

Abstract

This focused ethnography considers children's understandings and experiences of the body, and more specifically asks the question, 'how do children come to know about the body?'. The study draws heavily upon the methodological ideas of the social studies of childhood, particularly the work of James (1993, 2013), to explore this question with nine and ten year old participants in two primary schools located in a northern English city. Findings highlight the complex interplay between structure and agency in understanding how children come to know about the body. Furthermore, children's social and cultural locatedness, it is shown, shapes the ways in which they come to know about the body. Yet, the work of individual children in making sense of the body according to their particular experience is also highlighted. Indeed, it is through children's experiential knowledge of the body that they come to challenge adult knowledge of, and control over, their bodies in school. Wider implications of the findings of this project include a more in-depth understanding of how children learn, which challenges the traditional notion that knowledge is passed down in a linear succession from adults to children. This, it is argued, has particular consequences in relation to understandings of children's engagement with public health policy and formal learning about the body in school.



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

**Embodied Childhoods,
an ethnographic study of how children come to know about the body**

By:

Alice Palmer

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sheffield
Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health
School of Nursing and Midwifery

August 2015

Table of Contents

The table of contents is empty because you aren't using the paragraph styles set to appear in it.

Introduction

Building upon the social studies of childhood, particularly the work of James (1993, 2013), this project explores the question of how children come to know about the body. The conceptualisation of children as individual agents whose lives are shaped by structural forces is integral to the social studies of childhood (James and Prout, 1997). This project offers a detailed account of precisely *how* individual children make sense of the body within the particular structural limitations which frame their experiences. Children, this thesis demonstrates, are not the passive vessels of adult knowledge which traditional constructions of the child - the likes of which still linger in developmentalist discussions of childhood - would have us believe. In contrast, children are shown to be active social agents capable of making sense of the body according to their particular embodied standpoints and individual experiences. Indeed, one aim of this thesis is to express the importance of an embodied approach for making sense of children's understandings and experiences of the body. Children, as a social group, share a unique experience of a period of rapid physical growth. Thus, alongside the central question of how children come to know about the body, consideration of the ways in which children's *embodied standpoints* impact upon their understandings of the body also guides this project. Two further issues are also explored. These are the ways that social constructions of childhood impact upon children's everyday experiences of the body, and the extent to which children's experiences and understandings of the body are shaped by the structural factors of their lives.

This thesis offers an in-depth methodological account of research *with* children. Working within the guidelines for research within the social studies of childhood (Christensen and James, 2008) this project acts as an example to demonstrate the advantages, and potential pitfalls, involved in positioning children as social agents and attempting to encourage them to guide the direction of the research through flexible, child-oriented methods. Chapters three and four offer an account of the methodological reasoning behind the use of each method, and discussion of the effectiveness of each method that was employed. In some cases, recommendations about how methods might have been employed more effectively are also made. Therefore, this project also offers further opportunity for the ongoing development and refinement of social research techniques with children.

Chapters six, seven and eight examine the findings of this project. The Changing Body considers children's understandings of bodily change over time. The Experiential Body examines, in detail, the ways that children come to know about the body. The Disciplined Body explores the ways that children use their bodies to negotiate school rules via the employment of bodily strategies. Across these three chapters runs the theme of sociological debate about structure and agency. More specifically, chapters six, seven and eight highlight the complex interplay between structure and agency in relation to how children come to know about the body. Children are explicitly positioned, within this project, as competent social actors, and it is posited that the diversity between children's varying competences is no different from that found between individual adults. However, this project also demonstrates the significance of structural aspects of children's lives in shaping their understandings of the body. Social class, gender and children's religio-cultural backgrounds are identified as aspects of difference which lead to diverse understandings of the body between different groups of children both between, and within, the two schools. However, children are not found to be passive to the structural factors which shape their lives. Instead, individual children are found to challenge and actively reinforce or maintain cultural understandings of the body and treat the views of adults around them in a similar fashion. Indeed, the active construction of knowledge about the body is understood here as part of children's peer cultures. The things which are important to children as a social group, it is found, are significant to understanding how they come to know about the body. Thus, the importance of an embodied perspective lies in understanding what is important for children, both as a social group who share the unique experience of rapid physical change, and from the standpoint of individual children.

The final chapter, titled Embodied, Experiential Knowledge in Context, considers the notion that the ways children come to know about the body are simultaneously shaped by the structural factors of their lives and the agency of individual children. The importance of an embodied approach, which considers children's individual embodied experiences, and the particular form of embodiment which characterises children as a social group, will be highlighted. This idea is considered in relation to the findings of chapter seven, The Experiential Body, which indicate that both individual experience and children's embodied standpoint are significant for understanding how children come to know about the body. Using the notion of transcendence (Connell, 1987) it will be shown that structural factors of children's lives not only shape the ways they come to know about the body, but as a result, may also quite literally shape their physical bodies. This discussion,

therefore, positions the findings of this project in a policy context, more specifically, in relation to assumptions implicit within policy aimed at children, and the political motives which shape health and education policies. However, using a personal lives approach (Smart, 2007 and James, 2013), it will be argued that individual children have the capacity to negotiate the structural frameworks of their lives in order to make sense of the body in ways which are meaningful to them. Thus, children, it will be shown, play active roles in the construction of understandings of the body within their social worlds.

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter considers the questions ‘what is a child?’, and ‘how can we understand childhood?’. Its main aim is to establish some key points about the socially constructed nature of childhood in order to create a foundation upon which to form arguments about the significance of social constructions of childhood and the child in relation to the ways that children come to know about the body. This chapter will also consider the concept of normalisation in relation to the particular power structures of a school context which characterise children’s everyday experiences. This literature review offers a detailed account of research pertaining to children’s understandings of the body. The importance of an embodied approach for the exploration of children’s understandings of the body is acknowledged, and the significance of both social and biological factors which characterise children’s lives will be highlighted in relation to understanding the ways that children’s conceptualisations of the body differ from those of adults. However, it will be argued that the overemphasis of difference between adults and children may potentially reinforce traditional understandings of children as undeserving or incapable of the kinds of rights afforded to adults. Finally, the overwhelming focus upon health and illness, evident in previous literature which considers children’s understandings of the body will be noted. Similarly, the identification of a lack of emphasis upon the precise details of *how* children come to know about the body (aside from research within the sphere of developmental psychology) has also been used to inform the focus of this study.

The Social Studies of Childhood

The notion that childhood should be understood as a social construction is central to the social studies of childhood put forward by James and Prout (1997). However, within the social studies of childhood, “children’s social relationships are seen as active in the construction of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live” (James and Prout, 1997: 8). Childhood, therefore, is not only constructed as the result of historical processes of change, but is “constructed and reconstructed both for children and by children” (James and Prout, 1997: 7). By conceptualising children in this way, the social studies of childhood aims to challenge traditional approaches to understanding childhood by engaging in and responding to the process of reconstructing childhood in society. Furthermore, children’s own experiences of the ways that structural factors shape their lives are understood as worthy of consideration.

The social studies of childhood has done much to highlight the ways that social processes - including the institutionalisation of childhood via compulsory schooling, and the powerful influence of psychological theories of Freud and Piaget in contemporary Western understandings of children - have helped to reinforce both physical and conceptual separation of adults and children. As a result, James (1993) argues, widespread discriminatory social attitudes and practises towards children have been “confirmed, reaffirmed and perpetuated” (1993:103). An understanding of children as mentally and physically different from adults is used to justify their differential treatment to adults. Specifically this means that children’s rights are limited, and they are positioned as incompetent.

Similarly, Lee (2001) points out how the construction of childhood as a time of development which is significant only in terms of future outcomes in adulthood, can have negative consequences in relation to understandings of children’s competency and hence their rights and status as citizens. Qvortrup *et al* (1994) argue that within the framework of futurity children are positioned as “human becomings”, rather than “human beings”. The division between beings and becomings, Lee (2001: 7) argues, is that between “the complete and independent and the incomplete and dependent”. A further problem with positioning children solely as becomings is deciding upon the point at which they become complete and independent beings. Lee (2001) highlights the difficulty of describing change without reference to a fixed finishing point, such as a journey’s end or standard, complete adulthood, to refer to (Lee, 2001). This difficulty of conceptualising change over time without accepting the terms of the dominant framework is one reason why sociology has, prior to the social studies of childhood, tended to say very little about growing up (Lee, 2001).

Apollonian Childhood

The contrasting Apollonian and Dionysian discourses of childhood, outlined by Jenks (2005) is a useful way of framing the central themes of the particularly British construction of childhood. Jenks (2005) understands the Apollonian childhood as a way for adults to resolve the loss of freedom and creativity in adult life. Rousseauian notions of the child as naturally good, and a source of all that is best in human nature, epitomise the Apollonian discourse of childhood.

Rousseau provides a rationale for the idea that children are born good, and beyond showing us that each child has a unique potential he states something completely new for its time, and formative for the future – namely that children are different from adults: they are an ontology in its own right and as such deserve special treatment and care (Jenks, 2005: 65).

The innocence discourse, which prevails in British understandings of childhood, stemmed from the Apollonian approach to childhood, and portrays children as immature, ignorant, innately weak, and vulnerable.

...this discourse is extremely resistant to challenges, whether logical, experiential, evidential or otherwise... the discourse of innocence constructs vulnerability as directly deriving from the being of the child (Mayall, 2002: 89).

It is a construction of childhood that portrays children as 'at risk', and in need of adult protection; a construction that is epitomised by media panics over the commercialisation and particularly the sexualisation of childhood. The innocence discourse is a driving force for contemporary philanthropic work such as the Government commissioned impact report entitled *Bye Buy Childhood* (The Mother's Union, 2015) which details the commercialisation of children's lives. This report criticises the way that children are targeted by advertising. Particular concerns are raised about the effect of high levels of sexual content in forms of media to which children are exposed, and the marketing of sexualised clothing towards children, most notably girls. These things, The Mother's Union (2015) argue, lead to children's hastened participation in sexual or sexualised activity. Other concerns in the report include the impact of junk food advertising on childhood obesity levels, family relationships being damaged or disrupted through pester power, and the values of ambition and greed being instilled in children by aspirational advertising. Children are, therefore, positioned within the innocence discourse as entirely passive to, and completely malleable within their environments. Furthermore, Giroux (2001) argues that the innocence discourse has allowed children, and the idea of childhood, to become fetishised, and that narratives which understand children as in need of protection also render the figure of the sexual child as unintelligible to adults, as not a child at all. Furthermore, Egan (2013) argues that the construction of children as asexual is key to maintaining the innocence discourse, yet points out that this construction does not reflect the experiences of children themselves. It is no coincidence, Egan (2013) argues, that

...the Anglophone construction of the child as both innocent and sentimental (and thus categorically different from the adult) enthrals – this difference is both alluring and disavowed. Within this context, protection from defilement becomes an acceptable narrative through which we can endlessly look upon and think about the child and sex (Egan, 2013: 113).

The fact that children are a diverse social group is ignored within the innocence discourse, and thus, the idea that individual children might require varying levels of need for protection from aggressive

capitalist techniques intended to encourage them to consume or persuade their parents or guardians to buy is brushed over in favour of the idea that a protectionist approach is suitable for all children. Cook and Kaiser's (2004) discussion of the children's clothing industry conceptualises children as active consumers, pointing out how some children have more developed ideas than others about how they can critically use consumer products to reflect their identity which may include using clothing to express their sexuality. "Tensions between the child and the market are both present and absent within British culture" (Cook and Kaiser, 2004: 9). Thus, children are understood, on one hand, as in need of protection from the dangers associated with consumption of goods deemed unsuitable for their age, yet, on the other hand, are aggressively encouraged to become consumers. This results in sacred versions of childhood comingling with an instrumental, monetary valuation which renders childhood into a "pecuniary expression of value" (Cook and Kaiser, 2004: 11). Both experiences, Cook and Kaiser (2004) argue, are key to understanding children's experiences of childhood, yet conceptualisations of children and childhood based upon the innocence discourse alone fail to recognise diversity amongst children and how this shapes their roles as active social agents.

Dionysian Childhood

A construction of British childhood which contrasts with the innocence discourse is referred to by Jackson and Scott (1999) as Dionysian; this takes a more puritanical approach to children. Jenks (2005) notes how the Christian idea of original sin has significantly contributed to the Dionysian construction of the child,

Children, it is supposed, enter the world as a wilful material force; they are impish and harbour a potential evil. This primal force will be mobilized, if, in any part, the adult world should allow them to stray away from the appropriate path that the blueprint of human culture has provided for them (Jenks, 2005: 63).

In the Dionysian discourse, children are seen as a risk, rather than at risk, and in need of guidance in a punitive way. Here, not only is childhood seen as something to be protected, but children themselves become a potential threat. A contemporary example of Dionysian constructions of childhood in action comes in the form of the 1998 *Crime and Disorder Act*, which brought in Local Child Curfews allowing children under the age of ten to be given a curfew by Local Authorities. By 2001, the *Criminal Justice and Police Act* increased the age of children applicable for curfew to sixteen, and furthermore, the 2003 *Antisocial Behaviour Act* allowed police to disperse groups of two or more people if they felt that their presence may be threatening to others. Crawford and Lister (2007) argue that dispersal orders are likely to affect young people more than any other social group

due to the fact that, outside of the home, socialising in groups is considered, by parents and children themselves, to be necessary for safety reasons. Furthermore, Valentine (1996) notes the impact of the Dionysian construction upon media reactions to the crimes of children, which are understood as far more serious than those of adults due to the child's deviation from both the law, and the accepted framework of childhood. Smith (1995) argues that an example of this is provided by the ongoing and dramatic monster and devil imagery drawn upon in the media portrayal of the youngest convicted murderers in British history, Robert Thompson and John Venables, who were convicted of murdering James Bulger in 1993 when they were both ten years old (Smith, 1995).

However, Meyer (2007) argues that instead of seeing the Apollonian and Dionysian discourses as distinct, it is important to understand how they intertwine to create a "plurality of discourses, which differ in terms of pervasiveness" (Meyer, 2007: 95). The discourses of innocence and evil persist, and it is the notion of futurity - that is, the idea that children are important for future adult society - which connects them. Children are constructed as precious and in need of adult care if they are to flourish into adulthood, or dangerous and in need of adult control if they are to be prevented from following their presumed natural human disposition towards evil.

The Philanthropic Movement and the Separation of Childhood and Adulthood

The differentiation between adults and children in contemporary Western society, noted by Aries (1962), has been powerfully shaped by the notion of futurity which positions children as important in relation to future society. For example, Meyer (2007) notes that contemporary society sees the treatment of children, its vulnerable members, as symbolic of the social order and indicative of its moral state. This understanding was established by philanthropic narratives of childhood during the nineteenth century, a time which Prout (2000: 24) describes as "...a rapidly developing conceptual space of childhood being shored up by philanthropic and political reform". For example, the highly influential *Report of the Select Committee on the Bill for the Regulation of Factories* (Sadler, 1832) implied that childhood was being sacrificed to aid the expansion of Britain's textile industries. This extract from the work of a leading philanthropic campaigner and zealous critic of the factory system, Richard Oastler (1831), illustrates attitudes at that time towards the plight of working children:

Poor infants! ...Ye are required to work as long as the necessity of your needy parents may require, or the cold blooded avarice of your worse than barbarian masters *may demand!* You are doomed to labour from morning to night for one who cares not how soon your weak and

tender frames are stretched to breaking (Oastler, 1831 cited in Nardinelli, 1980: 739 italics in original).

Such changes in attitudes underpinned the move towards compulsory education that began with *The Factory Act* (1844), which stated that working children must split their days between work and school. *The Forster Act* (1870) finally moved children out of the work place and into the school by making education compulsory for all children aged five to twelve (Nardinelli, 1980).

Zelizer (1994) argues that the historical removal of children from the means of production was a major factor in the sacralisation of childhood, that is, the contemporary notion of children as precious in terms of their emotional, rather than economic, value. Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century,

...the wage-earning child was no longer considered to be the norm. Instead childhood was now seen as constituting a separate and distinct set of characteristics requiring protection and fostering through school education (Hendrick, 1997 cited in James *et al*, 1998: 39).

The physical separation of children's bodies through the establishment of children's place in the school, meant that childhood came to be increasingly conceptualised as distinct from adulthood.

