at the heart of the habitus, are rooted in a series of classificatory dualisms, such as up/down, masculine/feminine, similar/different and, as I go on to argue in this chapter, 'proper' child/not 'proper' child. Thus, as I also show in this chapter, whilst they are unconsciously learning and distinguishing, through the habitus, the 'norms' of the body (through 'knowing' in their bones and through experience (James, 2000, see also Chapter 6)), children also learn what it is to be a 'proper' child. As I will show, for most children, body *language* is literally an acquired skill. They learn to become eloquent in their judgements of others in the tricks and jokes which are expressed through the medium of the body. In this way they gain cultural, social and symbolic capital over their peers. This skill therefore, as I shall show, represents a potent source of power over those who, for whatever reason, have failed to learn the language and norms of childhood embodiment.

These notions of habitus, capital and field will underpin the present chapter. It is important to note, however, that these dominant forms of capital are developed through various discourses within different social fields or settings. This thesis concentrates primarily upon the social 'field' of the school. However, other fields - the wider political and social fields, discourses based upon differing models of disability and cultural images of disabled people - can also be seen to impinge upon the experiences of those children with disabilities or SEN. In addition, broader educational discourses revolving around teacher autonomy and expectations of acquiescent pupil behaviour allow teachers to exercise power over children and also to determine the organisation of schools and classrooms around issues of time and space. The field associated with the locality of the schools is impinged upon by discourses of social class, particular expectations of local employment prospects and the consequent devaluing of education itself. Within the field of the schools themselves, discourses of gender, appropriate levels of maturity and sexuality, judgements around physical and cognitive ability, all impinge upon the notion of childhood embodiment. Stereotypical concepts of how particular children's bodies should appear and act, for instance, are utilised by both teachers and pupils to order their behaviour. As Connolly claims:

> 'in being able to identify particular fields at various levels of the social formation ... we are able to contextualise children's peer-group relations in a much more comprehensive and meaningful way. Because of the lack of consideration of this wider perspective, there has been a tendency in some ethnographic research on schools to assume that children's attitudes and behaviour simply begin and end with their peer-group interactions'.
>
> (1998:24)

As I argue throughout the thesis, it is only possible to understand the nature of particular children's experiences of difference by referring to such wider social, political and cultural contexts.

In this chapter, however, I focus upon the detailed ways in which *all* children, during everyday social interaction, come to learn and to show how the broader norms of childhood embodiment become important in their classification of self and other. I shall show how children habitually play with these norms, using the body as a symbolic resource with which to relay jokes and play tricks on their peers, and as a potent source of identity. In other words, through interaction they gradually learn what it means to be a 'normal' or 'proper' child and, having established 'normality', they then go on to identify, again through the body, those whose bodies are different. According to James, Jenks and Prout:

> 'Cultural stereotypes about what constitutes a normally developing body for a child assume great importance ... both for parents and for children themselves. Deviations from these normative notions can create intense anxiety. Among children, experiences of the body, and especially of bodily differences, function as important signifiers for social identity'.
>
> (1998:155)

This prominence of the body as a signifier of the social self for all children colours their everyday social interactions, in that any bodily differences may impinge upon others' perceptions of them and consequently upon their suitability as potential friends. Having identified those others who fail to conform to their own established bodily norms, i.e. the 'not proper' child, as this chapter shows, they then use aspects of bodily difference as weapons to tease or to bully or, in extreme cases, to exclude. This use of bodily features as a source of control over others marks out the boundaries of social belonging, and is important to issues of SEN and integration. Cohen (1989) claims that individuals possess a need to 'belong' to a group which constitutes:

> 'an entity greater than kinship but more immediate(ly) than the abstraction we call society. It is the arena in which people acquire their most fundamental and most substantial experience of social life outside the confines of the home'.
>
> (1989:15)

However, groups also provide a source of conflict as well as support, by posing acute problems of social life such as aspects of inclusion and exclusion, and conformity and independence (Corsaro, 1981). It is only through constant negotiation of who is 'in', and therefore who is 'out', that children are able to establish and maintain group boundaries. According to Cohen (1989), whilst boundaries enclose elements which are considered to be similar, they also mark off these elements from those deemed to be different. I will argue that children in the study were more likely to be excluded because of their failure to conform to bodily norms than for any real or perceived lack of cognitive ability, and it was this which dented their sense of identity and self-esteem. For those with 'different' bodies, the implications were therefore more far-reaching although, as I shall ultimately show, not necessarily inevitable.

LOOKING, SEEING AND STARING: the body as signifier

I have suggested above that, during the process of socialisation, all children assimilate the norms of the body through a kind of osmosis, and that this learning underpins their understanding of what it is to be a 'normal' or 'proper' child. But what form does this learning take? Although children take in knowledge through all of their senses, I contend that children express culture in a predominantly visual way. Berger claims that 'seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognises before it can speak' (1972:7). Mandell describes how children utilise what she terms 'an involvement stance central to the continual reassessment which permits the innovation and novelty of human life' (1991b:168). Most characteristic of this stance is that of hovering on the sidelines and simply *staring*. Children learn by looking at others, and it is the body which plays a significant role in their developing visual consciousness of what it is to be a 'proper' child. Through the habitus, which involves a process of bodily classification, all children come to distinguish between their own and other bodies, and between 'normal' and different bodies (James, 1993; Christensen, 1993). By observing others, they learn how a 'proper' body behaves and, having registered this, they then go on to use the body as a signifier, as a symbolic resource, and as a source of identity. They may even exploit the body to excuse particular deficiencies, and again this has implications for those children with SEN, whose 'deficiencies' may actually exist and be beyond their control.

However, classification sharpens up ambiguities, and adds to children's power and control over others. During the fieldwork, for example, children used tricks and jokes to exploit bodily norms. These often revolved around blood, mucus and excrement as transgressive substances which should be inside, rather than outside, the boundaries of the body. As Douglas says, 'Pollution is like an inverted form of humour. It is not a joke for it does not amuse. But the structure of its symbolism uses comparison and double meaning like the structure of a joke' (1966[1992]:122). Although the children feigned disgust at references to these transgressive substances, nonetheless they homed in on any references to blood and gore, demanding the full, explicit details of accidents etc., as a fieldnote recording a conversation between Jill, Neil and myself, demonstrates:

J: (to Neil) *Tell Mrs Simpson about your sister's accident.*
N: *She did a parachute jump for charity and it went wrong, and she broke her leg.*
J: *Tell her about her finger!*
N: *It was really badly grazed.*
J: *Tell her about the skin being scraped off.*

Neil began to tell me the 'gory' details, and the rest of the group demanded increasingly detailed information about the injuries, such as whether the bones and veins were visible etc. On a later occasion, Max showed me his hand, which was covered in 'blood'. He claimed that he and a friend had sprayed 'Dracula blood' (fake blood which they bought at a local shop) around the playground. However, the children also constantly 'picked at' the scabs which formed on their injuries causing them to produce 'real' blood, to which they then drew the attention of their classmates.

Teachers were often side-tracked by the children if the subject of the lesson touched on blood as, for instance, when the group were discussing the blood donor system or, during a Religious Studies lesson, the subject of Jehovah's

Witnesses' refusal to accept blood. However, the most serious altercation between the children and a member of staff was caused by a discussion on road safety. Mr Paul was attempting to instil into the children the need for vigilance when crossing the road, but the group refused to take the matter as seriously as he wished, and he was becoming increasingly annoyed at their levity:

Mr P: *I wish I could get through to you that this means you. When you're lying on the ground in a pool of blood looking at your white bone sticking out of your arm and wondering how long the ambulance is going to be!*
Penny: (giggling) *It would be good!*
Mr P: *That's not appropriate, especially when two people have been killed at this school.*
Penny: *Sorry sir.*
Mr P: *There's no need to be sorry, when you're knocked down on the road it'll be you who hurts, not me.*

Penny continued to giggle, and was eventually sent out of the room. However, Mr Paul failed to realise that by going into ever more detailed descriptions of the potential injuries of a road accident victim, rather than forcing the children to face up to the seriousness of the situation, he was actually playing into their hands.

The children also utilised other bodily fluids and functions to emphasise bodily norms. They were adept in scatological humour (see also James, 1995b). At the primary school, one of them would break wind (or in their terms produce 'fizz bombs'), and then enter into long discussions about who was responsible. They not only frequently picked their noses but also displayed the results to their peers, and whispered to me that they had stuck 'bogeys' onto their exercise books before handing them in to staff to be marked. One lunchtime, as we sat around the dining table, Leon pretended to sneeze into his rice pudding, and claimed that the results had come from his nose. A general conversation about mucus then ensued. Children would antagonise others by spitting on their clothing, and one of the most feared myths concerning the move to the secondary school, on a par with the 'head down the toilet' rumour, was that older pupils would spit down the stairwells onto the newcomers. Boys especially often used the epithet 'you turd' as a term of abuse and, on one occasion when the group was walking to the swimming baths, we came upon some brown paint spilled on the pavement. Max, who had previously been directing jibes at Suzy, exclaimed, '*Oh, Suzy, what have you done? People usually do things like that on the toilet!*' The children unconsciously utilised, amongst themselves, the symbolic potential of pollution (Douglas, 1966[1992]) connected to bodily fluids. Further, by surreptitiously passing these on to unwitting staff, they also managed to covertly humiliate them and subvert their authority. Children with SEN, who may not possess complete bodily control, may consequently be excluded (or may exclude themselves in a wish not to draw attention to their lack of control) from this manipulation of body fluids.

However, the most frequent way the children utilised their whole bodies was by using parts of them to relay tricks and jokes to their peers. During lessons, children would exploit every opportunity to engage others in physical or verbal jokes that involved parts of their bodies, displaying unlimited resourcefulness in their efforts. In one lesson, whilst the teacher's attention was engaged elsewhere, Nichol placed two fingers from each hand between his eyebrows and eyes, moved his eyebrows up and down, whilst enquiring of the others what he was conveying. The answer: two caterpillars on a trampoline. During another lesson, Leon came to me with a piece of paper on which there were four drawings, one of which was a bird's wing. Pointing to each object in turn, but omitting the wing, he then rolled up the paper and told me to place my little fingers in each end of the resulting 'tube'. He balanced his pencil on top of the tube, and instructed me to repeat four times, the name of the object he had missed. I duly said, 'Wing, wing, wing, wing', and he picked up the pencil, placed it next to his ear like a telephone, and said 'Hello?' I would argue that these antics, as well as amusing the other children, operated in the way that Douglas (1975) indicates, i.e. 'a victorious tilting of uncontrol against control' by which the children contested the authority of the school and its staff by engaging in them during lesson time. The fact that they had also engaged me, another adult, in their subversion probably added to their sense of triumph. They also used their bodies in a rebellious mode when they gave their peers (and teachers, when their backs were turned as they wrote on the board), the two-fingered V-sign, the up-and-down hand motion which denotes masturbation, and when they tapped the side of their noses to indicate, 'Mind your own business!'. Cleo elaborated on this practice by demonstrating the 'full' version of the action thus: 'Nosey-nosey (tapping nose), cheeky-cheeky (tapping each cheek in turn), just (chin) mind (forehead) that (nose again)'.

Douglas (1975) indicates that many jokes may be in bad taste, and the children frequently used their bodies to indulge in somewhat racist jokes about bodily difference. It was as if they were rebelling against the controls that they were subjected to during assemblies and other lessons (see Chapter 4), which urged them, through the use of anti-racist and anti-disablist homilies, to be more 'politically correct', i.e. to ignore the body and not to remark upon its difference. During one interview, Callum related to me a series of jokes about a 'black man', and Belinda amused her classmates during a lesson with an anecdote concerning a Pakistani person and a microwave. Both sets of jokes revolved around aspects of bodily difference. However, some of the jokes took on a more visual aspect, as when Megan, returning from lunch one day, demonstrated to the class a trick she had been perfecting during the break. The trick involved her kneeling down, putting her knees into her shoes, and walking around the classroom pretending to be a 'dwarf'. The children appeared to consider that these words and actions, because they were in the form of jokes, were not as shocking, or as politically incorrect (perhaps simply 'didn't count') as they might have been had they been approached in a more serious way.

James (1995b) talks of rhymes serving the important purpose of 'allowing children to deal in scatological thoughts and taboo topics through the inclusion of sexual terminology, swear-words and profanities' (1995:54), and says that these rhymes become increasingly more explicit as children mature and become more aware of bodily changes. This was certainly true of the children in the study group, who were beginning to explore their burgeoning sexuality. The group included some children who were a full year younger than those in the study group, and one of these younger children related to me a rhyme:

> *Mary had a little lamb,*
> *She put it near a pylon,*
> *Ten thousand volts shot up its bum,*
> *And turned its wool to nylon.*

However, the jokes of the older children, which again revolved around the body, were more sexually explicit in comparison. This can be seen during a conversation with Patrick:

P: (to me, giggling) *Where you born with happiness or two fat knees?*
BS: *Happiness* (gasps and laughter from the children)
P: (whispering, to me) *That means a penis!*
BS: *OK, so what does two fat knees mean?*
P: (whispering again) *Two fan-nies!*

Although still rather bashful in their utterances, children delighted in their ability and power to 'catch me out' in my innocence of their verbal culture, especially as they were able to trick me, an adult, into saying the words out loud, of which they knew the 'hidden' meaning.

The other tricks in which children indulged also demonstrated a fascination with the body's developing sexuality. In games lessons, girls would place tennis balls down the front of their shirts to augment their incipient breasts. During a music lesson at the end of term, the children were allowed to bring in their own music tapes and CDs, which were played as background music to their activities. Whilst the teacher's attention was directed elsewhere, Leon stood up and began dancing, alone, to the music. As the other children watched, he slowly pushed his hand down the front of his trousers, opened the zip part way, and then pushed his index finger through the gap in the fly to emulate his penis. The boys applauded loudly and, although they affected disgust and remonstrated with him, the girls too laughed at the joke.

To summarise, children used the body as a signifier to establish bodily norms, and to remark upon bodily difference and change. They also drew upon aspects of the body as a potent source of power over others, which also allowed them to rebel against the control of the school and its staff (see also Chapter 4), as well as to relieve the tedium of lessons and amuse (and gain prestige with) their peers. I have suggested, however, that children with SEN, whose bodies may not subscribe to the same bodily norms, were often not able to harness this power over others in quite such a potent manner.

Identifying the norms: the body as a source of identity

Whilst drawing upon the body's signifying potential, the children also often used bodily characteristics as reference points in a bid to establish their social identity. Their talent for noticing and commenting upon bodily characteristics, especially any changes, was impressive, and their forthrightness breathtaking. Children would comment upon the appearance and bodily performance of their peers and teachers *ad infinitum*, noting dress styles, makeup and hair, and styles of walking and talking. During one particular lesson, I was besieged with remarks about the fact that 'Sir' had had his hair cut. On another occasion, when asked by one member of staff to describe another, the children began by stating that he wore glasses, went on to outline the colour of his hair and eyes, described his clothes, and only then did they outline his role within the school. Children would always comment upon the fact that I was wearing a different lipstick (and not only the girls!), and were fascinated by the locket I wear around my neck. I received requests practically on a daily basis from children wishing to look inside. On seeing photographs of my parents, they would argue which of them I most closely resemble[1]. At the secondary school, one girl, who was of Asian ethnic origin (one of only very few in the school) possibly used her body to proclaim this identity. She came to school wearing an ethnic necklace, and became upset when told to remove it, as jewellery was not permitted under the terms of the dress code. She explained that it was part of her ethnic identity, and that she was required to wear it.

Other children utilised the body's surface to declare identity and as a repository for their 'tattoos' (removable transfers). They wrote messages on their hands proclaiming their current 'love interest' ('I' followed by a love heart and then the person's name) or their allegiance to a particular football team (e.g. 'Liverpool are the best team'). However, the most telling evidence of children's use of the physical body to declare their social identity came during one of the very first lessons at the new school. They had been asked to bring their own personal 'bag of tricks', particular items which they could use to tell others about themselves. They duly came with photographs of themselves as babies and/or toddlers, the identity bracelets they had worn at the hospital, baby albums which detailed their birth weight and height, swatches of hair that had previously been cut off, and items of clothing, including their football shirts. They were then asked to describe their appearance, and to decide which aspect was most important. Their responses were i) size and gender, ii) hair colour, length and style, iii) distinguishing features, iv) age, v) shape of face and vi) colour of eyes.

It was significant that the children identified hair as the second most important aspect of their identities after size and gender. As I have suggested, hair played a prominent part in the establishing of norms. As Synott explains:

> 'hair is one of our most powerful symbols of individual and group identity - powerful first because it is physical and therefore extremely personal, and second because although personal it is also public, rather than private. Furthermore, hair symbolism is usually voluntary rather than imposed or 'given'. Finally, hair is malleable, in various ways, and therefore singularly apt to symbolise both differentiation between, and changes in, individual and group identities'.
>
> (1993:103)

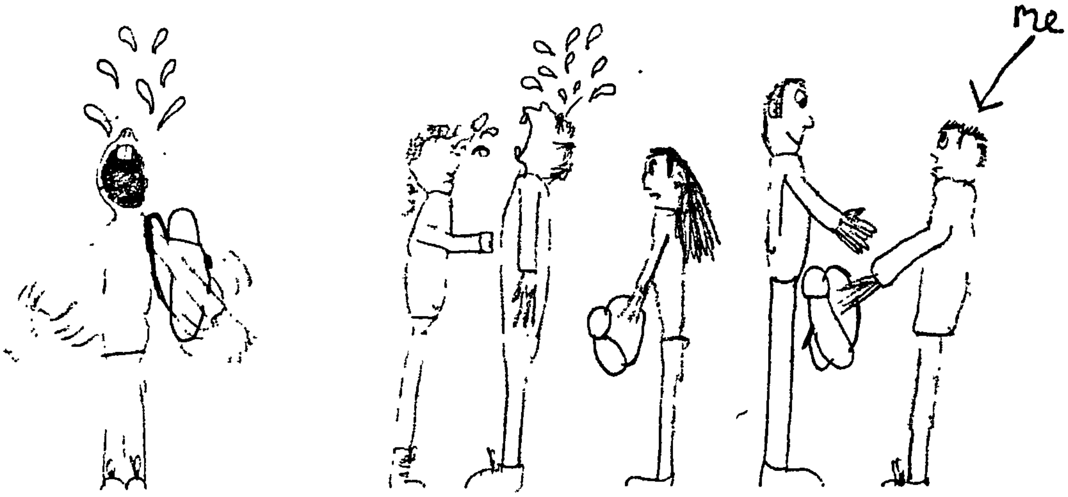
Children in the study often expressed strong views on the appropriate styles, lengths and, most importantly, colour of their classmates' hair. After one trip to the swimming baths, Cleo emerged from the showers with her hair, a mass of beautiful titian curls, worn loose. I commented that I had never seen her hair like this, as it was usually tied back tightly, and she replied, '*It goes all frizzy, and everyone picks on me because of it, and one boy 'jacked' me* (ended the relationship) *because of my hair*'. Later, as we set off back to school, Cleo's hair was again tied back. Another girl with red hair, Tanya, also talked about being bullied:

T: *They pick on me because of my hair.*
BS: *Who does?*
T: *Everybody, especially that Cassie Jones, and I wouldn't mind but she's got red hair as well.*
BS: *So is she picked on at all?*
T: *No, but she tells everybody it isn't red, it's strawberry blonde*[2].

It seems that Cassie had been able to convince her peers that her hair, rather than being the despised red or even 'ginger', was in fact the much more desirable 'strawberry blonde', thereby deflecting any potential attacks.

Children were often reduced to tears when, after deciding to change their hair style, they received adverse comments from their peers about the change, as in the case of Jane: '*Look, Jane's had her hair cut with a lawnmower!*' However, criticism was not confined only to the girls; boys were just as susceptible, if not more so, to adverse comments and appeared to be more worried about their hair styles than many of the girls during a visit by the school photographer (see Chapter 6). The current fashion for the boys at the time of the fieldwork sported a centre parting and 'wings' of hair on the forehead, and I often noticed boys surreptitiously checking that these were in the 'correct' place. Furthermore, as has already been noted in Chapter 4, a group of the more rebellious boys used their hair styles both to establish their group identity and to challenge the authority of the school, whilst another group of boys used the same method to demonstrate solidarity with a friend who had lost his hair due to chemotherapy for leukaemia (see below). However, the most noticeable aspect of children's hair was the manner in which they utilised it to denote a change in identity either immediately before, during, or after the transition. They would arrive at school with a change in style, which was usually shorter and which they deemed to be more 'grown-up' and therefore more appropriate to their new status.

So all the children exploited the body to indicate to others particular aspects of their identity and changes to these. Although, as the above examples suggest, children habitually highlighted bodily differences in their peers as a vehicle for taunts and teasing, some aspects of bodily change were seen as an acceptable part of the maturation process. Children wearing braces on their teeth, for example, escaped ridicule apart from an initial bout of relatively good-humoured teasing that soon subsided, unlike the wearing of spectacles (see below). This may be because braces on the teeth are seen to be a feature of self-improvement, which is valued, whereas spectacles are a sign of a disabled persona, which is not. As part of the quest to be seen as more mature and 'grown-up', children also exploited the changing appearance of their physical bodies to pinpoint changes in their social identity. Whilst still at the primary school, Patrick attracted my attention, pointed to his chin, and said, '*Look, miss, I'm getting teenage spots!*'. On another occasion, Suzy asked me to smell her cheek and, when I complimented her on her perfume, she told me that it was actually aftershave, and said: '*It's for my spots*'. As the children progressed towards adolescence, teenage spots were becoming increasingly commonplace amongst them. However, these bodily changes were accepted and acknowledged by the children as a common, and even welcomed, symbolic sign of incipient maturity. After the transition, the body was increasingly called upon to explain or account for emotions arising from changes in their social identity. On the first day of the new term, I was told by one girl, '*I feel about this high*'(measuring two inches with her fingers). Her explanation described exactly her feeling of leaving the primary school as one of the 'big kids' and of being reduced in both stature and status to one of the smallest, and the drawings (below) graphically illustrate the way in which children used the body to symbolise their emotions at that time of change.



Changes in sexual maturity were also evidenced by the wearing of 'shag bands' which, though displayed on the body, were suggestive of its potential performance. Harry explained the import of the fluorescent bands around his wrist:

H: *We all collect them and you get them at X's* (a local newsagents). *You have to twist two together like this* (demonstrates) *and wear them on your wrist.*

BS: *What are they called?*

H: *When we were at Littlefields school we used to called them friendship bands, but now* (coyly, giggling) *we call them 'shag bands', 'cos when you put them on you have to call them by somebody's name, and if they snap, you have to get into bed with them* (the named person).

The bands, along with the 'chicken scratches' (see below), were displayed on the children's bodies as evidence of increasing sexual maturity and toughness.

As with appearance, children also adhered to preconceived norms which governed changes in the performance of their own and peers' bodies. As part of their desire to be seen as more 'grown-up' and as having left their 'childish' ways behind, pupils acknowledged the different rules of perceived 'hardness'[3] (or learning to use the body as a 'hard' body) and 'softness', which was often equated with academic cleverness. These conventions were often drawn along boundaries of gender. Boys, especially, were expected to be, and to demonstrate that they were, 'hard', reflecting current debates about girls outranking boys at every stage of the curriculum. Boys, whose self-esteem plummets as a result, it is claimed, respond by indulging in anti-social behaviour - what the Chief Inspector of Schools, Chris Woodhead, calls the 'Gazza' factor[4] - to emphasise their toughness. Otherwise they are teased as 'cissies' or 'wimps' (soft) for doing their homework and excelling at school (The Daily Telegraph, 18.11.96).

This was certainly the case at both schools in the study where pupils would often voice the opinion that other children (usually boys) had indulged in particular acts of violence towards their (male) peers in an effort to demonstrate their 'hardness'. However, it was felt that boys should not fight with girls but, importantly, if they did, they should not be beaten by girls. 'Softness' was often equated with the notion of the 'Boff' (someone proficient in the academic arena), who was more likely to be a girl, and it was significant that the group of boys deemed to be the 'hardest' were also those who were the least able academically.

'Hardness' could be demonstrated in ways of talking and walking: it was unacceptable for boys to walk 'like a puff' or for girls to walk like a boy. It was commendable for boys, but not girls, to excel at football. Penny, who outclassed some of the boys with her football skills, was often picked on by them because she not only failed to conform to their stereotypical notions of prettiness (they claimed she looked like a 'troll'), but she also walked 'like a boy'. Her football skills caused them to undermine her femininity and they brought her down to size by bringing into question other aspects of her bodily persona.

Evidence of 'hardness' could be visibly displayed. I noticed actual 'wounds' on children's hands and, on enquiring what had caused these injuries, was informed:

T: *It's a 'chicken scratch'.*
BS: *It's what?*
T: *A chicken scratch.*
BS: *What's that?*
T: *Sometimes you do it to yourself, and sometimes somebody else does it, but you just scratch it until it bleeds, and you have to let them do it.*
BS: *Why?*
T: *To let them know that you're hard.*

However, although these subtle attempts to signal increasing maturity largely went unnoticed or were 'ignored' by school staff, children's more explicit challenges to the formal authority of the school were resisted. One teacher, soon after the transition, advised pupils on the inadvisability of wearing make-up at school. She had brought to school a soap dish and soap, which she claimed was kept next to the bidet in her bathroom at home. She asked the group whether they were familiar with bidets, whilst acknowledging that it was a very 'middle-class' thing to have, and Carly replied, 'It's for washing your bits and bobs'. A (male) pupil then mimed this action. Once the previous purpose of the soap had been firmly established, she then informed the pupils that she now used it for washing off pupils' make-up, if they insisted upon coming to school wearing it. By the use of this strategy, the teacher was threatening those pupils who wished to deviate from the 'uniform mass' by assuming the identity of an older pupil (Year

12 pupils were allowed to wear make-up) and reducing their identity to that of a much younger child.

The body, and its parts, then, were used by *all* children to express aspects of their social identity and the changes they were undergoing in terms of their 'hardness', newly acquired status and sexual development. Children with SEN were generally able to participate in most of these strategies, such as the use of the body as a repository for 'tattoos' etc. However, other aspects of the body, such as jokes around bodily 'difference' and lack of control, were often more problematic for physically disabled children.

Exploiting the norms: the body as an excuse for deficiency

Although I have argued that disability, illness, 'softness' and bodily fragility were largely denigrated by the children, they nevertheless also used these aspects to subvert authority when it suited their purpose (see also Chapter 4); for example when they claimed that they needed to visit the lavatory (in order to miss part or all of a lesson), or when girls claimed to be menstruating to avoid showers etc. However, there was a fine line, which children expected their peers not to cross, when drawing on the symbolic potential of bodily fragility. As I shall argue later, those experiencing serious disability, for example, were only able to deflect censure by using strategies which relied heavily on well developed social skills (see Beth and Clive, Chapter 6). As long as children were able to identify, and keep within, these boundaries, they were able to exploit aspects of bodily fragility in order to manipulate teachers' expectations or explain their own inadequacies.

Soon after I joined the group at the primary school, the children undertook their SATs for Maths. They were subject to varying degrees of nervousness, and Patrick informed me: '*My friend tried to break his arm by trapping it in the door so he couldn't write* (for the tests), *and I tried to break mine by falling off my bike!*'. Similarly, later in the term, the children were informed that their usual teacher would be absent the next day, and that a particular supply teacher, Mrs White, would be taking their lessons. Groaning loudly, Jill outlined her proposed strategies for being absent:

> *'Oh, I'm gonna drink some vinegar tonight to make me poorly so I won't have to come to school tomorrow. I don't like that Mrs White, she did nothing but shout at us the last time she was here!'*

Although these threats were largely in jest, the children nonetheless had acknowledged the use of the body as a vehicle for avoiding unpleasant tasks (see also Wilkinson, 1988). Children also drew on the potential fragility of the body in an attempt to deflect teachers' expectations of them. On one occasion, when berated by the teacher for failing to complete the requisite amount of work, Patrick claimed that he had glass in his finger and was therefore unable to write. This inability to write quickly was often used as an excuse by the children who experienced difficulties with reading, writing and spelling. They claimed that the amount of writing they were expected to complete caused their hands, arms and necks to ache. Although these children were not subject to any identifiable physical disabilities, nonetheless they drew upon bodily fragility to legitimate their poor performance.

When faced with her own inability to perform a particular physical task, Andrea reiterated the reason for this on three separate occasions (i.e. that she had broken her leg the previous summer by falling off her roller boots, which had left her leg considerably weakened). During a PE lesson, when she was unable to execute a forward roll, and later, was unable to skip satisfactorily during a practise for Sports Day, she explained to me this was due to the previous injury. Andrea was actually considerably overweight, a fact which contributed to her difficulties in sports and PE, but she preferred to explain away these difficulties by referring to the injury. She claimed that there was 'something wrong' with her body, to draw attention away from the less acceptable (to her peers) fact of her weight. Similarly, Cameron, who was constantly in trouble with teachers for inappropriate behaviour, explained his problems with reference to his unruly body: '*I can't sit still, I'm hyperactive, the doctor said so*'. Thus he legitimated his claim by reference to the medical profession. Children in the study, then, often referred to their bodies as somehow 'faulty', and therefore out of their control, to explain inadequacies of performance or ability. However, these explanations were only successful if confined within certain limits, which children were aware they must not exceed. This had implications for the children with SEN whose bodily weaknesses often exceeded the proscribed limits.

To summarise, I have shown that, during infancy and childhood, all children learn about themselves and others, and about similarity and difference through a careful process of looking and observation. Similarities and differences between children are highlighted through the medium of the body, upon which is laid different layers of meaning. In the social 'fields' of the school and the peer-group, and through the notion of the 'habitus', children unconsciously discover what it means to be a 'proper' child in the eyes of their peers (i.e. the 'correct' way to walk, talk and comport themselves). I will now go on to argue that children, having observed and learned the ways in which to know about the importance of the body, then 'read' the bodies of others, to attribute meaning to physical appearance and translate these readings into moral judgements. I will then show how those children who, for one reason or another, have not assumed the identity of a 'proper' child, are subject to teasing or bullying by others, and how, inevitably, this is also carried out through the medium of the body.

LOOKING, SEEING AND STARING: registering the 'not normal' body

I have argued above that looking and staring are mechanisms used by all children in the process of identifying and classifying others' bodies. However, as they grow up, children are 'civilised' by parents and, more especially by schools (see also Chapter 4), and are reproached for these actions: '*Don't stare, it's rude!*'. Part of the growing up process is perceived to be the move from the 'savage'/'natural' child to the 'civilised'/'cultured' adult (Jenks, 1996). Then it is that the innocent 'look' of the child is somehow transformed into the more threatening 'stare' of the adult. Teenagers, whose bodies may be undergoing changes due to adolescence, also feel threatened by stares, and can be heard to enquire '*What are you staring at?*', or alternatively, '*Do you want a photograph?*', as if to offer the 'starer' a permanent record of the 'object' of their gaze.

Shakespeare (1997) compares the objectification of the body in both pornography and disability charity advertising, and describes how 'looking' bestows power upon the observer: 'in each case the gaze focuses on the body, which is passive and available. In each case, particular aspects of the body are exaggerated: sexual parts, in pornography, or 'flawed' parts in charity advertising' (1997:223). This is also what children do. They focus on a particular part of another child's body that they deem to be different, using it as a metonymic device for the self, i.e. the part 'stands for' the whole. They 'see' the glasses worn by another child. or the missing arm, and define the child in terms of these alone. They may then dismiss the possibility of friendship with that child, fearing that the 'damaged' part of the other child may 'pollute' their own identity (see also below). Connolly, for example, describes how, in his study, particular discourses on 'race' operated in relation to South Asian boys to represent them as being 'effeminate, quiet and non-physical' (1998:19), with the consequence that other boys refused to play with them. They were concerned that their own status and reputations would be undermined. Similarly, some children in the present study dismissed the idea of friendship with children with disabilities (see below).

So the 'look' bestows power on the observer. Shakespeare illustrates the manner in which disabled people are deemed to be 'other' by able-bodied individuals, in the same way that women are perceived as 'other' by men in patriarchal societies (de Beauvoir, 1976), where women's oppression is a vital part of 'what it is to be a man, a major component of male identity and culture' (Shakespeare, 1997:227). As Okeley has written: 'The individual necessarily uses 'the other' for self-definition. He or she needs the other's gaze and presence as a confirmation of existence' (Okeley, 1986:57). Similarly, Coward claims that:

> 'The camera in contemporary media has been put to use as an extension of the male gaze at women on the street. Here, men can and do stare at women; men assess, judge and make advances on the basis of these visual impressions. The ability to scrutinise is premised on power. Indeed the look confers power; women's inability to return such a critical and aggressive look is a sign of subordination, of being the recipient of another's assessment'.
>
> Coward, 1984:75)

Those individuals whose bodies are somehow defined as 'other' may feel threatened by 'the look'; Jenny Morris, speaking as a disabled person describes, for example, the visual invasion practised by able-bodied people outside the privacy of the home: 'it is the knowledge that each entry into the public world will be dominated by *stares*, by condescension, by pity and by hostility' (1991:104, emphasis added). So the person on the receiving end of 'the look' perceives that the stare is accompanied by judgements of their moral and cognitive characteristics.

In Sandow's study, children drew upon their observations of others' bodies in order to produce illustrations of people they deemed to be 'clever, stupid, nice or nasty'(1997:83) (see also below). Similarly, children in the present study often claimed to be intimidated by their peers' use of 'the look' - engaging eye contact and holding it - whilst performing particular actions. However, even 'the look' on its own was sufficient to terrorise others. Children in this study and at the school more generally used the concept of the 'evil eye'. For example, as a particularly potent strategy, children stared into another child's eyes and told them: '*You're dead!*'. Staff at the school also related other incidents when this method of intimidation had been used, and one in particular stressed the impact it had on children: '*It's widespread and very powerful, they really believe it's going to happen, like a voodoo threat*'[5]. It was not necessary to touch the other child, the 'stare' was sufficient to instil fear. Hegley[6], writing from a bully's viewpoint, recalls his visual power over another child, 'I made him the subject of a relentless campaign of misery - every time he *saw* me, I gave him *eyes* that said: 'You're under observation, you're under threat. Watch it, or you're going to catch it'. And, occasionally, he would' (Sunday Times, 25.8.97, emphasis added). Children at both primary and secondary schools often remarked upon the strength of their 'look'. For example, when 11-year-old Phillip's ruler snapped and a section dropped off, he explained he had caused this to happen by his '*very strong eye power*'.

A particularly poignant episode concerning 'the look' occurred some time after the transition to the secondary school, and involved a group of girls who had previously been friends but who had had a disagreement. Penny had been excluded from the group, and was refusing at first to enter the classroom for a particular lesson. When she eventually came in, she was crying, and when I enquired why she replied: '*Melanie and all that lot are getting at me*'. A little while later she informed me: '*Look, Natasha's giving me a horrible look*'. She then despatched a note to another member of the group which enquired: '*Suzy, are you my friend?*' Suzy refused to reply, so Penny asked her directly, to which she simply shrugged. The conversation continued:

P: *You'll all be sorry when I'm dead!*
N: *But you're not gonna be dead, are you?*
P: *I'll kill myself and leave a note to tell everyone it's your fault.*

Natasha's 'horrible look' had evoked thoughts of death in Penny who, whilst admitting that this would be by her own hand, had then attempted to stir up feelings of guilt in the rest of the group, at whose door the ultimate blame should be laid. Indeed, children appeared to be more afraid of 'the look' than of any real physical violence on others' part, which suggests one area of agency that is common to children with SEN and their mainstream peers.

THE 'NOT NORMAL' BODY: Naming the norms: the body as a vehicle for taunting others

James (1993) notes that:

> 'many of the cultural stereotypes of qualified personhood used in the adult world as markers of a stigmatised identity also resound in the bald attribution of difference. Thus, both personal experience of such practices, and a more generalised cultural knowledge of the body, work to make the body an important signifier of social identity for children, a process which has yet to be systematically documented in accounts of childhood'.
>
> (1993:104)

In her study, James discovered that five aspects of the physical body took on particular significance for children: its height, shape, appearance, gender and performance, and the frequency with which the children referred to the body emphasised the importance of the corporeality of human life. Furthermore, their use of cultural stereotypes enabled her subjects to mark out as different, as 'other', those whose bodies they perceived to be in some way different from their own. These findings were borne out repeatedly in the present study. As I have already shown, children judged each other mercilessly in terms of their physical appearance and bodily performance, and the smallest perceived deviation from their own standards of 'normality' and acceptability was commented upon.

The naming of these norms of physical appearance, and the consequent identification of those who do not comply with them, are a potent source of power within the world of the child. As I have argued, children learn the norms of the body through observing others, identifying through 'the look' the ways in which particular bodies differ. However, these judgements around others' appearance are also crucial to children's identity in that they are mobilised to underpin wider assumptions about other children's characteristics, abilities and potential actions (see below). The most important physical aspects of the body for these children were its size, shape and facial appearance, the latter appearing to be of paramount importance. This is in line with Richardson et al's earlier (1961) study, in which children were asked to rank pictures of other children with various disabilities in order of preference (see also below). Richardson et al claimed that, as the face is of primary importance in an initial assessment of another individual, subjects preferred the child whose disability was furthest from the face.

James (1979) notes how, for a child, names and nicknames are extremely powerful; a way of distinguishing between friends and enemies. Names may take the form of social 'glue', binding the group together, or may be abusive and intended to disparage: 'abusive nicknames may wound as deeply as a physical attack' (1979:633). Children in their last term at the primary school expressed concerns that they would be bullied at the secondary school, and these concerns revolved as much, if not more, around verbal 'teasing' about their bodily features than actual physical violence. They also considered that they were more likely to be picked on for deviations from the physical norms than for any actual or perceived lack of academic ability. This belief was in fact borne out at the secondary school, where it was those children who *excelled* in academic areas who were singled out for ridicule and labelled 'Boffs'.

However, being teased for how one looks is an intensely emotional issue and represents a considerable challenge to self-esteem, a fact not always acknowledged by adults[7]. A particularly tragic event occurred at the primary school during the period of fieldwork, when a nine-year-old pupil died after running out into the road outside school into the path of a car. Recording a verdict of accidental death, the local coroner claimed, 'There had been some childish banter and name-calling between a group of children and perhaps nothing more than that. It appears he ran to get himself away from that situation' (Local paper, 13.9.97). What was dismissed and trivialised as 'childish banter' actually cost that child his life. Name-calling does chip away at a child's self-esteem. It cannot simply be dismissed by adults as 'teasing' or 'childish banter', but must be acknowledged for its potentially tragic consequences.

As the Opies (1959) have shown, the techniques that children use to gain and maintain power and social control over others are preserved over generations and, although the forms of the names themselves may change, the underlying power to wound remains. Morgan et al (1979) further claim that:

> 'in the autonomous society of childhood and adolescence the norms of appearance and behaviour are promulgated and enforced, at least in some such societies, through nicknaming. By marking, emphasising and stigmatising the abnormal, nicknames serve to publish what is acceptable among those who promote such names and who direct their contempt upon those unfortunate enough to be their bearers'.
>
> (Morgan et al, 1979:69)

The concerns children held about name-calling and potential bullying were highlighted during discussions about the move to the new space of the secondary school, echoing James et al's suggestion that children 'have to come to terms not only with their own constantly changing bodies and those of their peers, but also with the changing institutional contexts in which meanings are given to these changes' (1998:156). The children believed they were potential targets for name-calling if they were fatter, taller or smaller than the desired 'average' physical build (although slimness was usually valued, especially by the girls[8]). Pupils deemed to be too fat were seen to be figures of fun as well as attracting moral judgements (Featherstone, 1991). For example, Patrick claimed, '*I know this big fat girl and everybody calls her 'pie-eater*'', and another girl pupil who was larger than the rest was ironically dubbed 'anorexic' by one of the boys[9].

Children do not inhabit a cultural vacuum, but receive cultural messages through all of their senses, and from many different arenas, both internal and external. A powerful visual medium is advertising, especially that shown on television. During March, 1998, a debate raged in the press concerning an advertisement for Corn Flakes, which played upon the notion of children being bullied for being overweight, suggesting that the problem might be solved by feeding the child the '90% fat-free' breakfast cereal (see Appendix 1). Complaints were received by the Advertising Standards Authority, and Professor Peter Smith, a psychologist, claimed that there was no truth in the advertisement's claim that children are bullied for being overweight. The 'innocence' ascribed to children (see Gittins, 1998 and also Chapter 1) tends to deny the fact that children, as I have shown, do 'look' for differences in others' bodies and, having identified these, then go on to name them in a negative manner. Kelloggs reported, in fact, that a quarter of the calls to the Anti Bullying Campaign hotline were as a result of the perceived link between bullying and obesity[10]. This use of advertising images in order to taunt others was evidenced in other aspects of children's behaviour, e.g. their attitude towards spectacles. Pupils who wore glasses attracted adverse comments and sobriquets such as 'Four-eyes' or 'Milky Bar Kid'. The latter was surprising as the TV advertisement which originally spawned the expression has not been shown for several years, thereby underlining the Opie's (1959) suggestion that such classifications become part of children's culture, passed down through successive age groups. Although any feature which marked children out as slightly different was deemed to be undesirable, the wearing of spectacles was especially so, as confirmed by Sandow's (1997) study (see above). When children were asked to draw 'a very clever person', many of them depicted someone wearing glasses. In an environment where 'cleverness' (the 'Boff') is devalued, perceived visible evidence of this is also to be denigrated.

During an Art lesson at the secondary school, pupils were asked to design an imaginary pair of glasses for Dame Edna Everage[11]. To illustrate the lesson, the teacher had acquired several pairs of old, unused spectacles from a local optician, and he attempted to cajole several pupils into modelling them. However, the pupils were extremely reluctant to do so, with one girl actually covering her face to prevent him from placing the glasses on her nose. When he did succeed in putting them onto two pupils, everyone else laughed loudly, and the two pupils in question quickly pulled them off. There was a corresponding reluctance to wear safety goggles during science lessons, and pupils removed them as soon as possible after experiments which necessitated their wear. Due to the negative connotations attached to the wearing of glasses, pupils disliked wearing them even for brief periods and for their own safety, and adverse comments about spectacles often resulted in spectacle wearers 'accidentally' leaving them at home and therefore not being able to wear them[12].

As with physical appearance, children were often taunted as a result of the actions of their bodies which called into question competent performance. The children, for example, were able to identify fellow pupils who would be singled out after the move to the secondary school. Harry was a case in point. He had a habit of persistently licking his lips, which consequently gave his mouth a very sore, red appearance. One of his friends claimed that Harry would inevitably be bullied, and suggested that others would call him 'Lipstick Dipstick'. Although appearing at first glance to simply focus on Harry's appearance and his unfortunate habit, the nickname actually highlighted less innocent undercurrents, which focused ultimately on what his body did. Even at the primary school, the other children often raised questions around Harry's sexuality. During a discussion about Sports' Day, Mr Scott asked the girls to raise their hands. Several boys urged Harry to raise his hand, claiming that he acted like a girl.

On another occasion, Spencer claimed: *'Harry's a girl, he walks around like this'* ('mincing' around with a 'limp wrist' action). However, Harry himself often added to the uncertainty, as on the occasion we were returning to school from the swimming baths and he wanted to put his hair into a ponytail. One of the girls lent him a bright pink hair 'bobble', which he put into his hair and then began to 'mince' around, causing another girl to enquire of him whether he was 'gay'. So the menacing undercurrent beneath the 'Lipstick' taunt related not simply to the sore, red appearance of Harry's mouth, but also questioned his sexuality. In addition, 'Dipstick' may also have referred to his apparent stupidity ('Dipstick' rhyming with 'thick') in embracing a questionable sexual role, and departing from the macho, 'hard' image favoured by most of the boys. At primary school, Harry was adept at dealing with the teasing around his sexuality. However, the children's concerns about Harry's ability to cope at the secondary school proved to be justified. Soon after the transition, Harry was late for a lesson, and it appeared that he had run out of school after an altercation with a group of girls, who had been mocking him for fighting with another girl and, even more demeaning (in their eyes) coming off worst. Consequently, the girls were taunting him and calling him 'a puff'. This had led to his absconding from school. During a follow-up conversation at the primary school, it was noted that Harry had also absconded from there after a disagreement but, according to staff: *'It was a minor thing that he got upset about, quite a 'girly' thing'*. So Harry's gender identity was called into question by both adults, and children, alike.

Children also used the concept of pollution to highlight bodily difference and lack of bodily control in others. Cleo, who had previously informed me that her brother had 'come off' the steroids he had been taking for what she termed a 'blood disease', reported that she had been involved in an altercation at the baths with Raymond and Clem. She claimed that she had called them 'poo-poo' as a joke, which was common amongst the children (see above). However, Raymond had retaliated by stating: *'At least I don't shit myself like your brother!'* Cleo was particularly distressed as her brother had never suffered from incontinence.

I would argue, then, that bodily difference and loss of bodily control, which can be taken to include illness, were used by children as powerful tools with which to insult their peers. Consequently, the most abusive terms were reserved for disease and disability itself, and my fieldnotes are peppered with instances where children used forms of disability to libel their peers. Shakespeare (1997) citing Sonntag (1991), argues that although disease functions as a metaphor, this nonetheless skirts the real process: 'it is disability which is the most active and prominent metaphor of all, and disabled people become ciphers for those feelings, processes or characteristics with which non-disabled society cannot deal' (1997:221). Indeed, children, when wishing to abuse their peers, used a wide range of disability terms so to do. Galloway (1990) claims that:

> 'on an INSET training course, a group of 70 teachers took less than five minutes to produce a list of more than 70 derogatory labels in current use in their own schools when pupils were referring to peers regarded as slow learners (e.g. 'divvy', 'remmo', 'spas')'.
> (1990:215)

The terms 'div', 'divvy' (stupid) and 'spaz' (spastic) were in almost daily use during the fieldwork, but these epithets were usually used in anger and/or as a form of retaliation to a verbal or physical slight. However, during discussions with the children around reasons for bullying, they related their own and other children's experiences as targets of censure. They related how they, or someone they knew, had been picked on due to their having a particular condition such as asthma or epilepsy. They talked about Jamie: '*He's got a hole in his jaw and you can't understand what he says, so he gets picked on*', and Mel, who received similar treatment due to a 'lump' on his lip. Andy (who was actually autistic) was deemed by one of the girls to be 'a pervert', as he had dropped his trousers and shown everyone his backside, and he was labelled as 'crazy' by another of the girls, who said: '*He hasn't got anything wrong with his body but there must be something wrong with him. Mr Scott says we musn't laugh at him because that's what he wants, an audience, it makes him worse. We have to ignore him or we'll be in trouble*'.

During the study, children not only 'named' others experiencing health problems, they used their bodies to mimic the symptoms of illness. Children suffering from epilepsy reported that others would later caricature their seizures, stretching out their arms and shaking, and those experiencing asthma attacks claimed that other children would pretend to be gasping for breath. Patrick, who had both eczema and asthma explained:

> *'they pick on me, and once somebody snatched my inhaler off me* (at this point he went into the cloakroom, collected his inhaler and showed me how it worked), *and they wasted a full bottle. And I get itchy on my arms when I get hot playing football, and I have to run with my arms away from my body, and they all laugh at me'.*

Patrick's problems were twofold; not only was he subject to two identifiable illnesses, but because of them he was also forced to comport his body in a manner which contravened the stereotypical expectations of his peers.

However, as I shall demonstrate in Chapter 6, those children with specific illnesses or identified SEN (e.g. Clive and Beth) were sometimes able to deflect negative attention from others if they possessed good social skills, demonstrating that it was not the possession of SEN *per se* that attracted censure, but rather the manner in which these were handled. Children also understood that even when a particular nickname was directed at them, the most important aspect of this name-calling was the manner in which it was done, rather than the name itself. This was evident in the following scenario which involved the use of the nickname 'Boff'. Tom and Phil explained the intricate difference of the epithet 'Boff' used to wound a particularly bright child, and the same nickname offered affectionately between friends. Sitting between the two boys, I commented upon the neatness of Tom's work:

Phil: *That's because he's a Boff.*
BS: (to Tom) *Why are you called a Boff?*
Tom: *Because I'm neat and I wear glasses.*
Phil: *I call him a Boff but he's my mate.*
BS: *Why call him names if he's your friend? Do you do it in a nasty way or a friendly way?*
Phil: *In a friendly way.*
BS: *So how does he know?*
Phil: *By the way I say it.*

Here can be seen the details of children's ability to differentiate between a name intended to wound and the same name used as a term of friendship. Tom was well aware that his perceived 'failing' in bodily performance, that of producing neat work, was compounded by a physical attribute, that of wearing the dreaded spectacles, but Phil's tone of voice and his bodily demeanour conveyed to Tom that his jibe was intended affectionately[13].

Changes to the body as 'not normal' and undesired

Christensen (1993) notes that:

> 'through the 'act of looking' children symbolically exchange and share the experience of the body, as if saying 'look with me' or 'see, what I see'. More than that it shows a concordance with the practice with which children respond to presentations of the body in both play and other activity, and respond to symptoms and scratches'.
>
> (1993:499)

Christensen adds that children's exhortations to 'look' in this manner are often misinterpreted by adults as a demand for intervention, whereas they represent in fact simply a way of sharing bodily attributes and of gaining attention. Requests from children to 'look' at some minor injury or scratch were daily occurrences during the fieldwork. Once they had established that I was an 'unusual' adult who took notice of their exhortations to 'look', I was bombarded many times a day with requests for attention, to acknowledge changes brought about by injury, and sometimes to mediate with school staff in cases of illness.

The list is endless: small cuts, nosebleeds, scratches, scars, bruises, loose teeth, sunburnt earlobes, blood wheels, and rashes. I was asked to inspect one child's throat to determine whether it looked sore, to cut off another`s hangnail, and to inspect the stitches in a third child's gums. Not only did the children show me their current injuries, they constantly regaled me with accounts of the surgical operations they had either undergone in the past or were awaiting. They told me about their tonsillectomies, their eye tests/operations, and the grommets that had been/were about to be placed in their ears. It must be acknowledged that some of the children were not accustomed to being listened to, but nonetheless it was pertinent to note that when they did have a captive audience, their favourite topic of conversation was invariably the changing aspects of their bodies. This fact was even acknowledged by one of the teachers, during a science lesson, when a discussion about which of them had undergone physiotherapy threatened to take up the whole lesson. Drawing the discussion to a close, the teacher commented: '*You all want to talk about your bodies but we haven't got time*'. However, changes to the body brought about by illness or injury represent often unwanted changes to the self which can attract unwelcome attention and taunts from others.

Reading the body

During her study, in an attempt to tease out some of the more subtle influences to which children are subject in their everyday interactions, James (1993) devised a research strategy which involved group storytelling. The group was provided with the bare bones of a story which they were then asked to flesh out through group discussion. The subject of the story was a child who had no friends, and the children in the study were asked to provide reasons for the other child's friendless state. The main reason given for this was a lack of social skills (bullying, kicking, stealing, swearing etc.), but this behaviour was, without exception, 'accompanied by a description of an outrageously ugly body, composed of a variety of stereotypical negative aspects' (1993:131) such as fatness, pimples, and pointed noses. The implication was that ugly behaviour is portrayed through an ugly body, and that children do not welcome ugly people as friends.

During the present study, in a comparable attempt to ascertain the children's views of others' embodied identities, I invited them to look at a selection of photographs of other children, which had been gleaned from newspapers and magazines[14], and to assess them as possible friends. Of the thirty-one pictures, nine were of children with some kind of disability, some more visible than others. One boy had had a brain tumour (No. 17) but did not appear especially different; one had only one arm (No. 19), another had a genetic disorder and appeared slightly different (No. 25) and a fourth was hearing impaired and wore an aid

(No. 27). Of the girls, one had spina bifida but had no obvious facial differences (No. 2), another had received treatment for cancer and subsequently suffered hair loss (No. 12), a third had muscular dystrophy, and had an unusually long face and rather prominent eyes and teeth (No. 15), a fourth had Down's Syndrome (No. 21) and a fifth was a wheelchair user due to cerebral palsy (No. 23).

During previous discussions, the children in the study had appeared reticent when asked to articulate their feelings about embodiment and difference. It was unclear whether this was due to a reluctance on their part, or whether these issues were so deeply embedded in their unconscious knowledge of the 'habitus', as claimed by Bourdieu (1986), that they were either unaware of them, or unable to voice their feelings about them. Nonetheless, asking them to comment on the children in the photographs was a conscious research strategy which proved to be successful. Christensen and James (2000) have noted that the use of visual media as research tools with children serves two distinct purposes. Firstly they permit 'the concretizing of ... very abstract notions' such as time use or, in this case, perceptions of disability. Secondly, they provide 'another medium of communication over and above that of talking' (2000:165). Here, the photographs provided the participants with a focus for their perceptions and not only were they able to assess the other children as potential friends, but also to mobilise their appearance into characteristics and potential behaviour.

Image 1

The boy in Image 1, for instance, was considered by some children to be 'cheerful' and 'sporty', possibly due to the clothes he was wearing, and one boy claimed: '*He doesn't look like he's going round smashing windows or anything*'. However, for most of them, his manner was deemed to be 'loud' and his appearance led them to discount him as a potential friend:

> *'looks a bit aggressive'*
>
> *'looks a bit of a prat'*
>
> *'looks like he gets into mischief'*
>
> *'looks like he could be a bit, one of them that might get you into trouble'*
>
> *'looks really big-headed, 'cos of how he's laughing and everything'*
>
> *'looks a bit hard, mess with him and he can mess with somebody else'*
>
> *'looks like one of them boys that if you get on the right side of him you've got a friend for life, but if you don't you've got an enemy'*
>
> *'looks a bit ugly'*

Judging from his appearance alone, most children decided that this boy was 'hard' and was therefore rather dangerous as a potential friend.

Image 5

The boy in Image 5, on the other hand, was rejected on the basis that he 'looked' to be rather boring and a bit of a 'geek' (someone who works hard at school). One girl who came to this conclusion reached it on the basis of '*the way he's smiling*'. Other children confirmed this image:

> *'doesn't look right'*
>
> *'doesn't brush his hair'*
>
> *'his eyes are like that (*mimes droopy*)'*
>
> *'looks a bit old-fashioned'*
>
> *'looks geeky (one of them kids that's always boasting)'*
>
> *'looks like he works, helps people who are poor'*
>
> *'looks like a sensible one'*
>
> *'looks an old man'*

'looks a little bit posh' (x 2)

'looks too smart, too snobby' (x 2)

'looks like a smarty pants'

'looks ugly'

Again, most of the children rejected this boy as a potential friend as he was deemed to be too `smart', both in appearance and possibly at school, although one child rejected him on the basis of his unkempt hair. (Hair styles were mentioned on numerous occasions as important criteria in reaching decisions about potential friends, as were the shape of heads, faces eyes etc.) This boy was also deemed to be old for his years, and far too sensible.

Image 10

The girl in Image 10 also proved to be unpopular with the subjects, due to her rather surly expression, which was again mobilised into possible action that could lead them into trouble:

'looks like she's always gonna be in a mood'

'looks angry' (x 2)

'doesn't look like she's got many friends'

'looks a bit sad, probably got no friends'

'looks cheeky, she'll boss everyone around'

'looks like she'll try to have fights with you or something'

'looks like she picks on people'

'always gets into trouble'

'looks like she'd go round causing trouble, name-calling and that'

'looks like a bit of a bully'

'looks like she's being bullied'

'could be in the middle of a family problem'

'looks like she smokes'

'looks a bit like she's on drugs or something, she's drinking or smoking'

'looks like she's on the streets'

It was interesting to note that many of the children associated this girl's 'worried' look with bullying or name-calling, but whereas some deemed her to be the bully, others considered that she was the victim. This was quite perceptive of the children, as victims often become bullies, and *vice versa* (see Chapter 6). However, the majority of children were quite ruthless in their perception of her, deciding that she was not only a trouble causer, but that she herself was 'in trouble'.