Normalised Childhood

Compulsory schooling meant that children, as a social group, were corralled in one place which facilitated the observation and comparison of their bodies. This, Foucault (1979) argues, was integral to the concept of normalisation, where membership of an homogenous social body becomes a kind of status. Changes in the scale of control over the body during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries allowed the body to be discovered as an object and target of power. Prior to the onset of compulsory schooling, historical circumstances, most importantly the industrial revolution and various disease epidemics, had already led to changes in the organisation of people in response to the needs of that particular situation. These changes did not occur suddenly, but through a number of minor changes to processes in the general practises of the school, the hospital and the military (and crossovers between these institutions). For example, the classical age saw the birth of the great political and military strategy which was accompanied by meticulous military and political tactics through which the control of bodies was exercised within states. The classical age, Foucault (1979) argues, was characterised by a military dream of society where people were meticulously subordinated cogs of a machine, coerced, trained and docile. The techniques of classical age military ideas employed in other institutions were often minute in form, but were important because they defined a new microphysics of power. That is, a certain mode of detailed political investment

of the body. For example, the notion of hierarchical observation, which characterised the military camp and allowed power to be exercised solely through exact observation and general visibility, was used to build housing estates, hospitals, asylums, prisons and, importantly for this project, schools. Architecture, Foucault (1979: 61) argues, “transformed individuals who were now rendered visible inside it”. The school building was, and often still is, arranged as a mechanism for training. The perfect disciplinary apparatus made it possible for a single “gaze” (Foucault, 1979: 61) to see everything constantly. Therefore, although the pyramidal organisational hierarchy of the school gives it a ‘head’ it is the apparatus as a whole which produces power and distributes individuals in this permanent and continuous field. This form of power is absolutely discreet, yet everywhere and constantly supervising even the individuals who are responsible for supervising. It sustains itself by its own mechanism with no recourse to physical punishment or violence necessary. Thus, symbolic power is

...not triumphant, excessive, omnipotent, but modest, suspicious, calculating. It operates through hierarchical observation, normalising judgment and their combination in the examination (Sheriden, 1980 cited in Christensen *et al* 2001: 209).

This form of power is not based upon the appropriation of bodies, and neither does it aim to make the body ‘do’ as it wishes, but instead creates the environment in which the body must operate in a certain way. According to Bourdieu (1974), schooling achieves order and restraint via a process of symbolic violence, which imposes culture upon groups in such a way that it is experienced by them as legitimate, and thus, the power relations which permit that imposition to be successful are obscured (Jenkins, 1992). Bourdieu (1974) also highlighted the importance of the school to the reproduction of hegemonic cultural values. In all societies, order and restraint are produced by indirect, cultural mechanisms, rather than by direct, coercive social control (Jenkins, 1992). The power of normalisation, therefore, imposes homogeneity, but also individualises it by making it possible to measure gaps, determine levels, and fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another (Jenkins, 1992). Alongside this, the advancement in medical practice and technology has “allowed the body to enter into a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down, and rearranges it” (Jenkins, 1992: 104).

The increased surveillance of children’s bodies, which was justified by the idea that structural causes of child mortality and morbidity could be identified and tackled, facilitated the politicisation of childhood. Specifically, the idea that there is a ‘correct’ way for children to experience childhood. Housing, nutrition, hygiene and poverty became the analytic lines through which the

domestic was brought from the private into the public domain. Alongside this, maternal relationships were under scrutiny and given a new status and meaning (Armstrong, 1983: 213).

Armstrong (1983) draws upon Foucault (1979) to demonstrate how the formalisation of panoptic techniques enabled the examination of children's lives by allowing the whole body to be placed under surveillance, which contrasted to earlier approaches which aimed to merely control disease. The conceptualisations of childhood as separate and different from adulthood meant that a gradual distinction was made between pathological conditions in children and adults, eventually leading to the creation of specialist paediatric medicine. Armstrong (1983) calls this the medicalisation of childhood, and notes that the shift in medical understanding of the child's body as distinct from the adult body has further compounded the *conceptual* separation of children and adults.

Woodhead (1997) notes that medicalised conceptions of childhood remain important today and that particular cultural values often become promoted under the guise of science, with the concept of children's needs being used as shorthand for conveying a particular conclusion about the requirements of childhood.

Concealed beneath the apparent simplicity and directness of 'need' statements is a highly condensed combination of both empirical and evaluative claims... Thus, over and above basic needs, some of the needs which are said to ensure children's well-being have to be seen as cultural constructions, rather than prerequisites of well-being in absolute or relative terms. That is to say, these ideas derive from adult value positions, but when projected onto children they acquire a certain spurious objectivity (Woodhead, 1997: 65).

The influence of adult value positions and societal demands on children can be seen at work in the *School Health Service* since it was established in 1908 (Bagnall, 1997) Its original purpose was to improve the health of future recruits for military service (Bagnall, 1997). However, over the years The School Health Service has focused upon a wide range of health issues including head lice, routine health checks, immunisation, vaccination, contraception and anti-smoking campaigns. Bagnall (1997) argues that the changeable nature of school health policy over time indicates the potential for political or moral concerns to override the straightforward neutrality of addressing children's health issues. Rayner *et al* (2010) illustrate how cultural stereotypes of the ideal child's body intrude into the 'normal' model of the child by detailing how hormone therapy was used to reduce the height of tall girls and increase strength and vigour of children, a practise which began in the 1940s. The 1990s saw the peak of this technological use of hormones in what Rasmussed (2002) describes as an "endocrinological gold rush" (Rasmussed, 2002 in Rayner *et al*, 2010: 1079). High

dose oestrogen was used to curb the height of tall girls, and justified by the idea that they would never find husbands if they grew too tall. These were categorised as psychosocial interventions, although no records exist of psychological tests carried out prior to treatments. Pyett *et al* (2005) interviewed Australian women who had been subject to high dose oestrogen in early childhood, and found that commonly, their mothers had responded to adverts for the treatment in magazines, and girls had little choice over this process. This suggests that the ‘affliction’ of height was more a cultural problem than a medical issue. Despite this, medicine intervened, and the negative outcomes of this high dose oestrogen in early childhood included higher rates of cancer and emotional problems among the sample of Australian women that Pyett *et al* (2005) studied. This example shows how particular cultural constructions of normal female childhood infiltrated medicine to the extent that height was seen as an affliction requiring treatment when combined with traditional gender norms and cultural expectations of femininity. Rayner *et al* (2010) note, however, the paradox of treating girls to make them look and feel normal while ignoring the stigmatising effect of a medicalised identity. As James *et al* (1998) have argued, the socially developing model of the child is not attached to what the child naturally is, so much as what society naturally demands of the child. The notion of normalisation, it will be shown, is important to the concerns of this thesis, both in relation to children’s understandings of the body, and the ways that children’s bodies are understood from a policy perspective.

Classed Childhoods

The large scale comparison of children *en masse*, made possible by compulsory schooling and the employment of panoptic techniques, highlighted how various factors, including social class, may shape experiences of childhood within a particular culture. Philanthropic efforts to improve the lives of the nation’s most vulnerable children (noted above) meant that the health of working class children became the focus of public health policy more broadly. Thus, with the advent of *The School Health Service*, working class schools have, since the early twentieth century, been important sites for the provision of various forms of health policy (Urwin and Sharland, 1992).

While the philanthropic focus of health policy upon working class children undoubtedly made significant changes in relation to the health of children who had previously been part of the labour market, the targeting of working class schools with health policy has never entirely closed the gap in health between children from richer and poorer families. For example, Spencer (2008) notes that the health outcomes of British children vary markedly in relation to social class, with children in

families earning less than £10,400 more likely to suffer from asthma, a range of mental health disorders, and forms of chronic illness, than children in families earning over £52,000.

Despite the failure of health policy aimed at working class schools to bridge the gap between the health of children from different social class groups, the medicalisation of childhood has had other important effects in shaping ideas about classed childhoods. For example, Piltcher (2007) points out that within medical discussions of childhood in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it became clear that a ‘proper’ childhood was not a lower class childhood. As noted previously, with the increased surveillance and ability to compare children facilitated by the advent of compulsory schooling, the maternal role came under close scrutiny. The perception of feckless working class mothers being unable to care ‘properly’ for their children is an example of the “inherently political nature of health policy” (Pilcher, 2007: 216). Indeed, it must not be forgotten that the driving force behind the idea that the health of children requires monitoring by the state via social policy, is the cultural construction of childhood in terms of futurity. That is, an emphasis upon childhood as a time significant only in relation to the development of the future adult. This idea is as inherently political as the notion that working class children ought to be targeted and monitored more closely than middle class children, or the idea that an *ideal* childhood exists as an achievable policy outcome. Cultural constructions of childhood, then, have tangible effects upon the everyday lives of children in a number of interconnected ways.

Beings who are Becoming

Despite the fact that childhood, as a concept, is understood differently across time and space, childhood as an experienced reality remains rooted in a biological phase of rapid bodily change and is “one of the most intensive periods in which work on the body is accomplished” (James *et al* 1998:164). Indeed, Western concepts of childhood are predicated upon “the particularities of children’s physical bodies... the age of the physical body... define(s) its social status as either child or adult” (James, 1993: 103). Childhood, therefore, is both socially constructed and biologically bound. Furthermore, the body is integral to understanding children’s experiences, a core theme engaged in by this thesis. Any approach to understanding children’s experiences must, therefore, capture aspects of both fleshy materiality and social construction, and most importantly, must consider the reciprocal relationships *between* the constructed and biological aspects of childhood. The experiences of bodily change which characterise children’s embodiment are important in relation to this. As Uprichard (2008) argues, looking forward to what a child *becomes* is an important part of *being* a child. Ignoring the future entirely, Uprichard (2008) notes, prevents the

exploration of ways in which futurity may shape experiences of being a child. Failure to consider the 'being' child as someone who 'becomes' an adult is problematic because the 'being' child discourse, "only goes half way to addressing the underlying issue of temporality, precisely because it does not account for any future constructions of the child" (Uprichard, 2008: 306).

A life course approach, put forward by Hockey and James (2003) proposes that we are always, regardless of age, in a process of being and becoming. Furthermore, a life course approach acknowledges that being a certain age brings certain social obligations and expectations, but also notes how bodily changes which result from ageing are imperceptible on a day-to-day basis (Hockey and James, 2003). 'Complete adulthood' is not something which characterises everyday experiences of change over time, and thus, the correlation of competency with physical maturity does not reflect the reality of what it is to 'grow up'. A life course approach, therefore, negates any justification for assuming that *all* children are different from *all* adults in terms of competency by highlighting the fact that we are all variably competent at different points throughout our lives.

Children's Understandings of the Body

This section moves from the broad exploration of the questions 'what is a child?' and 'how can we understand childhood?' to focus more specifically upon previous research which has considered children's understandings of the body. Children's learning about the body has been considered in a number of studies in the field of developmental psychology. Carey (1985) proposed that prior to the age of ten, children's understanding of biological phenomena is not based upon biological theory, but is instead conflated with the same theory with which children understand psychological phenomena. Thus, Carey (1985) argues, children *misunderstand* biological phenomena including the body. However, more recent consideration of children's understanding of the body within the field of developmental psychology has tended to argue that children under the age of ten possess a more sophisticated understanding of biological phenomena than Carey's (1985) study gave them credit for. For example, Kiel (1992) found that three year olds have an autonomous cognitive domain of biology structured around a skeletal version of the same causal principles present in adult's understandings of the body. McEwing (1996) found that eight year old children were able to understand the idea of spatial displacements, which, for example, allowed them to understand that the heart is a pump which pushes blood around the body via blood vessels. Younger children in McEwing's (1996) study, who were aged between four and six, tended to focus upon "genuine experiences that are either visible or tactile" (McEwing, 1996: 427) in their understandings of the body. For example, bones, skin and the beating of a heart, all of which can be felt by children, were

far more easily understood and discussed. This led McEwing (1996) to argue that the cognitive ability to understand the notion of spatial displacement is key to enabling children to understand the inside of the body, which cannot be seen or felt. Similarly, Jaakkola and Slaughter (2002) argue that it is the cognitive ability to appreciate that “life is a biological goal” of all living things, which allows children to understand how the body functions (Jaakkola and Slaughter, 2002: 327). A sudden increase in understanding of the body between the ages of four and six was attributed to the introduction of the idea that life is a biological goal of all living things as part of children’s formal school learning (Jaakkola and Slaughter, 2002). Inagaki and Hatano (2006) consider the role of formal learning in children’s understandings of the body in more detail by distinguishing between children’s learning about the body prior to systematic teaching at school and after the introduction of formal learning about the body. Children under the age of five, Inagaki and Hatano (2006) argue, “possess a fairly rich knowledge about humans” and can therefore “generate educated guesses” about aspects of biology (Inagaki and Hatano, 2006: 178). Young children use a knowledge system which has two demonstrable components; the distinction between living and non-living, and a set of causal devices or internal mechanisms which enable causal reasoning for biological phenomena. This, Inagaki and Hatano (2006: 179) call “naive biology”. Following the introduction of formal learning, children aged around five base their understanding of more advanced biological notions upon this naive biology. Thus, children’s naive understandings act as “a basis for performance and learning in socially and culturally important practices, in relation to health and instruction in the biological sciences” (Inagaki and Hatano, 2006: 177).

The developmentalist studies outlined above have a common goal of identifying age-based stages of development for children’s understandings of the body. However, it was noted in the previous section that competence, including the ability to understand the body, is not something which is determined by a particular age or stage, but is a process engaged in by every individual across the life course. The applicability of this idea to the subject of children’s understandings of the body is demonstrated by sociological studies which consider children’s experiences of dealing with illness. For example, Bluebond-Langer (1996) found that children as young as six, who had cystic fibrosis, were capable of understanding their condition and its implications for the lives of their family members. Children’s understanding, Bluebond-Langer (1996) argues, was not dependent upon their age, but upon the length of their experience of the condition and the particular stages of their condition. Similarly, Backett-Millburn (2000) interviewed middle class families with children aged three to ten years old to explore their understandings of the healthy body and found that “making

sense of the healthy body was a dynamic and life-long project” which was never truly “finished” and which could be characterised as, “a complex and ongoing social accomplishment” (Backett-Millburn, 2000: 80-82). Mckintosh *et al* (2013) interviewed four year old children and their family members and found that young children’s understandings of how illness is caused are influenced by their particular experiences of illness, the illness prevention messages they had been exposed to, and behavioural rules within their respective families. Children’s understandings of health and illness were found to be strongly shaped by the beliefs and values of their family members, rather than their age or stage of cognitive development (Mckintosh *et al*, 2013: 14).

However, despite evidence that children’s competency in understanding the body tends to be based upon experience, rather than age, Mckintosh *et al* (2013) argue that practitioners still tend to be guided by traditional child development theories which “emphasise children’s predictable and universal progression through particular stages of development” (Mckintosh *et al*, 2013: 3). However,

...with the emergence of the new sociology of childhood, researchers in the fields of education and social practice are increasingly viewing young children as active meaning-makers who are competent research participants (Mckintosh *et al*, 2013: 15).

Indeed, a central tenet of the social studies of childhood is the idea that “children must be seen as actively involved in the construction of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live” (James and Prout, 1997: 5). By applying the notion of human agency (Goffman, 1959 and Blumer, 1969) to children, the politics of childhood innocence and the weakness of the centuries-old assumption that adults could orchestrate childhood without children perceiving it as such, can be “laid bare” (Ryan, 2008: 574). Thus, children do not merely pass through stages of development which endow them with the cognitive skills to make sense of different phenomena. In contrast, children are actively engaged in the life-long process of making sense of the world around them, according to their particular experiences. This casts doubt over the developmental notions of children’s understandings of the body - their *naïve biology* (Inagaki and Hatano, 2006) - as *misunderstandings*, which are only important in their usefulness as stepping stones to a more scientific adult knowledge of the body. Children’s understandings of the body, therefore, must be conceptualised in terms of their *difference* to the understandings of adults.

Backett-Millburn's (2000) study of children's understandings of illness (noted above) does precisely this by observing how children's use of partial knowledge of adult health definitions reflects differences in the lived experiences of the body between children and adults, and the particular nature and demands of their particular social worlds. For example, children understood exercise to be healthy in terms of "immediately identifiable corporeal benefit" and were less likely than adults to discuss exercise in terms of its "longer-term value" to health (Backett-Millburn, 2000: 97). This, Backett-Millburn (2000) argues, is a result of the fact that within children's social worlds, "exercise was understood to have strong immediate purposes of social inclusion, pleasure, personal credibility and peer acceptance" (Backett-Millburn, 2000: 98). Similarly, children and adults placed emphasis upon different physical markers of health. For children, "rotten teeth, physical laziness and fatness", were prominent because these markers were significant to interaction within their peer cultures (Backett-Millburn, 2000: 89-91). What children chose to eat was affected by the availability of time, the lure of playtime and the approval of certain foods by friends and choices at school lunches. Children's decisions about body management were, therefore, made "pragmatically and for non-health related reasons" (Backett-Millburn, 2000: 97-99). Backett-Millburn (2000) points out that adults also make decisions about body management based upon non-health related reasons. However, the cultural construction of children as incompetent, and thus, of their knowledge as a partial, developing version of *complete* adult knowledge, leads to the constant downgrading of children's knowledge as inferior to adult knowledge. Yet, Backett-Millburn's (2000) study demonstrates children to be generators of health knowledge in their own right. Although children draw upon their partial access to adult knowledge and experience, they "also drew upon their own social worlds, their assessments and priorities" (Backett-Millburn, 2000: 91) which were often very different from those of their parents. As a result of conflict caused by the differing generational understandings of health within families, children's understandings, and thus their health practices, were often partially hidden from adults (Backett-Millburn, 2000: 89).