Image 29

Only one child (Image 29) from the set of photographs, received unanimous approval:

> *'looks fine'* (x 3)
>
> *'looks cheerful, playful, easy to talk to'*
>
> *'looks nice, easy to get on with'*
>
> *'looks all right to be a friend with, yes'*
>
> *'looks cheerful, nice to be a friend with'*
>
> *'looks like he's got plenty of friends'*
>
> *'looks like he could have a lot of fun, but do his work sensibly'*
>
> *'looks happy, looks like he's interested in football, like him'*
>
> *'looks nice, a smile on his face'*
>
> *'doesn't look rude or cheeky'*
>
> *'doesn't look like a bully'*

Initially, I felt that this universal acceptance was due in some part to the way the boy was dressed. However, the boy in Image 1, whom most of the children disliked, was similarly dressed. In this case, boy number 29's smile was approved of, as part of his 'niceness', whereas the smile of boy number 5 was deemed to be a negative feature which added to his 'geekiness', and the way that boy number 1 was laughing was perceived to be big-headed. Unlike the boy in Image 5, who was deemed to be too 'smart' for his own good, boy number 29's serious attitude to work was mitigated by his sense of fun. Subjects tended to like those children who reminded them of others that they knew and liked (and *vice versa*), and approved of those they considered to share their own interests, such as football or pets. As with James' (1993) study, the children they disliked were often deemed to be 'ugly' (see also Jenny, Chapter 6).

This exercise was carried out during the children's final term at the primary school, and the information gathered was compared with fieldnotes collected during observation at both schools. The reactions and consequent behaviour of two pupils, both boys, are particularly pertinent to the present discussion. Judging from their academic performance and test results, both Phillip and George were bright, popular with their peers and, as far as I was aware, had not been involved in any kind of overt bullying during the final term at the primary school. They both enjoyed friendships with other pupils, mainly boys, but did not appear to share a particular friendship with each other. Although interviewed on different occasions, the two boys in question showed similar reactions to the photographs, especially with respect to bodily 'difference'. The first boy, Phillip, said of Images 2, 12, 17, 21 and 27 (all of whom were disabled but did not appear especially different, see later) that he would like them as friends because they were 'nice', 'friendly' and 'cheerful'.

Image 15

However, when it came to the child in Image 15, Phillip commented:

P: *Yes, well, I'm not sure about this one, I think I'm gonna have to say 'no'. I don't think I could make friends with her, no.*
BS: *Are you able to say why?*
P: *Well, it's not because she looks ugly, it's, she, I'm not sure really, she just looks like a person I couldn't make friends with.*

Phillip was reluctant to admit his ambivalence towards this child, and wanted to reassure me that the reason for his hesitancy had nothing to do with the girl's different appearance, although he twice referred to the way she 'looked'. Throughout the interviews, the children in the study referred constantly to 'the look' of the children in the photographs, which they used as a reference point to determine their reactions to them and which coloured their decisions as to potential friendships.

Image 19

When we reached the child in image 19, again Phillip hesitated:

P: *He's a bit old, yes.*
BS: *He's a bit old?*
P: *Yes.*
BS: *What do you mean, he's a bit old?*
P: *He's a bit, you know, in his teens, but I could make friends with him if he could make friends with me, I'm not sure, he might be a bit rough, I'm not sure.*
BS: *What makes you think that?*
P: *I'm not sure, he looks nice on that picture, but he looks as if he can get rough at times, you know, if he hangs round with his big mates, you know, trying to impress them or something.*

Phillip, who appeared not to notice the boy's missing arm, struggled to explain his antipathy towards him by claiming that he was outside his own age range, and might not want to be *his* friend, although the boy in the picture was actually approximately the same age as Phillip. He eventually excused his feelings by claiming that the boy appeared too rough for him to associate with, and that he looked like a braggart, and was therefore unacceptable as a friend.

Image 25

Phillip also used the concept of 'roughness' to explain why he couldn't be friends with the boy in Image 25, claiming that he: '*looks a bit on the hard side, on the rough side, mm*'.

Image 21

He appeared to accept that the girl in Image 21 might be a friend, whilst also claiming that he felt sorry for her.

Image 23

However, when it came to the child in Image 23, Phillip again appeared ambivalent towards her:

P: *Mm. She looks as if she's got a problem. I feel sorry for her again, but I'd have to say I don't really want to make friends with her, honestly. I feel very sorry for her, but not the person I'd like to make friends with.*
BS: *Are you able to say why?*
P: *No, not really, not sure really, she just doesn't look it, as I see it.*

He was unable to articulate his feelings precisely, and claimed once again to be unsure' of his reasons. As previously, Phillip referred to the child's *look* as influencing his view, thereby reinforcing my argument about the predominantly visual nature of children's judgements. He seemed to feel a sense of guilt about his feelings, acknowledging that he probably ought to be able to overcome his apparent abhorrence towards the other child but, at the same time, stressing his honesty in disclosing his true feelings.

The other boy, George, appeared to have no such struggle with expressing his finer feelings in his rejection of almost all of the children with disabilities.

Image 2

He reluctantly accepted the child in Image 2 as 'all right'.

Image 12

However, George was emphatic that he could not be friends with the child in Image 12:

G: *No.*
BS: *You're not keen on her?*
G: *No.*
BS: *Does she look as if she's had something the matter with her, do you think?*
G: *Yes.*
BS: *What do you think she's had the matter with her?*
G: *That thing, um, where all your hair drops out.*
BS: *Leukaemia?*
G: *Yes, that.*
BS: *Mm. So what do you think to her, then?*
G: *No.*
BS: *Not so keen?*
G: *No.*

Unlike Phillip, George did not express sympathy toward this child, or attempt to give me an explanation for his feelings. However, when we came to the boy who had an arm missing (see above, Image 19), George attempted to explain why it would be difficult for some people to form a friendship with him. Not noticing the missing limb at first, George said the boy was 'all right', but later in the conversation when it became apparent, he explained to me why some people might be 'put off' by this:

G: *Yes, yes, I think it would be horrible, you'd get called names if you was out with someone with no arm.*
BS: *You would get called names?*
G: *Yes.*
BS: *Well I can understand that he might get called names, but why would you get called names if you were with him?*
G: *Cos you play with him.*
BS: *Right, so people would lump you together, would they?*
G: *Yes.*

Here George is subject to pollution (Douglas, 1966[1992]) by association or 'courtesy stigma' (Goffman, 1963[1990]) whereby those children associating with another child who has a disability may receive the same kind of negative response to the disability from others.

Image 27

George reiterated this idea whilst discussing the boy in Image 27. He again rejected the idea of friendship with this child at first, then relented, and reluctantly admitted that perhaps he could be friends with him, although not on a regular basis:

G: *But it's not every day I could be friends with him, though.*
BS: *You couldn't play with him every day?*
G: *No.*
BS: *Why not?*
G: *Cos you'd get fed up.*
BS: *Why would you get fed up?*
G: *Just playing with the same person.*

Image 17

When presented with the child in Image 17, again George appeared ambivalent:

G: *Yes, but not as much though.*
BS: *No, not quite as keen?*
G: *No.*
BS: *Does he look as if he might have a problem?*
G: *Yes.*
BS: *What makes you think that?*
G: *That eye's half closed, and that one's wide open, and that one, his mouth's all funny.*

BS: *So it's his mouth and his eyes that look funny, and it just puts you off again, does it?*
G: *Yes.*

George confessed on more than one occasion that he would be reluctant to play with, or in other words, *to be seen with* as a friend (or *to be looked at* by others), a child who appeared different, especially facially. George frequently reinforced this finding in his rejection of the children as potential friends:

> *'He just doesn't look very good'*
>
> *'She just doesn't look right, doesn't look right'*
>
> *'Well, her eyes are stuck down, her mouth is stuck down, and she's got funny eyes'*
>
> *'(it's) just his, just his face. ... That's a bit bigger* (points to top of head), *and then he's got loads of hair on top, and then it goes into a funny shape at the bottom'*

Like the children in James' (1993) study, both boys to some extent, and George in particular, felt they could not accept those children that others might deem to be ugly as potential friends. Phillip was reluctant to express these feelings outwardly, probably as a result of moral discussions during assemblies held at the primary school, which focused on the virtue and altruism of accepting all kinds of people, whatever their differences. However, George was quite content to voice his apprehension at being 'lumped together' with children who appeared, and possibly acted, contrary to the children's own bodily norms.

After the transition to the secondary school, George and Phillip were placed in the same form and quickly became friends. However, during the time that I spent as an observer in their form, it became apparent that they were involved in the bullying of other children. Furthermore, this persecution manifested itself around concepts of disability. On the first occasion, one child reported to me that the two boys had been taunting another girl because she had epilepsy. I spoke to the second girl, who was reluctant to discuss the issue, so I was unable to elicit further details. However, another child, a member of my study group, later reported that she was being bullied. When I enquired further she reported:

> *'they've* (the doctors) *found out I've got asthma and I've got an inhaler. I had to use it before P.E. but like, that Phillip don't believe I've got asthma, he keeps mimicking me when I use it, he says I don't need it. And George and Phillip keep bullying me and they say I'm thick'.*

The boys were questioning Jenny's claim to the 'sick role' (Parsons, 1951), even though this had been validated by the medical profession. They were exploiting her use of the medication as a vehicle for bullying, implying that, because her claim to sickness was fraudulent, this must call into question her intelligence. Who would wish to be 'different' unnecessarily, especially where this difference negated one's ability to belong to the group? On a more positive note, however, evidence of a more seemingly altruistic attitude to difference was apparent in another group of boys, who all suddenly appeared at school with shaved heads. When questioned about this, Marty claimed: *'I've done it for my mate, Neil, he's poorly with leukaemia and he's lost all his hair, so me and my mates have had ours shaved so's he won't feel out of it'*. However, although the act was undertaken in a spirit of friendship and compassion, the ultimate aim was to alleviate Neil's potential position as an outsider on the grounds of his different appearance.

In summary, then, I would argue that George and Phillip's shared ambivalence towards disability and difference, as demonstrated by their reactions to the photographs, was consolidated when they later formed a friendship. This led them to target their attentions toward those children whose illnesses forced them, through the use of medication, to become more visible (and therefore more 'looked at'). Both Phillip and George were very concerned at the way children 'looked' and, more especially in George's case, the way they themselves would be 'looked at' (and consequently judged) by their peers, if they were 'seen' in the company of children whose bodies failed in some way to conform to their own high standards of 'normality'. Their reactions to the photographs, and their subsequent behaviour, encapsulated the manner in which children scrutinise others' bodily appearance and performance and, having used these observations to determine similarity and difference, go on to gauge the manner of their response to these others accordingly.

CONCLUSION

I have argued throughout this chapter that children's identity and selfhood is given meaning through interaction with their peers. Children unconsciously learn not only classificatory schemes which govern ways of walking, talking etc., they also acquire notions of similarity and difference, which they then use to categorise others. Central to this is the importance of childhood as a visual culture, whereby children look, watch and stare at others in order to determine what it is to be a child and, more importantly, to be a 'proper' (i.e. 'normal' to them) child. Notions of identity, similarity and difference are arrived at through the medium of the body and, once children have learned the 'norms' of embodied childhood, they then go on to 'read' the bodies of their peers and attribute a range of meanings to physical appearance and bodily performance. All children use the body as a symbolic resource - to express identity, as a vehicle for jokes, and to explain deficiencies. They also draw on the body, i.e. what it looks like, and what it does, in order to taunt those who fail to conform to the norms of embodiment, and whom they dislike.

However, it is important to establish the children's categorical distinction between the notion of 'differentness' and that of 'something wrong'. Children who had 'something wrong' with them, i.e. an *externally* produced label of illness, deficiency or SEN in the form of a statement, were in a different category to those whom the children themselves had decided were simply 'different' for some reason. They appeared to understand about 'visible' physical illnesses such as epilepsy, asthma and eczema and, as I have demonstrated, used this understanding as a weapon against those that they disliked. However, the behaviour of children with less 'obvious' conditions such as autism, ADD and

ADHD, whose social skills were also lacking, engendered puzzled reactions in their peers, especially when staff failed to adequately explain these other children's particular behavioural problems. Urging children to ignore these 'overt' manifestations of 'hidden' illness somehow denies the labels that are placed on children with SEN. In the incident with Andy and Mr Scott (see above), for example, although Andy had been labelled as 'autistic', Mr Scott nevertheless was attempting to deny to the children the implications of the illness, which led to their bewilderment as to whether there *was* anything 'wrong' with him, especially as autism is one of the conditions for which there are often no obvious visible clues.

In the next chapter, I will go on to extend this argument through the use of case studies of six children, some of whom had been externally 'labelled' as having SEN, and some the children had themselves judged to be 'different. The chapter will also substantiate my suggestion (above) that the possession of SEN *per se* does not automatically exclude children from the social world of their peers. The crucial aspect for these children is the possession, or otherwise, of well-developed social skills. Similarly, some children lacking in such skills, although not identified as having SEN, nonetheless were excluded. These case studies also illustrate the variety of ways in which meanings of the body are negotiated by children.

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[1] The most diminishing comment I received was from a girl who looked at me, screwed up her face and enquired, *'Do you know you've got something on your face?'*, referring to the large mole at the side of my mouth. Although this has been part of my lifelong persona, she genuinely thought I had failed to notice it and proceeded to enlighten me as to its existence.

[2] Here can be seen an example of children's ability to subvert criticism by the use of the 'as if' factor, whereby, through bodily negotiation, 'the body is worked on and with so that it appears other than it is' (James, 2000:33; see also Chapter 6)

[3] Christensen notes adults' perceptions of the child which 'are reflected in the assumption that through growing up the child develops a unified hardness of the body surface' (2000:49), i.e. that the body surface serves as a protective shield of the vulnerable interior of the child. It is possible that these perceptions of 'hardness' are unconsciously absorbed by children.

[4] Paul Gascoigne, who played football for England, has gained a reputation as a 'hard' man due to his drinking binges and wife-beating episodes, although ironically he is also famous for weeping openly during a World Cup match. (See Chapter 4 for examples of boys unashamedly weeping and sulking when challenged)

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[5] See Cannon, 1942, for an account of the potency of death brought about by superstitious fear.

[6] Hegley's article is entitled *Bullying: The Dark Shadow over Childhood.*

[7] This is despite the fact that newspapers regularly feature articles which detail the attempted, or actual, suicides of children subjected to bullying.

[8] This ideal of slimness can have tragic results especially amongst young girls, who may assimilate messages from media images of very slim fashion models (see also Chapter 2 and Woodward, 1997). During September and October 1997, for example, the nation's press covered the death of 13-year-old Kelly Yeomans, who took an overdose of her mother's pills. Kelly had been taunted at school because of her weight, but other children called her not only 'fatty', but also 'smelly', thus subjecting her to the 'as if' factor whereby bodily characteristics not actually present are attributed to a particular child (James, 2000; see above and also Chapter 6 for a fuller discussion).

[9] The girls were often attacked by their male peers for failing to conform to stereotypical ideals of femininity, as for example, when Jack informed Melissa that she was acquiring a moustache and was therefore turning into a man.

[10] Moreover, claims that at least one in 10 children in the UK is overweight have led to the setting up of 'fat camps', based on the American model, which subject children as young as 7 to a rigorous diet and exercise regime (Sunday Times, 27/9/99).

[11] 'Dame' Edna Everage is an Australian female impersonator who is renowned for wearing outrageous spectacles.

[12] However, staff at both schools consistently emphasised the attractiveness of glasses. At the primary school, during a play in Assembly about the Trojan war, it was noticeable that the girl chosen to be Helen - 'the most beautiful woman in the world' - was a spectacles wearer. Similarly, after the transition, the Year Co-ordinator, during an assembly which focused on 'difference', asked pupils to point out what was different about her that morning. The answer was that she was wearing glasses, rather than her usual contact lenses, but she reiterated that nevertheless she was still the same person 'underneath', just as they were the same people whether they were wearing glasses, or whatever the shape of their ears or nose. I would argue that by constantly emphasising the desirability of spectacles in the face of the children's antagonism, staff were actually colluding in this antagonism towards them, and validating the teasing which surrounded those who wore them.

[13] Similarly, children were delighted to learn of my surname, which they always remembered and used to tease me. 'The Simpsons', a cartoon programme shown on television, details the activities of a fictitious American family of five and relies to some extent on the use of subversive humour. During the research, children constantly enquired whether I had a husband called Homer or a son called Bart (as in the fictional family).

[14] The exercise took place towards the end of the last term at the primary school, when I felt that the children had become familiar with me. They were interviewed individually in a separate room. I asked them whether they felt they would like the child in the photograph as a friend, and their reasons for this, at the same time acknowledging the difficulty of making a judgement simply from a photograph. Conscious of the criticism (Soder, 1990) engendered by Richardson et al's (1961) study, where children were shown drawings of children with disabilities and asked to rank them in order of preference, I used photographs rather than drawings, and did not ask the children to choose between them.

CHAPTER 6

EMBODIMENT IN THE CHILD'S WORLD: CASE STUDIES

The previous chapter discussed the many ways in which *all* children use the body as a medium of expression to mediate their interaction with other children. This chapter presents a series of case studies in order to demonstrate the manner in which specific children, both those with and those without SEN, use their bodies as part of the material culture of childhood. The aim of these case studies is also to underpin my argument, made in the previous chapter, that having SEN *per se* does not preclude particular children's ability to participate in the social and cultural worlds that all children inhabit. Children's social skills, and their ability or otherwise to manipulate their particular difficulties, hold more sway than the nature of those difficulties as such. More important to a child's social inclusion is his/her development of social skills and ability to relate to peers in ways that demonstrates his/her understanding of the child's world, and the importance to that world of the role of the body.

I begin by discussing the experiences of Liam, who had not been identified as having SEN, but who nonetheless was bullied mercilessly, followed by those of Jenny, who again had not been identified as having SEN, but who inhabited a marginal space surrounded by questions as to the possibility of her having autistic tendencies. I then go on to discuss Simon, who had been 'statemented' as experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties. After analysing the experiences of these three children, I continue by discussing a further three children, Beth, Clive and Brent, who had also received statements of SEN. I outline the ways in which their experiences differed in relation to their ability, or otherwise, to overcome their bodily difficulties and participate in the social world of their peers.

Exploring the experiences of these six children, and the ways in which they differ, will underline my argument that children with SEN, along with their mainstream peers, are able to demonstrate their agency in the structural space of the school. The chapter will set the scene in which to address the issue of integration for those children with SEN who are lacking in social skills. It will also underline the crucial role played by the body in children's relationships.

CASE STUDY 1: LIAM

Liam is a small, quiet, dark-haired boy with freckles who wears spectacles. His demeanour is rather sad and withdrawn, and he is usually largely uninvolved in the daily 'rough-and-tumble' interaction in which the rest of the group engage. He has not been identified as having SEN.

3.6.96 - Mrs Jones informs the class that there should have been a new boy (Liam) joining the group today, but he is absent due to a sore throat. He has not attended his previous school since last March because he has been the victim of bullying, and is therefore transferring to Littlefields school, where it is hoped he will have a new start. When he does arrive, Mrs Jones is putting him next to Richard, and she wants the group he is with to 'look after him'. She also asks the whole class to 'include' him in their games at playtime.

6.6.96 - I interview a group of children including Natasha, Richard and Liam who, throughout the interview, constantly pulls and 'cracks' his fingers, despite the fact that Natasha and I cringe and ask him to refrain. We discuss possible reasons for bullying, and Liam claims he is picked on for wearing glasses (which he consequently refuses to wear), because of his freckles (for which he is dubbed 'Freckie'), and because he goes ballroom dancing. I enquire about the latter, and Natasha chips in: '*Because it's usually girls who go dancing*'. I ask what they consider will be different about life at the secondary school, and Liam replies:

L: *Nothing's different about my life, everything's hard.*
BS: *Why?*
L: *Because I'm a sad boy, even my parents pick on me. Nobody likes me.*

Later in the interview, Liam confides that his family tell him that he is 'a bit dropped off'[1] as he is the youngest of seven children. He then regales the group with the many nicknames assigned to him and his sister[2]. He proceeds to put his hand into his armpit and make 'farting' noises, whilst at the same time detailing his bullying experiences at his previous school. His peers claimed that he suffered from 'twaggleitis'[3] because he had missed so much schooling and, more specifically, the dreaded SATs. He had chosen to come to Littlefields as he perceived it to be a 'smart' school, unlike another possible school which he thought was full of 'boneheads'. He claimed that, at his previous school, he had had his head flushed down the lavatory, and that a boy who disliked him, because he (Liam) had beaten him at rounders, had thrown a ball and hit him in his 'bit' (private parts).

8.7.96 - Liam shows me that he has brought his glasses to school and is wearing them.

9.7.96 - During lunchtime, I notice that Mrs Jones is talking to Liam, who is crying, and then she takes Sandy out of the dining room. When he returns, Sandy informs me that Liam was being 'horrible' and calling people names in the dinner queue, so everyone had stopped talking to him and he had become upset. I ask what kind of names, but Sandy replies, '*You know*' and declines to elaborate.

18.7.96 - Liam tells the teacher that Andrea has sworn, but Andrea denies this, claiming that she merely spelled out the word, which she thinks is 'OK'.

After the transition to the secondary school, Liam does not attend for the first two days of term.

5.9.96 - At lunch, Liam's elder sister seeks me out to inform me that Liam is absent due to a rash, which the doctor has been unable to explain.

6.9.96 - In the school foyer, I come upon Liam and his mother, who are waiting to speak to the Year Co-ordinator. Liam's mother explains that Liam is terrified because he has missed the first two days of term, and also because the boys who bullied him previously were at the school. She tells Liam: '*You don't have to worry, because you can go and see Mrs Simpson if you are worried about anything*'. She explains that he still has a rash, and has a note to be excused PE as he is conscious of the scabs that are forming on the spots. The Year Co-ordinator arrives, I introduce them and take my leave.

2.10.96 - I encounter Liam and his mother in the foyer, waiting to speak to a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT). She explains that Liam has been beaten up by another pupil after school and has suffered bruised ribs, necessitating a visit to the local Accident and Emergency Department. Two days later, this same pupil had shouted an insult ('bastard') at Liam. Mr Preston informs her that the other pupil has been 'severely warned', but that if it happens again, Liam must report any incidents. If the problem is confined to name-calling, Liam should try and ignore it, but any physical threats should be taken more seriously. Liam's mother informs us that she has recently undergone surgery, and consequently Liam is reluctant to worry her, but Mr Preston reiterates that he must inform someone at the school of any problems. At this point, Liam's mother leaves, and Mr Preston returns Liam to his lesson and speaks to the other pupil involved in the attack. He asks the other boy whether he had in fact called Liam a 'bastard', to which he replies that he was referring to another boy rather than Liam. Was it possible for Liam to have thought that he was being referred to? The boy replies that it was possible. Mr Preston speaks severely to him, emphasising the bruised ribs, the hospital visit, and possible police involvement, and stresses that he must stay away from Liam at all times.

15.10.96 - Liam tells me that he has been beaten up yet again, because he and another boy had been 'messing about', and the other boy's friends had thought that Liam was hurting him, so they had attacked him.

11.11.96 - Liam is late arriving for a music lesson. When he arrives, he claims that he is having problems with Billy (another boy in the study group), who has repeatedly punched him on his 'bad arm'. The deputy headteacher comes in to collect Liam to investigate the incident. Later, Billy claims that he had not hit Liam, but that Liam had pushed him and had then started 'beeling' (crying). Later in the day, Liam is late for art lesson, and claims that he is still experiencing problems with Billy, who has called him 'dweeb' (soft) and 'twagger' because he has been to visit his mum in hospital. He sees the deputy headteacher again, and claims that Billy has been calling him a 'div' (stupid) and various 'swear names'. Billy has also been giving him 'dirty looks' when he glances in Liam's direction, and he looked 'really evil'. Mr Preston says that Liam must not respond in any way, or react, because Billy was gaining pleasure from Liam's reaction. If Liam refused to react, it would no longer be any fun. Liam returns to his lesson, and Mr Preston then speaks to Billy who, when confronted with Liam's accusations, responds by tutting and looking away, claiming, 'I haven't touched him'. Mr Preston agrees that the physical aggression has stopped, but emphasises that the mental and verbal bullying must also stop. Billy claims that Liam has threatened his (Billy's) sister, and Mr Preston agrees to investigate this, but reiterates that, in the meantime, Billy must agree to leave Liam alone. Billy reluctantly nods. When questioned, Billy's sister claims that Liam has been pointing at and laughing at her, and threatening to attack Billy. She adds that Billy had been bullied at the primary school he attended before Littlefields.

13.11.96 - Liam tells me he continues to have problems with Billy. As a respite, he has been allowed to remain inside at break times in Room 42 (this is the room that wheelchair users and other vulnerable children are allowed to occupy during break times) and has been allowed to take a friend in with him. However, this has engendered more problems for Liam:

L: *I've asked two different friends to come in with me but they've both made excuses not to.*
BS: *Why?*
L: *They don't like being in there with the wheelchair kids.*

BS: *Why not?*
L: *I don't know, they just don't. They said they'd come in with me until they knew it was with the wheelchair kids and then they made excuses not to.*

18.11.96 - Liam's mother comes in to school again to speak to the deputy headteacher about his being attacked again.

25.11.96 - At lunchtime Beth, who is a wheelchair user, tells me a secret, namely, that she 'fancies' Liam, but stresses that I must not tell him. However, as soon as he joins us, Beth and Daisy, Liam's sister, informs him of the fact. Daisy asks, *'How does it feel to be a heart-throb?'*, to which he replies, *'I don't know, I've only just found out I am one'*. Later, I see him in the foyer, and he complains that everyone is teasing him in Room 42 as they have discovered that Beth 'fancies' him.

4.12.96 - Liam is complaining that he is unable to eat properly because his teeth are hurting, and I jokingly remark that he always has something wrong with him, to which he replies, in all seriousness,

L: *Yes, I'm a jinx, perhaps that's why my mum has something wrong with her* (the recent illness) *because of me. She's got arthritis because of me, from when I was born, so that's my fault.*

This conversation concluded my involvement with Liam during the fieldwork period but, during a chance encounter with him, his mother and his sister towards the end of 1998, I enquired how Liam was faring at school, to which his mother replied: *'OK, but he's still being bullied!'*.

Discussion

Liam joined the group at the school midway through the final term before the transition, which meant that he was already at a disadvantage in terms of being a part of long term friendship groups, as he had not progressed through the school with the rest of the group. He had previously attended one of the other feeder schools in the area, but had been forced to leave due to persistent bullying, after which he had been absent from school altogether for a prolonged period of time. The teacher went to great lengths before he arrived to encourage the other children to welcome him, and specifically to 'include' him in their activities.

However, Liam had been presented as a 'victim' by school staff before he even entered the school. Michele Elliot, an acknowledged expert on the subject and director of the KIDSCAPE helpline for victims of bullying, claims that some children who are continuously and chronically bullied may have a 'victim' mentality and may actively seek out ways to attract bullying. These chronic 'victims' may share certain characteristics, in that they:

- want any kind of attention even if it is negative
- feel that the insult or punch from the 'bully' reinforces their existing feelings that they are only worthy of bullying
- may not learn from their mistakes
- get upset if told they are good
- may destroy their own good work
- say no-one likes them
- may be oversensitive
- may lack humour
- are slow to settle in
- are jumpy and wary
- are anxious
- cry easily
- have poor social skills

(Elliot, 1997:28)

It is fair to say that Liam fell into the majority of these categories. In addition, he was often absent from school due to relatively minor illnesses such as a sore throat or unspecified rash, which the doctor had been unable to diagnose. Consequently, Liam encountered difficulty in forming and sustaining long term relationships with the other children, especially as he arrived at the primary school so late in the day. The fact that he was often 'excused' PE due to his illnesses only exacerbated the other children's perception of him as someone who was 'soft', to them the worst possible insult. He was easily moved to tears, thus confirming their definition. As with the other children, Liam's account of his body and its fragility (its smallness, freckles and the need to wear glasses) was used by him to explain his absenteeism and the reasons for his victimisation. However, he went further and added to his self-definition as a victim by also citing bodily defects in an attempt to deflect ill-treatment and enhance its severity (punching him on his 'bad' arm was a doubly heinous crime). Furthermore, unlike his peers, his use of his body as a medium of expression, rather than endearing him to them, only served as a source of further irritation (the cracking of fingers, the 'farting' noises in his armpit etc.) and enhanced his 'victim' persona.