Differences in conceptualisations of the body between children and adults are further highlighted by Christensen's (2000) study of minor illnesses and injuries at a Danish primary school. It was noted that children were told to stop fussing if they came to adults with small injuries. However, Christensen (2000) argued that children were not seeking sympathy, but were simply interested in comparing injuries as a way of sharing bodily experiences. According to Christensen (2000) adults tended to view the child's body as "somatic", or,

...an objectification of the body beyond subjective experience, revealed at a particular diagnostic instant, a view restricted in time and space which is partial, often technologically mediated and clinical (Frankenberg, 1990: 356 *cited in* Christensen, 2000: 45).

Working in this mode, adults were concerned, for example, to validate the “objective reality” of an illness or injury, rather than its experience to the child, and with “localizing the injury within a culturally dominant categorization of the body and its parts” (Christensen, 2000: 45). This approach contrasts with the conceptualisation of the body which children were observed to make use of, which Christensen (2000: 45) calls the “incarnate body”:

A unity of past, present and future simultaneously experienced from inside and outside... the perspective of the incarnate body lacks boundaries in both time and space and is permeable to the world (Frankenberg, 1990: 358 *cited in* Christensen, 2000: 45).

For example, children in Christensen’s (2000) study expressed their experience of self and body as inseparable and, therefore, as an embodied experience. Thus, illness was not experienced as distinct from their person. So, when children were asked by adults “where did you hurt yourself?” they might answer “on the swing or in the sandpit” (Christensen, 2000: 47). Furthermore, when children discussed their experiences of illness, they emphasised the relationship between illness and their own and others’ actions. Christensen (2000) illustrates this with examples of children stating that they had bled from their knee because someone had tripped them up, rather than a more ‘adult’ style of answer which explained the bleeding in relation to the skin having been cut (Christensen, 2000: 47-54). Christensen (2000: 47) found that children’s concern was with “the interruption of their body and their connections with the social and material world”. For example, experiencing vulnerability was related, by children, to the experience of losing their social position (Christensen, 2000).

Backett-Millburn (2000) and Christensen (2000) both demonstrate that children’s understandings of the body differ to those of adults as a result of the broad differences between the lives of adults and children as distinct social groups. Therefore, any attempt to understand children’s experiences must be achieved via an anthropological approach which “firmly contextualises children in their own social worlds” (Christensen, 2000: 58) rather than attempting to translate children’s experiences into those of adults. Most importantly, these studies suggest that children’s understandings of the body are, in comparison to those of adults, more powerfully connected to social relations.

Children, the Body and Social Identity

The work of James (1993) is key for understanding why the body is so very important to children's social identities. It is children's positioning in the institution of school, and their embodied standpoint - unique to them as a social group - that determine, in part, the importance of the body to their social identities (James, 1993). The young body, James (1993) points out, is more unstable, and more quickly changing than the adult body. Furthermore, within Western cultures, the social context of the young body is also rapidly moving, as characterised by the transition from primary school to junior, then senior school. Each move involves a repositioning in terms of body size, development and social standing. This instability is characteristic of Western childhoods, and means that the child's body is a crucial resource for making and breaking identity. It is, therefore, as a result of the combination of children's particular embodied standpoints and the particular circumstances of children's lives, including their position within school, which shapes their everyday experiences. The significance of the body for children is further compounded by the normalisation of childhood, discussed previously in this chapter. For example, James (1993) points out that

The relationship between concepts of body size and those of social identity may become critical for children whose bodies refuse to grow at an appropriate rate. By the ages of eight and nine-years-old height has become, quite literally, a quantifiable measure of social status and, consequently also of identity (James, 1993: 113).

James (1993) also found that cultural stereotypes of the body play an important role in children's social relationships and the ways in which conceptual links are established by children between body size, shape, appearance, gender, performance and social identity. James (1993) expresses the complexity of the body as a medium of social and cultural expression for children, and argues that the body is used by children as a "symbolic marker of social identity to create stigmatising distinctions" in ways which are "both subtle and fluid" (James, 1993: 132). Children, therefore, more readily equated morality with physical appearance in comparison to adults. Bullies, for example, were generally characterised by children as ugly. Furthermore, being too fat or too thin was seen as problematic for children. Among children, it is not just what kind of body a person has, but what that body does, which has significant bearing on perceptions of personhood and social identity (James, 1993). In addition, James (1993) found that behaviours which were seen as stereotypical of young babies, such as dribbling, runny noses and incontinence, were viewed negatively by children. Conversely, children celebrated signs of increasing bodily maturity, eagerly

showing off gaps left from missing teeth. James (1993) also notes the significance of height, shape, appearance, gender and performance as aspects for children's creation and enactment of bodily difference. These issues occurred frequently in discussion amongst children "as the sources of ridicule or distaste, as objects of desire and admiration, [and] as grounds for the beginning or ending of social relations" (James, 1993: 105). For the child, James (1993: 107) argues, stereotyping enables those who do or do not belong to be remarked on or marked out "as different, as other". Thus, the cognitive value of stereotypes for children lies in the bringing of an element of certainty into an uncertain environment (James, 1993). That uncertain environment is a result of children's embodiment, which is characterised by change and flux, and unique to them as a social group.

Children's Embodied Experiences

The notion of embodiment challenges the idea that the body is a representation of social reality which is *completely* pliable to discourses of power. In contrast, the concept of embodiment brings constructionist narratives together with foundationalist approaches to the body by highlighting both the importance of the materiality of the body, and how the particular embodied position of an individual affects their experience of the world. Harraway (1991: 11) proposes, for example, that "the current dichotomy between nature and culture is unsatisfactory and unrealistic as bodies are simultaneously products of both". McLaughlin and Coleman-Fountain (2014) highlight the importance of an embodied approach for understanding the experiences of disabled children in particular, as both social constructions of the 'normal' child's body, *and* the material physicality of the body itself, were found to be significant to the everyday lives of disabled children. Yet, an embodied approach, which considers how constructions of the body shape children's lives *alongside* the physical experience of having a child's body, this section will argue, is useful for understanding how children *as a social group* experience the body. After all, the significance of the construction of 'normality' in relation to the body is not limited to children with disabilities, but, as discussion of the notion of normalisation (above) points out, applies to children more broadly.

Turner (1996) attempts to unify constructionist and foundationalist approaches with methodological eclecticism, where social constructionist and foundationalist approaches are both seen as intellectually legitimate. Turner (1996) proposes that one can *have* a body as an object, and one can *be* a body; actively engaging with it as a project. To understand these dimensions more clearly, Turner (1996) uses the German words *Korper* to describe the body as an object, and *Leib* to describe the body as an experience. However, Turner's (1996) theory offers an additive, rather than

relational approach to the problem of how to synthesise the foundationalist and anti-foundationalist dichotomy (Prout, in Johnson *et al*, 2000). A useful answer to this problem is provided by Shilling's (2003) argument that the human body is biologically and socially unfinished at birth. In his view, the biology of our bodies is not completely static but partially formed by social factors, and is thus constantly changing, both naturally and through human intervention. For example, the use of hormone therapy, discussed previously in relation to the work of Rasmussen (2002), provides a good example of the intertwinement of biology with cultural ideas. In Western society, Shilling (2003) argues, the body becomes a project through which people can express their lifestyle choices and identity options. However, though medical technology and scientific knowledge can alter the body, this does not mean that its biological constitution becomes unimportant (Shilling, 2003). Society, Shilling (2003) argues, impacts upon, and is generated by, the embodied individual.

An embodied approach is important for making sense of how children's understandings of the body are shaped by both their shared experience of rapid bodily change, and of having their bodies separated from those of adults via the school. However, an embodied approach also enables engagement with children as individuals who share materiality but "perceive themselves and their environments differently" (Hockey and James, 2007: 44). Thus, not only does an embodied approach highlight the importance of children's shared experiences of temporality in relation to their mutual understandings of the changing body, but also highlights the ways that understandings of the body differ between individual children. For example, James (1993) found that the reasons individual children gave as to why they felt bodyweight is important varied according to gender. Boys felt that being too fat might impede their running, whereas two seven year old girls in James' (1993) study proposed that it is worse for girls than boys to be fat because "they have to look nice... for going out with their boyfriends" and, because "If they be fat [sic]... they won't be able to kiss them, because their tummy's in the way" (James, 1993: 120-121).

It is difference between children's individual experiences which allowed them to be critical of stereotypes, despite their reliance upon them to make sense of their social worlds. Indeed, James (1993) found that children were adept at negotiating stereotypical notions of identity related to their bodies. For example, an eight year old boy in James' (1993) study found that by referring to himself jokingly as a "titchy little boring person" he could forestall the controlling power which others may have asserted over him (James, 1993: 117). Furthermore, James (1993: 130) argues that although

any difference or deviation from notions of bodily normality can become significant for children, there is no necessary relationship between physical difference and a position of social marginality.

The Body in School

The contradictory nature of children's need for stereotypes to make sense of their social worlds on one hand, but their ability to challenge and question these stereotypes in relation to their individual experience on the other hand, is mirrored in the findings of studies which consider children's experiences of the body in school. As this section will demonstrate, while children's experiences of bodily discipline in school provide the framework for their everyday experiences, it is children's ability to negotiate and challenge these forms of discipline via their bodies, which is key to understanding children's role as active sense-makers in relation to the body.

Simpson (2000: 69) considers the ways that children's bodies are regulated through the transition from primary to secondary school, and found that the "spectre of secondary school" looms over primary school children. In part, Simpson (2000) argues, this is the result of the way that teachers actively equate age with self-control, for example, by telling children that they will not be able to act as they do currently when in 'big' school, or reprimanding secondary school children for acting like 'little ones'. The expectation of a significant change in children's behaviour is implicit in this, despite the fact that the move from the last year in primary school to the first year in junior school is accomplished following a mere six week gap (Simpson, 2000). Children's bodies were intensely controlled through a powerful moral discourse dispensed through teacher-student interactions, signs around school, in registration, and during assembly. Bodies were required to be ordered, tidy, and neatly presented. Docile children were rewarded by being allowed to remain inconspicuous. Those who did not conform were punished by being positioned "out of place" (Simpson, 2000; 70), for example, children would be placed in a corridor outside the classroom or head teacher's office, visible to passersby, who would know that they had misbehaved.

Mayall (1996) found that battles with teachers about going to the toilet or having a drink typify children's experiences of school. For example, Mayall (1996: 127) found that children's dinner times at school were characterised by "a combination of neglect and control by adults over what children consumed". Furthermore, Mayall (1996) argues that at school, children's knowledge of the body is "regarded with particular suspicion" (Mayall, 1996: 125). For example, children experience

...the devaluing of their body clocks and bodily experience, in the face of adult timetables and constructions of childhood. During school the *time future* of childhood predominates over the *time present* (Mayall, 1996: 140 [emphasis added]).

Mayall (1996) thus concludes that children's embodied experiences are characterised by negotiating bodily issues with adults. Prendergast (2000) similarly identifies power struggles over the body in school as typical of children's daily lives. For example, girls attempting to negotiate the practical elements of menstruating in school struggled with poor facilities, negative attitudes, and time constraints. Prendergast (2000) found that girls were unable to visit the toilet between lessons, and that a lack of bins, toilet paper or hand soap was inconvenient and posed health risks. Therefore, despite the importance of the body for children in relation to their social identities (James, 1993), the child's body in school is tightly controlled and their access to necessary resources which enable them to care for their bodies is restricted.

However, despite the evident control of children's bodies in school, Simpson (2000) is careful not to characterise children as *merely* the passive recipients of adult power, showing instead that they do not always conform to bodily regulation. Children, Simpson (2000) suggests, use their bodies in various ways to defy the regulations placed upon them. The ways that children did this was dependent upon their gender and status within the peer group (Simpson, 2000). For example, boys with high social status, Simpson (2000) found, tended to use their bodies as instruments of rebellion, openly farting, belching, spitting, pulling faces and moving around the classroom at inappropriate times. Boys were also most adept at manipulating space, sometimes even injuring themselves on purpose to be excused from lessons. Girls, in contrast, tended to opt for illegal adornment such as jewellery, make-up or subtle changes to uniform. A game where shoes would be secretly passed around the classroom until each girl was wearing an odd pair is illustrative of the girls' tendency to resist by using forms of secret power which are based on exclusion of others, in this case, adults and boys (Simpson, 2000). Irrespective of gender, children's 'unruly' bodies were also used to their advantage, for example, Simpson (2000) found that veruccas were used as an excuse to avoid swimming or to wear trainers instead of school shoes, and period cramps were used by girls to negotiate the contentious issue of toilet breaks with teachers who wished for children to stay in their seats for the entire lesson. Indeed, Simpson (2000:61) notes that the school is a "locus of discipline" where, despite the fact that control of pupils by staff might be the most overt display of power, children also possess the ability to resist their teachers and to wield different forms of power over their peers.

Thus, Simpson's (2000) work demonstrates that understandings of children as merely the recipients of, rather than the participants *in*, the education process, effectively work to curb children's potential for agency (James and James, 2005). An overly structural perspective of schooling, James and James (2005) argue, excludes any real acknowledgement of and engagement with children as social agents who "receive and participate in the educational process as pupils in the school system" and instead positions them as "receptors of implicit and subtle messages about identity inscribed in the educational process and the policies through which schooling takes place" (James and James, 2005: 117). James and James (2005) argue that single variables, such as background or gender, do not invariably determine the ways in which children relate to and experience the educational process. On the contrary, what children learn through schooling is dependent upon "the dynamic and complex interplay between a whole configuration of different variables, which may be unique for each individual child" (Montandon and Osiek, 1998, in James and James, 2005: 117). Therefore, given the same structural conditions, individual children may nonetheless have rather different schooling experiences (James and James, 2005). Nevertheless, it seems that the body, and bodily discourse, is central to all forms of power relations played out within schools and thus provides common ground between children's experiences of school.

Further evidence that children are not entirely passive to the forms of bodily discipline in school includes Gillborn's (1990) exploration of the experiences of a group of Afro-Caribbean pupils who affected "a particular style of walking", which was perceived as an overt threat to the authority of teachers at school (Gillborn, 1990: 211). However, this was not necessarily the intention of pupils who adopted the walk, which was understood by them as quite simply being associated with "good feelings" (Gillborn, 1990: 212). The importance of children's control over their movement and bodily comportment in school is also highlighted by Christensen *et al* (2001) who distinguish between 'curriculum time' and other times at school, the latter being understood by children as more under *their* control. For example, close observation of 'reading time', where children were supposed to quietly read while teachers carried out administrative tasks, revealed that many children were making active choices about how to spend their time (Christensen *et al*, 2001). That is, children managed this time on their own, rather than the teacher's, terms. Thus, children "were able to liberate themselves, to some extent, from the rigid discipline of school" (Christensen *et al*, 2001: 204). Through knowing attention to bodily posture and appearance associated with, for example, the act of reading, children passed time *as if* they were reading, and were thus able to escape the watchful eye of the teacher. This enabled children to strategically exert control over their

own time at school and to pass off leisure as work (Christensen *et al* 2001). Christensen *et al* (2001) also note that it was only those children who failed to adopt the body posture and style of “sitting and reading” who would be judged by the teacher to be misbehaving (Christensen *et al*, 2001: 215). This kind of resistance to bodily control, Christensen *et al* (2001: 215) argue, is not “conspired in a subversive political insurgence” by children. Instead, the ways that children negotiate rules “through knowing attention to bodily posture and appearance” can be better understood as a form of “practical mastery” of bodily knowledge (Christensen *et al* 2001: 215-216).

A further example of children’s practical mastery of bodily knowledge is provided in Wilkinson’s (1988) study which describes how school children fake illness. Wilkinson (1988) found that children may purposefully raise their temperatures, pretend to be sick while really just coughing down the toilet, put talcum powder on their faces, wear sad expressions, or mope and act unusually quiet in order to convince adults that they are ill. It is essential, Wilkinson (1988) argues, for children to be able to pretend illness occasionally, as this is how they come to learn “the construction of the locally approved illness behaviour” and is also how “the children’s knowledge of the minutiae of their culture’s value system about illness is elaborated for them” (Wilkinson, 1988: 118). It is by gaining experience of the reactions of parents and teachers to their faked symptoms that children hone their practical mastery of the body.

They learn not to complain too much or too little in order to be effective. They experience the salience of different symptom constellations, and how these can come to have the same or alternative meanings at home and at school. Through being successful pretenders from time to time they learn the value system of their culture as well as continuing their individuation (Wilkinson, 1988: 119).

James and Hockey (2007) draw upon Wilkinson’s (1998) work to point out how children develop sets of situated body practises which “enable their changing somatic states to be made meaningful, both for themselves and for those from whom remedy is being sought” (James and Hockey, 2007: 119). Part of these situated body practices, they argue, is the ability to pretend to be ill. Therefore, although young children’s health status is “usually legitimated by adults” and a “healthy child wishing to stay at home, rather than go to school, is not empowered to make this choice themselves”, children’s ability to *feign* illness represents a position of strength (James and Hockey, 2007: 119).

Ironically, then, children use their knowledge of the very bodily practises, postures and behaviours which are imposed upon them at school to liberate themselves from its constraints. Therefore,

children are revealed as embodied beings and active participants in the social world, and not simply the outcomes of socialisation and pedagogic processes. This insight represents a core theme to be explored in this project.

Children's Formal Learning about the Body in School

The previous section has demonstrated how the process of schooling can, in part, be understood as a process of learning about bodily comportment. Children are required to control their bodies in ways which are deemed appropriate to a school context. This forms what James and James (2005: 117) refer to as the “hidden curriculum of cultural values”. Implicit in education policy, they argue, is the notion that turning children into ‘pupils’ allows them to be “introduced into society and come to understand how, as adults, they will find their place within it” (James and James, 2005: 123). Furthermore, it has been shown that children also learn how to use their bodies in ways which enable them to resist forms of discipline in school. Thus, while the significance of children’s experiences of school in shaping their understandings of the body have been extensively explored within the social studies of childhood, the ways in which the body is engaged with as part of children’s *formal* learning in the school curriculum - that is, discussion of the body in the explicit, as opposed to ‘hidden’ curriculum - is a relatively neglected subject. An exception to this is Lewis and Knijn’s (2001) study of the delivery of sex education to children in schools. They compared sex and relationships (SRE) lessons in UK and Dutch class rooms with fourteen and fifteen year olds, noting that sex and relationship education (SRE) tends to begin at a much earlier stage of education in Dutch classrooms than in the UK. Indeed, SRE begins earlier in the classrooms of most other parts of Europe and Scandinavian countries in comparison to the UK. Lewis and Knijn (2001) also found that English SRE courses are likely to treat sex education alongside “risk behaviours”, such as drug-taking and smoking, and to aim to develop self-esteem as a means of countering them (Lewis and Knijn, 2001: 60). Dutch care courses, in contrast, aim to embed sex education in courses that focus on everyday living. In Dutch schools, sex education is thus “found alongside nutrition and bicycle repair” (Lewis and Knijn, 2001: 60). The split between the emotional, social and biological sides of SRE was far more rigid in the UK with “mechanistic” style science lessons which deal exclusively with the biological aspects of sex (Lewis and Knijn, 2001: 61). Thus, the idea that children ought to be ignorant of certain aspects of the body and bodily change appears to be particularly British, as this construction does not have such a powerful influence over the ways that information about the body is presented to children in school in other cultures (Lewis and Knijn, 2001).

The ways that ideas about the body are presented to children in British schools are, therefore, shaped both by peculiarly British constructions of the body and constructions of childhood. The separation of physical and emotional aspects of sex, for example, demonstrates a particularly Cartesian conceptualisation of the body and mind as distinct, and thus provides a practical example in support of Lakoff and Johnson's (1999: 406) argument that the Cartesian view of the body as a "widely-held, self-evident truth" has had "special catastrophic significance" on Western bodily constructions. The British approach to sex education further reflects an understanding of children as asexual. The problematic nature of this idea was noted earlier in reference to Reay's (2013) work, which proposes that the adult preoccupation with the need to "protect the child, as a figure, from sex", means that "we ignore actual children and the conditions of childhood which fall outside of our cultural fantasies of children as innocent" (Reay, 2013: 113).

The argument, put forward by James and James (2005), that legal definitions of competence do not change children's experience and abilities overnight, is also applicable here. In practical terms, the construction of the child as innocent until they reach a legally defined age at which they are considered to be 'competent' to deal with and to understand sex and sexual aspects of the body, is not applicable to children's real life experiences. Mayall (1996) further highlights the irony apparent in a system that is grounded in the idea that children are in need of protection, yet which, in practice, fails to ensure children's safety and health by keeping them ignorant about aspects of the body such as the bodily changes associated with puberty and safe sex.

In conclusion, this chapter has shown that childhood is both a socially constructed phenomenon and fleshy, material reality. Research within the social studies of childhood has demonstrated the importance of considering children's own experiences of the structural and biological factors which characterise childhood. In order to understand children's perspectives, therefore, it is vital to be able to synthesise foundationalist and constructionist conceptualisations of the body. The most useful approach to this, it has been argued, is an embodied approach. Specifically, it is Shilling's (2003) understanding of the body as biological and socially unfinished and subject to change as a result of both its natural biology, and social factors, throughout a person's lifetime. The notion of embodiment, therefore, is drawn upon to make sense of children's experiences of the body in this project.

For children, the particular experience of a rapidly changing body characterises their social worlds. The work of James (1993) is fundamental for understanding how the particularities of children's

lives make the body so significant in relation to children's social identities. James (1993) also highlights the ways that the normalisation of children's bodies has contributed to an understanding of the body among children themselves as a quantifiable measure of social status and identity. This point is supported by findings from Backett-Millburn (2000) which show that children's understandings of health, and their health decisions, were powerfully connected to social relations. Furthermore, the work of Christensen (2000) demonstrates how children's understandings of vulnerability were closely related to the experience of losing their social position in the school context. Children's understandings of the body, therefore, were closely intertwined with their social identities. It must be noted, however, that detailed accounts of the ways that children's understandings of the body differ to those of adults are, with the exception of James (1993), limited to discussions of *health*. Thus, this literature review has identified a space for further research which provides a detailed exploration of how children's understandings of the body reflect the particularities of their social worlds, outside of a specific focus upon health.

However, although one of the most important overarching themes of previous literature on children's understandings of the body is the difference between their conceptualisations of the body and those of adults, emphasising any kind of difference between adults and children requires caution so as not to unintentionally reinforce traditional understandings of children as separate and different from adults. This chapter has demonstrated how the literal and conceptual distinction between children and adults - grounded in the advent of compulsory education, the advancement of medical technology and the cultural influence of developmental ideas - are used to justify the differential treatment of children.

Thus, while children's embodied standpoint, particularly their experience of a rapidly changing body, is clearly significant to their understandings of the body, it remains important to recognise that children are a diverse social group. The work of James (1993) provides evidence that individual children are likely to make sense of the body in different ways according to their particular experiences and standpoints. It is this element of diversity that developmentalist accounts of children's understandings of the body (Kiel, 1992, McEwing, 1996, Jaakkola and Slaughter, 2002 and Inagaki and Hatano, 2006) have failed to capture. Despite progressing from Carey's (1985) notion that no child under the age of ten is capable of drawing upon biological understandings of phenomena, developmentalist studies of children's understandings of the body retain an image of the child as passive in the process of their age-based cognitive development.

However, it must be noted that these developmentalist studies have, in contrast to sociological studies, considered children's engagement with formal learning in relation to children's understandings of the body. School is identified, in sociological literature, as an important site for both children's subjection to forms of bodily discipline and as a site of children's practical mastery of the body. Despite this, children's engagement with formal learning about the body in school is neglected. Yet, if children are capable of negotiating adult control over their bodies, then how do children engage, as active social agents, with the ideas about the body with which they are presented in school? It has also been shown that children's formal learning about the body in school is shaped by particular cultural understandings of childhood and the body (Lewis and Knijn, 2001 and Reay, 2013). Therefore, exploring children's engagement with formal learning about the body in school also offers an opportunity to examine how social constructions of childhood shape children's everyday lives.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The question ‘how do children come to know about the body?’ focuses upon *the body* broadly, and not upon specific aspects of the body in relation to health. Thus, in part, this question responds to the lack of detailed sociological exploration of children’s understandings of the body with a non-health focus identified in the literature review. Furthermore, asking how children *come to know about* the body, invites exploration of the significance of the role played by both children’s formal and informal learning about the body. Thus, the neglect, within sociological research, of children’s formal learning about the body in school, is also responded to. However, in asking how children come to know about the body, the assumption that knowledge about the body is *only* passed on to children from adults (of which formal learning at school is an example) is challenged. This question, therefore, invites further exploration of how children, as social actors, actively produce knowledge about the body.

Contained within this broad aim of understanding how children come to know about the body are three more specific research questions which similarly respond to discussions made in the literature review. The first of these is:

How do social constructions of childhood impact upon children’s everyday experiences of the body?

This question is a response to evidence, presented in the literature review, that social constructions of childhood (most notably the innocence discourse and the notion of futurity) shape children’s everyday experiences in a number of different ways. It is reasonable to predict, therefore, that constructions of the child and childhood will, to some extent, shape the way that children experience and come to know about the body. This question also acknowledges the idea - integral to the social studies of childhood - that childhood is a cultural phenomenon which is constructed differently across time and space.

The second question contained within the broad aim of exploring how children come to know about the body asks:

To what extent are children’s experiences and understandings of the body shaped by structural factors of their lives?

This question also relates to the acknowledgement of the constructed nature of childhood, but in a more specific way. It invites exploration of how particular structural factors (such as social class and cultural understandings of gender) may shape children's everyday experiences and, as a result, the ways that they come to know about the body. This question is also conducive to the exploration of how children, as social agents, encounter and potentially negotiate the structural factors which shape their lives. By acknowledging that the particular circumstances of children's lives may influence the ways that those children understand the body, this question acknowledges the importance of considering diversity among children, a notion introduced in the previous chapter. This question also acknowledges evidence that children, as a result of the particular circumstances of their lives, tend to understand the body in ways which differ from the understandings of adults.

The third more specific research question contained within the broad aim of this project is:

In what ways does children's embodiment impact upon their understandings of the body?

The advantages of an embodied approach to research on the body, which allows both the body's constructed and fleshy, materialistic aspects to be acknowledged, have been demonstrated in the literature review. Children, it has been noted, experience a period of rapid bodily growth which is unique to them as a social group, and this means that children share a particular embodied standpoint which contrasts with that of other social groups. However, this question also provides an opportunity to explore how *specific* aspects of children's embodied perspectives, relating to ethnicity and gender, for example, may create diversity and difference between individual children. Thus, the problematic tendency for children to be treated as a homogenous social group is avoided.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins by considering the decision to label this project an ethnography, and discusses the consequences this has in relation to the need for reflexive consideration of the researcher's role. The chapter then goes on to discuss the conceptualisation of children which frames this project, arguing that the use of child oriented methods does not necessarily imply a conceptualisation of children as incompetent. Instead, children are positioned as a diverse social group whose everyday lives differ from those of adults in a number of important ways.

Use of the Term 'Ethnography'

This project can be described as an ethnography due, most importantly, to its qualitative, inductive and exploratory nature. However, use of the term ethnography is much disputed. For example, Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer (2005: 287) note how ethnography is variably defined as the description of culture (Spradley, 1970), a methodological approach involving thick description (Geertz (1973), studies of enculturation and acculturation, socialization and institutionalized education (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993), the study of everyday lives (Emerson *et al.*, 1995), the in situ observation grounded in a specific historical and cultural context (Bazanger and Dodier, 1997), and finally, as an approach that allows the inclusion of everyday speech (Atkinson, 1990). Following their review of ethnographic research, Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer (2005: 301) conclude, therefore, that the answer to the question 'what is an ethnography' remains unclear as there exists "a diversity of practices, power, and conceptual as well as epistemological struggles among qualitative researchers identifying themselves as ethnographers" (Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer, 2005: 287). In response to this, Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer (2005: 285) coined the term "disrupted ethnography", which they describe as an "ambiguous, but highly legitimate label for presenting a complex variety of epistemologically and theoretically different approaches to qualitative research". More specifically, the major difference between a disrupted ethnography and a classic ethnography is that the latter aims to create a description of culture, whereas the former aims to create an open ideological production of culture through focused research activities.

The disrupted ethnography, which draws upon a number of different elements from a range of ethnographic approaches, therefore allows the complexity of the particular research questions to be captured in a way that a single theoretical perspective or method alone might fail to do. As Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer (2005: 299) point out, it is almost impossible to pin down a single, stable form of ethnography which "would be capable of serving all its researchers, research

projects, and participants through conceptual coherence and shared understandings of what it means to study culture”. Furthermore, the lack of a unified field of ethnography is considered by Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer (2005) to be a strategic strength of the label ethnography and rather than proposing “stable labels” for types of ethnographic research, they recommend that those engaged in research “draw their own conclusions of the fit with and usefulness of each approach to their own work and their theoretical frameworks” (2005: 286).

This project, therefore, drew upon the ideas of Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer (2005) by making use of a number of elements from different understandings of ethnography. For example, Knoblauch’s (2005) notion of the “focused ethnography”, which describes a study that considers small elements of one’s own society, could be used to describe this research. By focussing upon social actions, interactions and social situations, rather than social groups, institutions and events, the subject matter of the focused ethnography becomes verbal and visual conduct, as well as the visual representation of objects and actors. The methods of data collection used in this project, described in the following chapter, were therefore based on communicative activities. These are referred to in this thesis as activity sessions, and are more intensive than traditional experience-based data collection processes. The use of communicative activities with small groups is characteristic of a focused ethnography, and compensates for a relatively short, part-time stay in the field which does not facilitate the longer term study of a wider social group (Knoblauch, 2005). The insights offered by this project, which were gained as a result of the focus upon the communicative actions of a small number of children are not intended, therefore, be generalisable in a quantitative sense. Instead, they aim to shed light upon the ways that children come to know about the body through their richness and detail. Inspiration for this approach is taken from James (2013), who argues that the children whom she encountered in her work:

...are not to be seen as representative, rather, they are here because, in their singularity, they have provided me, as the author, with insights about their past and present lives that have provoked me to think in new or different ways (2013: 20).

Ontology and Epistemology

The decision to adopt a qualitative, ethnographic approach to research necessitates acknowledgement of the ways that the particular standpoint of the researcher will shape the interpretation of the events during fieldwork, and thus what is, and is not considered to be data.

Hammersley's (2010) distinction between 'data' and 'evidence' is useful for making sense of the fact that data contains numerous possibilities for interpretation. Raw data, in essence, can be 'spun' into thread which may be used to create any kind of garment. According to Hammersley (2010), field notes and interview transcripts can be understood as data, whereas the pieces of information selected as part of the analysis in relation to the research questions are evidence. However, it is important to note that both data and evidence are constructed according to the needs of the researcher creating a particular kind of research project. Data is always collected for a particular reason and interpreted according to the particular standpoint of the researcher (James, 2012). Arguments and conclusions which form part of a research project are, therefore, in this sense, always partial.

The roots of this interpretive and openly subjective approach to research can be found in the anthropological work of Geertz (1973), specifically the notion of thick description. The process of making sense of the lives of others, Geertz (1973) notes, can be puzzling, awkward and always involves piecing together the various bits of information which researchers gather through fieldwork, for, Geertz (1973: 20) argues, it is not necessary to know *everything* in order to understand *something*. Any understanding of the social world, according to Geertz (1973) is "essentially contestable" and "marked less by a perfection of consensus than by a refinement of debate" (1973: 29).

James (2012: 563) points out the similarities between the ways that Geertz (1973), Mills (1959), Atkinson (1990) and Rapport (1994) all describe a sense of "craftwork" necessary for the process of interpretive research and analysis. For Geertz (1973: 16) this involves "the scientific imagination [that] brings us into touch with the lives of strangers". For Mills (1959) tapping into *The Sociological Imagination* during research requires skill, rather than simply technique. Likewise for Atkinson (1990), processes of interpretation and the rhetorics of persuasion form an important part of the *Ethnographic Imagination* which is core to the production of sociological accounts. Finally, Rapport (1994) shows how acts of creativity and imagination enable researchers to "craft stories of people's lives" (Rapport, 1994: 277 cited in James, 2012: 563).