This notion of the chronic and irritating (to others) victim was reinforced by a member of the secondary school staff during an event which took place soon after the transition and which focused upon anti-bullying activities. The group was shown two films about bullying, the first from the perspective of the 'victim', and the second from the 'bully's' viewpoint. The teacher was focusing the group's attention on the bully:

T: *Would people like him have friends?*
Pupil: *Yes, people who are wimps but think they're hard cling around people like him.*
T: *They're not real friends -*
Pupil: *Yes, but they'd rather be his friends than his victims!*
T: (in an exasperated tone of voice) *I've got a confession to make! Some time ago I had a lad in my year group who was bullied from the moment he joined the school to the moment he left. I spent hours talking to him, he stood out like a victim. He was so irritating, so annoying, that he couldn't see what it was he did that could make someone want to hit him. I became so frustrated that I said, 'There are times, A, when I could smash you in the face myself!'. So the victim can do something about being bullied.*

Here the teacher is questioning whether 'victims' of bullying are completely helpless, by suggesting that they should be able to take action to avoid being bullied. She is drawing attention the fact that some children become 'victims' by being irritating and annoying, as did Liam.

Liam appeared to have been raised in an environment which focused on illness, and his family repeatedly reinforced his own perception of himself as the 'runt' of the litter. He even went so far as to shoulder the blame for his mother's continued illnesses. She herself was extremely protective of him, appearing regularly at school, in an attempt to resolve alleged bullying incidents involving Liam.

However, many such incidents revolved around her and her time in hospital. Visiting his mother in hospital was perceived by the other children as a further sign of Liam's 'softness', as was his association and friendship with children who were wheelchair users. The use of the epithet 'bastard' poured further scorn on his family background. During the time spent with the group, I observed many such instances whereby remarks about children's family members were used as a potent form of abuse towards each other, thereby reinforcing Goffman's concept of the 'courtesy stigma' (1963(1990):44). Liam's mother's attempts to mediate and protect him from harm were illustrated by her metaphorically handing him over to my protection (6.9.96) and, although these actions emanated from the best possible motives of maternal love, Liam was further entrenched in the role of a victim who needed protection in the eyes of his peers and, possibly also, the school staff.

Liam did attempt to decipher the reasons behind his treatment at the hands of his peers. He acknowledged that he was given the nickname 'Freckie' because of his freckles, was picked on for wearing spectacles (which he consequently 'accidentally' left at home), and because of his hobby of ballroom dancing. He realised that the other children perceived him as 'sad' (pathetic) and not acceptable as a friend, but he often exacerbated their antagonism by telling 'tales' about them. On more than one occasion Liam was discovered to be bullying other children which, according to Elliott (1997), may be a common response to being bullied (see also Stephenson and Smith, 1989). However, whatever the received wisdom about bullying, it would seem that the children who picked on Liam did perceive him as a 'victim', and it was through focusing on particular aspects of his body and bodily demeanour that they attacked and tormented him. Stephenson and Smith note that Olweus (1978) claims that bodily difference or deviance is not in itself a reason for children to be bullied, as not all children who deviate from the norm are bullied, but that 'bullies may well latch on to some oddity in a potential victim as a pretext for bullying' (1989:50). This was certainly the case with Liam.

In her advice to parents, Elliott acknowledges the part played by bodily demeanour in bullying behaviour, and urges parents to involve children in role-play which concentrates on assertive body language:

> **Practise Saying 'NO' and Walking Confidently**
>
> The victim should practise shouting 'NO' really loudly and confidently in front of a mirror. ... Your child can also practise walking 'tall'. A victim's body language can often reflect the way they feel about themselves. They may stoop, hang their heads, and hunch themselves into as small a space as possible. Practise standing up straight, holding the head high, and taking deep breaths. Stand 'like victims' and then stand 'like heroes'.
>
> (Elliott, 1997:37)

This advice would appear to be pertinent to children such as Liam, whose whole bodily demeanour and outlook drew criticism and scorn from all those involved with him.

CASE STUDY 2: JENNY

Jenny is a pretty, dark-haired girl with large brown eyes. Her manner is strange and she engenders mixed reactions from the other children. She appears to have no close friends amongst them.

22.4.96 - On the first day in the class with the children, I am puzzled by Jenny's reaction to the teacher's questions. Her behaviour appears 'odd' - she puts her hand up, then takes it down, then puts it up again, all the while making a peculiar 'gasping' noise.

25.4.96 - During an English lesson, I help Jenny, who appears to have no idea of what is expected of her, but as I explain she eventually seems to understand. At the end of the lesson I speak to the teacher, Mrs Jones, who informs me that Jenny has been tested by the Educational Psychologist, who can find nothing wrong, and who claims that her reading skills are above average. She has a cousin who has autism, so it may be that she is also affected. Mrs Jones is concerned about her because she is 'dolly and cute' and may be taken advantage of. Later I interview a group of three girls, and during a discussion about possible bullying at the secondary school (and with no prompting from me), they claim that they are all worried about Jenny. They feel sorry for her because she is not very good at her work, but is a bit slow and does not listen. None of the boys will stand near her. They call her a 'spaz' (spastic) and 'are nasty to her'.

26.4.96 - Jenny informs me that it is her birthday tomorrow, but Suzy questions whether this is correct. Later I work with Jenny and she remarks: *'It's better when you're here because you help us'*.

29.4.96 - I work with Jenny in English. At first she does not understand but as I explain she gradually comprehends the task. Jenny and Andrea argue because Andrea has written: '*Jenny's face is divvy* (stupid)' on Jenny's book. Sandy tells Jenny that she has a dirty nose, and to blow it. I give her a tissue, she blows her nose, and asks me to check it is clean.

2.5.96 - The class lines up to go swimming and Jenny, who has been looking forward to swimming as she received her Grade 1 badge the previous week, joins the line. Mrs Jones, who has been informed that the Educational Psychologist is coming to collect Jenny for a test, has to inform her that she will not be able to go. Jenny bursts into tears, as she is unaware of the test. I stay behind with her, and she tells me that she often has ear infections, and the Educational Psychologist has discovered she has a hearing problem. Later, I talk to the Educational Psychologist, and comment that Jenny appears vulnerable as she is pretty but rather naïve, and he agrees that she is 'mature but immature'.

3.5.96 - During Assembly, the headteacher awards swimming badges to some of the pupils, including Jenny, who goes to the front to collect her badge using a different route to everyone else, causing the other children to giggle. During the afternoon, Mrs Jones asks Jenny to take round a tray of seedlings to show everyone. Andrea bossily orders her to move onto the next table, and Jenny meekly obeys. Later, I work with a group of children including Jenny, and at one point Sally nastily retorts 'Jenny!' as she has failed to understand something in the lesson.

9.5.96 - I talk to a group of two boys who tell me that they dislike Jenny because she is loud and rude, especially when playing 'pogs' (a playground game involving round metal discs).

23.5.96 - I interview Jenny, Andrea and Penny as a group. During the interview Jenny shouts, swears, interrupts and constantly raises her hand to speak. We discuss the possibility of being picked on at the secondary school and, even though Jenny is present, Andrea asserts: '*She* (Jenny) *gets picked on because she's a bit different*'. She expands by saying: '*She holds her mouth funny when she reads aloud*'. Jenny herself adds that she is called a 'div', has no brains and is thick, a 'der-der' (stupid).

18.6.96 - I join the lower maths group and work with Jenny, who eventually seems to understand how to do the calculations. She then becomes very animated and keeps repeating: '*This is easy, 'pimps'* (simple)'. Another child remarks that the work is boring and Jenny retorts: '*It's brilliant, so shut up!*'. She becomes increasingly excited that she has grasped the concept. The other child enquires about my presence in school, to which Jenny replies: '*She's helping us and I'm one who's going to be studied*'. At the end of the lesson I ask the teacher whether he considers that Jenny will retain what she has learned and he replies that he doubts it.

25.6.96 - I again join the maths group. Jenny is struggling with her work, and I ask what the problem is, as she was coping so well the previous week. She replies: '*My buttons are switched off*'. She eventually completes the task successfully and the teacher raises his hand for Jenny to 'give him five' (clap opposite hands in triumph) but she stares at him uncomprehendingly. Nonetheless, she again becomes very excited and keeps shouting 'yes!' and 'pimps'. Sally repeatedly tells her: '*Shut up and work quietly*'.

27.6.96 - Jenny asks me to listen to her read, which I do, but I have to ask her several times to read more quietly, as her voice becomes increasingly louder and she is disturbing the other children, who are becoming annoyed. The children take turns to ring the bell for the end of lessons, and today it is Jenny's turn. The others keep reminding her about the time, and she becomes agitated, standing up and then sitting down again, undecided what to do. Sally turns to her and pulls the 'der' face (open mouth, slack jaw). Later, the group goes to the swimming baths. Julia complains of chest pains and gets out of the baths before the rest of the group. On the way back to school, we encounter Julia's mother and, on hearing what has happened at the baths, she offers to take Julia home to rest, saying that she will return her to school during the afternoon. On hearing this, Phillip laughs and remarks to George:

P: *If Julia comes back to school, a Chinaman will kiss Jenny Jay!*
BS: *Why do you say that?*
P: *Because she's ugly!*
BS: *Why do you think that?*
P: *Because she's slow, she knows nothing!*
BS: *I think she's pretty.*
G: *No she's not, she's ugly.*

28.6.96 - The school is holding a summer fete, for which the children have been allowed to devise some games to raise money. Alexander and Saul are testing their game, which involves shooting water from a water gun at a pyramid of six empty aluminium cans and attempting to dislodge them from the table on which they are standing in as short a time as possible. The children in the class are each allowed to have a turn at the game, whilst the two boys time their respective efforts. As Jenny comes out for her turn, Alexander says: '*Oh, God*', and Saul exclaims: '*Here comes a nought!*'. Out of earshot, I ask why they are making these remarks. Alexander says: '*Because she's slow*', and Saul adds: '*It's because she doesn't listen to what Mrs Jones says. It was her turn to ring the bell yesterday and she went out five minutes early*'.

3.7.96 - Jenny misses PE as she has forgotten to bring her kit. A boy from another group calls her 'big nose'. She chats to me, saying that she wishes to move tables, as Suzy and Jeannie pick on her, as do others in the class because she cannot hit the ball at rounders. Later, Mrs Jones places the children in groups for a music lesson. As Jenny is allocated to a group, someone remarks that she cannot sing, and everyone else in her group pulls a face. As the group works on the set task, Jenny merely sits and watches without contributing. Someone makes a list of the group's names, and someone else realises that they have failed to include Jenny's name on the list.

8.7.96 - I ask Jenny a question, and she says she cannot hear me because she has something wrong with her ears, adding: '*That's why I can't hear Miss properly and why I can't listen*'.

9.7.96 - During a maths lesson, the teacher tells Jenny to calm down and listen as she is shouting out, and then asks her a question, which another child quickly answers. The teacher retorts: '*You did that without moving your lips, and it sounded just like Jason!*' Jenny looks blank. Later, the teacher tells Jenny that she has 'switched off'. She gives Jenny a task to complete, but Jenny does it wrongly, and the teacher remarks: '*I don't want it doing like that, perhaps one day you'll listen, Jenny!*'

18.7.96 - The class is working in pairs, and Jenny and Andrea are placed together. Andrea exclaims: '*Oh, no, I don't want to work with Jenny*'. When asked why, she says: '*I just don't, she drives me mad*'.

23.7.96 - Jenny has a hearing test, and when asked how she fared, she replies: '*It was OK, but I have lots of ear infections and that's why I'm off school a lot*'. After school, the children have a Leavers' Barbecue, with games, competitions and food. I notice that Jenny is the only child from the class who is not present.

After the transition to the secondary school

5.9.96 - I join Jenny's group in PE. They are playing a game which requires them to stand in a line, throw a ball through everyone's legs and run to the back of the line. Jenny stays at the front after her turn, so Chloe orders her to the back, and Jenny responds by pushing Chloe hard.

13.9.96 - Whilst I am chatting to Jenny in the corridor, another girl comes up and claims that Jenny has 'bullied' her during the holidays by not allowing her to go on the slide at the swimming pool. During the lesson, Jenny tells me that she has been in trouble for calling one of the teachers by her nickname. Later, during PE, Jenny continues with an exercise after the teacher has instructed the class to stop, and is in trouble again.

20.9.96 - During break, I meet Jenny waiting in the corridor to speak to the Bullying Counsellor, to inform her that two boys have been picking on her and saying she is 'thick'.

25.9.96 - Jenny has been absent for two days. She tells me that both of her parents have serious illnesses and that she has been caring for them. She claims that she now has asthma, for which she is using an inhaler, but that Phillip and George deny that she has asthma, mimic her, and tell her she is 'thick'. In her Maths group, Jenny continually shouts out, claiming that the work is easy. As we walk across to the gymnasium for the next lesson, Leanne asks what I am doing in school, and Jenny replies that I am studying children who have problems. Leanne asks if this applies to her (Jenny), and Jenny replies that that is why her mum agreed to her being in the group because she knows she has problems. When we reach the gymnasium, the children are instructed to choose a partner, and Jenny pairs up with another girl who has been taunted (because of her size). When told to get out some benches, Jenny shouts: '*Yeah*', and the teacher reprimands her. During the lesson, the two girls play about, argue and giggle, and the teacher says she will see them at the end of the lesson.

30.9.96 - Whilst we are waiting for the music lesson to begin, an altercation breaks out between two pupils. Jenny then claims that one of the two (a boy) is also calling her names. During the lesson, Chloe's and Jenny's names are written on the board twice, and then Chloe is moved to the front. Later, Jenny and Chloe engage me in conversation:

J: *Chloe keeps calling my mum.*
BS: *Is that true?*
C: (to Jenny) *Oh, it was different when you kept running after that boy and calling him a 'Paki'!*
J: (to me) *I had a hearing test at school, and I've got asthma, that's why I'm like I am.*

Jenny moves away from Chloe and continues with the conversation:

J: *My mum's got to have an operation, and Chloe keeps teasing me about my mum, saying she's fat. And I've got to have an eye test soon.*

Later I overhear Katrina and Helen urging Jenny: '*Say it again!*' They explain that Jenny had met someone she knew in the street and had said 'hiya' in a very deep and distorted voice. She had repeated the story to the two girls, who had laughed loudly and urged her to keep demonstrating the voice.

1.10.96 - I sit with Jenny at the computer. She tells me that they have to work in pairs, and she does not usually have much chance to work on the computer as Sally, her partner, 'hogs' it. I help her to input some information, and she becomes increasingly excited, running around the room.

2.10.96 - During PE, Jenny is throwing herself around on the mat, spinning around and sprawling on the benches. She giggles whilst the teacher is talking and receives a reprimand. Later, during a geography lesson, Jenny is again in trouble for not paying attention. She and Chloe are giggling, fighting and shouting.

4.10.96 - During a history lesson, Chloe is again attempting to draw Jenny into talking and giggling. Jenny tells me: '*I'm fed up with being called 'thick' and 'fatty'*'. Later, in a drama lesson, a group of four girls, including Jenny, are working together to devise a story which they will later act out. The group has decided upon a circus story line, and Jenny is instructed to sit out and be a tiger, to which she retorts: '*I'm always left out, why can't you change the story, it's boring*'. She urges them to use another story line which they have rejected, but the other girls refuse, claiming that Jenny would spoil it by laughing. The current story concerns an elephant which visits the lavatory, and Jenny is a tiger who takes no active role apart from roaring at the end. We watch another group's presentation, during which Jenny becomes very excited and throws her arms about in the air.

Discussion

Jenny's behaviour, in all aspects of her school life, was difficult to define. She appeared to have no understanding at all of how to behave appropriately, either in the formal 'school' world, or the informal culture of the child. The world of the classroom proved to be a puzzle to Jenny. Although some of the other children attempted to coach her in the etiquette of the formal classroom, Jenny remained on the margins. She shouted out, was loud and excitable, annoying both peers and teaching staff alike, and continually 'missing the point' of what was happening. She was berated and blamed for this lack of understanding by both pupils and teachers, who felt that she failed to listen and digest information. All who came into contact with her were aware of the fact that there was something vaguely 'different' about Jenny; teachers and support staff attempted to explain her difficulties by seeking some medical or psychological explanation. However, the children used their 'readings' of Jenny's bodily indicators to explain her social difference: '*She holds her mouth funny when she reads aloud*'. This remark pinpoints exactly the essence of children's use of the body to decipher and explain similarity and difference. Children are well versed in the discourse and language of the body, whereas adults usually lose these skills. In my eyes, Jenny appeared no different to any other child when reading aloud, whereas her peers used her body and the way it behaved to express her differentness.

However, not only was Jenny unaware of the niceties of classroom behaviour, she continually excluded herself from the culture of the child's world. She was not privy to the bodily tricks and insults that the other children traded between themselves on a daily basis. She failed to realise, for instance, that all children use nicknames to ridicule and exclude adults (James, 1979). Once the children in the study group had established that what they told me would go no further, they regaled me with the nicknames they used for various staff members. Some were linked to teachers' surnames, but others revolved around bodily features, e.g. 'World Cup' and 'Mr Beetroot' for a member of staff who not only sported protruding ears but whose face became red with anger when the children antagonised him. Jenny, however, committed the ultimate crime of using a teacher's nickname to her face, not realising that such names are part of children's secret arsenal of weapons which are used to ridicule and deflate adults in the child's world.

The other children reacted towards Jenny in one of three ways. They either i) snubbed or ignored her altogether, ii) mocked and taunted her, or iii) ordered her around and 'helped' her, but in an exasperated manner, as if they found it difficult to tolerate her oddness. Of those who ignored her, the boys were in the majority, refusing to stand next to her in the line. However, both boys and girls became annoyed when she was placed in the same group as they were and, although forced by staff to work with her, merely tolerated her presence. She was continually marginalised, and the incident on 3.7.96 clearly demonstrates how they were able to ignore her completely, even going so far as to omit her name from the group list. This did not appear to be an overtly malicious act, rather they simply forgot that she was there. To them, she was a 'non-person'. Nonetheless, the most poignant episode was that which occurred during the practice for the summer fete, when Alexander and Saul openly verbalised their feelings towards her. To them, Jenny was a nought, a nothing, hardly even worth their contempt.

The second group of children, who mocked and taunted her, at least acknowledged her existence. However, these children discussed her shortcomings openly, within her hearing, again as if she counted for nothing. The most extraordinary reaction was that of many of the boys, who insisted that she was ugly, even though I and the other adults involved with Jenny perceived her to be a pretty child. The incident of 27.6.96 demonstrates that, to the boys, the likelihood that anyone would choose to kiss Jenny was seen as beyond the bounds of incredibility, due to her 'ugliness', and again due to her status as a 'nothing'. According to James (2000), 'experience teaches children that the body is also an eloquent expressive tool which can inform unknown others about the more personal, inner aspects of the self' (2000:32). The children in James' (1993) study judged the bodies of others in moral terms, insisting, despite evidence to the contrary that, in a poem about bullying, a boy involved in bullying others was 'a fat bully', not because he was physically fat, but because his anti-social behaviour made him appear *as if he were* fat. Friendless children's bodies were 'without exception grotesquely caricatured for children 'know' (in their bones and from experience) that people who behave so badly as to have no friends must without doubt have fat or ugly bodies' (James, 2000:32). I would argue that this was certainly true in Jenny's case. The boys involved with her genuinely believed her to be ugly, despite evidence to the contrary, because her behaviour, lacking as it did any understanding of the social skills required to make and keep friends, belied her actual appearance[4].

The third group of reactions to Jenny took the form of others in the group instructing her as to how to behave, not in a kindly way, but rather as if they felt it was something they 'ought' to do. Whenever she was asked to do anything by a teacher, they attempted to show her the correct way in which to proceed, but in a domineering fashion, and every statement of fact she uttered was double checked for accuracy, even down to the date of her birth. On the occasion of the bell-ringing incident (27.6.96), there were so many children giving her conflicting advice that she became completely bemused. She could not even be trusted to wipe her own nose without one of the children informing her that it was dirty. The only time that I observed Jenny involved in the children's world was on the occasion of the 'voice mimicking' (30.9.96), when she had, probably unwittingly, stumbled upon a way of impressing the children with a previously undiscovered talent.

Jenny also saw her involvement in the study as a way of becoming part of something about which the other children were enthusiastic. However, even in this area, she struggled to be part of the other children's world. They had realised that being involved in the research and taking part in interviews afforded them some space and relaxation away from the 'formal' school world (we often talked during hymn practice, which most of the children hated). However, Jenny failed to appreciate the informality of the situation, and behaved exactly as she did in the 'formal' classroom situation, even raising her hand to seek permission to speak. She had been led to believe, by her parents, that involvement in the study would possibly aid her transition to the secondary school and, in common with Liam's mother's perception, would also afford her some protection. However, her self-esteem did improve, as my involvement with her on a one-to-one basis, which was a new experience for her, enabled her to understand some of the concepts which had previously eluded her. Unfortunately, this modicum of understanding only exacerbated her bizarre behaviour and antagonised her peers even further.

However, some understanding of her own situation seemed to have filtered through to Jenny. In common with Liam and the rest of the group, she realised that children fall back on their bodily frailties to rationalise their shortcomings. Her repeated explanation for her shortcomings was based upon a catalogue of her medical problems - the ear infections, the hearing difficulties, the asthma - and the perceptive exclamation: '*My buttons are switched off*'. This explanation corresponds with that of another boy who was diagnosed as having Asperger's Syndrome and who attributed his difficulties to bodily frailty by explaining: '*It's because there's a wire loose in my head*'. Also, in common with Liam, Jenny had suffered verbal abuse of her family (i.e. her 'fat' mother) by some of the other children, who had also learned of their respective illnesses. There were also indications that, after the transition she, like Liam, had begun to indulge in bullying activities toward other children. However, it is telling that, once challenged about her racist taunts towards a boy of ethnic origin, she explained this again through recourse to a litany of her bodily frailty.

I have argued, with the help of these two case studies, that children who have not been identified as having SEN may still experience difficulty as a result of their lack of social skills, which the other children focused upon through the vehicle of their bodies. Both of these children were excluded by their peers but, whereas adults attempted to make allowances for Liam and to ensure that he was accepted by the other children, their treatment of Jenny was characterised by the same kind of exasperation shown her by her peers. In contrast, the next case study will show that a child with a statement of SEN, whilst marginalised by adults, was in fact accepted by most of the children.

CASE STUDY 3: SIMON

Simon is a small, dark-haired boy with a particularly belligerent demeanour. He appears to go out of his way to antagonise most of the adults and many of the children with whom he comes into contact, but nevertheless he does have a circle of close friends. He has been statemented for emotional and behavioural difficulties and although he should, strictly speaking, receive a considerable amount of in-class support, this has not been forthcoming due to the situation in the school, whereby it has not been possible to allocate regular, consistent support to the children with statements of SEN (see Chapter 4).

4.9.96 - In the first English lesson, the teacher carries out an exercise to familiarise herself and the group with each other's names. We stand in a circle, and everyone says their name. Then we go around the circle again, repeating the name of the person to our right, our own name, and then the name of the person to our left. Before the exercise begins, Simon and Freddy are reprimanded for talking and, during the exercise, the boys have a giggling fit and Simon refuses to say his name. Mrs Miller moves Simon away from Freddy, and he leans against the wall and refuses to participate in the lesson.

6.9.96 - In a geography lesson, the teacher has to reprimand Simon several times, and she tells him: '*You are riding for a fall*'. Later, during a Music lesson, Simon and Freddy continue to talk, pull faces and giggle. Lesley and Carol, who are sitting at the same table as the two boys, are drawn into the mischief. The teacher threatens to punish the whole group if their behaviour fails to improve.

7.9.96 - Simon, Freddy, Lesley and Carol are not listening to the teacher, but instead are playing a game with the exercise books, pushing them from side to side on the table and giggling. During the art lesson, the same group of four children attempt to sit together at the same table, but the teacher tells them it can only accommodate two people and moves the two girls onto a separate table.

9.9.96 - During Registration, the teacher asks Simon whether he wears glasses, as he seems to be having problems reading something on the board. Simon replies that he does, but that he has left them at home. The teacher jokes to one of the girls: '*Don't turn pink or Simon will probably post a letter in you!*' I ask Simon why he does not wear his glasses and he retorts: '*I don't need them*'. Later, during a geography lesson, the teacher explains to the class what she would like them to do. Simon sits and looks at his book for approximately five minutes without attempting to do anything, so I ask if he would like some assistance, and he accepts. We work through the questions together, and he is able to answer most of them, although he struggles with the writing.

10.9.96 - Before the lesson, one of the group (a boy with autism) asks me the names of Simon and Freddy, as they have been picking on him and his friend (a boy who has a cleft lip), and he wishes to talk to a teacher about it. Simon again sits next to Freddy and attempts to disrupt the lesson. The teacher asks Simon to read aloud. He refuses at first, so Derek, who thinks that he has lost his place in the text, points out where he should read from. Simon retorts angrily: '*I know, I'm not thick!*'. The teacher again asks him to read aloud, he again refuses to co-operate, and is sent out of the lesson. The teacher later reports to me: '*Simon has got himself in quite a state*', and is with a member of the SMT. By the end of the lesson, it transpires that Simon has apologised, has agreed to complete the work at home, and will start afresh from the next lesson.

11.9.96 - During PSE (Personal and Social Education), the discussion revolves around study skills. Simon is absent from the group at the start of the lesson as he is again with a member of the SMT. He comes into the lesson later, and as everyone has already paired up, I am asked to partner him. We complete an exercise which tests memory and observation skills. Simon appears to enjoy the exercise and smiles frequently, which is quite unusual as his manner is usually quite surly and defensive. After the lesson, Freddy drops his bag down the stairwell, and another pupil reports to the teacher that both Freddy and Simon have dropped their bags.

12.9.96 - During Registration, Simon is talking, and is informed that if he persists, he will be moved to the front of the room. The Year Co-ordinator comes in and removes Simon and Freddy, telling them: '*You must hurry up because you're going to see the headmaster and he doesn't like to be kept waiting*'. They are in trouble due to the incident with the bags which occurred the previous day. The teacher explains to the rest of the class why they are being taken to the headteacher, and the folly of their actions (see also Chapter 4). Later, the group goes to a drama lesson, throughout which Simon and Freddy cause problems by giggling, rolling around the floor and disobeying instructions. The teacher tells Simon to come to the front and reinforce what she has said by repeating the rules of the game they are playing. Simon refuses to move. The children are then put into groups of five and instructed to sit in a circle and devise a story which they will later act out. I move around each group in turn to observe what they are doing, and when I speak to Simon's group he makes a remark about his character: '*going to the toilet and doing a big shit*'.

13.9.96 - During a science lesson, Simon, Lesley and Carol are wriggling on their stools in unison causing them to squeak. Simon is 'on report' (required to present his report card before each lesson for the teacher to comment upon his behaviour during the lesson), but he has failed to present his card. Mrs Carter notices and asks whether it ought to be in her possession. She asks: '*What should you do with it?*', to which Simon replies: '*Eat it!*' Everyone laughs. Simon continues to misbehave throughout the lesson and Mrs Carter asks him what she would have to write on his report card. Simon replies: '*No reply*'. Again everyone laughs. Later, Simon disrupts the lesson by making a noise with his mouth and cheeks, and by antagonising Lesley and Carol. Mrs Carter explains how the experiment should be carried out, and instructs the children to place the cylinder on a flat surface and bend down level with it to read the level of fluid it contains, adding: '*Your bones are younger than mine!*' Simon mimics someone old with shaking hands. Later he call Lesley a 'prick', and continues to disrupt the lesson. I move next to him and help him to write up the experiment. Although his writing and spelling skills are not of a high standard, he does completes the task with my help.

14.9.96 - During a music lesson, we listen to a piece of music by Mozart and then read a passage about it. The teacher asks several children, including Simon, their opinion of the piece. Everyone comments positively apart from Simon, who remarks: '*It's rubbish, I don't like it*'.

15.9.96 - Two girls, who are sitting behind Simon and Freddy, keep moving the boys' chairs. Simon turns round to them and remarks: '*If you move my chair again I'll move your head off your neck*'. The children are asked to complete a quiz which tests their knowledge of the school, e.g. which side of the corridor they should walk along. I work with Simon, reading out the questions to him, and again he works well with my help. The conversation turns toward leisure time:

BS: *Do you go to the youth club, Simon?*
S: *No.*
BS: *So what do you do when you're not at school?*
S: *I beat people up.*
BS: *Really? That seems a bit sad.*
S: *I don't really, I'm joking.*

17.9.96 - In the science lesson, Simon is again defiant and Mrs Carter tells him to stand in the space between the benches. Simon says that there is 'loads' of space and weaves around inside it. Mrs Carter tells the group angrily: '*You will have to make your minds up about how you come into this room*'. As Simon becomes increasingly more defiant, she enquires about his report card, and puts him next to me, whereupon he throws his pencil case over the desk and his exercise book over his shoulder onto the floor. He then starts making 'farting' noises with his mouth.