The importance of noting the subjective nature of the ethnographic researcher is a fundamental building block of classical ethnography, a branch of which, according to Koro-Ljungberg and

Greckhamer (2005) can usefully be labelled constructionist epistemology. Here, the ethnographer constructs descriptions of cultural patterns and experiences through recognition that the ethnographer's own views and standpoint form a part of these cultural structures. Constructionist ethnographers acknowledge that both the reality they observe in the field, as well as the account they give about this reality in their ethnographies, are constructed (Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer, 2005). Geertz's (1983) discussion of the hermeneutic circle - the idea that part of the human condition is to make meaning and that the construction of meaning lies in a circular sequence of interpretations - is useful for making sense of this. As researchers, we partake in a socially constructed practice of understanding culture, and each discipline brings with it a plethora of epistemological biases before the subjectivity of the individual researcher is even considered. The acknowledgement and discussion of the inevitable subjectivity of the researcher is what characterises constructionist ethnography more broadly. This recognition must continue into the analysis of data, where "the cultural experiences of natives must be translated into research accessible to the public through textual or descriptive analysis" (Koro-Ljungberg and Greckhamer, 2005: 293).

Thus, a researcher cannot help but follow a path of analysis which emphasises their own subjective epistemological beliefs. According to Skeggs (2001), this idea forms a fundamental aspect of feminist ethnography. Gendered power relations, Skeggs (2001) argues, ought to therefore be questioned as part of any feminist research. Neutrality of observations is an unrealistic goal for feminist ethnographers such as Skeggs (2001) and instead, research "ought to generate different understandings of why, and how, women are oppressed and what solutions are possible" (Skeggs, 2001: 41). While this project does not actively seek or discuss solutions to female oppression, its methodological approach is informed by feminist theory, since not only is gender an important issue in terms of analysis, but it must be acknowledged, in the feminist tradition, that the cultural, racial, gendered and classed standpoint of myself as the researcher affected both how participants engaged in research, and how the subsequent data was interpreted and presented.

Research With Children

As part of this project's commitment to the notion of reflexivity, discussed above, it is important to note that the broad methodological standpoint of the research lies unapologetically within the remit of the social studies of childhood (James and Prout, 1997). This brings with it a set of particular

beliefs about what research with children ought to aim to achieve, including, most importantly, the acknowledgement of children as active social agents whose levels of competence are often underestimated by adults (Jenks, 2005 James *et al*, 1998). The conceptualisation of children as active social beings, who construct and create social relationships, rather than as the cultural dupes of socialization means that methodologically, children must be considered as *active* rather than *passive* research participants. Thus, children are the *subjects*, rather than the *objects*, of research. Furthermore, research within the social studies of childhood is now carried out *with* children instead of *on* them (Christensen and James, 2008). The children's rights agenda provides a formal framework for a more participatory approach to research with children. For example, Article 12 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC) gives children the right to participate in decisions which affect them. The right to participate is now more commonly recognised alongside traditional rights to protection and the provision of services. Furthermore, Sinclair (2004) notes the influence of contemporary notions of user involvement, which have become more popular since the 1970's as the power of the consumer grows to shape the nature and quality of goods and services available to them. This idea has crossed over to public service use, and increasingly the role of 'user' has extended to include children (Sinclair, 2004).

However, Punch (2002) has identified three different methodological approaches to research with children within the social studies of childhood, each of which conceptualises children's abilities and needs in different ways. The first considers children as practically the same as adults and employs the same methods as those used with them. The second perceives children as completely different from adults and examines the child's world as anthropologically strange. The third understands children as similar to adults but with different competencies.

In defence of the first position laid out by Punch (2002), the literature review has demonstrated how children are traditionally constructed as dangerous or in danger, requiring regulation, guidance and adult assistance. Therefore, by seeing children as in need of special kinds of child-oriented research methods, the construction of children as less competent than, and cognitively different from adults may unwittingly be reinforced. Furthermore, children are not a homogenous group. Therefore, calling research methods 'child-oriented' and 'child-led' may obscure the heterogeneity within the category of children, and "effectively circumvents the need for further discussion of the social dynamics that shape data collection and analysis by posing as a solution" (Hunleth, 2011: 82).

There are a number of arguments in favour, however, of retaining a sense of anthropological strangeness when undertaking any research with children. Jenks (2005) argues that the ‘natural’ category of the child is often problematised in lieu of the ‘cultural’ category of the child. If children are a cultural category, then children’s cultures may legitimately be studied as anthropologically strange. The existence of children’s culture which is distinct from the culture of adults is epitomised in Opie and Opie’s (1977) ethnographic study of children’s folklore and games, which found that children create and maintain a complex system of rituals, rules and normative constraints which is connected to, but noticeably different from the world of adults. Fine and Sandstrom (1988) similarly highlight the changing nature of the experiences of childhood culture through exploration of the situated character of the meanings of insults used by children;

Insults are spoken frequently by children with a wider range of meanings than adults might guess... to complicate matters further, one should not assume that these meanings remain constant over generations – or even between curricular cohorts of a single academic year (Fine and Sandstrom, 1988: 35).

In this way James *et al* (1998) proposed an approach to research with children which imagined the tribal child, encouraging an emphasis upon children’s social action as structured, but within a system that is unfamiliar to adults and, therefore, to be revealed through research.

Childhood intentionality welcomes the anthropological strangeness that has been recommended by ethnographic and interpretive methodologies for, if the tribes of childhood are to be provided with the status of social worlds, then it is to be anticipated that their particularity will systematically confound our taken-for-granted knowledge of how other (adult) social worlds function (James *et al*, 1998: 29).

In line with a sense that children’s culture might be ‘anthropologically strange’ for adults, Mayall (2008) proposed an approach to research which involves asking children to help adult researchers to understand what it means to be a child. This helps to overcome generational differences which might limit an adult’s ability to make sense of the experiences of a contemporary childhood. Furthermore, Qvortrup (2008) points out that children live within a particular set of social, cultural and economic circumstances which derive from their minority group status and living conditions resulting from unequal age-based power relationships. Their experiences, therefore, cannot easily be

comprehended by adults who are not currently experiencing the same positioning within their society.

The third and final approach to research with children highlighted by Punch (2002) is one where children are conceptualised as similar to adults but with different competencies. For example, Hunleth (2011) proposes that more informal and reciprocal power relations, which allow children to question and challenge the adult researcher, are facilitated by creative child-oriented methods. Furthermore, Pridmore and Bendelow (1995) argue that creative visual techniques provide empirical demonstration of the high quality and sophisticated nature of data which can be collected from even very young children, who might not be able to communicate as effectively in a more traditional interview situation. Clay *et al* (2003) argue that drawing enables children to express complex ideas, emotions, or issues which are sensitive, hard to discuss, or things that children might not want, or feel able to, put into words. Similarly, Punch (2002) proposes that drawing gives children time to think over a question or topic rather than demanding a quick verbal response. In a traditional interview situation, participants may not feel able to bring up an issue which is not directly approached by the researcher. This is illustrated by Darbyshire *et al* (2005), who found that children were following norms for communicating with visitors by being polite and answering questions rather than engaging in discussion about their experiences of play activity and places;

...this developed into what may be modestly claimed as a methodological ‘first’ – the ‘jumping focus group’... the facilitator changed the environment by asking everyone if they would like to jump and talk, signalling a more fun and interactive norm of communication. The children subsequently expressed the physicality of fun by demonstrating one variety (of many) of the game of ‘chasey’ (Darbyshire *et al*, 2005: 241-242).

The conceptualisation of children which is integral to the methodological approach used in this project acknowledges both diversity among children and the differences in children’s everyday lives compared to those of adults. Arguing that children have the same competencies as adults ignores diversity between the competencies of individual adults and children. However, the experience of school particularly defines children’s experiences as separate from those of adults. Therefore, methods which utilise the kinds of activities with which children are familiar with in school, such as drawing, are likely to feel more comfortable for children than an unfamiliar formal interview situation, and are thus likely to produce richer, and more meaningful data.

Importantly, the use of child-oriented methods in this project is not a reflection of children's abilities, but instead a reflection of the need to consider the particularities of participant's everyday lives. Similarly, Mayall (2008) points out how the use of paired or grouped activities with children is not necessarily a concession to the view that children are not capable of engaging in research activities alone, but in contrast, can be a way for children to showcase their skills.

Analysis of conversations with pairs or groups of children can show their cognitive abilities to listen, take note, reply, add in points... Furthermore, children help with the social presentation of other children by explaining to the researcher that their companion is shy, or not generally talkative, or always has a lot to say, or isn't feeling well (Mayall in Christensen and James, 2008: 122).

Griffiths (2011) argues that drawing activities "provide a basis for conversation with children in the research setting", and offer children "stimuli for questions" which enables them to talk confidently about themselves and their lives (Griffiths, 2011: 192). Furthermore, such creative activities also give children the opportunity to discuss issues which are difficult to talk about, especially things that adults, particularly in a school context, might deem inappropriate. Creative methods, therefore, can also provide a way of negotiating traditional age-based power relations between adult researcher and child participant. Furthermore, Griffiths (2011: 192) argues that it is by seeing how children engage with, and reject, different kinds of research activities that a researcher can get a better picture of "kid culture". James (2013: 176) argues that the eloquence with which children speak about "particular feelings, incidents and places" during fieldwork suggests that "these were important to them, as children". Therefore, it seems that a child-oriented approach to research, which allows children to express what matters to them most eloquently, is most appropriate for enabling children's culture to be accessed by a researcher. An approach which champion's anthropological strangeness, yet does not gain access to information about what is most important to children, learns nothing about new children's culture. It is instead, through the use of methods which make children feel comfortable that individual children can demonstrate, to a researcher, what matters to them. In qualitative research, it is the accounts of individual children, which, taken together, offer insight about children's experiences and culture more broadly.

However, anthropological strangeness remains an important concept in the methodological approach taken in this project. For example, any researcher who has previously been a school child, will enter the school context with assumptions about who is who and what is what. Without a sense

of anthropological strangeness, these assumptions may mask the realities of children's experiences in school, which, after all, are likely to differ between individuals, despite the fact that they all may have followed a similar curriculum in the same tightly scheduled format mutual to most school settings. A sense of anthropological strangeness, then, aids in the process of conducting a truly inductive research project which aims to discover new evidence with which to theorise, rather than reaffirm an existing idea or theory.

Knoblauch's (2005) notion of 'alterity', is useful for finding a middle ground between an approach of anthropological strangeness and an approach which aims to best accommodate children in relation to their particular experiences of schooling. 'Alterity', Knoblauch (2005) suggests, captures the difference felt within a culture of which the researcher already has a good background knowledge, rather than the anthropological 'strangeness' achieved in cultures that are entirely unfamiliar. Thus, in this project the school is conceptualised as a place which the child participants are likely to experience in ways which are different from how an adult researcher will have experienced school. Rather than relying on past experiences of being a school child to inform an understanding of children's experiences, the aim of this project was, therefore, to use the access gained into children's social worlds to build a kind of cultural knowledge of the field.

Power Relations in School and the Researcher's Role

The methodological approach taken by this project, which aims to treat children as active and differently competent subjects of research, acknowledges that traditional age-based power relations are social constructions that change over time and between cultures. The school, Fendler (2001) notes, is a complex political space over which children have little or no control. Yet, the methodological stance taken by this research must not be mistaken for an intention to disrupt the existing power relations of the research context, as this section will demonstrate.

It is not uncommon for researchers to attempt to limit the impact of traditional age based power structures upon research with children through their use of method, body language, terminology and space within school. For example, Darbyshire (2011) notes how conducting research outside of the classroom helps to create an informal environment for animated, interactive discussion which welcomed children's contributions and, most importantly, indicates to children that research is different from 'school work'. However, Hunleth (2011) provides evidence that a researcher's attempts to re-shape children's well established understandings of power differentials or activities,

particularly those familiar to a school context, may be in vain. For example, Hunleth (2011) asked children to carry out activities on the themes of household roles, family, and illness and, while doing this, rejected the term “assignment” for these activities due to its association with “forced work... a type of obligation” (Hunleth, 2011: 85). Yet, the children in Hunleth’s (2011) research constantly referred to the activities as ‘assignments’. Hunleth (2011) makes sense of this by considering that, from children’s perspectives, the term assignment did not bear the same power-related connotations as it did for the adult researcher. By refusing to allow her to drop the term ‘assignment’ Hunleth (2011) argues that the children reprimanded her for stepping outside of the norms of the age-based power framework which they were used to. Thus demonstrating how children framed their understanding of research in terms of what was familiar – school and homework. Similarly, children’s familiarity with certain activities such as drawing, which is often used in child-oriented research with children, can also be problematic in relation to power relations between participants and researcher, and between participants themselves. For example, Atkinson (2008) notes that for children, drawings are often understood as ‘gifts’, with which they might feel they can build a relationship with adult researchers. Adults’ delight at receiving pictures as ‘gifts’, Atkinson (2008) warns, can lead to competition between more, and less, creative and skilled children. It is ironic that a method which is used with children because it is familiar to them, becomes problematic for this very reason. The ways in which British school children use drawings and pictures in their everyday lives are well established; they are encouraged to create pictures which are competent rather than expressive, and present their pictures to adults as gifts or pieces of schoolwork. This impacts the extent to which drawing pictures can be seen to empower children in research through expression in their own medium, as the rules of this medium are clearly made by adults.

It must not be forgotten, however, that children are active in the construction of their everyday worlds, and are, therefore, active in their reinforcement of the power frameworks in a particular research context. Hunleth’s (2011) and Atkinson’s (2008) findings highlight the importance of acknowledging that children’s understandings of age-based power issues may differ to those of adults, and how the issues of power which are significant to children themselves may be far removed from a researcher’s methodological concerns.

If issues of power have different meanings or significance to children and adults, then the researcher is required to consider how they might ethically work within the existing power relations of the

particular research context. This means paying attention to the power relations between children and adults, or between children themselves. The appearance, experience and details of the power frameworks which children shape, resist or maintain will differ between individuals. Furthermore, the extent to which children maintain or resist the power frameworks which may be present in their social worlds may differ between contexts. Children may be involved in multiple power frameworks, shaping, resisting and maintaining each in different ways. Respect and consideration for the power relations within the particular context of the research may, therefore, be equally, if not more, significant for children than the choice of methods in relation to reducing power differentials between child participant and adult researcher. Gallacher and Gallagher's (2008) notion of immature methodology is useful in relation to the practical implementation of a respectful attitude towards the aspects of power which are significant to children. They propose that the study of childhood should be approached with a little humility, and the understanding that we are all, irrespective of age, interdependent, incompetent, vulnerable and incomplete in some way, which makes us immature, rather than fully formed, rational, competent and autonomous agents.

Such an attitude has some potential to undermine dualistic notions of powerful researchers and vulnerable participants, competent adults and incompetent children (Gallacher and Gallager, 2008: 511).

By combining an immature methodological approach with the notion of ethnographic 'alterity' (discussed previously, Knoblauch, 2005) it is possible to simultaneously respect the issues of power which are significant to children, while noting the overall power structures of the situation being explored. Incorporated alongside this is the approach proposed by Mayall (2008) which argues that researchers should work *with* generational power differences by "...asking children, directly, to help me, an adult, to understand childhood" (Mayall in James and Christensen, 2008: 110).

Respectfully observing the power relations of a research context in the way that Gallacher and Gallager (2008) and Mayall (2008) recommend requires reflection upon the role of the researcher. The importance of reflexive practice during research is highlighted by Gabb (2010), who proposes that reflexivity is part of respecting the sensitivities involved in studying people's lives (Gabb, 2010). In order to become reflexive, it is necessary to consider the *role* one plays during research and how this may impact events. The role of a researcher ought to be established with the aim of being both adaptable and genuine, and with the importance of rapport building in mind. Rapport is not built through participants' understanding of the researcher's role alone, but instead through a

more general attitude of reciprocity on the part of the researcher. Precisely what is required from the researcher to build rapport is impossible to pin down and differs between participants and contexts.

If, as Mayall (2008) suggests, adult researchers are asking children to help them to understand childhood, then attempting to change the power relations which form such an integral part of children's everyday experiences may be asking too much. It is unrealistic, therefore, to expect any change in power relations within a school as a result of a research visit and furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that adults in school, including researchers, will be expected to behave according to the well-established constructions of age-based power. This may mean that researchers must carefully balance their commitment to 'give back' through practical, hands-on involvement with the everyday work of school life, and a commitment to a sociologically minded understanding of the school as a research context.

However, by assuming a role which prioritises the child's wishes and feelings, traditional age-based power imbalances may to some extent be temporarily negotiated in order for the child's voice to be heard more clearly. Jordan (2006) reminds us that researchers do not have total control over the research setting. Indeed, participants are often quite active in determining "the climate and quality of the interaction between the observer and the observed" (Jordan, 2006: 172). Furthermore, the role of the researcher is not determined by the researcher alone, but established *with* participants, who will of course have their own ideas about the researcher's place in their lives and will have their own frames of reference in relation to power differentials. Allowing participants to work out for themselves what the researcher is doing is fundamental to rapport building between researcher and participant. Remaining sensitive to the differing needs of participants, and acting in a way that is considerate and respectful is, therefore, more important than challenging oneself to the impossible task of altering power relations in school as part of the research role.

In conclusion, this chapter has justified the project's use of the term ethnography, and has also given consideration to the reflexive approach required by any research which claims to be qualitative and interpretive. By using child-oriented methods, this study does not necessarily concede to the idea that children have different competencies to adults in relation to their ability to participate in traditional methods such as focus groups, interviews or surveys. Instead the particular method, or combination of methods, may be the ideal way to investigate a particular aspect of understanding with children. The fact that it is 'child-oriented' may relate to its usefulness for exploring children's social worlds, and in order to work on a practical level, methods must fit into the participants' lives.

Child-oriented methods, it has been shown, are not always necessary for research with children. However, they can help children to express their ideas more eloquently, and to challenge or question adult-child power relations. Group work in particular can help to showcase children's abilities more effectively than more traditional one-on-one methods. The increased flexibility of creative, child-oriented methods encourages children to discuss issues in greater depth and facilitate a deeper insight into their experiences than could be gained from structured questions devised by an adult researcher prior to entering the field. Thus, the use of child-oriented methods, which offer children greater control over the direction of the research, fits neatly with the inductive approach of this project. Furthermore, research methods that take a child-oriented group format offer an opportunity to develop the kind of 'communicative activities' which compensate for the relatively short stay in the field during this focused ethnography. The focus of these communicative activities, it has been noted, is interaction, that is, verbal and visual conduct rather than social groups. However, acknowledging the anthropological strangeness of children's social worlds via the notion of alterity allows for the 'small elements' of social interaction to be examined with necessary care, free from assumptions about how children experience their everyday lives in a school context.

CHAPTER FOUR: DESIGN AND METHODS

This chapter describes the methods of data collection used in this project. It begins by discussing three important issues that required consideration in order to define the research design. These are the choice of research sites, decisions about which children to work with, and the measurement of social class. The chapter then outlines the process of recruitment, both of the research sites and of the participants within these sites. This chapter also reflects upon the ways that the participant-led nature of the research methods led to a number of unplanned adjustments in the field. This includes, most notably, the decision to avoid using data created by three interviews conducted in the homes of participants, and to abandon plans to conduct any further home interview sessions.

Research Design

Chapter one demonstrated how the school has been identified, in previous research, as an important site of control over children's bodies, and conversely, as a place where children use their bodies to resist age-based power relations. The identification of school as a "locus of discipline" (Simpson, 2000: 61), both in relation to adult power over children's bodies and children's ability to use their bodies as tools to negotiate age-based discipline and wield power over their peers, was key to the decision to choose a school context as the site for this project.

Why Two Schools?

Using two schools with contrasting demographics allowed for the comparison of the ways that structural factors including social class and religio-cultural differences, for example, influence children's understandings of the body. Locating the research in two different school contexts also enabled the exploration of how the particularities of a school impact upon children's experiences and understandings of the body, and thus acknowledges the importance of diversity between children's experiences noted in the previous chapter. Siting the research in two different schools also facilitated the exploration of the second and third research questions, noted above. These questions ask how children's understandings of the body are shaped by the structural factors of their lives, and how social constructions of childhood, including, for example, those relating to the experiences of school by children of different social class groups. Furthermore, sociological research within private schools is less common than research in state schools. Therefore, this project provides a rare opportunity to explore children's experiences of private school life in comparison to those of state school children.

Why Nine and Ten Year Olds?

An important aim of this project - as outlined above in the research questions - is to explore how the temporal nature of childhood impacts upon children's experiences and understandings of the body. In the previous chapter, it was argued that the transition from primary school to junior, then senior school is characteristic of the rapidly moving instability of childhood within Western cultures, and thus means that the child's body is a crucial resource for making and breaking identity (James, 1993). This idea is key to the decision to work with a group of children who were nearing the end of their primary schooling. It was predicted that these children would be anticipating the move to secondary school, and that this subject would, therefore, provide an important focus for discussion about change over time in a way that children could easily relate to.

The reason for choosing nine and ten year old children rather than children in the final year of primary school was, in part, a practical one. Children in the final year of primary school - that is ten and eleven year olds in year six - were likely to be too busy with SATS (Standard Assessment Tests) examinations to be able to participate in research. Gatekeepers to these children, it was predicted, would be unlikely to consent to access or participation due to concerns about children becoming distracted from lessons integral for their SATS examinations. However, for the nine and ten year old children in year five - as this project will go on to demonstrate - the move up to secondary school was an important issue, and common topic of conversation. Thus, by choosing to research with nine and ten year old children, the aim of the project, in terms of exploring how the temporal nature of childhood impacts upon children's experiences and understandings of the body, was met without undue inconvenience to, or disruption of, the daily lives of participants.

Measuring Social Class

Social class is key to addressing the question of how children's experiences and understandings of the body are shaped by the structural factors of their lives. Therefore, it was necessary to attempt to measure social class in some way. However, the kinds of social class measures used with adults are rendered quite useless for use with children who are outside the labour force (Potter *et al*, 2013, Dimaggio, 2012). Nonetheless, Reay (1997) argues that "without class, or something to go in its place, we cannot engage adequately with the intricate web of inequalities that constitutes society" (Reay, 1997: 226).

One way of avoiding the problems associated with measuring and allocating social class would be to simply ask participants which social class they identify with. The idea of asking children to class

themselves is not inconceivable. For example, Ramsay (1991) found that children aged six or seven have developed fairly clear and consistent, albeit rudimentary ideas about social class differences. Furthermore, Ramsay (1991) reports that three to five year olds could accurately identify images of people as either rich or poor by noticing clues in relation to the people's clothing, possessions and the setting of the images. This means that social class, when carefully explained in an accessible way, is a notion that children can use and understand. However, Dimaggio (2012) points to evidence which suggests that when given the option, respondents will often leave out questions about social class, and, when they do answer, tend to give unexpected answers which do not adhere to the criteria sociologists would traditionally use to measure class. Not only is the notion of social class not very salient (Dimaggio, 2012) but it appears to also be unstable, as Lambert (2006) found when studying British people's beliefs about their own class identities over a period of five years. Furthermore, a situation where children need to be 'taught' about social class before they are asked to discuss it would bear close resemblance to children's experiences of schooling. This runs the risk of creating data which is merely a regurgitation of that 'lesson', particularly if children were asked to discuss the subject immediately without time to consider the information in relation to the contexts of their own lives.

The measure of social class used in this project, therefore, was one of comparative simplicity. It is based upon the broad assumption that children who attend the private school are middle class and children who attend the state school are working class. This distinction becomes important to later discussion of how the structural differences of the children's lives are significant to their understanding of the body. However, alongside the simplicity of this broad assumption, Reay's (1997) discussion of boundaries between social classes as "flames whose edges are in constant movement" (Bourdieu, 1984: 13), was helpful for recognising that children within each school were not always necessarily of the same social class. Examples of these 'moving edges' include the fact that one state school participant's mother owned a horse, and their family lived in a suburban area further away from the school than most other children who lived in the local urban area. Similarly, one private school participant lived in a much more suburban area than her rurally located peers and was driven to school in a small, relatively inexpensive car which stood out from the huge, luxury four-wheel drive vehicles driven by the families of most private school pupils.

Reay's (1997) adaptation of habitus in the field helps to conceptualise class as "encompassing complex social and psychological dispositions that interact with gender and race to inform and influence everyday practice" Reay (1997: 228) reminds us to consider the ways that social class may be intersected with other aspects of difference. Indeed, this intersection of aspects of difference proved to be important to the findings of this project (see chapters six, seven and eight). However, the stories from the lives of participants which unfold through data presented in these chapters also demonstrates that the daily experiences of state and private school children differ, quite markedly, in a number of important ways, and thus justify the usefulness of a simple school-based measure of social class for the purposes of this project.

Recruiting the Schools

Having decided on the research design, and gained ethical approval for the project from the University of Sheffield, schools were approached via letter asking for permission to allow me to enter their sites as a researcher and attempt to recruit their year five pupils for the research. I had been sent to the state school as a volunteer reading assistant by a local literacy charity, and therefore had been working with a small group of year two children at the state school for six weeks prior to the research, but had no prior contact with the year five children. A meeting with the state school's Headteacher was arranged to discuss the research and request permission to enter the school as a researcher, and to recruit the state school's year five children as participants. This, it was explained, would take place alongside my continuing role as a reading assistant with the small group of year two children. Following consultation with the year five teachers and children, the Headteacher agreed to the project, and a further meeting with the year five teachers was arranged to schedule an appointment to meet their classes and present the research project to them.

Four co-educational private schools, whose children were likely to provide a suitable demographic contrast to the state school, were identified and contacted by letter (see Appendix 1). One school was interested in taking part in the project¹, and I was contacted by a year five teacher by telephone in order to discuss the project in more detail. Both year five teachers at the private school subsequently agreed to allow me to access their year five classes. As part of this arrangement, I volunteered as a reading assistant with the private school year two classes during the fieldwork.

¹ The other three private schools replied to say that they were busy with other commitments.

The state and private schools recruited for this project provide a stark contrast in terms of location, facilities, and student demographic. The state school is located in a built-up area of social housing and low-cost private housing inhabited by an ethnically mixed community including a large Muslim population. The proportion of pupils at the state school known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average for the UK. The state school has one very small indoor hall and one outdoor concrete playground for play and sports. Equipment for sports and academic activities is limited. In contrast to the state school, the private school has only a very small population of ethnic minority students and Muslim students, and is situated in a wealthy suburb on the outskirts of the city on a secluded leafy campus. The private school has grassy areas for play and sports, and excellent equipment for both sporting and academic activities.

Recruiting Participants in School

Having identified the schools, the research was presented to each year five state school class in turn. Each class gathered in their respective classrooms for the presentations as there was no suitable space available, at that time in school, for the sixty-one children who made up the state school year five group of potential participants to gather together. At the private school, the year five group numbered thirty-one in total, and they could, therefore, gather together in one classroom for the presentation. The presentation took the same format each time, beginning with an explanation of who I was, and what I was doing in the children's school. The details of the project were described in simplified terms, and titled 'Me and My Body' in an effort to make the project more accessible for children and school staff, who were not familiar with sociological terminology and ideas. The research activities were described, and it was explained that if children chose to participate, they would be asked to make up friendship pairs or groups of three to undertake the activities in a private space in school away from other children who were not participants. The children's choice about their participation from the beginning, and throughout the project in relation to specific aspects of the research activities, was emphasised. Alongside this, the use of pseudonyms to anonymise participants was carefully explained to children. Finally, it was explained to children that if they wished to become participants, they would need to sign a consent form and also take one home for their parent or guardian to sign. Information letters and consent sheets for children (see Appendixes 5 and 6) and for parents (see Appendixes 7 and 8), were stapled together in sets and left with year five teachers to give to children upon request.

Time was left at the end of the presentations to the year five classes for questions about me, and about the research project. It was anticipated that not all of the children's questions would be answered, and furthermore, children were likely to think of questions later on, after the presentations, as part of their consideration about whether or not they wished to become participants. For this reason, bright red research question boxes, decorated with stars, were placed into each of the year five classrooms. Children were told that upon my return in one week's time, the anonymous questions would be read out and answered in front of the whole class².

Twenty one participants were recruited as participants from the state school (thirteen girls and eight boys) and eighteen participants were recruited from the private school (ten girls and eight boys) forming a sample of thirty nine children altogether (twenty-three girls and sixteen boys). The difference in number of participants between the schools reflects the difference in class sizes between the schools. The difference between the numbers of boys and girls seemed to be a result of girls at both schools being more concerned than boys about wanting to do things together, which Egan (2013) notes, is characteristic of female friendship groups. In the state school, children organised themselves into three pairs and five groups of three for the first activity sessions, and then split into nine pairs and one group of three for the second activity sessions. Private school children chose to remain in the same groups for both sessions, made up of six pairs and two groups of three (see Appendix 10 for details of groupings and pseudonyms).

Schedule of Fieldwork Activities

Fieldwork began at the state school in September 2011, and finished three months later in December. Fieldwork began in the private school in January 2012 and finished three months later in March. In both schools, three weeks of observation were followed by research activity sessions (described below) which took place over a nine week period, and were interspersed with more observation in gaps between activity sessions. The final stage of the research involved four semi-structured family interviews which took place in the homes of three state school children and one private school child. The data from these home interviews does not, however, feature in this thesis. The reasons for this are discussed in the section titled 'Reflections on the Methods'.

Observation

One week following the presentation made to the year five classes, observation of the school day began. The three weeks of observation prior to the research activity sessions were important for

² The children's use of the research question box is considered further in chapter five, Ethics.

building rapport with children. We asked questions about one another and, as I became more familiar with children's everyday lives, the children became more familiar with me, and how the research project was likely to affect those everyday lives.

Observation took place in the year five classrooms, the school playgrounds, reception areas, dining halls and year five P.E lessons. I usually arrived on campus before morning registration to greet parents who were dropping their children off, and children who gathered in the playground prior to entering their classrooms. I often remained after school to help with tidying up, rearranging furniture and creating classroom wall displays. During observation, it was occasionally necessary to retreat to the staff room, teacher's toilets or store cupboard to make notes.

The first week of observation was the busiest time for answering anonymous questions from the 'Research Question Boxes' which had been placed in each of the year five classrooms (see above). This proved to be an effective method for giving children the opportunity to ask questions which they would prefer not to ask in person. It also enabled participants to share and mutually discuss their concerns about the research, an example of which will be examined in detail as part of chapter five, Ethics.

Research Activity Sessions

Each participant took part in two research activity sessions in pairs or groups of three. These research activity sessions took place in empty rooms on the respective school campuses away from other children and school staff. These sessions lasted between forty minutes to an hour, depending on children's willingness and enthusiasm, and were recorded using a Dictaphone. The activity sessions involved creative child-oriented activities including storytelling, drawing, and making timelines. However, it is the transcriptions of these recordings which form the focus of the analysis (discussed in the Data Analysis section, below), rather than any visual data created by the research activities. This decision was made in light of the discussion, developed in the previous chapter, about the potential for activities which are familiar to children, such as drawing, to become a source of competition and a potential ethical challenge for researchers who wish to avoid reinforcing traditional age-based power relations (Atkinson, 2008, Hunleth, 2011). The methods which created visual data during the research activity sessions were thus employed as tools get children talking, and therefore enabled me to access the interaction between children which forms the analytical focus of a focused ethnography such as this project. The use of child-oriented, creative methods in this project is, therefore, guided by a commitment to making children feel comfortable, optimising

the opportunities for children to demonstrate their skills and capabilities, and allowing children to more easily challenge and control the research activities in order for the direction of the research to be guided by the participants. The ability to tell children that the pictures and documents which they were asked to create were just ‘for us’, and would not be shown to anyone else, forms part of this commitment.

Stage One Research Activity Sessions: Information Sheets, Stories and Self-portraits

The first of the two activity sessions with each of the participants (in their respective pairs or groups) involved filling in an ‘About Me’ information sheet and then writing a ‘My Body’ story, followed by a full body self-portrait.

The ‘About Me’ information sheet was designed to elicit some basic background information about each child and thus allow children to introduce themselves and provide a context for discussion during the activity sessions (see Appendix 2). One aim of the ‘About Me’ information sheet was to establish a pseudonym which could be used throughout the entire project, in order to anonymise the data. Participants were interested and enthusiastic about the concept of pseudonyms and tended to take great care in choosing a suitable ‘fake name’ for themselves. The ‘About Me’ information sheets allowed children time to discuss and consider their name, but also encouraged children to ‘pin down’ a name and therefore helped to avoid the discussion of pseudonyms from continuing as the focus of the activity sessions. The aim of the ‘About Me’ information sheets was to encourage children to feel comfortable talking about themselves, with a view to enabling children to gradually become more confident in sharing the more complex ideas needed for the ‘My Body’ story which followed the ‘About Me’ information sheets. For this purpose, the statement *The most important thing you need to know about me is*, was followed by a space which children could fill with writing, or choose to discuss (see Appendix 2). The ‘About Me’ information sheets were also designed to gather background information on each participant to help build rapport by increasing the feeling of familiarity between the researcher and participants. Knowing who participants lived with, how many siblings they had, or whether a participant identified with any particular religion also proved to be useful for following conversations between children, both in activity sessions and during observation. This meant that I could refer to the information from the ‘About Me’ information sheets, rather than having to interrupt the flow of conversation too often in order to ask children for clarification. Asking children to state their religion, if they had one, also proved to be useful when diversity between Muslim state school children became apparent. At the time of the

fieldwork, it would then have felt uncomfortable asking children whose beliefs, in relation to dress, for example, differed notably from the children with more traditional Islamic beliefs, whether or not they were indeed Muslim.