20.9.96 - We walk over to the art lesson, and wait outside the room for the teacher to arrive. Simon walks up with his bag hanging from his head, and with the strap around his forehead. The teacher instructs him to remain outside the room. At intervals he goes back outside to Simon and asks if he is ready to join the rest of the class in the lesson, but Simon keeps repeating: '*I don't know*', and is left outside. Eventually another teacher enters the room and asks if 'this miscreant' is allowed back inside. The first teacher agrees and Simon reluctantly rejoins the group but sulks and refuses to work at first, although the teacher eventually wins him round.

21.9.96 - In the science lesson, Mrs Carter tells the group that some of them will have to move, Simon included. He says: '*OK, I'll move*', and moves his stool two inches to the left (see also Chapter 4). Later in the lesson he is told to sit up and take his face out of his hands.

26.9.96 - In French, Simon calls someone 'a prickhead' and the teacher tells him not to use such language in her room. Simon begins to pack up his things in order to leave the room. The teacher tells him: '*Get on and stop acting like a two-year-old*'.

4.10.96 - As we wait to enter the maths room, Simon is playing around, and Jenny tells him he is 'cheeky'. During the lesson, Simon and Freddy remove the ink cylinders from their ballpoint pens and use the outer shells as peashooters, firing rolled up pieces of paper at the other children. The support teacher asks Simon: '*Are you having a bad day today?*' Simon continues to misbehave and is moved to the front of the room. He then begins to throw his bag around , whereupon the support teacher tells him: '*You're a spoilt little boy not having his own way*'. Simon walks out of the room, slamming the door hard. The support teacher follows him out. Some time later both return, and Simon begins to work quietly. Later the support teacher informs me that this is the way that Simon must be handled: '*Even though he misbehaves, he has to be given the opportunity to backtrack*'.

1.11.96 - The photographer comes to the school to take individual photographs of the pupils. This engenders much excitement amongst the children, who ask me check that their hair is tidy etc. However, Simon has refused to have his photograph taken, an action which the teacher puts down to 'attention seeking behaviour' on his part.

This was my final contact with Simon, although I learned later on in the term that he had been excluded from the school after an incident which occurred after the Year 7 end of term disco.

Discussion

From the very beginning of the term, during which the rest of the children were still enjoying a 'honeymoon period' of conformity (Measor and Woods, 1984), Simon went out of his way to challenge the authority of the school. He defied and antagonised staff members, and enticed other susceptible children into his mischief. He continually used his body as a form of resistance to authority, moving it around in space and time, and making noises with his mouth, cheeks, hands etc. All of the teacher's usual strategies for controlling children, such as remonstrating with them, removing them from the teaching space, and even sometimes belittling them by reducing their status to that of a much younger child, were lost on Simon. He turned these strategies around to confront the teachers themselves and to cause them to lose face in the sight of the other children.

During the incident on 20.9.96, the teacher was forced to continue negotiating with Simon to bring him back into the room and, whereas most children would have wished to re-enter as soon as possible so as not to draw attention to themselves by placing themselves outside the 'official' space, Simon refused to capitulate. It was only when another member of staff intervened that the situation was resolved. On 26.9.96, the teacher asserted her authority and her 'ownership' of the room, whereupon Simon simply packed up his belongings and prepared to remove himself from the disputed space. This was not a strategy that most children would choose to employ. Simon challenged authority on a daily basis, and refused to behave in the 'normal' manner of the other children. When they were asked to comment on the music on 14.9.96, only Simon had the confidence to assert that it was 'rubbish'. He used epithets and language that children of his age would not normally use openly in front of adults and, during the photographer's visit, he was the only child to refuse to go along with the procedure. However, it must be noted here that several instances occurred during the research when children whose self-esteem was very low refused to be captured on film.

Nonetheless, most teachers seemed at a loss as to how to deal with Simon. Some were able to 'win him round' by the use of humour, and to cajole him into some form of submission, whereas those who confronted him and asserted their authority usually found themselves on the slippery slope to failure. Many attempted to diminish his continuous challenges by accusing him of being 'childish', whereas he was in fact adopting the strategies and behaviour of children much older than himself. Teachers labelled his actions negatively as 'attention-seeking behaviour', as described by Mellor (1997):

> 'Nose picking. Tongue clicking. Shredding paper. Fidgeting. Lolling, not sitting. Making funny noises. Wandering round the classroom. In PE, running when told to walk, skipping when told to jump. Snatching pens. Throwing coats to the floor. Thumping the desk lid ... the list goes on'.
>
> (Guardian Education, 2.9.97)

Mellor, an educational psychologist, claims that such 'attention-seeking behaviour', unlike straightforward 'naughtiness', is unlikely to respond to punishment or other sanctions, which only serve to make the behaviour worse,: 'negative behaviour leads to attention, which leads to more negative behaviour'. Mellor likens his suggested approach for dealing with such behaviour to a pair of scissors, whose two blades act in unison to be effective. One 'blade' is to ignore the negative behaviour, the other is to recognise, reward and praise 'good' behaviour. In effect, Mellor is equating 'negative' behaviour with any actions that make the child more visible, and advocating rewarding the behaviour of children who remain 'invisible'.

Simon's behaviour was constantly labelled as 'attention-seeking', a term with negative connotations when used by teachers. On the contrary, I would argue that Simon was instead 'crying out for attention' and expressing his need for extra help, a more positive strategy, which in Simon's case was being ignored, with the result that he made himself more visible. On the occasions that I worked with Simon and offered him assistance, he co-operated and attempted to complete the work, and his behaviour changed from sullen and defensive to more open and pleasant. I do not claim the credit for this change, but merely suggest that Simon fell victim to the structural situation in school (see Chapter 4) whereby, along with others with SEN, he failed to receive adult support from the beginning of the term. He struggled with the work due to his poor reading and comprehension skills but, once given assistance with these on a one-to-one basis, he was better able to cope. However, whereas Jenny simply 'switched off' when she failed to understand the work, Simon resorted to misbehaving and challenging the authority of the teachers who were failing to meet his needs.

Simon rejected the assumption that he was 'thick' (10.9.96), and rebelled against authority in a bid to gain some *kudos* with the other children. Although many of his peers became exasperated at his disruptive antics, there was a distinct group of (mainly) boys, who revelled in these. They laughed at (and with) him and urged him on to ever more outrageous behaviour, enjoying the challenge to authority that he represented without risking censure themselves, thereby indulging in 'bad behaviour by proxy' (see also Chapter 4). Simon felt the need to continually reinforce his 'hard' image, insisting that he spent his leisure time 'beating people up (15.9.96) although, when gently challenged, he did back down and claimed to be joking. Simon's story highlights the problems that schools in general, and teachers in particular, experience with children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Given the political will and the appropriate resources, schools can make inclusive education a reality for children with physical difficulties; they can adapt the built environment by providing ramps and lifts for children who are wheelchair users to enable them to access the curriculum. However, they are unable to do the same for children whose unruly minds (e.g. those with EBD) and bodies (e.g. those with ADHD) refuse to conform. As noted in Chapter 2, schools can only function when populated by docile, teachable bodies. So, in contrast to the two previous case studies, such children, although often accepted and included by the majority of their peers, are faced with social and physical exclusion by the adult world.

I have presented the previous three case studies to underpin my argument that the possession of SEN, as such, does not necessarily preclude children from inclusion in the child's social world, and that children without identified SEN but lacking social skills may be marginalised. I will now discuss evidence from three further case studies as additional proof that social skills are more important to children's inclusion than physical difficulties.

CASE STUDY 4 - BETH

Beth is a small, dark-haired child who uses a wheelchair due to cerebral palsy. She appears to be rather immature, and is consequently 'babied' by the rest of the children. Nonetheless, she has a circle of close friends, who stay with her in Room 42 during break times.

7.12.96 - The group has a history lesson. The teacher remarks to me that they are 'a good-natured group' but that at least ten of them are having problems with lessons. This is being contained at the moment, but he feels that once the transitional 'honeymoon period' is over, these children, unless they receive appropriate support, may develop behavioural problems due to frustration. This support has been requested, but has not been forthcoming. Later, Beth's Teachers' Aide (TA) remarks that the suggestion has been mooted that Beth, who is in a different group to the one under discussion, might be transferred to this group, in order that she (the TA) could provide support for the other pupils who are struggling, in addition to supporting Beth. This decision has been rationalised by the fact that Beth's best friend, Claudia, is also in the group to which she may be moved.

12.12.95 - Claudia's eye is red and painful, and she continually complains that it is painful. However, her mother refuses to believe that she needs to visit the doctor for treatment. At one point she begins to cry, and Beth pats her arm to comfort her. During the lunch break I carry out a joint interview with Beth, Claudia and Megan. Claudia and Megan are close friends, and they both accompany Beth at breaks and lunch times. When I interview Claudia (a member of the study group), she asks that the two other girls take part. Claudia discusses her apprehension when she met Beth:

C: *I saw Beth and I thought, 'Oh no, what do I say and what do I do?' and I didn't think I'd ever be Beth's friend ... and when Megan introduced me to her* (giggles) *she started being friendly to me and I thought, 'Oh, what do I say?' and everything and we just got along, didn't we?*
BS: *Why were you worried about what you'd say to her?*
C: *I thought I'd say the wrong thing.*
BS: *What do you mean by 'the wrong thing'?*
C: *Being in a wheelchair ... I was scared what to say, in case I'd say the wrong thing and she'd cry.*
BS: *Have you ever said the wrong thing?*
C: *No, not really.* (To Beth) *Have I?*
B: *No.*
C: *We talk about when she's been to hospital and everything, don't we Beth?*
M: *When she's had operations, and she doesn't mind -*

C: *And she's got a tube in her neck and she lets us feel it, don't you Beth?* (all giggle) *and it feels so weird!*

The conversation develops into a discussion regarding the fact that girls tend to develop didactic relationships, whereas boys usually belonging to larger friendship groups. Claudia and Megan enter into a long and detailed description of the way in which their previous friendship groupings have been characterised by frequent changes of personnel. The conversation continues:

BS: *So you think that it's better if girls are in twos because other people butt in, do they?*
C: *Yes.*
M: *Yes, but with Beth, she doesn't, 'cos she just keeps her mouth shut, sometimes* (laughter)
C: *She's quiet.*
B: *It's best like that.*
BS: *It's what?*
C: *Best.*
B: *Best.*
BS: *Best? Is it?*
C: *But she's, it's like, Beth's there for someone to cry on their shoulder, she's -*
M: *Like if someone's poorly, she'll -*
C: *She'll just comfort you, she's there ... she's there for me and Megan, she's there for everyone, like, she's got a shoulder for us to cry on, she's always there, so if Beth wasn't there, I don't know what we'd do.*

15.1.96 - The teacher explains to me that all children are valued in the art department and valued for themselves, whatever their ability. Beth's work has been differentiated by the fact that she is working with crayons rather than paint, as she finds using a paintbrush difficult. However, Beth claims that she dislikes art, and her TA is having to cajole her into doing the work, and is actually doing a great deal of the work herself. In the afternoon, the group go to their history lesson, which has been moved from the second to the first floor to accommodate Beth. The lift, when it is working, only services the first floor. However, it is again out of action and has been declared irreparable and, as Beth cannot now reach even the first floor, the purpose of the original move has been defeated. The teacher remarks that she would like to move back to her original room on the second floor, as she dislikes the present room, but that she feels guilty for suggesting this simply because Beth cannot attend the lesson. Later, I sit with Beth and her friends at lunchtime, where the main topic of conversation is boyfriends. Beth's boyfriend, Donald, previously 'went out with' Claudia, who now claims: '*He doesn't really go out with Beth but feels sorry for her because she's in a wheelchair*'. This discussion takes place within Beth's hearing, but she simply denies that it is true and that he is in fact her boyfriend. Megan teases Beth by singing: '*I'm Henery the Eighth I am, Henery the Eighth I am, I am*' and, when asked the reason, claims that Donald has had eight other girlfriends. Beth simply shrugs and denies that this is true.

16.1.96 - The children are reading to themselves, and Beth asks if I will listen to her read. We then go to the support teacher for extra reading and I help Beth to complete a comprehension task. Her TA tells me that, although Beth is a competent reader, she does not appear to understand or retain what she is reading. Later, Beth is writing a story about a family holiday and asks me for help with the structure. She is capable of writing her own sentences, but I notice that there is a considerable amount of her TA's writing in her exercise books. However, this is possibly due to the fact that her writing is so slow. Later, I go with Beth to a drama lesson. The teacher comments that in her lesson all children are treated the same, apart from those like Beth who have physical difficulties, but that nevertheless she tries to involve these children as much as possible. The children play a game and the teacher asks me and Beth to adjudicate by deciding who is 'out'. At this point, Beth appears rather worried and takes hold of my hand.

18.1.96 - The music teacher is absent, and the lesson is being taken by a substitute teacher, who is intending to take the group to his own subject room. When questioned by Beth's TA, he replies that the group will not be engaging in any musical work, and tells Beth: '*You should go into the TA's room and have a cup of tea and some chocolate biscuits*'. Later, I talk to Beth in the TA's room as the rest of the group are taking part in PE, which Beth never attends. After lunch, Beth is again unable to attend the geography lesson on the second floor as the lift is out of action. She spends the lesson with a TA in their room working on the geography task that is being undertaken by the rest of her class.

23.1.96 - During the PE lesson, I again talk to Beth. It is sometimes difficult to catch what she is saying, as her speech is rather immature, e.g. '*I've dot a told*' rather than '*I've got a cold*'. Later, I ask her TA whether her speech is affected by her condition and whether she receives therapy, but the TA replies that she feels that Beth is simply lazy where her speech is concerned, and her parents make no attempt to correct her. She has a brother who is considerably older than she is, and she is very tiny for her age, so the aide feels that her parents tend to 'baby' her and treat her as a much younger child than she actually is.

25.11.96 - Incident with Liam (see above).

CASE STUDY 5 - CLIVE

Clive is a wheelchair user due to cerebral palsy, and has quite pronounced difficulties with both speech and movement. He has a wide circle of friends and enjoys a close friendship with another boy in the same year, who is able-bodied.

5.12.95 - At lunch I meet Clive, who is accompanied by another boy, Stefan, who introduces himself as Clive's friend. I ask if they came from the same feeder school, to which the answer is no, and whether they are in the same groups for lessons, to which they reply that they hardly meet in school. I ask how they became friends, and Stefan replies: '*We just bumped into each other on the field when we were both watching the football and we just started talking and that*'. Clive is a joy to talk to, with an incisive sense of humour and the ability to laugh at himself. He has a strong sense of identity and is quite aware of his strengths and weaknesses. He tells me: '*I've never been to no special school, they're all right for some children but not for me*'. During lunch, he is experiencing difficulty in raising a glass of milk to his mouth, but points out: '*I'm like a set of scales*', in that in order to raise the hand that is holding the milk, he has to also raise the other hand as a balance.

29.1.96 - During the lunch break I go into Room 42 to talk to the pupils who are wheelchair users, who are allowed to use the room during break times if they so wish. I remark that it is quiet in the room today, whereupon Clive replies that this is because 'Mouth' and 'Mouth' (Claudia and Megan, who accompany Beth - see above) are not present, and this is the reason for it being so peaceful. We discuss the subject of bullying and Clive remarks: '*All children are bullied at some point during their time at school, even if it's only being called a name*'.

30.1.96 - At lunch I again sit with Clive and his friend, Stefan, and discuss the interview that we will hold after lunch:

C: (to me) *What do you do?*
BS: *I'm a social anthropologist.*
C: *That's one of the jobs on the Careers CD Rom.*
BS: *What does it say? Does it talk about going to darkest Africa and studying long-lost tribes?*
C: *Yes.*
BS: *Actually, a lot of anthropologists are like me now, studying their own societies.*
C: *The other ones probably just wanted a long holiday somewhere hot!*

At the end of the meal, we go and find an available room for our interview, at which point Clive asks me: '*Have you got your safari hat*?' During the interview with Clive and Stefan, we again discuss the subject of discrimination against people with disabilities:

BS: *So, do you feel that you're accepted by the other people in your class?*
C: *Er, yes. I mean, there's some daft people in school, you know how it is?*
BS: *Yes.*
C: *Just 'cos I'm in a wheelchair, they think I'm thick but, as Stefan knows, well, he won't tell you this but I'm pretty brainy* (said laughingly)
S: *As a lot of the other people will ...*
BS: *So if someone's being patronising towards you, would you tell them or would you just laugh it off?*
C: *Well, I don't really, I laugh inside, if you know what I mean, 'cos they don't know what it's like to be, if you haven't been with a disabled person, you are gonna be a bit patronising 'cos, but if they were being too patronising, I'd tell them, know what I mean, like, let me do this, let me do that, I'd tell them to get off!*

15.1.96 - Before lessons, I talk to Clive about the fact that the lift is broken and he is unable to get up to his lessons. He is very angry, and also expresses strong opinions about SEN provision in general and the banding system in particular.

18.1.96 - During the break, I again talk to Clive, who is even more unhappy than previously about the stairlift situation, claiming: '*People are earning a lot of money and not doing their jobs properly*'. He is angry that his statement has been changed and his funding reduced, thereby also reducing the amount of support to which he is entitled. He has written a letter to this effect to the education authorities, who have agreed to hold a meeting with all concerned to assess his needs, and decide how these might best be met.

22.1.96 - The TAs are discussing the above meeting. It has been suggested that a special machine might be borrowed to transport Clive upstairs to his lessons, and that he could use a Dictaphone to dictate his notes during lessons, which then could be typed up later by a TA. Both of these suggestions are felt by school staff to be stop-gap measures, rather than providing Clive with what he really needs, i.e. full-time funding and support. The view is expressed that, because Clive is so bright and articulate, his physical needs are often overlooked.

Discussion

Both Beth and Clive experienced problems with the physical environment of the school. They were both affected by the problems engendered by the breakdown of the lift, by the reluctance of teaching staff to move from their own teaching space, and the associated reluctance of staff to accommodate children in wheelchairs in their lessons (see Chapter 4 for a fuller discussion). This reluctance can be seen in the teacher's rather patronising remark to Beth on 18.1.96. The excuse that no musical work would be undertaken (an issue which raises questions in its own right) was used to marginalise and exclude Beth from the lesson. Beth and Clive were also subject to the wider structural effects of the constraints of inadequate funding, and the knock-on effect this has on children when it is summarily withdrawn. These wider structural and social issues are illustrated in the attempt to manoeuvre Beth so that her TA could provide additional support to the other children who were struggling and who were without the benefit of a statement. Nonetheless, in both cases, the presence of these children in the school raised the profile of all disabled children and enabled their non-disabled peers to overcome their previous apprehension at approaching them.

Both children were popular with their peers and were included in most activities, although the reason for their inclusion differed. Beth was perceived as someone who was there in the background when others needed her, a 'shoulder to cry on'. Possibly the fact that she had suffered illness and physical pain meant that others perceived her as someone who would understand such matters and therefore empathise with their own problems. She was valued as someone who would not 'butt in' to their friendships (12.2.95), although this was taken literally by Megan to mean that she would keep quiet and remain passive. It was this passivity that was valued by the other children. They related to Beth as they would have done to a much younger child, and she was not seen to present a threat to them. Beth seemed to appreciate this fact, and so became worried when asked to preside over her peers in a position of power and adjudicate during the Drama lesson on 16.1.96. Beth was also aware, whether consciously or unconsciously, of the other children's fascination and inquisitiveness in bodily matters, allowing them to touch and investigate the results of her previous surgical operations. However, as with Jenny, the other children discussed Beth and her relationships quite openly, in her presence and without compunction, and again she passively allowed them to do so.

Clive's acceptance by his peers stemmed from an altogether different source from Beth's. Whereas Beth was impassive and accepting, Clive was confident in his own abilities, and forged his way through by the sheer force of his personality. He used humour to great effect and, although this often appeared to be self-deprecating, it was possible for him to be so because of the bedrock on which his confidence was based[5]. He had been raised in the belief that he was as good as, if not better than, any non-disabled child, and he was aware of his rights and was prepared to fight for them with the backing of his mother. Clive deemed any bullying that he suffered to be part of every child's experience, and was able to rationalise this by perceiving the perpetrators as simply 'daft'. He was also prepared to make allowances for these people; arguing that it was their lack of experience of disabled people that caused them to behave inappropriately. However, he was only prepared to rationalise up to a point, and if they overstepped a certain mark he gave them short shrift.

Both Beth and Clive, despite their physical difficulties, were largely accepted and included by their peers. Although staff paid lip service to the notion of inclusion and also largely accepted them, questions arose related to their accommodation in certain lessons and by certain members of staff. Questions were also asked about whether Beth was working as hard as she might be, whereas Clive was seen to be hard-working and capable. Nonetheless, both children worked hard to forge relationships with their peers and, I would argue, to develop and maintain their social skills in order for this to continue.

In contrast, the last case study, that of Brent, demonstrates that a child with autism, who experiences problems with social relationships on all levels, is excluded by both adults and children alike.

CASE STUDY 6 - BRENT

Brent is a large, blond-haired boy who has a statement due to having Asperger's Syndrome (a disorder on the autistic continuum). He has formed a close friendship with Colin, who is also marginalised by some of the other children due to his possession of a cleft lip and palate.

5.9.96 - While we are waiting for everyone to get changed for the Drama lesson, some of the boys who are ready begin trying to sit in the 'Lotus' position (Yoga). Brent achieves the position, closes his eyes, puts his index fingers and thumbs together and begins to chant 'Ummmmm'.

6.9.96 - In Music, pupils listen to a piece of music, after which they are asked for their comments. Brent puts up his hand and says that he likes it because some parts were loud and some soft, and these 'went well together'. The teacher then asks for volunteers to read aloud and again, Brent raises his hand. The teacher allocates him a piece of text to read, but he reads the wrong section, and the teacher asks another pupil to read the correct piece. Later, during Science, the teacher instructs pupils that they should always stand when conducting experiments and asks them if they can think of a reason for this instruction. Brent replies that if they spill anything dangerous, they could jump out of the way more quickly if they are already standing.

7.9.96 - After lunch, the group goes to English. Brent is late for the lesson as he has lost his way. Another pupil is sent to look for him.

9.9.96 - During a geography lesson, Brent asks me about the work, which appears to be worrying him, and I realise he has not fully understood the teacher's instructions. He has completed only the first four questions on the board, rather than all ten. At the end of the lesson, the teacher explains that the homework consists of describing to a stranger the town in which they live. Brent asks her: '*What happens if I can't find a stranger?*' After the children have left, the teacher remarks that, in her opinion, it is unfair to put children like Brent in the classroom with no support, as she has not received any form of training in how to cope with them.

10.9.96 - While we wait to go into the science lesson, Brent asks me the names of Simon and Freddy, as they have been taunting him and Colin, and calling them names. Brent wishes to report them to the bullying counsellor. During the lesson, the children are preparing for a test, and the teacher asks why the desks have been set far apart. Brent replies: '*It's so people can't cheat*'. Later, during English, the pupils are asked to complete a profile of themselves. Brent has written:

Favourite sports - N/A
Dislikes - Soft and hard drugs, salad, bullies, fruit and vegetables.

I look at the replies of the other boys, and every one has named their favourite sport, usually football, and included the name of the team they support. The teacher then produces a 'bag of tricks', which she explains she will use as a prompt to introduce herself to the group. She asks them what a prompt does, and Brent puts up his hand and replies: '*It whispers words out to you*'. The group is then asked to produce their own 'bag of tricks' for the next lesson, as they will each be given the opportunity to talk about themselves. Brent shouts out: '*We should get a Paul Daniel's Magic Set and say 'Abracadabra, here's my box of tricks!*'' The other pupils cast disparaging glances in his direction. Later, during a maths lesson, I notice that Brent is sitting alone in an otherwise empty row.

11.9.96 - In the English lesson, the children produce their 'bag of tricks' and use these to introduce themselves to the group. Most of the children have bought more 'personal' items such as baby photographs and albums, samples of their baby hair, or pictures of themselves, their homes and their families. Brent has brought a photograph album filled with pictures of his dogs, a model he has painted, a brochure about model making, and a book: *The Hobbit.*

12.9.96 - During the maths lesson, one of the pupils informs the teacher that someone is calling Brent 'dumb'. She reprimands the tormentor and thanks the first pupil for informing her. Brent then answers a question correctly and she comments: '*Well done, you remembered that well*'. I notice that Monica keeps staring at Brent with a perplexed look on her face. Later in the lesson, she informs me that someone is 'stuck' on a question, to which Brent laughs loudly, shouting that he himself is 'stuck' to the table, which he shakes vigorously. After break we go to English. Brent is late again as he has lost his way.

13.9.96 - During a science lesson, the teacher asks the group about the level of liquid in a measuring cylinder. They reply: '*Thirty*' and she asks: '*Thirty what?*' Brent puts up his hand and replies: '*Thirty mils*'. The teacher smiles wryly and says that the measure does in fact read 'Thirty mils' but that this is the old measure, whereas what it should show is 'Thirty cubic centimetres'. Later, Brent is reprimanded for fidgeting during the lesson, and the teacher asks: '*Do you have a problem?*', to which Brent replies that he has a splinter.

14.9.96 - During an art lesson, I walk around looking at the children's work and admire Brent's, which is excellent, whereupon Malcolm remarks:

M: *Brent's drawings are good because he's got a fantastic memory, and that's why he's my friend.*
B: *Now he tells me!*

18.9.96 - During English, the teacher reads out a poem and then asks what a 'belief' is. Brent puts up his hand and replies: *'It's something you think you shouldn't do, and I think you shouldn't bully, so I don't'.*

19.9.96 - We go into Year 7 Assembly, and Nadine stands next to Brent. She starts to gesture at a girl in another group, pointing to Brent and signalling that she thinks he is weird. She keeps staring at Brent with a puzzled expression and engaging him in conversation, making him laugh aloud. This is in spite of the rule which disallows talking in Assembly.

2.10.96 - I speak to Brent's mother and enquire how he is faring at school. She replies:

> *'He keeps asking if he can go to a different school, as he keeps getting picked on. He's also getting upset because the other kids keep trying to get him to do wrong things that would get him into trouble. He won't do them though, fortunately he's got a very good idea of right and wrong, so he won't do what they tell him'.*

1.11.96 - The pupils are having their photographs taken. The photographer goes to great lengths to position the children exactly as he would like them, i.e. sitting at an angle, hands neatly on knees, shoulders up and smiling. He has difficulty in making Brent understand how he wishes him to sit. As Brent comes out of the room, he continues to pose and asks the children waiting to enter the room whether they would like his autograph.

4.11.96 - During the maths lesson, I notice that there is only one vacant chair in the room and that is next to Brent. In CT, the pupils have to sit in swivel chairs, and Brent spends a large part of the lesson swinging himself around and giggling. He asks me to help him carry out some soldering, as he is afraid he might burn himself, and asks: '*What is Mr. C's* (the teacher) *favourite TV programme?*' I say I do not know, and he replies: '*Solder, solder*' (After a programme being shown at the time, 'Soldier, soldier').

11.12.96 - I accompany the boys to the swimming baths and watch the lesson from the balcony, together with Sandy and Harry, who are not able to join in the lesson. Harry laughingly instructs me:

H: *Watch Brent dive in, it's really funny, he does a belly flop.*

S: *Don't be mean, he can't help it.*

H: *One week we all got into trouble, 'cos Brent was running around the changing room and acting like a gorilla.*

S: *Everybody starting laughing and picking on him and we all got into trouble.*

At the end of the lesson, I ask the teacher if he feels that Brent is coping, and he replies immediately in the negative. He feels that Brent should not be in the group without additional support, which is not available due to a lack of resources, so he has to manage as best he can. The pool staff had been informed of the situation and there is always someone: '*keeping an eye on the situation, especially Brent*'. I ask why one of the pool staff could not help Brent, and he replies that, again, this would cost the school extra money. He appears unhappy at being expected to include Brent in the group.

Discussion

Brent's experiences shared certain similarities with those of Jenny, although Brent had been officially diagnosed as having a form of autism, whereas Jenny had not. Autism is characterised by a 'triad of impairments' (Wing, 1976), which impinge upon social interaction, social communication, and imagination/social understanding. It is a disability which prevents children from reaching out to others, keeping them locked inside their own peripheral world. Both Brent, and to a certain extent, Jenny, failed to understand, and therefore be part of, the jokes, tricks and metaphors of their peers, especially those which revolved around the body as a medium of expression. However, there were certain differences in the two children's exclusion. Whereas Jenny simply failed to understand most of the children's humour, Brent was able to make jokes, but at a more sophisticated level than those of his peers, and this left him outside their intimate circle. The fact that Brent and Jenny were not part of the other children's verbal and visual culture added to their social exclusion.

At the same time, their peers were often perplexed, and sometimes exasperated, by the behaviour of both children. Like Jenny, Brent was usually ignored, often mocked and sometimes ordered how to behave. Both were drawn to other potentially marginalised children as friends, and it was telling that, although Malcolm professed to be his friend, Brent had not been aware of his friendship. Brent was further excluded from the world of his male peers by his complete disinterest in sport in general, and favoured football teams in particular. However, unlike Jenny, Brent was bright, knowledgeable and able to verbalise his thoughts. He was always one of the first to raise his hand and answer the teacher's questions, although this was often done in a stilted, formalised manner. Unfortunately, his ability was not always valued by the other children, who tended to taunt those who were keen to answer and label them as 'Boffs'. He was able to retain facts, and possessed a strong sense of moral values, which he quoted at every opportunity, e.g. the inadvisability of using drugs, bullying or cheating. By drawing on these values he was able to resist those wishing to involve him in 'bad behaviour by proxy' see above and Chapter 4), unlike Jenny, who was increasingly drawn into Chloe's mischief and consequently berated by the teachers.

Nevertheless, although Brent was able to remember concrete facts, he was repeatedly late for lessons after having lost his way around the school building. Like the children, many of the school staff were perplexed by Brent's behaviour and were at a loss as to how to deal with him. Some were quite openly hostile to his presence in their classroom or working space, mainly through a lack of understanding of the characteristics of autism and the strategies to use when presented with an autistic child. Brent's tendency to shout out and become excitable in class mirrored the behaviour of Jenny, and both children tended to antagonise their teachers. In addition, Brent constantly tested the teaching skills of staff members. He frequently misunderstood instructions, took everything literally, and possessed very few imaginative skills. The incident on 9.9.96, during which Brent became distressed at his potential inability to find a 'stranger' left the teacher nonplussed, and at a loss as to how to explain what she required from him. Having never previously encountered a child with autism, she was faced with a situation for which her previous training had failed to prepare her. Taken in context, in a classroom of thirty children all demanding attention, Brent's particular difficulties exacerbated an already potentially fraught situation. Like Jenny, Brent found himself in a 'no-win' situation, excluded by the majority of children and adults alike.

CONCLUSION

The above case studies have exemplified my ongoing argument that it is the possession of social skills, rather than a perfect, non-disabled, fully functioning body, that is the most important factor in particular children's ability to participate in the world of the child. Liam's case study demonstrates that disability and illness, *per se*, are seen as signs of weakness, or 'softness' which is an anathema to children in their desire to be seen by their peers as 'hard'. Liam's persistent, non-specific illnesses, and the more diagnosable ones of his mother, although not actual disabilities, were used by the other children as weapons against him. His low self-esteem, his cowed demeanour, his physical appearance and his victim mentality, all contributed towards his social exclusion by the other children. His family background, and the efforts of his mother to mediate in, and protect him from, the verbal and physical abuse of his peers, only added to his marginalised position, as did his repeated absenteeism, which also hindered his ability to form and maintain friendships. Most of the children in the study disliked being absent from school through illness, as they were concerned that existing friendships may be fractured, and new alliances formed by other children during their absence.

However, the case studies of both Beth and Clive demonstrate that some children, although subject to various forms of disability, are able to mitigate these bodily difficulties through the use of one or more strategies which draw on their use of particular social skills. Whilst Beth had learned to be passive and non-threatening in her dealings with other children, she had also carved out a niche for herself as a metaphorical 'available shoulder' and 'listening ear' for her peers in time of trouble. She was also able to utilise the other children's fascination with the physical body to ensure her inclusion in their world. Clive, on the other hand, was able, by the use of humour and self-deprecation, to avoid any potential marginalisation by his peers. He had also acknowledged the fact that all children, as previously argued in Chapter 5, are subject to teasing and taunting around bodily attributes, and was able to make allowances for those who picked on him, in that they were unfamiliar, and even uncomfortable, with disability. However, he felt, with some justification, that his presence in the school, and that of others with physical disabilities, only enhanced their position of familiarity with their non-disabled peers.

Simon's position in the school was more ambivalent. Whilst not subject to physical disability, his psychological problems and 'dis-ordered' behaviour, whilst providing a source of potential chaos and ensuing amusement to some of his peers, engendered a great deal of irritation in the teaching staff. Whereas, as has been shown, all children are able to use their bodies as a subversive challenge to authority, Simon's defiance was more overt. He did not appear to respond to the usual strategies that teachers use to gain and maintain control in the classroom and, urged on by the more disruptive element, was a persistent source of conflict to them. However, although he was ignored by the more conforming children in his group, he was not subject to the social exclusionist strategies practised on Jenny and Brent.

Jenny's and Brent's case studies highlight only too poignantly the manner in which those children, who not only differ from the physical norm in some way, but also lack social skills for whatever reason, are marginalised by their peers. Both children were not visibly different in any physical sense, but it was their bizarre behaviour which marked them out from those in their group, and prevented them from forming close friendships with others. This 'oddness' was ruthlessly expressed through the use of bodily signs which the other children were able to 'read', and which were then mobilised to form assumptions about moral, cognitive, and potentially physical, attributes which were not actually present, such as Jenny's perceived ugliness and Brent's 'dumbness'. I would argue, therefore, that, in common with Liam, Jenny and Brent suffered social exclusion by their peers due to their lack of discernible social skills.

On the contrary, Simon, Beth and Clive, although subject to actual physical or psychological difficulties, *were* included in the social world of the child. Effective social skills can be drawn upon to mitigate the effects of disability, and, *vice versa*, a lack of social skills can result in social exclusion. For those with a disability *and* a lack of social skills, the result may be exclusion from the worlds of both the child and the adult.

The final chapter will draw all these arguments together and seek conclusions which reflect upon and consider the experiences of children with SEN within the structural space of the school.

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[1] i.e. the 'runt' of the litter.

[2] For reasons of confidentiality I am unable to divulge these as they are connected to the family surname.

[3] To 'twag' meaning to miss school for an unjustified reason.

[4] Proof of children's use of the 'as if' factor was also evident in the case of Derek, another child who was largely friendless and marginalised. Coming as he did from a financially bereft family, Derek's clothes were shabby but nonetheless clean. His trainers were not of the 'requisite' (to the children) variety, and I often caught them nudging each other and pointing derisively to Derek's feet. But, what was more pertinent to the present discussion, and again despite evidence to the contrary, was the other children's insistence that Derek was 'smelly'. Furthermore, not only was he deemed to smell, but his belongings were also rejected as being unhygienic. Children needing to borrow a pencil or other items of equipment would rather go without than borrow anything of Derek's, and on one occasion, he reported that, during a lesson, a girl had been about to borrow one of his pencils, whereupon another girl had retorted, 'Ugh, don't borrow that, it's Derek's and it's got fleas!'. The association with dirt and disorder even spread to Derek's work when, during another lesson, the teacher was stressing the need for pupils to produce neat work, and a boy on the other side of the room to Derek shouted out, 'I bet Derek's work is scruffy!'. So, like Jenny, children would refuse to stand next to Derek, in his case not because he was deemed to be ugly, but rather due to a perceived bad odour which did not actually exist.

[5] It has been suggested to me by a member of the disability lobby (personal communication) that it is not acceptable to depict disabled children as passive (Beth) or self-deprecating (Clive). I would argue that, on the contrary, Beth and Clive, in common with their non-disabled peers, had devised conscious strategies for coping with potential teasing/bullying from others. Furthermore, these strategies were proving successful. Similarly, James (2000) notes how a child in her (1993) study, 'very small for his age, bespectacled and bookish', successfully employed strategies of self-deprecation. He described himself as a 'titchy little boring person' and thus forestalled their use of his body as a target for ridicule' (2000:29).

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

> 'When you think of the words *a child with a handicap* which word comes first? The word *child* comes first. Remember that you are dealing with a child that has a handicap rather than a handicapped child. Try to remember that he's (sic) a child, first. Therefore, when things don't go as you'd like them to, when things go wrong, try and think, 'Is this happening because he is a child or because he is handicapped?' I think that this might give you a different outlook, because children *do* fall; they run and skin their knees and things do happen to them because they're human beings'
> Roberts (quoted in Stephens, Blackhurst and Magliocca, 1988:36), emphasis in original.

Linda Roberts, who has cerebral palsy, attended mainstream school in America for most of her academic career. In the above quote, she is addressing a group of prospective teachers, and attempting to help them to understand that all children have individual needs quite separate from the needs of any particular disability. This quote graphically illustrates the main thrust of this thesis - that children are children first. Despite the fact that some of those children may have *special educational* needs, all children have *individual* needs. The children in this study demonstrated on a daily basis that, whether or not they had been 'labelled' as 'special needs children', they nonetheless harboured similar wishes, aspirations and emotions to their peers. Above all, they wanted to 'fit in' with, and 'be the same as', those around them. Unfortunately, as has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, there are a multiplicity of factors which may mitigate against children with SEN 'fitting into' the schools which they attend, and many of these factors are directly related to children's embodiment. These factors, some of which are not confined within particular social spaces but are subject to a complex interweaving between the outside world, the school world and the world of the child, will now be explored.

Structural Factors which Mitigate against Inclusion

Policy Issues

The experiences of children with SEN, in common with those of their mainstream peers, are impinged upon by policy decisions concerning educational provision in general. According to Scraton:

> 'As a result of government policy since the 1970s, a whole range of schools, from nursery through to sixth form, have borne the brunt of swingeing budgetary cuts, dilapidated buildings, overcrowded classrooms, out-of-date equipment and poor essential resources. Every local authority has its hierarchy of schools and the extension of parental choice, with finance tied to enrolment, has created the concept of the 'sink school'. The stress on teachers, and headteachers as managers, has been exacerbated by devolved and restricted budgets. While politicians and employers bemoan the lack of correspondence between school-based knowledge and skills and those demanded by industry, the reality for many young people, their families and communities is the lack of employment opportunity. ... Once structural unemployment became an institutionalized feature of contemporary society, the promise of trading hard work and commitment at school for a rewarding and secure future in the workplace became unrealizable. Effectively, for many young people, schools lost their relevance'.
>
> (1997:102-3)

These factors impact upon the educational experiences of *all* children. However, for those labelled with SEN, the debate is further clouded by the integration/segregation debate. According to Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare (1999), there are four main reasons used by policy-makers, professionals, and to some extent parents, to argue for segregated provision for children with SEN:

i) the specialist provision and protection needed by children with SEN can only be provided in a special school setting,

ii) special schools are staffed by teachers who have the skills, expertise and qualities needed to teach children with SEN,

> iii) only within special schools are staff able to offer children with SEN a curriculum flexible enough to prepare them for the rigours of life in the outside world, and
>
> iv) only by siting expensive resources such as special equipment and specialist teachers in one place can demands of administrative and economic efficiency and effectiveness be met.
>
> (1998:106)

Support for segregation by a significant number of parents of children with SEN (and also some of the children themselves) has been crucial to the argument. They contend that mainstream schools often fail to meet children's educational, care and social needs, and that only lip service is paid to real integration, leaving children with SEN socially and academically isolated. In contrast, the segregated setting provides greater personal and technical support, a more accessible environment and a more enlightened peer culture (Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare, 1999).

The contrasting argument from the disability movement is that the special education system contributes towards the disabling process and must be abolished. Apart from the humanitarian argument, evidence suggests that the educational achievement of children in segregated settings is inferior to that of their mainstream peers. Those designated as having SEN not only experience a narrower curriculum, teachers' lower expectations of them may affect their performance (Wade and Moore, 1993). As a consequence, these children often leave school with fewer academic qualifications and skills than those in mainstream schools (Thomas, 1997). According to Barnes (1991), special schools also perpetuate the oppression of disabled people by pandering to the ignorance and fear surrounding impairment that is present in the general population.

It is uncertain as to how far recent educational policies will facilitate a shift away from segregated schooling in the UK. It has been argued (Weedon, 1994) that the introduction of a National Curriculum (as a result of the 1988 Education

Reform Act) hinders teachers' abilities to respond creatively to the needs of children with SEN and focuses on their inadequacies rather than their achievements. Rather than moving further towards the social model of disability, within-child (or medical model) factors such as dyslexia, previously banished from official documents, are now being given a higher profile, as parents feel the need to compete for resources for their children. Local management of schools (LMS) has meant that schools may be reluctant to invest in general learning support for all those children with SEN and instead push for increasing numbers of statements for individual children (Lunt and Evans, 1994).

Finally, there are indications that there is an increase in the exclusion rate of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). Riddell claims that:

> 'definitions of 'normal' and 'deviant' behaviour are being redefined within the mainstream classroom in response to managerial pressures for school and teacher accountability'.
>
> (1996:98)

Within an increasing 'managerial culture' of market forces, compulsory testing, published league tables etc., performance indicators, such as external examination results, costs and truancy, are utilised to assess school and teacher performance. In such a climate, children with SEN may be perceived as taking up extra resources and lowering examination results. Children with EBD are more likely than other pupils with SEN to have a negative impact on a school's profile in terms of these performance indicators, as they usually achieve poorly in examinations but are demanding of teacher time. and so may be perceived as a liability. However, according to Armstrong and Galloway (1994), school staff may feel the need to justify their exclusion from the school, and as a result they are redefined as disturbed (implying a pupil deficit) rather than disruptive (implying a curriculum or teacher deficit). Simultaneously, mainstream teachers reconceptualise their task as teaching 'normal' children rather those with problems who demand 'specialist' teaching. Riddell claims that 'once gatekeepers such as psychologists have accepted this definition of the situation, the way is cleared for the child to be removed' (1996:99).

Evidence gained during fieldwork and since would appear to largely support these claims. Many teachers felt that the National Curriculum was 'a strait-jacket' which restricted their ability to respond creatively to children's individual needs, especially those with SEN. Pupils who were struggling to master the basics of the English language were forced nonetheless to tackle French, although the secondary school in the study has, since the completion of the fieldwork, gone some way to discontinue this practice. It is also true that there is a strong tendency currently to move away from the social model of disability by pushing for individualised statements based on specific deficits such as dyslexia and dyspraxia etc., especially since the introduction of LMS. Thus, the importance of children's embodiment in relation to the structure of schooling is being increasingly highlighted. Although schools are expected to cater for *all* children with SEN in stages 1 to 3 of the Code of Practice within their 'general' SEN budget, many children receive little or no help without the 'security' of a statement which labels them and emphasises their bodily and individual deficits.

However, this is nowhere more true than in the case of children with EBD. Whilst pupils with physical difficulties and those who were wheelchair users were generally accepted (although there was some evidence that staff were reluctant to accommodate them in certain lessons and without the services of a teachers' aide), those children who were unable or unwilling to control the way their bodies *behaved* were not generally welcomed into classrooms. One of the case studies, Simon, was statemented for EBD, and the general opinion of the school was that the problems emanated from within him rather than from some kind of deficit in the curriculum or teaching methods. It was also perceived that his home background and family life, specifically a lack of discipline at home, were contributing to his difficulties. He was excluded from the school soon after the period of fieldwork ended. However, further evidence of these children being removed from schools was gained whilst working with children with EBD as part of a multi agency support team, and subsequently with parents of such children. Although many schools went to great lengths to accommodate them, others excluded them in a spuriously reluctant 'cruel to be kind' manner on the grounds that this was being done, in the words of one headteacher:

> *'in their own best interests. We're being forced to take this action against our will in the hope that the LEA will take notice and be forced to give them the specialist provision that they need'.*

One solution to the problem is often sought by suggesting that children with EBD are suffering from relatively difficult to diagnose disorders such as ADHD, Tourette's Syndrome, schizophrenia etc., as if this vindicates the schools' inability to contain them. School staff often reported that, once medication (e.g. Ritalin) had been prescribed, difficult children were transformed from whirlwinds into models of Foucauldian compliance, making their bodies much more 'docile' and thus the children easier to teach. School staff also appeared to struggle with children who have disorders along the autistic spectrum. Whilst claiming that this was due to a lack of condition-specific training, those children whose bodies refused to comply with teachers' instructions were the cause of most perplexity and frustration. Staff appeared unsure of how to include them in lessons due to their inability to grasp specific concepts such as time, and often allotted them alternative tasks to carry out which focused instead on areas of social skills learning.

The research, taking place as it did during the primary-secondary transition, pointed up these children's differential experiences at each school. In the 'family-type' atmosphere of a small primary school, children with autistic spectrum disorders were known to all. For most of the time, they remained in one classroom, taught by the same teacher, alongside children who had usually known them from the beginning of their school career. Their peers were familiar with their sometimes bizarre behaviour, for which they made allowances and often ensured they did not come to any harm. In contrast, after the transition, these children found themselves in a large, sprawling comprehensive school, with a cohort of over two hundred pupils from different feeder schools. The majority of these pupils did not know them, and were often puzzled by their behaviour. They lost their way moving between lessons, and experienced several changes of teaching personnel daily. Teachers were unfamiliar with them and also did not understand the complexities of their behaviour. In other words, stability and continuity, crucial to children with autistic spectrum disorders, were absent. As a consequence, they struggled to cope.

Children with SEN, despite government rhetoric which encourages their integration or inclusion (whichever term is currently 'fashionable') into mainstream schools, are thus being fitted into an existing system which is not designed to take them and which, because of current trends in education, is increasingly less so. However, as has been suggested in Chapter 1, were schools to adopt more democratic practices, this would be of benefit to schools themselves and to all children, not simply those who have SEN. It has been demonstrated (e.g. Humphries and Rowe, 1994) that mutual respect and children's participation in decision-making leads not only to a greater democratisation of schools, but also an improvement in children's behaviour, both individually and towards each other. Activities such as circle time and peer mediation give children an opportunity to verbalise their concerns and ideas about school practices and, more importantly, issues such as bullying and disruptive behaviour. However, allowing children to contribute towards decisions regarding school management must not be merely cosmetic, but must be carried through (and be seen to be carried through) into practice.

Attitudes to Disability

As highlighted in Chapter 2, many arguments in favour of the concept of integration of children with SEN into mainstream schools revolve around the claim that it is only when children of all physical and cognitive capabilities are able to mix will attitudes towards disability begin to change. For some (e.g.

Oliver, 1996), the question is a matter of fundamental human rights, whereas others, such as Leicester (1994) warn against using children in the education system as an exercise in social engineering, rather than perceiving them as individuals in their own right. I would argue that theorists who advocate this use of children with SEN as 'learning aids upon which mainstream children practise their 'compassion'' (Leicester, 1994:304) are rather naively ignoring the messages about disability which abound in the outside world. How can we expect the education system to fulfil the role that the wider society is evading? Despite attempts by teachers to foster positive perceptions of 'difference', whether these be along lines of gender, class, colour, ethnicity or disability, during PSE lessons and whole school assemblies, children continue to be bombarded with negative images of disability which abound in the media and the outside world (see Chapter 2).

A mother responding to a 'Letters' page query (Guardian, 7.1.00) describes succinctly the public reactions to her learning disabled son. She was responding to a letter in the previous week's edition from another mother, who was bemoaning the fact that her own son had returned from India as a white Rastafarian, a dropout and a vegetarian:

> 'That you should be so lucky! Our 17-year-old son has learning difficulties. He will never be able to travel independently to India or anywhere else, is relatively housebound and dependent on us, and is turning into the kind of adult you desperately hope won't sit next to you on a long train journey. As his parents we have become immune to embarrassment (although his younger teenage sister still dies a little social death every time we go anywhere together). He looks normal, but is odd'.

This mother's heartfelt plea demonstrates exactly the cultural bias against people with disabilities described by Barnes (1990), and the concept of 'pollution by association' felt by other individuals. However, it also conveys the importance of embodiment and the 'added' stigma experienced by those with mental health problems whose bodies nonetheless 'look normal'.

These broad negative stereotypical perceptions of disability and bodily expectations were evidenced and reinforced in the present study during day-to-day interaction, but more especially during the exercise with the photographs (see Chapter 5). Although many children undoubtedly held positive perceptions of disabled children, others were more negative. Not only did they reject the notion of these children as possible friends, they often expressed the view that their own friendship potential would be drastically reduced due to the 'courtesy stigma' (Goffman, 1963[1990]) that they themselves would be subject to as a result of the relationship. In their everyday social relations, as I have shown, children in the study also frequently used disability terms such as 'spaz' (spastic) and 'divvy' (stupid) as terms of abuse, or mimicked the bodily symptoms of conditions such as asthma and epilepsy during interaction with their peers. However, when questioned about children with specific difficulties, most of those who came within the sphere of their own experience at school were perceived as being able to cope within a mainstream setting. This would indicate that, given changes of attitude in the outside world towards disabled people, children may be more accommodating in their own perceptions. Nonetheless, perceiving the inclusion of children with SEN as necessary for changing the attitudes of their mainstream peers begs a more fundamental question: to serve whose interests does special education primarily exist?

The significance of the body

As has been argued in Chapter 2, factors such as the primacy of the body in consumer culture and the body as a signifier of social identity impinge upon the experiences of *all* children. Waksler (1996) questions the way in which children establish their identities in their own eyes and the eyes of others, and concludes that a significant element lies in the manner in which one imagines one appears to the outside world, or the concept of the 'looking-glass self' (Cooley, 1909[1962]). If children are limited in their ability to express themselves in terms of their presentation of self (Goffman, 1959[1969]), this can have implications for their self-esteem and sense of self. According to Waksler, 'not 'blending in' may have significant, even dire, consequences for children' (1996:38). This lack of control presents much more significant consequences for those children with SEN, whose bodies may refuse to conform, either in appearance or behaviour, with society's current stringent norms of bodily perfection.

As I have described in Chapter 3, my involvement with the children during fieldwork (and the resulting depression) demonstrated to me the ways in which children can show cruelty towards each other. Although they used their bodies to perform tricks and jokes, and to engender amusement amongst their peers, nonetheless they also highlighted bodily difference in order to wound and taunt. *All* children were subject to these onslaughts which focused upon the body, but of necessity, those whose bodies either appeared or behaved differently were much more susceptible. Andrew Walker (Guardian, 4.1.99) describes the agony of being 'different' (especially at school) but not understanding why:

> *'I knew that I was different, in some indefinable way, even as a small child. My parents regarded me as a naughty boy ... At six I started to see a child psychiatrist. I never fitted in at school. I felt totally isolated and had no desire to make friends or be part of a gang. I didn't know how to interact or to communicate and I felt deeply ashamed. I was also academically bright, which stirred up much name-calling and bullying from my peers. At secondary school, it was an extraordinarily violent time, both physically and mentally'.*

After suffering 35 years of self-loathing, attempted suicide and broken relationships, Walker finally discovered, via a BBC TV documentary, that he was autistic: 'I was 35 and, for the first time, felt that I knew what, why and who I was. The diagnosis was life-changing. It was liberating to know that I shared a lifestyle with other autistic people'.

However, as children, even those who are aware of their 'difference' often lack comprehension of the measures needed to alleviate its effect. Nick Hornby, in his novel *About A Boy*, describes succinctly his (possibly autistic) hero's awareness of his own 'weirdness', and how the possession of this oddness is particularly highlighted in the structural space of the school:

> 'What was there to laugh at? Not much, really, unless you were the kind of person who was on permanent lookout for something to laugh at. Unfortunately, that was exactly the kind of persons most kids were, in his experience. They patrolled up and down school corridors like sharks, except that what they were on the lookout for wasn't flesh but the wrong trousers, or the wrong haircut, or the wrong shoes, any or all of which sent them wild with excitement. As he was usually wearing the wrong shoes or the wrong trousers, and his haircut was wrong all the time, every day of the week, he didn't have to do very much to send them demented. Marcus knew that he was weird'.
>
> (1998:21)

Hornby describes exactly the sometimes predatory nature of children in determining 'differentness', and the way this is identified through aspects of the body. This was evidenced during the fieldwork. However, in many instances, the possession or otherwise of SEN made relatively little difference to children's classroom and playground experiences. Those such as Liam, who had not been designated as having SEN, still suffered agonies at the hands of their classmates, whilst others, who had quite significant physical difficulties (such as Clive), nevertheless were popular and accepted by their peers. From the observations that I made, and as a result of the conversations I had with children both with and without SEN, I would argue therefore that the most important factor in the equation was the sociability of particular children and their possession (or otherwise) of social skills. Despite the importance of bodily appearance and behaviour to children's social relations, those children with SEN who *could* develop strategies, based on social skills such as empathy and humour, were able to interact with peers and gain acceptance. However, other children (for instance, those with SEN on the autistic spectrum), who were unable to understand and communicate with others through the medium of the body, were largely excluded, not only by teaching staff but also by their classmates. The importance, for example, of 'the look' (see Chapter 5), eye contact and non-verbal communication in general, were beyond the scope of their understanding, as were the tricks and jokes around the body in which their peers indulged.

Attempts at 'normalising' individuals with learning disabilities often focus upon 'teaching' them social skills. Burton, Kagan and Clements claim that skilled social behaviour is made up of many different component parts:

> 'Awareness of self and of others contributes to our effective social behaviour in a number of different ways. Our self-system is made up of our understanding of internal events (bodily sensations, moods, thoughts, values, attitudes, beliefs and emotions); knowledge about external events (how we behave, what we say, where we go, etc.); personal and social identities (the roles we play, the groups to which we belong, the characteristics we like about ourselves, etc.); and the extent to which we have any sense of agency or control over the things that happen to us'.
>
> (1995:60)

According to Burton, Kagan and Clements, children learn to recognise and label bodily sensations within a particular social context, but there is scope for these to be labelled inaccurately. Attitudes to the self and others are formed by comparison with others, and contribute to levels of self-esteem. Although aware of *what* we say, we may be less aware of the non-verbal or body-language messages we convey, or of the impression that others gain from the way we behave. Furthermore, our sense of identity is formed from the messages we receive about ourselves from others about the kind of person we are, and social identity arises from the groups to which we belong (or from which we are excluded). More importantly, our sense of self is influenced by the amount of control we feel we possess over our situation. Burton, Kagan and Clements claim that it is possible for people with learning difficulties to be taught social skills through exercises which relate to the above factors. However, they express reservations about the feasibility of achieving success with certain groups of people, one of which is individuals with autistic tendencies. who lack the innate understanding of how to empathise with others and form social relationships.

CONCLUSION

Is it possible to satisfactorily answer the questions posed at the beginning of this thesis?

i) Why is the different/disabled body/identity culturally devalued?

ii) How do children come to an understanding of this devaluation?

iii) What part does the education process play in this understanding of the need to possess a 'normal' body?

iv) To what extent are children influenced by the emphasis on the 'normal'/perfect body in Western culture?

v) How do those children whose bodies, either in appearance or behaviour, do not conform to certain cultural norms, experience life in the school setting?

With regard to the cultural devaluation of the 'different' or disabled body, this is entrenched within society and begins in childhood. As outlined in Chapter 2, children receive messages that the non-standard body is somehow not socially or culturally acceptable and in Chapters 5 and 6, children in the study demonstrated this cultural devaluation of the 'different'/disabled body on a daily basis, by highlighting bodily differences in their peers and then using these as ammunition with which to taunt and tease.

In Chapter 2 I show how children come to an understanding of this cultural devaluation. During the socialisation process, children are bombarded with negative images of the 'different'/disabled body. Their literary heritage often perpetuates the myth of beauty and ugliness as not only being based on physical but also moral attributes. Some characters in fairy tales and children's stories are seen to be not only ugly but also evil, and disability is often equated with malevolence. It was also evident during the discussion of the photographs (see Chapter 6) that children assessed a child's physical characteristics to form judgements about their potential behaviour and suitability as friends.