The 'My Body' story activity, which followed the 'About Me' information sheets, aimed to explore the notion of temporality in relation to children's experiences of change over time. Participants were asked to consider the three phrases *When I was younger, my body was...*, *Now, my body is...* and *When I go to secondary school, my body will be...* (see Appendix 3). Children could write on the sheet or just discuss the phrases. Each of the three statements was designed to explore an aspect of temporality; past, present and future. Rather than giving a specific age to look back to, asking children to consider their bodies when they were *younger* allowed children to decide how far into the past they wanted to go, and therefore encouraged them to discuss memories or knowledge about their bodies in the past which were significant to them. The statement *Now, my body is...* encouraged children to consider both what they were like now, and how their bodies had changed over time since they were *younger*. The final statement, *When I go to secondary school, my body will be...* encouraged children to imagine how their bodies would continue to change. The 'My Body' story activity proved to be enjoyable for participants who readily shared their memories of being younger, reflected on their bodies during the time of the fieldwork, and imagined, in great detail, how their bodies might be in the future. It is through engagement with this activity that the importance of the notion of 'normality' for children was most clearly expressed. Specifically, in children's discussions of their wish to be 'normal' in future, an issue discussed in detail as part of chapter six, *The Changing Body*. This method also successfully encouraged children to discuss the issue of temporality, and furthermore, the data produced by the children's engagement in the 'My Body' story activity proved to be integral to the argument that children's conceptualisations of bodily change are shaped by social class, which will also be laid out in chapter six, *The Changing Body*.

The third activity which formed part of children's first paired or group interview was a full body self-portrait. The aim of this activity was to create an environment where children could talk about the things they were interested in, and to encourage children to speak in detail about themselves and their understandings of the body. For this reason, the self-portrait activity was purposefully open-ended in order to facilitate the broad exploration of which aspects of the body were most important

to children. Each participant was given a plain piece of A4 paper and colouring pens and asked to draw their whole body, from head to toe. Questions for discussion were prompted by what the children drew, and discussion during this activity was largely directed by children.

Stage Two Research Activity Sessions: Daily Timelines

The second of the two activity sessions with each of the participants (in their respective pairs or groups) involved making daily timelines. The aim of this activity was to explore temporality in the context of a single day, as opposed to the long-term passing of time which had been explored in the 'My Body' story. Previous work on children's time use has proven that discussion of daily routines with creative props can be a successful research tool, particularly for helping children to visualise their thoughts in relation to an abstract task (see Solberg, 1990, and Bagnoli, 2009). A further aim of this activity was to encourage children to consider how their body feels through the day and to think about the work that they, and others, might do to care for their body. Each participant was asked to create a timeline of an average school day from a simple template which began with *When I wake up* and ended with *When I go to sleep* (see Appendix 4). Children were asked to think about and discuss the subject of *my body through the day* while they were creating their timelines.

Home Interview Sessions

The aim of the home interviews was to explore the temporal nature of childhood and the experience of change. This was to be facilitated using family photographs as a tool to aid discussion of *how I have changed over time*. For this reason, families were asked to have some photographs ready for the interview, in either digital or hard copy. These could be pictures of their child, or of other people or things which they feel are significant to the discussion of change over time. Another issue which this method intended to explore was the understanding of normality in relation to children's bodies, which was found in the literature review, to be important for children and families (James, 1993).

The prospect of participating in a home interview sessions was raised with participants at the end of this second stage of activity sessions. Children were given the opportunity to ask questions about what a home interview would entail and offered information sheets and consent forms to take home. They were encouraged to discuss the home interview sessions with their families and to think carefully about whether they would like to be involved.

Three families were recruited from the state school and one from the private school. A further family recruited from the private school had to cancel their interview at the last minute due to

illness. The home interviews were semi-structured, lasted around one hour and took place in the family homes of children following the fieldwork in each respective school.

Reflections on the Methods

This part of the chapter considers changes to the research design made during fieldwork, including the aforementioned adjustment to the planned use of data from family interview sessions, along with some other, more minor, adjustments to the research activities as a result of feedback from teachers in school. These changes are a reflection of the flexible and open-ended nature of the majority of methods used, and offer recommendations about how the research methods might have been employed more effectively, both on a practical level, and more specifically in relation to their usefulness in relation to exploring the research questions.

The period of observation offered a chance to predict how the child-oriented methods chosen for the research activity sessions would work on a practical level, in the particular context of each school. This is demonstrated by the fact that the self-portrait activity was adjusted during fieldwork. Initially, the plan was to ask children to fill in an outline of a human body. However, following new insights gained during observation prior to the research activities, it was decided that children ought to instead be given a blank piece of paper and asked to draw a self-portrait. Children at the state school, it turned out, had been asked to draw self-portraits (head only) as part of their art lessons. Therefore, the idea of drawing a whole body self-portrait without a template did not seem as daunting a task to the children as I had imagined prior to observation. Furthermore, in discussion of the methods with teachers, they advised that some of the boys were likely to ‘draw rude things’ and not much else on an outline of a human body. In hindsight, I feel that this was unlikely, yet the changes to the initial design of the method proved to be positive for other reasons. For example, it was difficult to create a gender neutral outline of a body; they always appeared to be male. Furthermore, creating an outline which did not look like an adult, but neither looked like a *young* child proved difficult. The nine and ten year old participants were such different shapes and sizes that attempting to fit any of them into an ‘outline’ that was supposed to reflect their body proved to be problematic. These changes to the self-portrait activity enhanced its open-ended nature by enabling children to express themselves much more freely than they would have been able to within the initial template. For example, a number of children chose to use most of the blank sheet of paper drawing slogans and objects related to their beliefs and hobbies which acted as useful footholds for more in-depth conversations about the children’s everyday lives, and thus helped to build further rapport. Mason’s (2008) emphasis upon the importance of re-shaping methods as the research

process unfolds helps to make sense of how the self-portraits were adapted with positive consequences following new insights from the field.

Observation allowed for the comparison of events between the two schools, and for the findings of previous literature in relation to the school to be considered in context. For example, observation of classroom practice and conversation between children confirmed the prediction, made in relation to the work of James (1993), that the transition to secondary school is a significant point in time for primary school children. Similarly, the finding that the body is central to power relations between adults and children in school (see chapter one, Literature Review) provided a platform from which to observe. For example, observation of the reception areas of the two schools, which were both used as waiting areas for children who claimed to feel ill, allowed previous findings about children's ability to fake illness (Wilkinson, 1988), and the ways that children who claim illness are understood in school (Prout, 2008) to be developed as part of chapter eight, *The Disciplined Body*.

As noted in the description of the 'About Me' information sheets (above) the space following the statement *The most important thing about me is...* encouraged children to communicate what, about their bodies was most important to them. A number of children chose to write about their hobbies and interests rather than their bodies in response to this statement. However, other children referred to aspects of their bodies which had featured as part of their school-based learning about the body, which subsequently forms an important component of chapter seven, *The Experiential Body*. Therefore, while this method did not pick out children's understandings of the relationship between identity and the body as intended, the data it did produce, however, proved to be incredibly important to the project. This demonstrates the importance of remaining flexible to the possibility that the true usefulness of a method may become apparent through its practice, even if this differs from the purpose intended in its initial design.

Children, it turned out, were not particularly interested in discussing bodily care and how their bodies felt throughout the day, which was the subject which the timeline activity was intended to explore. This meant that the focus of the activity was shifted, by the children themselves, to what they *were* interested in. That is, descriptions of the activities which they took part in after school. During the sessions, I often found myself asking the children, *so what does that have to do with your body?* while they discussed watching their favourite soap operas on television, playing sports or going to Mosque. As a result of this child-led shift in focus, the timeline sessions felt messy and

unproductive during fieldwork. Furthermore, the data produced by this activity seemed, initially, to be quite useless in relation to the aims of the project. However, following more careful and imaginative analysis in conjunction with data from other methods, it became clear that the details of children's lives outside school which had been exposed by the daily timeline activity highlighted contrasts in children's opportunities to exercise and play sport. These insights proved to be important in relation to the analysis of children's understandings of change over time, and are discussed in more detail as part of chapter six, *The Changing Body*.

However, while similar feelings of unproductive messiness were experienced in the home interview sessions, in contrast to the positive outcomes noted above as a result of unplanned, child-led changes to the 'About Me' information sheets and timeline activity, data from the home interview sessions did not reveal any new or interesting insights. In contrast, instead of adding to the themes of the data from school or affording exploration of change over time and the notion of normality - which was the purpose of the home interviews - a whole raft of disparate and unrelated data was created. This is why the data produced by the home interview sessions are not analysed as part of this thesis. It is important to also note that the issue which the home interview sessions had aimed to uncover - that of bodily change over time - had already been discussed in a much richer way as part of the 'My Body' story activity.

The failure of the home interviews to produce data relevant to the aims of the project is somewhat balanced by the fact that by using methods which encourage participant-led discussion, more reciprocal power relations were clearly encouraged. The disparate data produced by the four home interviews provides evidence that participants did indeed feel able to focus upon what was important to them, which has positive consequences in terms of the ethical impact of this research. Nevertheless, in reflecting upon what changes might have been made in order to make data from the home interview sessions more useful for the purposes of this project, it is clear that a better balance could have been struck between the theoretical notion that participants ought to be able to shape the direction of discussion, and guiding participants towards issues which related to the aims of this project. Thus, with the benefit of hindsight, the aims of the home interview sessions ought to have been refined prior to the application of this method in order to create less disparate, and more relevant, data.

Data Analysis

An interpretive approach to data analysis, which reflexively acknowledges the particular standpoint of the researcher, is characteristic of ethnographic studies such as this. This section discusses the interpretive analysis of data produced by this project. The strengths and weaknesses of the analysis software programme *Nvivo* are considered in relation to the need to code large data sets whilst still aiming for a ‘creative craftwork’ approach to analysis. As noted in the section of this chapter titled ‘Research Activities’, visual data produced by children in the research activity sessions were not analysed. The data discussed in this thesis are therefore derived from analysis of the transcriptions of conversations with children which occurred as part of the activity sessions.

Recordings from activity sessions were transcribed using an intelligent verbatim approach (Seers, 2012), that is, word for word with light editing of some filler words (um, and er, etc.), and interruptions to activity sessions which led to off-topic conversations. A detailed knowledge of the data set was established through the process of transcription, and the reading and re-reading of transcripts, along with the constant referral to observation notes. This use of observation notes alongside transcriptions helped to maintain a focus upon the integrity of each child’s individual story, which can be difficult in paired and group interview situations where the opinions of each participant can seem, from the perspective of a researcher, to merge or overlap (Rabiee, 2004).

The attention given to the tone, and emotional and physical involvement of participants in their communication - which are noted in brackets in extracts of data presented in chapters six, seven and eight - also help to maintain a focus on the integrity of the participants’ individual stories by helping to express precisely what was meant by that particular participant in the context of that activity session. More broadly, the use of quotes from transcriptions, referred to as extracts of data, helped to keep the analysis firmly rooted in the data.

The transcriptions were uploaded onto the data analysis software programme *Nvivo*, which was used to code the data. Nodes, or coding categories, were developed according to themes which were developed during the fieldwork. Data about any particular issue, for example, ‘hair’, would be coded within a node of that title. Data was often coded in more than one node. For example if a child was talking about how their hair would change in future, then this piece of data would go into both the ‘hair’ and ‘change’ category.

As discussed in chapter four, Design and Methods, each research method was geared towards exploration of a particular aspect of the research questions. The ‘My Body’ story, for example, was intended to explore children’s understandings of bodily change over time. Therefore, analysis began through the organisation of data into subjects relating to the research questions. However, the inductive approach taken by this project, along with the open-ended character of the research methods, facilitated the creation of data which offered new insights into how children come to know about the body which could not have been predicted prior to the research. For example, it was noted in the ‘Reflections on the Methods’ section (above) that children shifted the focus of the daily timeline activity from bodily care to after-school activities. During analysis of the data, therefore, it was important to remain focused upon the understanding of what Sandeowski (1995: 8) calls “a particular in the all together”. That is, the significance of pieces of data in its own right, along with the ways data fits into the data set as a whole.

The use of computer based systems for the analysis of qualitative data offers tremendous scope for handling large bodies of data, and indeed, *Nvivo* was vital for managing the data produced in this project. The systematic and orderly categorisation system which could be produced using *Nvivo* proved to be useful for getting to know the data. For example, the tree shaped node system could be viewed ‘as a whole’, or broken down into data from boys or girls etc, which enabled a good feel for the different possible routes of analysis within the data set. However, Mason (2008) warns that working with the discrete data blocks thrown up by the nodes or indices of such software packages can hamper interpretive analysis and that categorically indexed slices of data may be understood by researchers as unrealistically ‘concrete, uniform and static’ (Mason, 2008:158). Similarly, James (2012) warns that the use of computer based systems of analysis such as *Nvivo* may remove the ‘craft element’, which, as noted previously, is ‘an essential component of the analytic imagination that lies at the heart of interpretation’ (James, 2012: 564). The temptation to quantify qualitative data, James (2012) points out, derives from the inbuilt functions of software tools, and may change the nature of the intellectual process of interpretation, running the risk of detracting from the purpose of employing a qualitative approach in the first place. The use of these systems, James (2012) warns, often results in weaker knowledge of our data sets as a result of the ability to instantly retrieve extracts which we need without having to read and re-read through our transcripts and notes. The process of data analysis, according to James (2012) requires more than the acts of data framing, coding and systematizing – what she refers to as “the sharp edges of analysis” (James,

2012: 563). What is needed during the undertaking of these “sharp edges” is a reflexive and creative crafting of the data (James, 2012: 575). Finding the meaning in the stories of participants, therefore, requires narratives to be situated within broader social contexts. Thus, researchers must draw upon wider empirical and theoretical understandings by “digging deep into the repertoire of implicit knowledge that researchers themselves possess” (James, 2012: 574). This, according to James (2012) is how we engage our analytic imagination and therefore how we come to *understand*, rather than simply report our findings.

As noted in chapter three, Methodology, the analysis of data used in this project does not seek to provide an objective representation. It is instead based upon my particular, subjective interpretation of children’s meanings. *Nvivo*, therefore, was of less use for the reflexive and creative crafting of the data than it was for the sharp edges. For this reason, it was important to continually refer back to transcripts and notes during analysis. Time and time again, it was the context of the data which allowed me to understand more clearly what each particular participant was attempting to communicate.

In conclusion, this chapter has demonstrated the complexity of balancing methodological aims with the practical application of methods in the field. The importance of acknowledging the role of participants in shaping the research was demonstrated by the way that the timeline activity illuminated insight into children’s activities outside of school, rather than the intended focus upon how they care for their bodies. Indeed, the experience of having participants re-shape a method during its implementation – discussed above in relation to the daily timeline activity and the home interview sessions – shows that the epistemological standpoint guiding the methods is perhaps more important in relation to facilitating children’s active involvement in research and maintaining more equal power relations, than the methods themselves. This chapter has shown that an approach which champions participant-led methods clearly has both advantages and pitfalls. On one hand, the flexibility of child-oriented methods enabled children to shape the direction of the methods, and thus has positive ethical consequences as a result of more balanced researcher-participant power relations. On the other hand, utilising participant-led methods has the potential to create disparate and irrelevant data if they are applied in the absence of unrefined, indefinite aims. Discussion of the application of methods in practice highlighted the need to strike a balance between a project’s methodological aims, a researcher’s ‘ethical radar’, and the need to produce relevant data. It will

become clear, in chapters six, seven and eight, that the quality of the data produced by the fieldwork in schools more than makes up for the lack of success in the home interviews. This chapter has also examined the potential pitfalls involved in data analysis programmes in relation to the interpretive approach to data analysis taken by this project. It was argued that it is possible for programmes like *Nvivo* to improve the quality of analysis through assistance with the sharp edges of data analysis (James, 2012), particularly organisation and coding. This, it was noted, helps to allow the researcher to focus upon engaging their analytic imagination in order to enable reflexive and creative crafting of the data.

CHAPTER FIVE: ETHICS

This chapter describes how the ethical issues which arose during this project were dealt with, both in the planning stages of the research, and during the fieldwork. The potential for the body to be understood as a sensitive subject is considered in relation to gaining consent from both adult gatekeepers and child participants. This chapter also considers the ethics of recording, anonymity, disclosure procedure, and the importance of ongoing consent. Attention is also given to the treatment of non-participant children in the school and how this relates to the ethics of observation. Despite the decision to abandon the home interview sessions (discussed in the previous chapter), it is important to briefly discuss some practical and ethical considerations of research in the home. This chapter also explains the decision to analyse only transcripts and observation notes (see chapter four, Design and Methods), and not any visual content produced by the research activity sessions. Furthermore, the discussion of power relations in school, begun in chapter three, Methodology, is continued here in relation to both the use of drawing methods in this project and how methodological plans about the researcher's role played out, on a practical level, in school.