However, the role that the education system plays in the formation of these perceptions is, as I have shown throughout this thesis, complex and often contradictory. As I argued in Chapter 2, childhood, and hence children's experiences of childhood, are heavily mediated and circumscribed in the wider society by the body. Child/adult relations are built upon ideas of the self/other, discipline/control, maturity/immaturity and the development of the child is heralded through the maturation of the body. These ideas were explored in Chapter 4, through a demonstration of the ways in which children were ordered and disciplined through the use of bodily control. The need to possess a 'normal' body is highlighted throughout the special education system, whereby children's bodies are examined, assessed and labelled in order to determine whether they are 'in need of' a form of 'special' education which is different to that of their peers.

During these processes, children *are* also influenced by an increasing emphasis on the 'normal'/perfect body in Western 'consumer' culture. As I argued in Chapter 2, there is considerable pressure to look good, and children are not immune from this physical expectation that abounds in the wider society. Media and fashion images that promote ideals of slenderness and physical perfection are influencing children from a progressively younger age, and these were played out during the study in children's self-perceptions and notions about their bodies. As I demonstrated in Chapter 5, pupils perceived to be too fat were deemed to be figures of fun as well as attracting moral judgements around self-presentation and self-discipline. Girls, especially, subscribed to ideals of slimness promoted through fashion and media images.

These cultural norms and expectations of bodily perfection, of necessity, impinge upon the school experiences of those children whose bodies, either in appearance or behaviour, deviate from the norm. As I have argued throughout this thesis, the bodies of *all* children in the school setting are subjected to processes of control which attempt to 'civilise' the 'savage' child. However, as I have shown in Chapters 5 and 6, this *implicit* regulation of childhood through the body is not *explicitly* recognised and accounted for in educational policy. As a result, those children whose bodies are different or fail to fit neatly into the system - i.e. are not 'standard' - are disadvantaged in relation to the other pupils. Because of their 'disordered' or 'disorderly' bodies, it is difficult to 'fit' children with SEN into the ordered environment of the school setting. Obvious difficulties, such as a lack of adequate funding and political will, simply add to their experiences. However, I would argue, of most fundamental importance is the centrality of the body to both child-adult and child-child relations in the context of the wider society and the school in general. This lies at the root of their experiences.

However, as has been argued throughout this thesis, children are not passive recipients of adult control, but are competent social actors in their own right. Children in the study, both those with and those without SEN, demonstrated daily their potential for agency. They fought back against efforts to control them in the structural arena of the school and, just as teachers attempted to enforce discipline through the medium of the body, it was their bodies that children drew upon as a force for resistance. It was also the body that was used as a signifier of the social self, as a symbolic resource with which to relay jokes and play out tricks on their peers, to evidence changes in status, and to point up aspects of the 'not-normal' body as possessed by the 'not-proper' child. Nonetheless, many of these 'not-proper' children also demonstrated their agency, through the medium of well-developed social skills, to fit their 'disordered' bodies into the social space of the child. Those children with 'disorderly' bodies, however, were not so fortunate. Lacking such social skills, they were often isolated by teachers and classmates alike.

It was these particular children whose plight most affected my fieldwork experience. Although often aware of their 'differentness', they were usually nonetheless unaware of the measures needed to alleviate the treatment they suffered at the hands of their peers. As a result, and in common with the individuals above, their experiences at school were characterised by a sense of isolation and exclusion. This all contributed towards my own ambivalence at the end of the fieldwork. Always a firm believer in the ethos of inclusion, I began to consider that, in the conditions operating in society in general and schools in particular, and despite claims to the contrary (e.g. Alderson and Goodey, 1998), we might be doing a disservice to these children by placing them in mainstream schools. Until social attitudes begin to change, and until teachers gain a better understanding of their particular difficulties, children with conditions related to the autistic spectrum disorder might fare better in separate provision in the care of well-trained professionals.

This is not to say that all children with SEN do not cope well in inclusive provision. Those such as Beth and Clive, although their experiences were mediated through their possession of 'disordered' bodies, nonetheless fitted into the world of the school and their classmates. As a result of a follow-up study, I was able to speak to Clive as he had just received his (excellent) GCSE results. Whilst acknowledging the difficulties he had experienced during the previous five years, he nonetheless claimed that it had all been 'worth it' to attend a mainstream school. His resilience and determination will no doubt stand him in good stead for his future life, as he encounters possible discrimination and exclusion within our society.

This experience, then, setting out as it did from a personal encounter with impairment, and the ensuing questions this raised, has led me on a journey of discovery. Although not all my questions have been answered satisfactorily, nonetheless I have travelled, together with the children in this study, some way towards an understanding of cultural attitudes toward disability and the role of the education system in determining these. I have nothing but admiration for all those children labelled as 'special' who nonetheless struggle on a daily basis to achieve equality and some kind of agency within the current educational structure. This thesis is their story.

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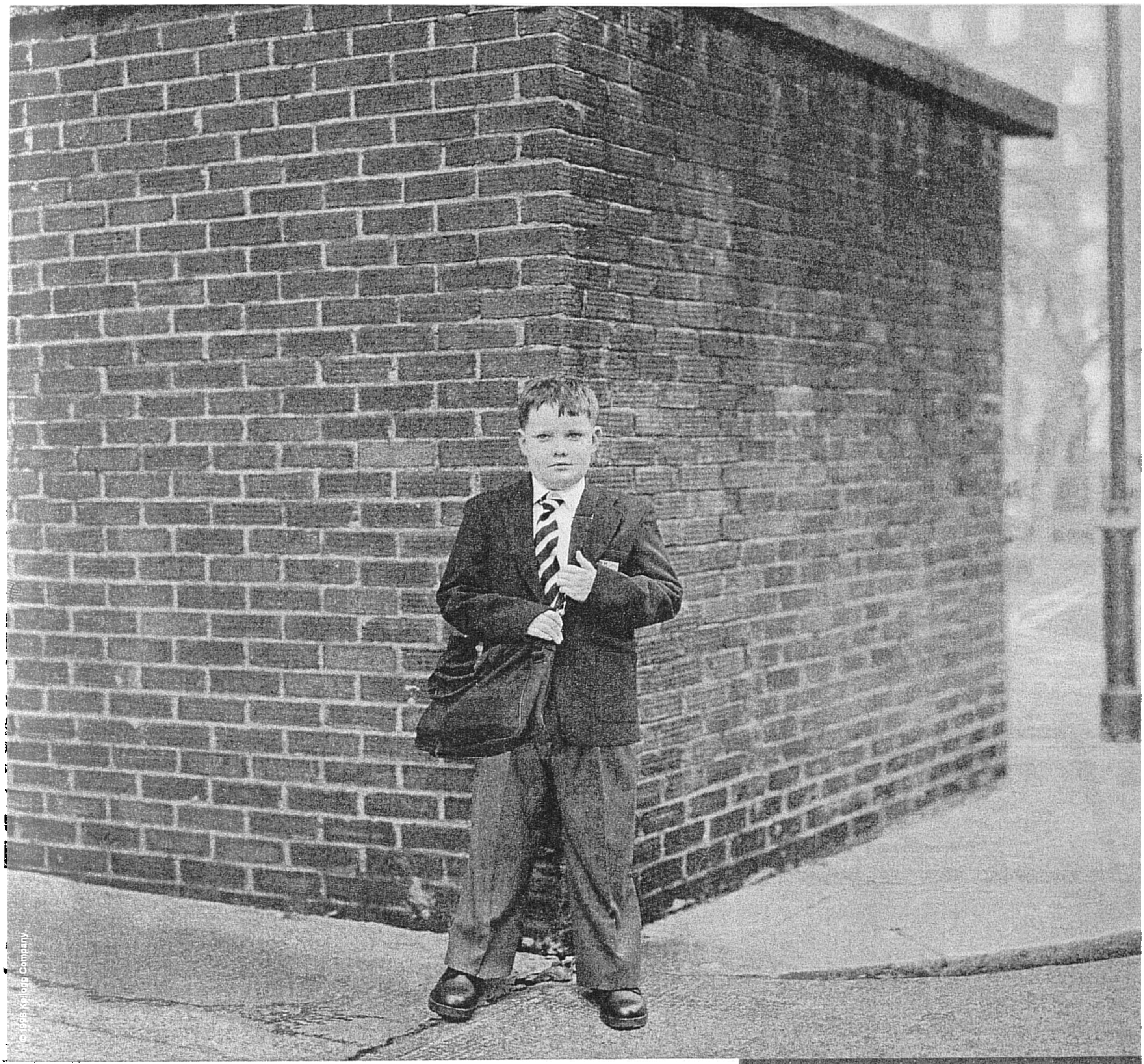
Appendix 1

The Kelloggs Advertisement



"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names could really hurt me."

One of the most common causes of bullying in school is being fat. And there are many deeply hurtful names associated with it.

Unfortunately, adult obesity levels have doubled in Britain over the past 15 years. And they are rising at a particularly worrying rate amongst children.

Of course, a cereal breakfast like Kellogg's can't solve complex weight problems, but in its own small way it can really help. As from today, we are taking steps to ensure that every breakfast cereal we produce is at least 90% fat-free. Compare that with many snacks that kids who skip breakfast are prone to eat which could contain as much as 30% fat. What's more, children (and adults) are able to burn off energy from carbohydrate-rich foods like Kellogg's more efficiently than energy from high-fat foods. For more advice call Kellogg's on 0800 626 066.

Kellogg's®

Serving The Nation's Health

"Bella" 7/4/98

Appendix 2

Images shown to the children

IMAGE 1

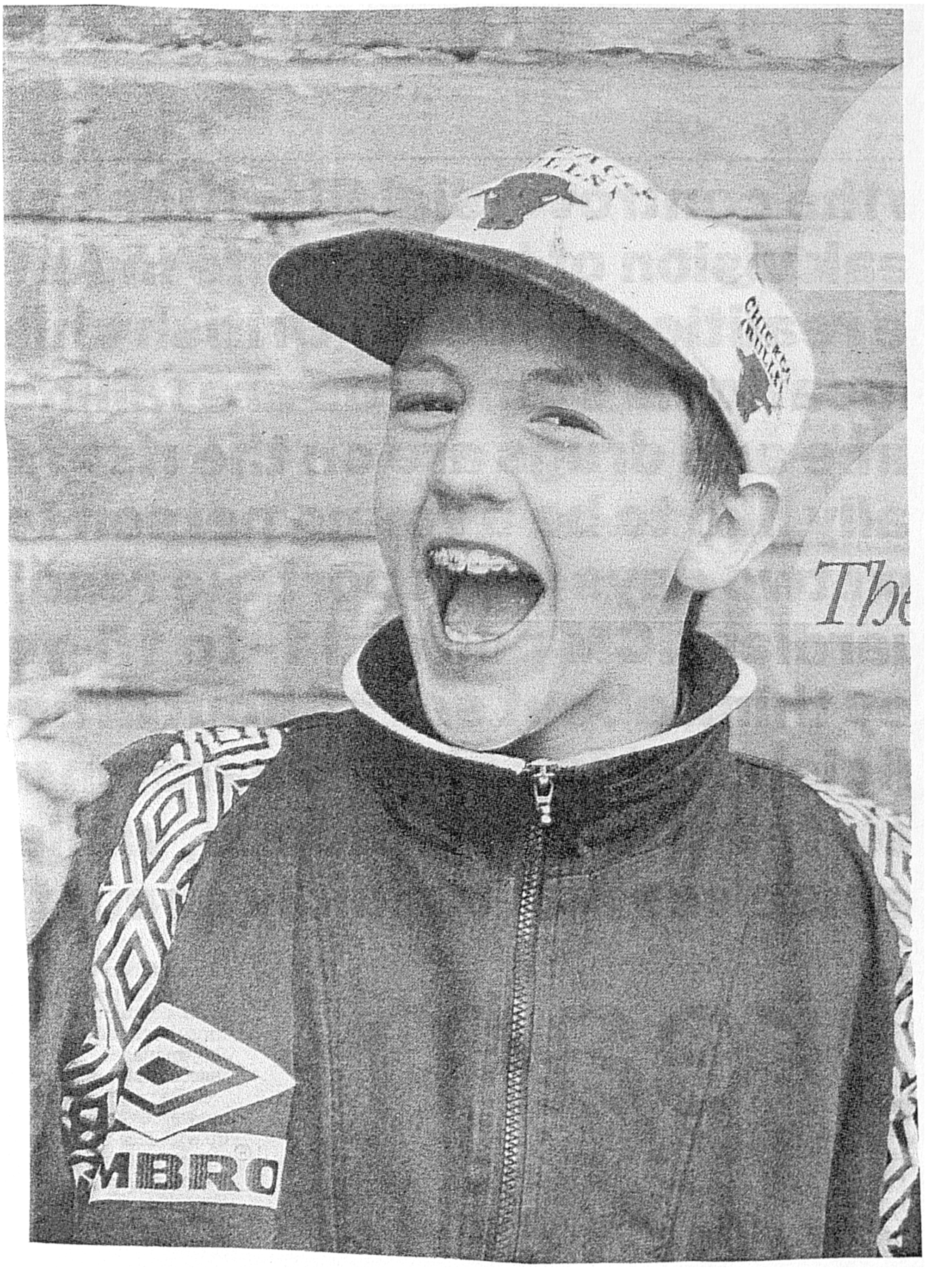


IMAGE 2

IMAGE 3

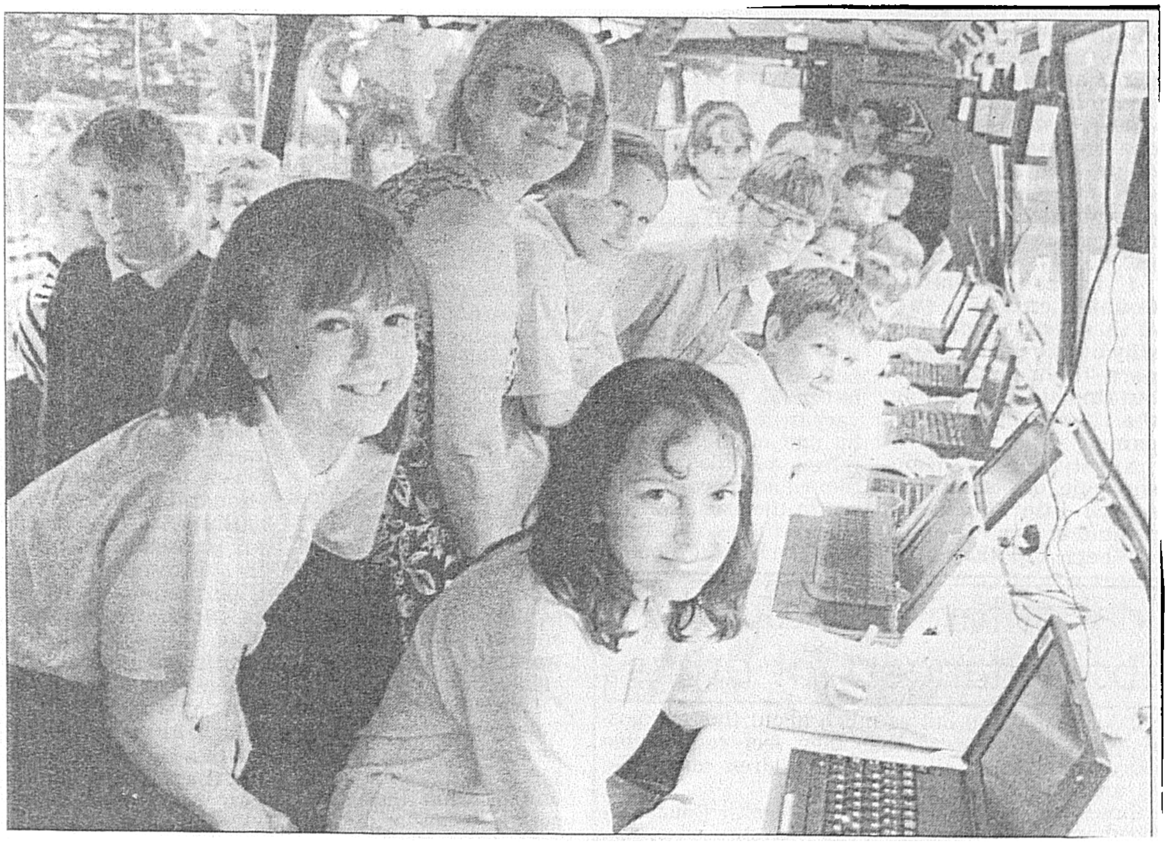


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IMAGE 4

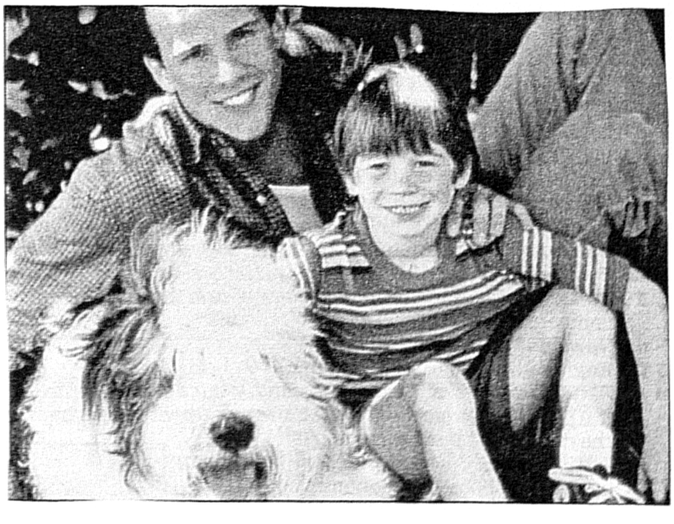

IMAGE 5

IMAGE 6

IMAGE 7

IMAGE 8

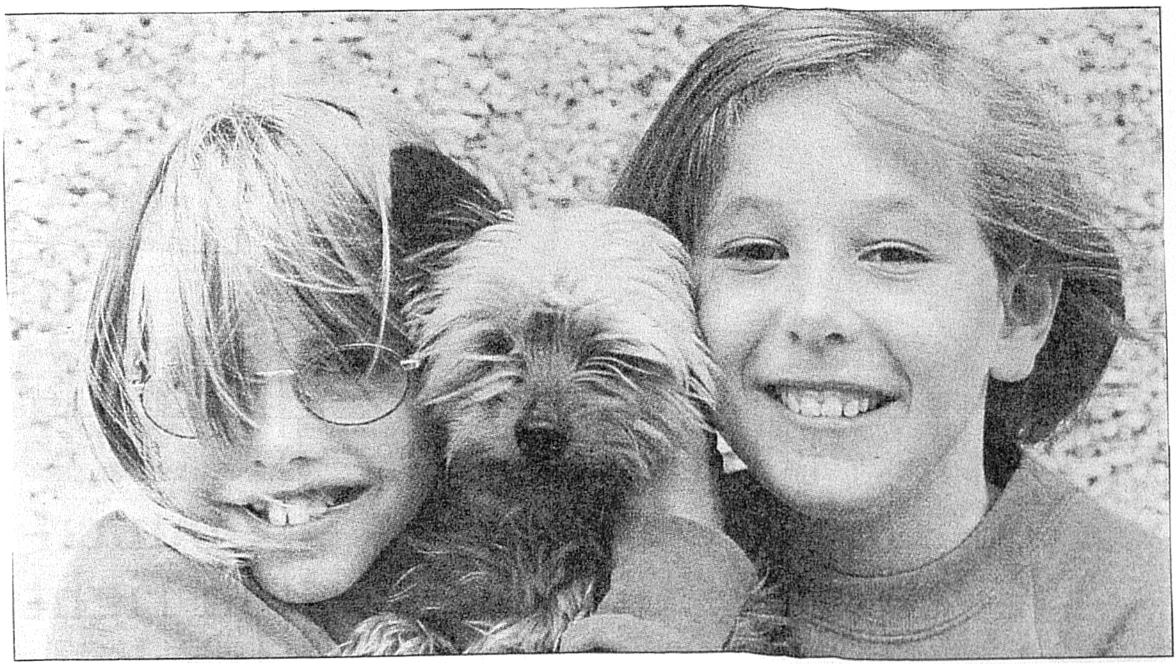

IMAGE 9

↑

IMAGE 10

IMAGE 11

↗

IMAGE 12

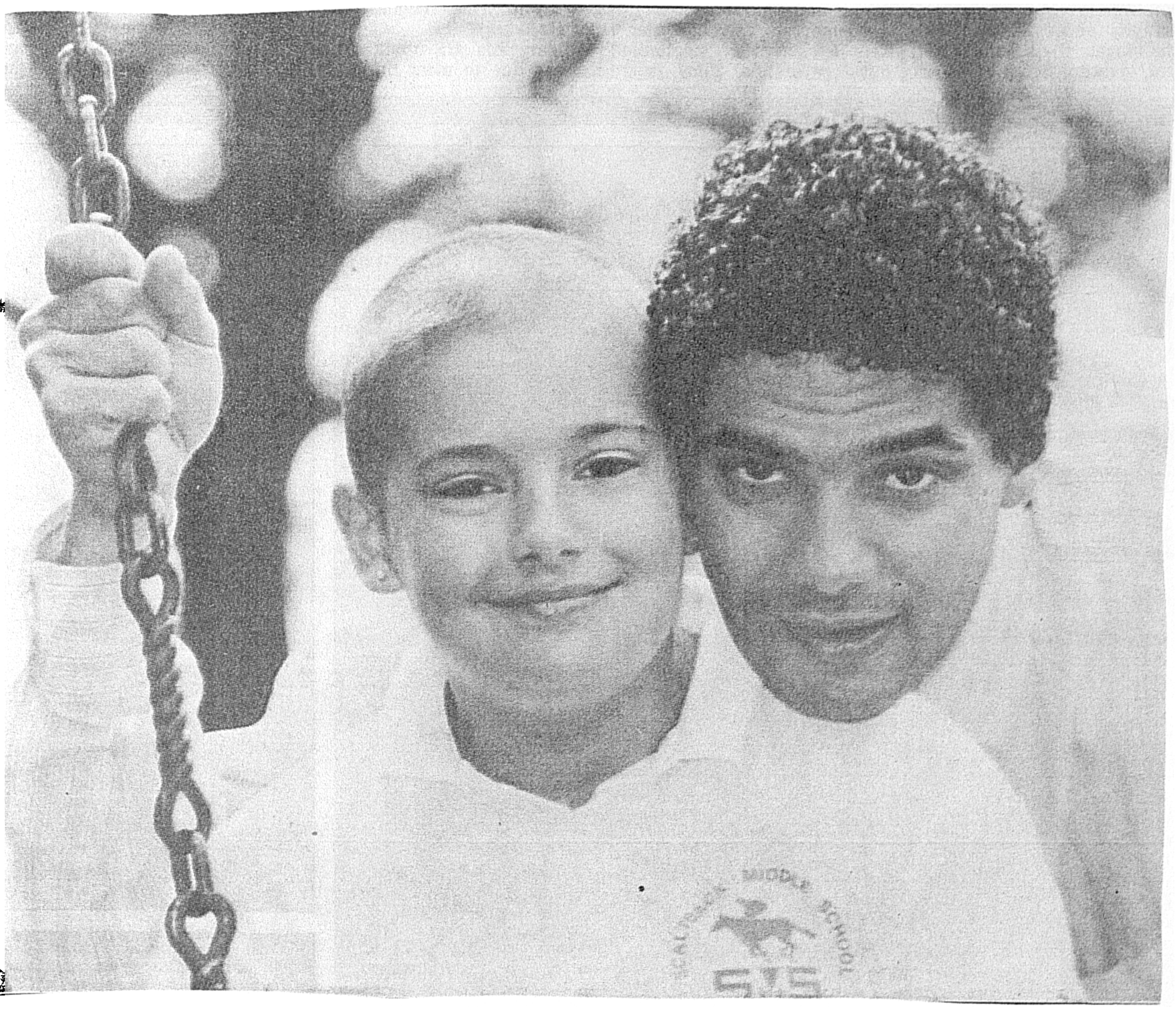

IMAGE 13

IMAGE 14

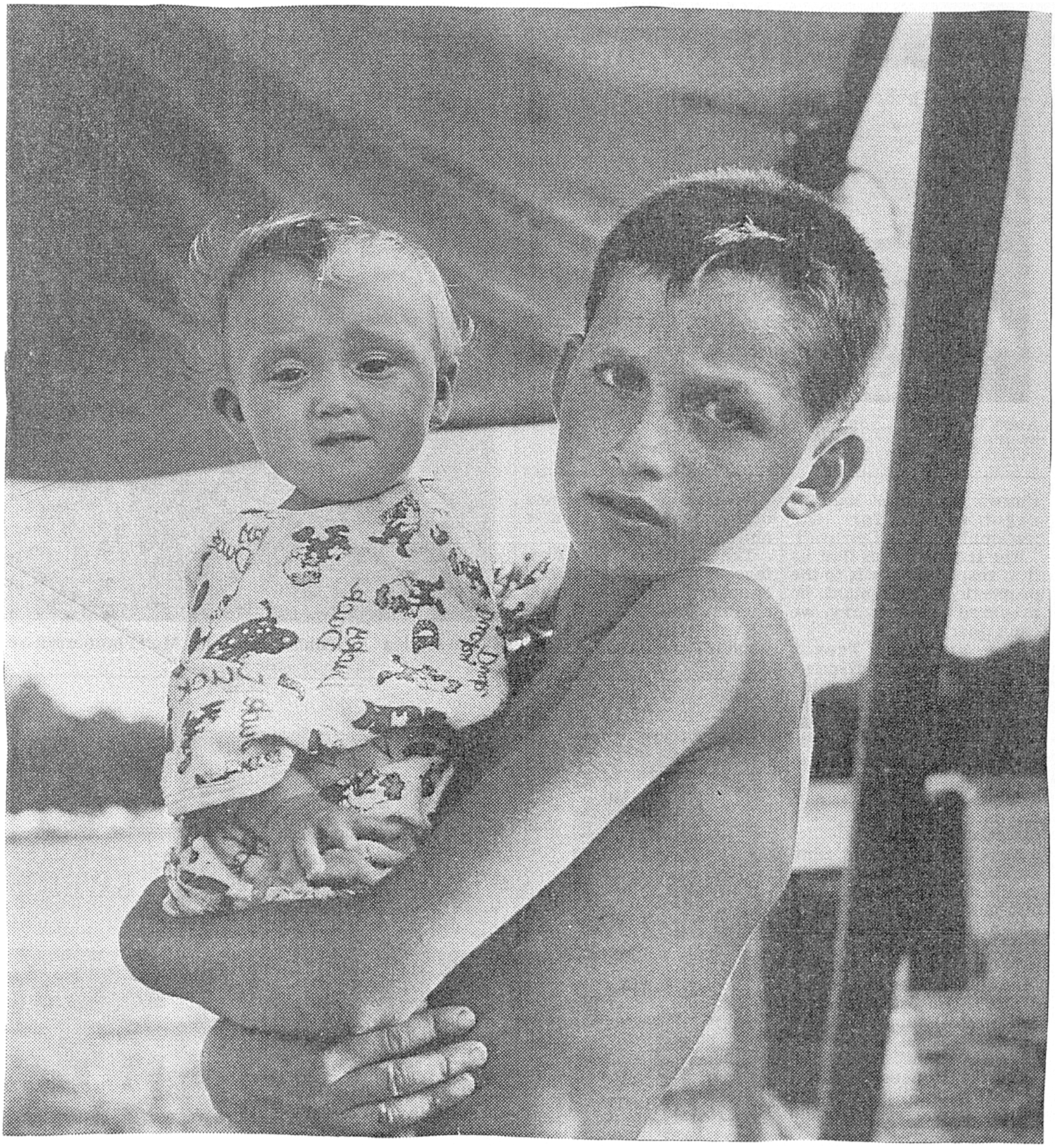

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IMAGE 15

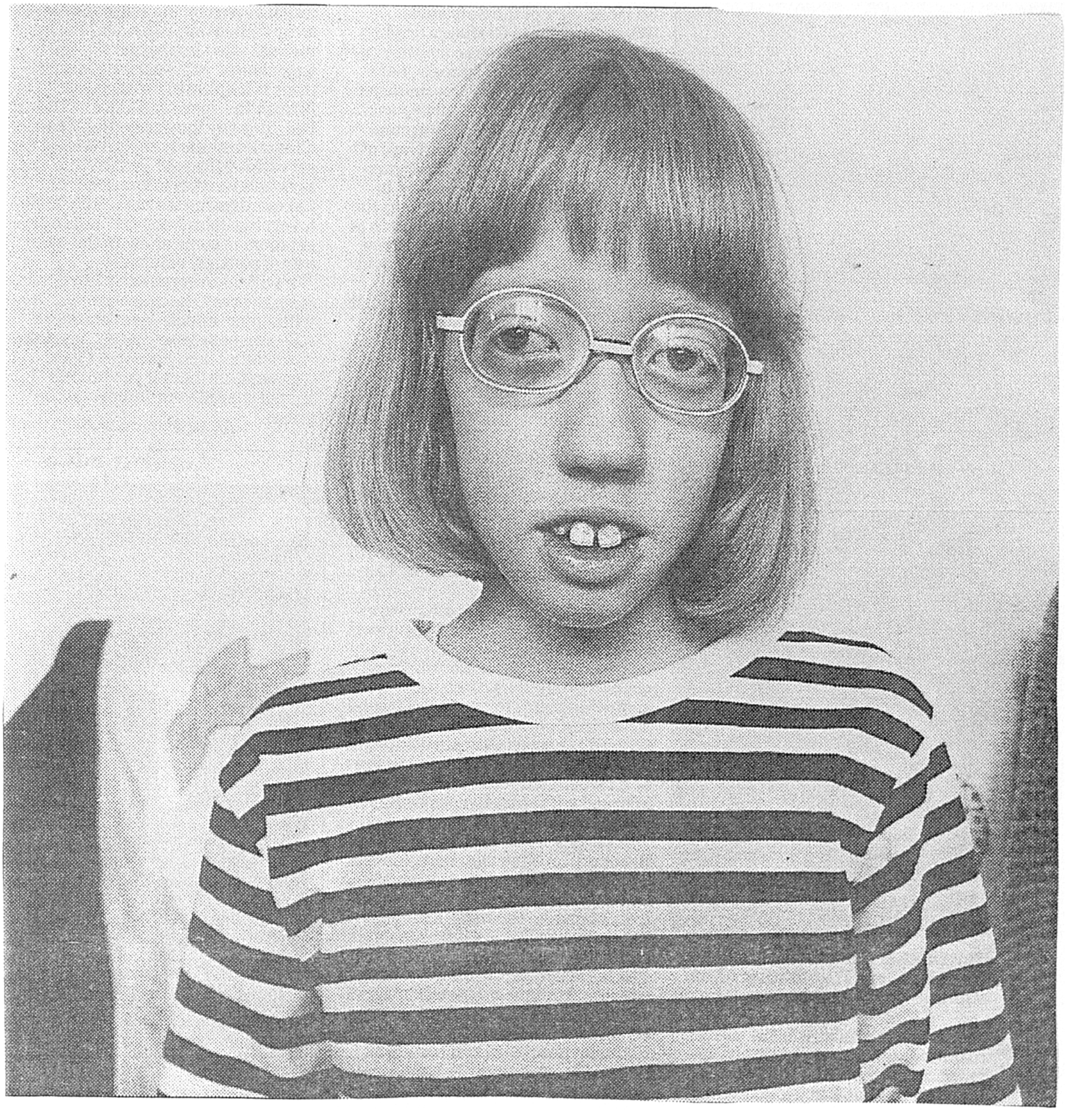

IMAGE 16

IMAGE 17

↑

IMAGE 18

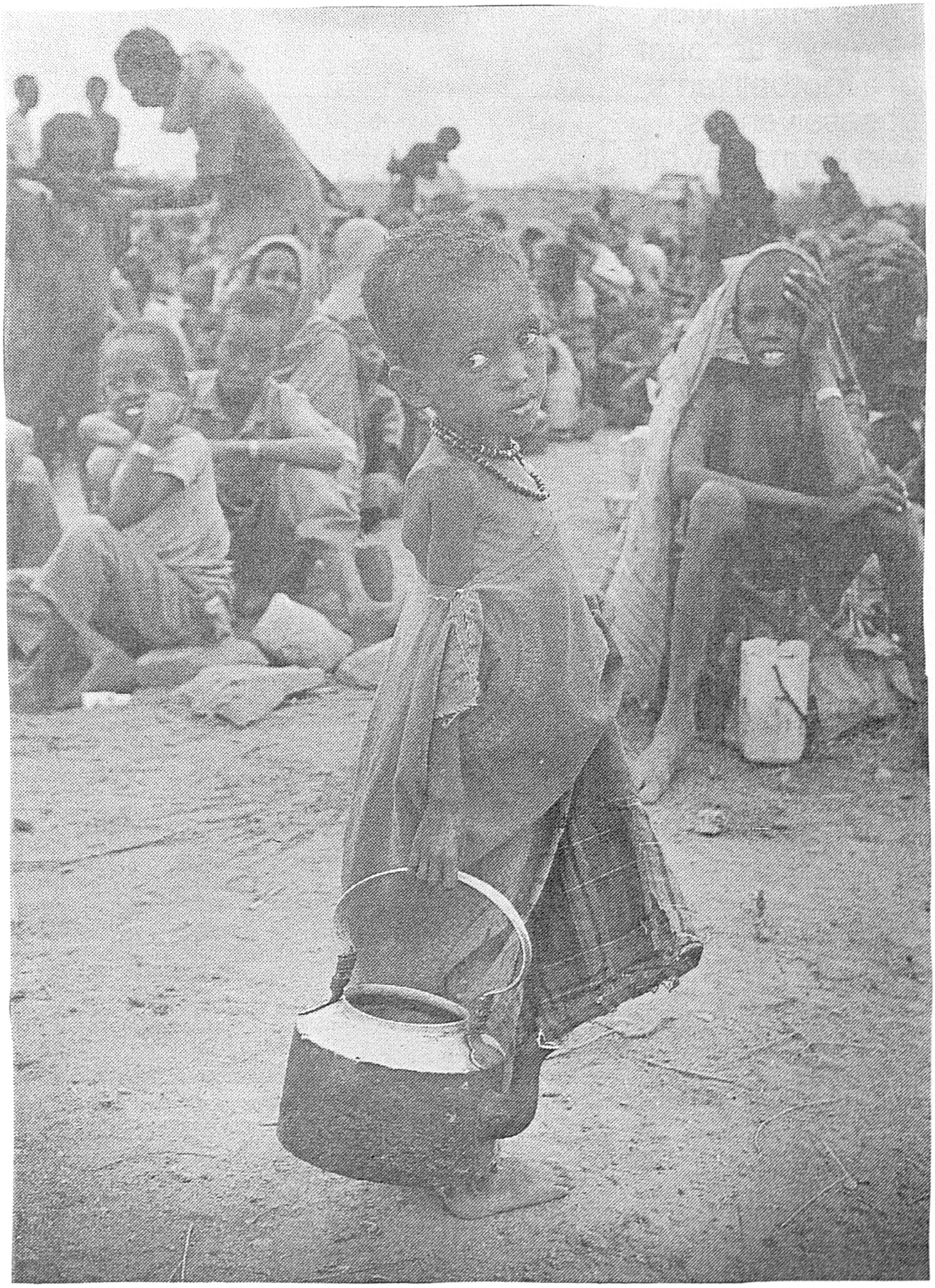

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IMAGE 19

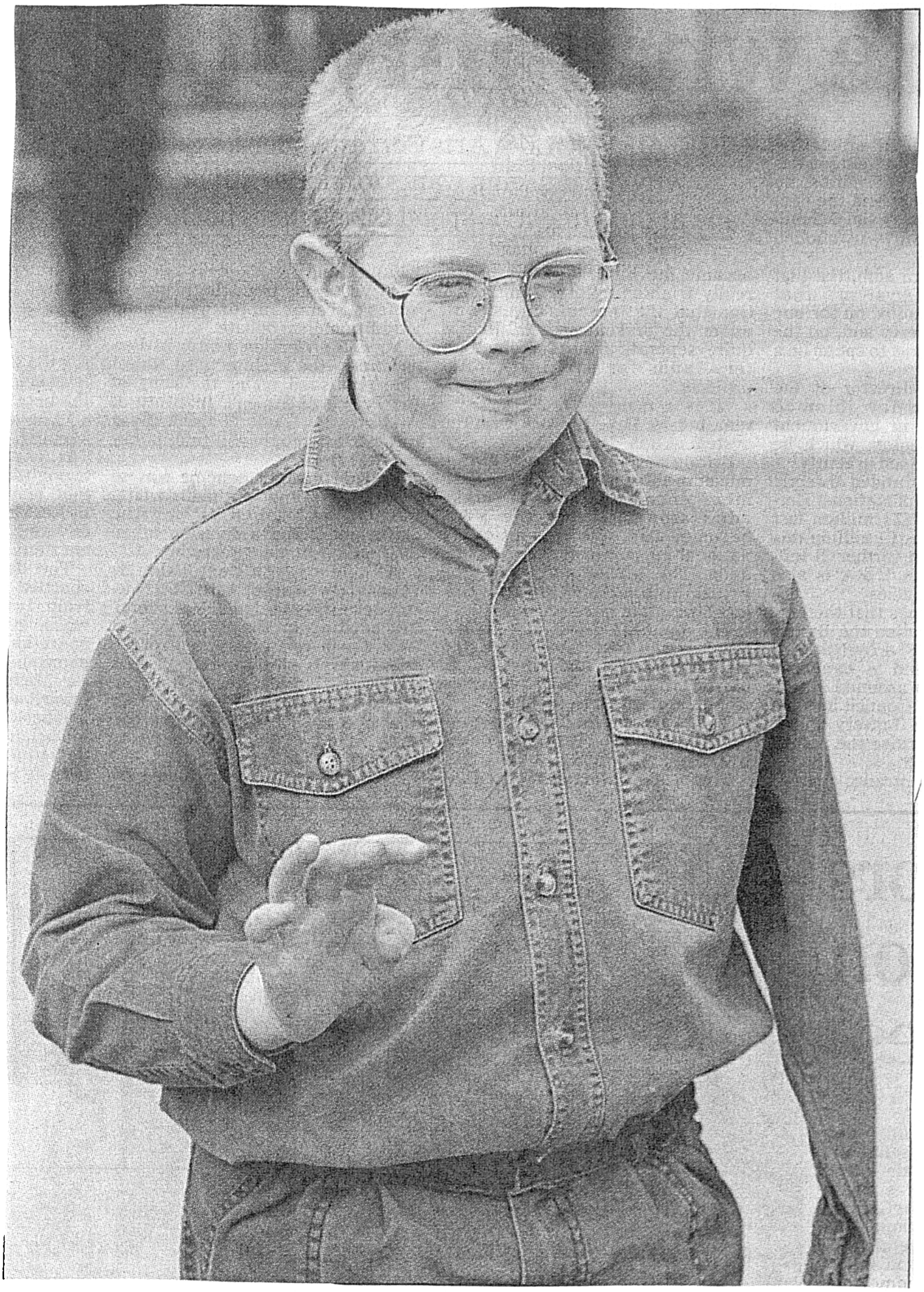

IMAGE 20

IMAGE 21

IMAGE 22

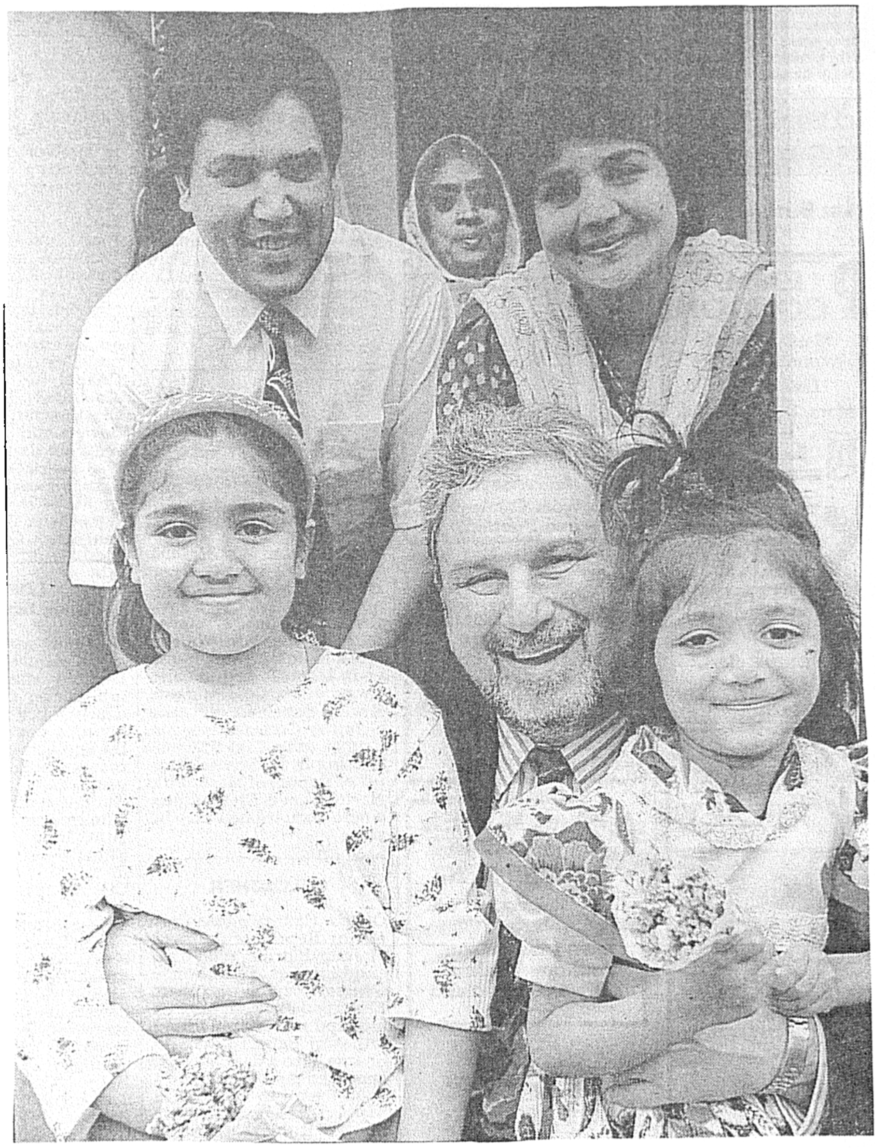

IMAGE 23

IMAGE 24

↑

IMAGE 25

↑

IMAGE 26

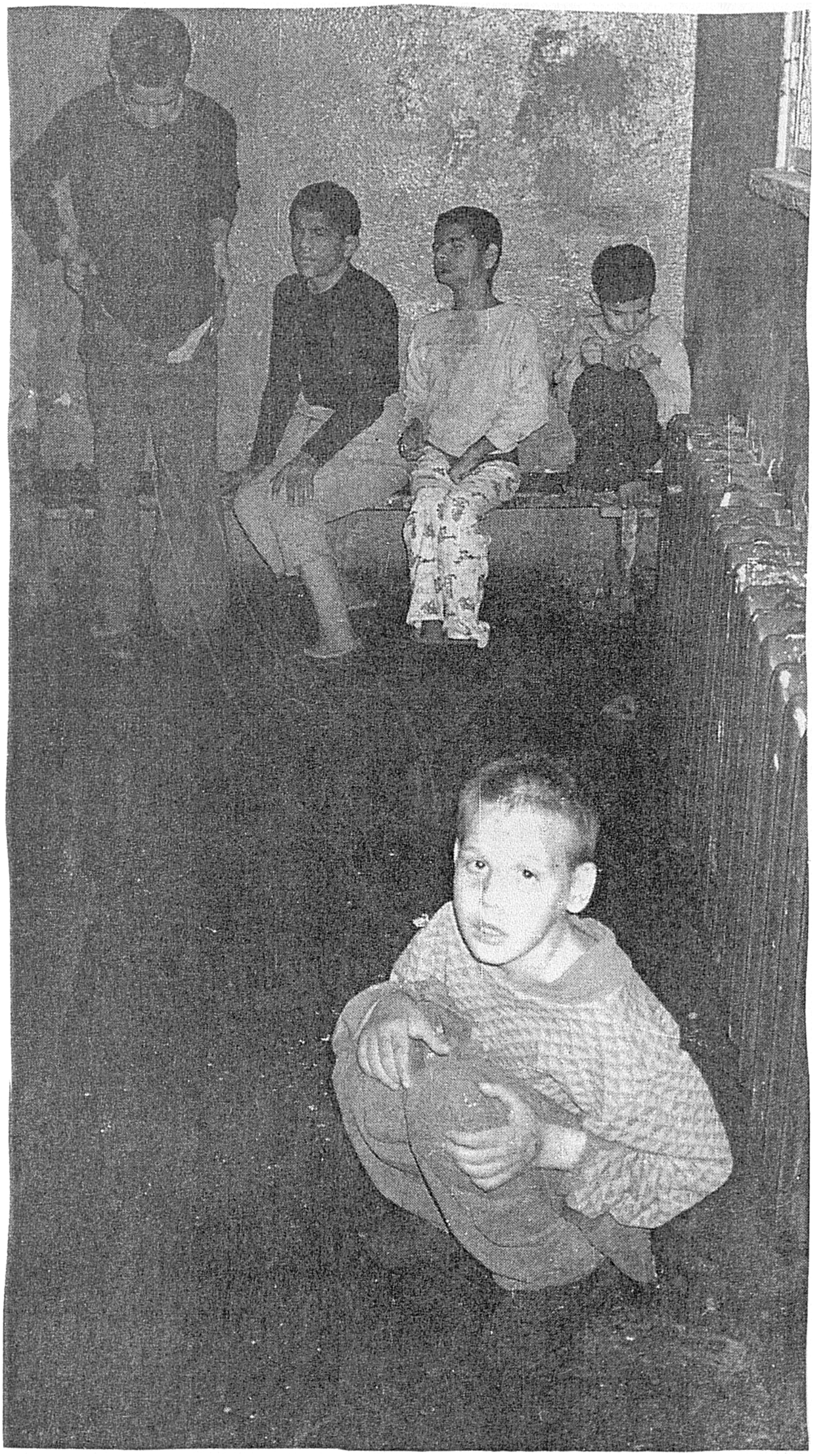

IMAGE 27

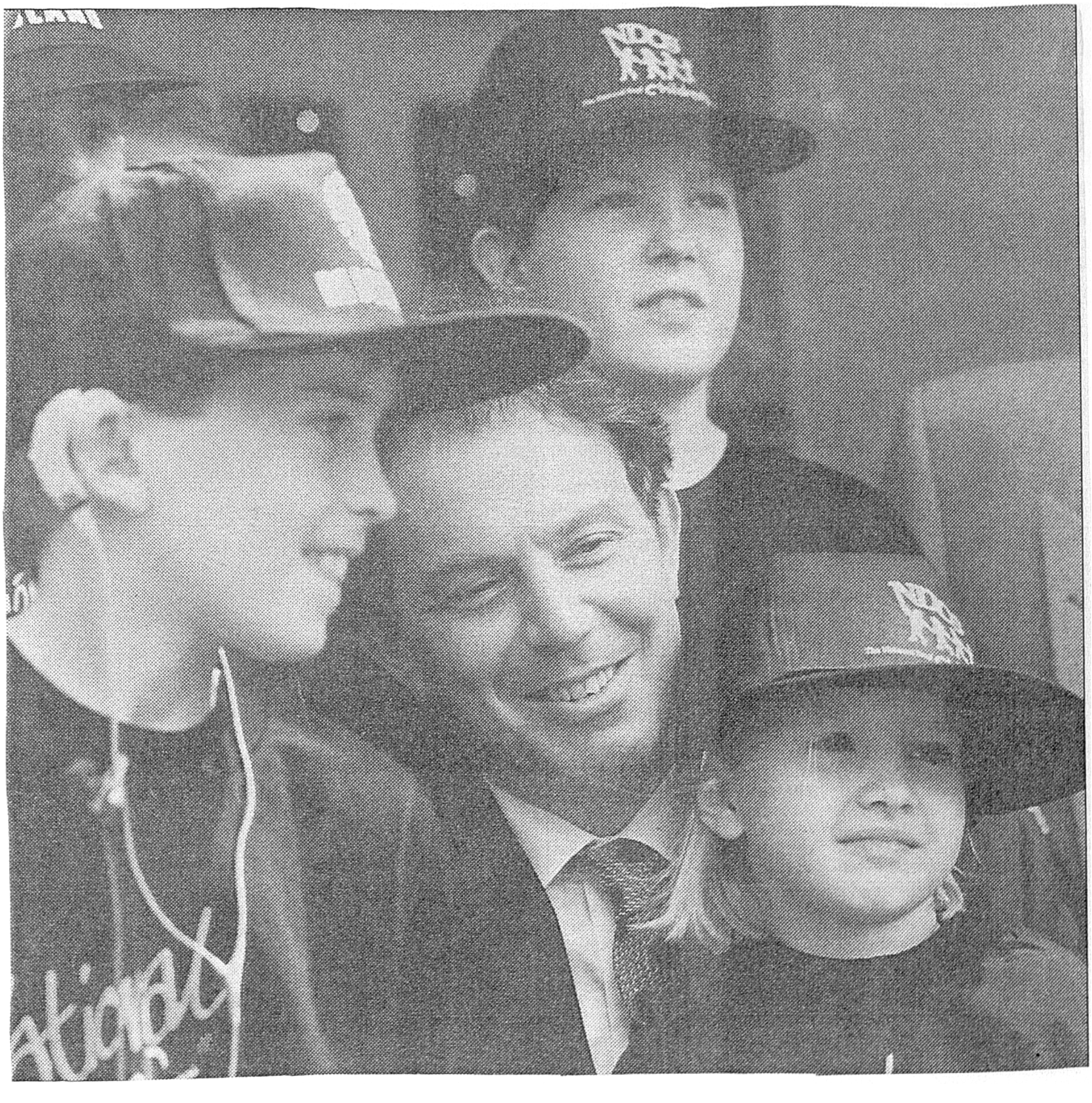

IMAGE 28

IMAGE 29

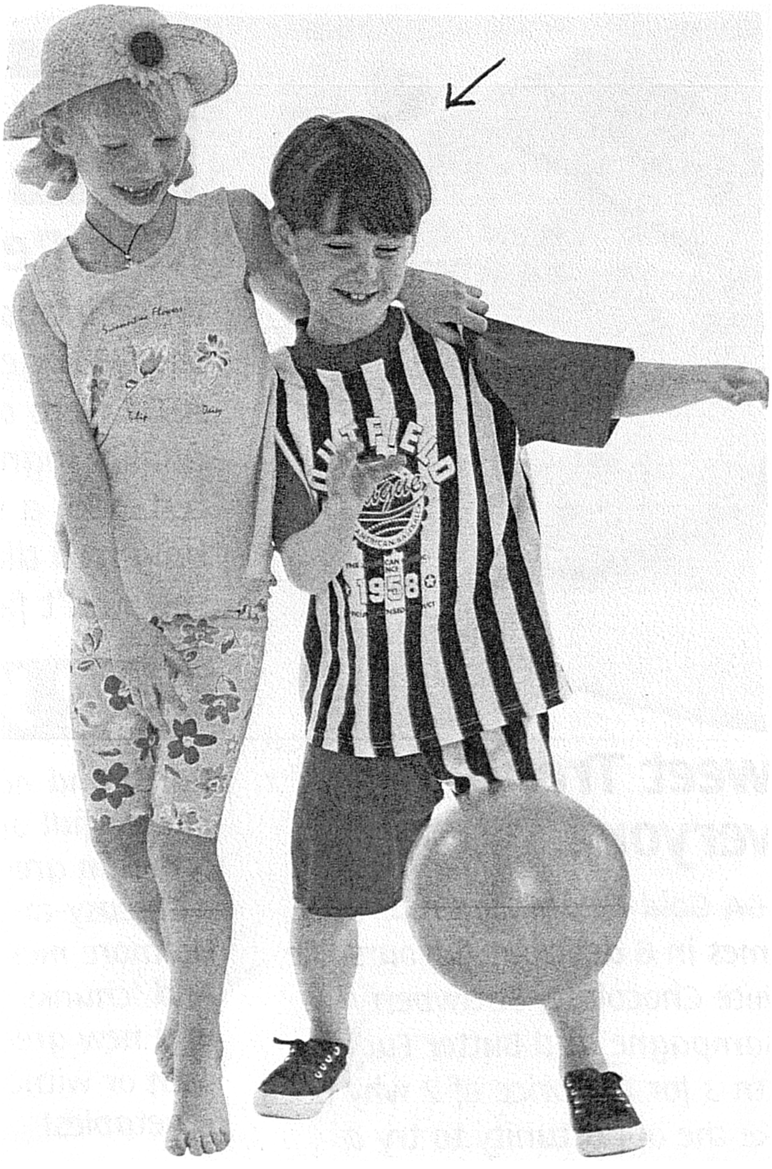

IMAGE 30

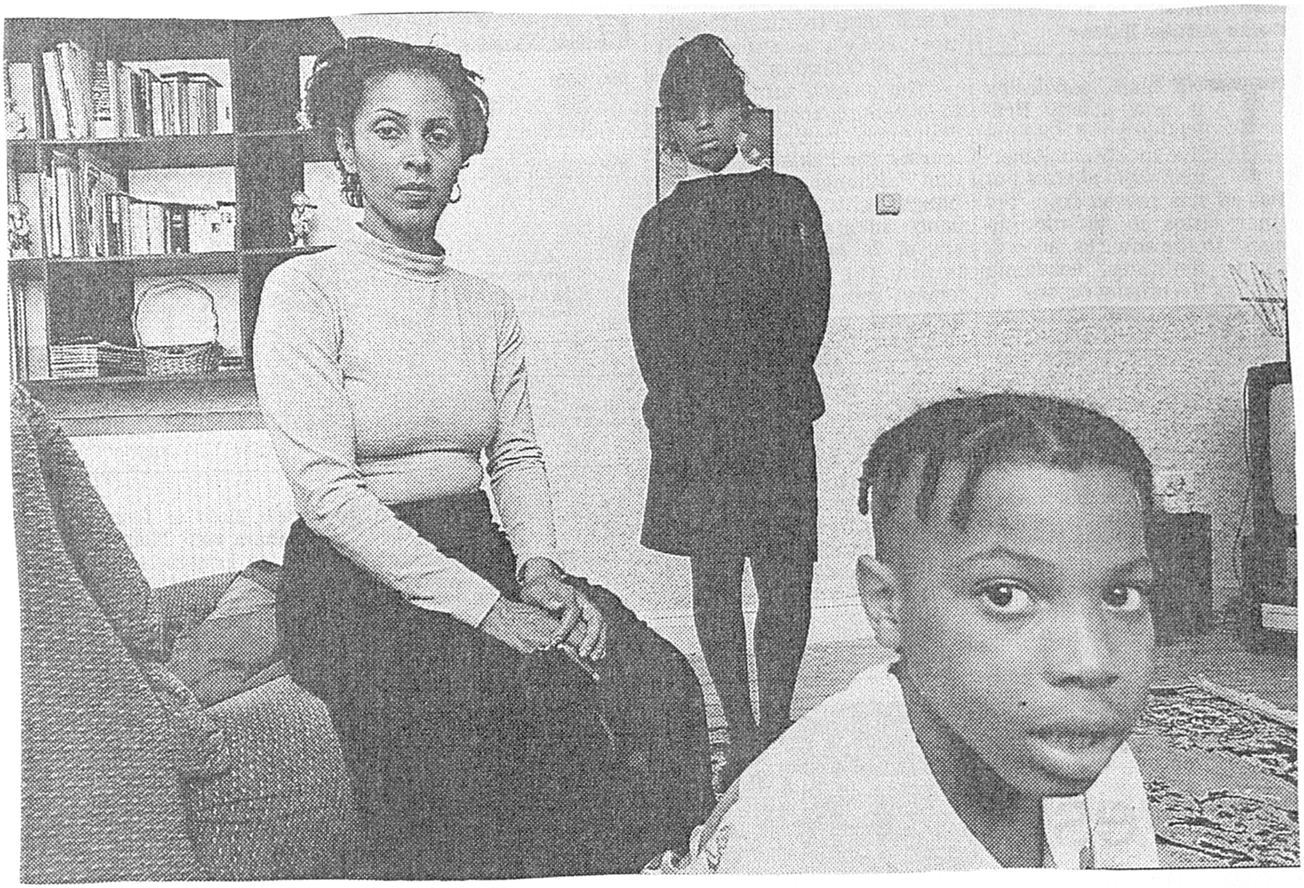

IMAGE 31