The Body as a Sensitive Subject

Research with children invariably involves gaining access through adult gatekeepers, and the subject of children's bodies could potentially have been seen as a worrying subject by adults who control access to children. In order to gain access to schools, therefore, it was necessary to produce an accessible presentation of my sociological interest in the body which is suitable for a lay audience, and which also allayed gatekeeper's concerns about talking to children about their bodies. This kind of strategic approach to presenting research to participants is apparent in the work of Murcott (1993), who states that her use of babies' feeding regimes as a topic for interviews with mothers was,

...strategic in exploiting the greater acceptability of collecting data on elimination as one set of routine (normal, health) bodily consequences of eating than might be the case for adults. Social proprieties circumscribe the occasion on which such things can be discussed (Murcott, in Scott and Morgan, 1993: 123).

Similarly, White *et al* (2010) decided to use the subject of what was important to children when they moved house, and feelings about where they lived to foreground the topic of migration in Ireland and by doing this gained an insight into the role played by migration and difference in children's worlds. Thus, in order to make the sociological interest in children's understandings and experiences of the body more accessible, the letters to schools to request their participation in the research emphasised an interest in children's daily routines, how children look after their bodies, and how their bodies have changed over time.

However, in this project, children are positioned as active social agents capable of making decisions about whether or not they wish to consent in research (see chapter three, Methodology). For this reason, it is important to consider children's reactions to discussion of the body. For example, children's concern over discussing certain aspects of the body was demonstrated through the anonymous posting of the question *Will we have to talk about bums and stuff?* into the research question box (see chapter four, Design and Methods). When the class was addressed about this question, it was explained that children would not have to talk about anything they did not want to, and that while activities had been planned, these were optional. Furthermore, it was explained that the things we spoke about during the activity sessions were up to the children themselves. Children were reassured that I was interested in everything they had to say, and if they chose to talk about 'bums and stuff' then that would be fine as long as they were considerate of the other children in the group. Furthermore, this session answering anonymous questions offered another opportunity, following the initial presentation talk, to remind children about the disclosure procedure. This meant that children were told that, just like any other adult in school, if I was told anything which made me worry about a child, then I had a responsibility to report it to a member of staff. Children were assured that in the event of a disclosure, they would be asked to make a decision about which member of school staff ought to be informed. Given this information, children were able to make an informed decision about the information they choose to disclose. No children chose to share information with me which required a disclosure process to be carried out.

During the fieldwork, participants were not questioned directly about sensitive issues concerning sex, sexuality or intimate aspects of the body. However, previous studies have shown that children

might choose to discuss intimate aspects of their bodies for a number of reasons. For example, Dalley-Trim (2007) and Mora (2012) both show that pre-teen and teenage boys in particular are prone to talk about and use their bodies in ways which purposefully make others feel uncomfortable as part of their mobilization of “gendered and sexualized discursive knowledges and practices” (Dalley-Trim, 2007: 199). This was demonstrated to some extent in this project by one private school boy thrusting a pencil case up his jumper and exclaiming that he was *fat* and *had boobs*. Thorne and Luria (1986) show how girls, in contrast to boys, tend to discuss intimate aspects of their bodies with other girls as a way of strengthening friendship. Indeed, it was the girls in this project with whom I had built the most rapport, and who worked in single sex groups, who chose to speak about more intimate aspects of their bodies. However, girls also demonstrated the most concern about being overheard by teachers discussing things which they felt were ‘inappropriate’.

Chapter six, *The Changing Body*, focusses upon children’s understandings of bodily change over time, and notes that while children spoke about ‘teenage spots’, having braces and changes to personality which they expected to happen as they reached their teenage years, discussion of more intimate aspects of bodily change relating to puberty is notably absent from the data. Previous studies (see Prendergast, 1991, and Connolly, 1995) have shown that children of a similar age to those in this project do discuss aspects of bodily change related to puberty in some detail. However, aside from the private school boy who shoved a pencil case up his jumper, boys in this project avoided talking about the physical changes associated with puberty. Similarly, although some girls were willing to share stories about intimate aspects of their bodies, the bodily changes which happen as part of growing up were understood as ‘inappropriate’.

At Key Stage Two, schools can elect to teach certain aspects of the Personal Social and Health Education Curriculum (PSHE), which *may* include teaching children ‘about how the body changes as they approach puberty’ (Department of Education, 2013). The compulsory aspects of PSHE, which include sex education, do not begin until children move up to Key Stage Three, usually at age eleven or twelve. The knowledge of nine and ten year olds about bodily changes relating to puberty is, therefore, likely to be dependent upon disparate sources outside of school at this point in their education. Thus, while children will have undoubtedly witnessed changes relating to puberty in the bodies of older children, or perhaps begun to experience these changes themselves, they will not necessarily have the vocabulary to talk about these kinds of changes. Therefore, by avoiding discussion of intimate aspects of bodily change relating to puberty, children might have been

attempting to conceal their lack of knowledge about bodily changes relating to puberty.

However, the contrast between children's willingness to talk about *some* intimate aspects of the body during fieldwork, and yet, their specific avoidance of the subject of puberty, suggests that along with a fear of revealing ignorance, children were highly aware that the subject of puberty is associated, by adults, with becoming sexual. It seemed that discussion of the issue of sex and sexuality, as opposed to other intimate aspects of the body, made children worry about being punished by teachers. Two private school girls, for example, anxiously asked for confirmation that their teacher would not see their 'My Body Story' sheets after one of them had written the word 'sexy' on hers. Another private school girl was reluctant to speak about how her body would change by the time she reached secondary school because, she argued, these changes were 'inappropriate'. Indeed, children's cause for worry about any subjects even vaguely related to sex and sexuality was confirmed during an incident at the private school where a girl reported to her teacher that she had been called a lesbian and a 'tranny' by some other children. After being reassured that the culprits would be dealt with, she was instructed by her teacher not to discuss the matter any further. This included talking to her best friend, or any other children, about the event.

Thus, while it is certain that children do discuss the subject of sex and sexuality among themselves (see Egan, 2013), overt discussion of sex and sexuality is controlled in school. This happens on a policy level too, through the absence of learning about puberty as part of the compulsory curriculum, which thereby limits children's access to terminology that might help them to express their ideas about sex and sexuality. However, the acute awareness, on children's part, of the difference between sexual and non-sexual aspects of the body demonstrates their capacity for sophisticated understandings of the body. Thus the notion that children ought to be 'protected' from even thinking about sex and sexuality, implicit in the decision to limit sex education, is challenged. Yet, the normalisation of these controls over what is, and is not appropriate for children to discuss in school meant that I had little to worry about in terms of the body as a sensitive subject. The children were well aware of the fact that discussion of any subject pertaining to sex and sexuality was likely to be understood, by adults, as *more* inappropriate than the intimate, but relatively 'safer' subject of poo, for example. Children demonstrated this knowledge by avoiding discussion of subjects such as the physical changes associated with puberty. In essence, then, it was the existing power relations of the school, specifically in relation to the rules about discussion of sex and

sexuality, which shaped the way the body was, and was not, discussed. There was little I could do, as a researcher, to disrupt this particular assemblage of power relations concerning teachers, children and the subjects of sex and sexuality in school. This provides a practical example of the argument, made in chapter three, Methodology, that attempts to rearrange the existing power relations of a research context are futile.

Informed Consent

Within the social studies of childhood, the importance of consulting children about matters which affect them is emphasised (James and Prout, 1997). Therefore, children should be allowed the opportunity to give informed consent. The presentations (described in chapter four, Design and Methods), were the first step towards informing children about the research in order to enable them to choose whether or not to give consent to participate.

Children who showed initial interest in participating in the research were given two information sheets and two consent forms to take home. One set was designed for children (See Appendix 5 and 6) and another for a parent or guardian (See Appendixes 7 and 8). Alderson and Morrow (2004) found that, in a school setting, children's relationships with their parents, teachers and peers are likely to have implications for whether consent is given or withheld. For this reason, I encouraged children to discuss the research with their parents and anyone else who they wanted to discuss it with. If they were sure they wanted to participate, and their parent or guardian was happy for them to do this, children were required to sign the children's consent form, and have their parents sign the parental consent form, then bring both of the forms back to school with them. The information sheets were designed to be simple, clear and concise in order to give adequate information but avoid overwhelming participants and parents. Parental information sheets contained my email and telephone contact details so that parents might get in touch to ask any further questions or to find out more about me or the research. In addition to this, as noted in chapter four, Design and Methods, I was often present on the playground at the start and end of the school day to give parents who might be dropping off or collecting children the chance to approach me to talk about the research. My identification was facilitated by the inclusion of my photograph on the research information sheets. I received no calls from parents about the project, yet a number of parents of participants approached me in the playground before and after school to ask questions about me, and to ask, broadly, how the research was going. This suggests that the opportunity to speak to a researcher in person is more important to gatekeepers than access via telephone or email.

Furthermore, it appears, from the kind of questions that gatekeepers tended to ask, that their preference for face-to-face contact with a researcher is due to the fact that meeting in person allows them to ‘get to know’ the person working, or potentially working, with their children without pressure for them to form definite, coherent questions about the researcher or the research project.

Children, like their parents, also seemed to be far more interested in what I was like as a person than in any particular aspect of the research project itself. Although children were excited by the notion of pseudonyms following the presentation of the project, once observation began, children seemed to be most interested in finding out about me. Kay *et al* (2009) similarly found children to be more interested in “immediate facts”, for example, the researcher’s name, age, where they have come from and why, than in the “more abstract details about a project’s possible outcomes, the need for anonymity and the limits to confidentiality” (Kay *et al*, 2009: 475). During observation, before the research activities had begun, children, in particular girls, would approach me and tell me that they thought I was ‘nice’ or ‘kind’. In hindsight, it is clear that this was the time that children were making their minds up about whether they would like to participate in the research, and these stated assessments of my character can be understood as part of this process. It seems therefore, that immediate facts about the researcher are interesting for children and their gatekeepers for good reason; it helps them to weigh up whether or not they wish to participate, or consent to their children’s participation. The time between the start of the observation and the research activity sessions was useful, therefore, for it allowed children to get to know me and to carefully consider whether or not they wanted to become participants in the research activities.

Wiles *et al* (2006) warn that children may become overloaded with information as a result of the need to be fully informed and able to consent, which can lead to potential boredom or frustration. The enthusiastic questions following the presentations in both schools did not suggest that children were bored or frustrated, but, in contrast, suggested that children readily understood the issues which had been discussed. However, some children did seem more confident than others in asking questions, and following the presentations, a minority of children tended to ask a lot of questions, leaving others unable to ask questions as a consequence. The research question box, discussed in the methods chapter and above, acted as a remedy to this by providing an opportunity for children who lacked the confidence to ask questions in person, or who thought of questions when I was not present to answer them, to have their questions answered. Importantly, the research question box also ensured an ongoing dialogue about the research between researcher and children. This is

important in relation to this project's commitment to ongoing consent, and allowed children, for example, who had initially decided to consent to participate, the chance to anonymously question their 'rights' as participants at any point during the fieldwork.

Recording

All activity sessions in school, and the four family interviews at home, were recorded using a Dictaphone. The reason for recording research activities was explained to participants in the research presentations and in the information letters they were given prior to the research. This was reiterated at the beginning of each research session and family interview to ensure that all participants were comfortable with being recorded. Furthermore, participants were made aware that data would be kept securely, and destroyed following transcription. It was made clear that even if participants were referred to by name during recording, they would remain anonymous in the transcription and write-up of the project. Oliver (2003) suggests that in order to reduce potential feelings of unease about recording, the recording device should be placed within the vision and reach of participants rather than guarded by the researcher. Similarly, Oliver (2003) recommends that researchers do not act protectively over the recorder. Thus, a number of children enjoyed deciding for themselves where the recorder ought to be placed and played back the recording at the end of the sessions to hear their own voices.

Anonymity

A cornerstone of research ethics is that respondents should be offered the opportunity to have their identity hidden in a research report (Oliver, 2003). The names of the two schools are not disclosed in this thesis and while it has been necessary to describe certain features of the schools, this has been done with care so as not to reveal the identity of the institution, and therefore compromise the anonymity of the participants involved. The anonymity of particular members of staff who are alluded to has also been maintained through the use of pseudonyms. Any individuals mentioned by research participants are also made anonymous using allocated pseudonyms. Each child participant was allowed to choose their own pseudonyms, thus a number of the names used in chapters six, seven and eight are rather unusual. This, however, is a small price to pay for the enjoyment children took in choosing their pseudonyms. Care has been taken to maintain the pseudonyms throughout transcription, analysis and write-up of the research.

Ethical Consideration of Visual Data

As noted in chapter four, Design and Methods, notes, recordings, self-portraits, body stories, timelines and recordings were kept private between children and myself in order to avoid the

reinforcement of traditional age-based power relations concerning creative methods (discussed in chapter three, Methodology). This decision was justified during the fieldwork as it became apparent that for a number of children, the idea that strangers might see the visual data they had produced (most notably the self-portraits), was an unnerving prospect. For example, a number of children communicated obvious concern that their pictures were ‘not good enough’, that they ‘looked stupid’ or even that their writing was ‘too messy’. In these situations, it was useful to be able to assure children that these pictures and documents were just ‘for us’, and would not be shown to anyone else. The use of visual data as a way of expressing ideas, during the activity sessions, rather than as a means to create documents for display, or as ‘gifts’ (Atkinson, 2008), also enabled each activity to be adapted to suit each child’s particular preferences for drawing, writing or verbal expression. Although a number of children took pleasure in creating attractive and ‘finished’ self-portraits, timelines and stories, there was no pressure on children to complete the visual aspect of each activity to a competent standard as they would have done with school work, or if their pictures, stories and timelines were to be placed ‘on display’. Evidence that the treatment of visual data as a tool for expression (rather than a form of data in itself) helped to increase flexibility and child-oriented character of the methods is demonstrated by one particular incident when a private school girl arrived at an activity session following a netball game and was obviously tired. Rather than taking up my offer to have a rest or leave the session, she chose to ‘just talk’ through the timeline activity while her more energetic and artistically-minded friend chose to carefully sketch out her timeline with colourful images. As the activity sessions were recorded and the transcriptions of these recordings were the focus of the analysis, it was no problem if some children preferred to speak rather than draw or write. Therefore, although some readers may be disappointed by the lack of visual data in this thesis, leaving it out facilitated a far more flexible and child-oriented approach.

Non-Participants and the Ethics of Observation

Some children expressed a desire to participate in the research but were unable to get consent from their parents or guardians. Children who could not participate seemed resigned to this, perhaps due to the familiarity with gaining (and failing to gain) parental consent for school trips and activities. Nevertheless, it was important to consider the feelings of children who could not participate. Care was taken, therefore, to avoid discussing the research activities in front of the whole class after the initial presentation of the project unless specific questions from the research question box were being answered. Children were encouraged to submit questions about the research, whether they were participants or not, in order to allow everyone to join in and feel involved to some extent.

Activity sessions were timed so that participants did not have to leave and re-enter class unnecessarily, thus minimising disruption or annoyance to other children. The issue of non-participants in a school research context is an unavoidable ethical issue. However, by being friendly and making time to also pay attention to children who were not participants, those children could still feel that they were respected by and interesting to a researcher, who, after all, inconveniences their daily lives in no small way.

Likewise, it is equally important to give space and privacy to children who do not wish to be involved in the research at all. No child, whether participant in the research activities or not, had given active consent to be observed. Instead, consent had been established via the school. Despite assent, or passive acceptance/non-refusal of participation being common practice in studies using observation in an institutional setting with children (Christensen and James, 2008), observation of children with institutional consent creates additional ethical issues for consideration. For example, while, on the whole, children at both schools seemed pleased at my presence in school, it must never be forgotten that children who have no interest in being involved in the research necessarily become 'caught up' through observation via institutional consent. Alderson and Morrow (2004: 5) point out that children's "non-refusal may be very different from them actually assenting", particularly if they feel pressured or feel that saying no would cause a fuss or be classed as bad behaviour in the context of school. Children may not want to be observed at certain times for a number of reasons, which must be respected. Mora (2012) negotiated this issue by telling children to simply pause if they did not want him to listen in on their conversations. Upon hearing the pause, Mora (2012) would move away. However, in this project, the hustle and bustle of the playground meant that Mora's (2012) technique was difficult to implement, as it was often difficult to hear well enough above the noise to know if children were pausing due to my presence or as part of a game or natural pause in conversation. Therefore, during observation, I tended to remain in one place where I was not concealed in any way, nor obstructing anything important such as a water fountain or toilet, and waited for children to move around me. Children could then choose their proximity and I could feel confident that I was not encroaching on anyone's space in a way that made them feel uncomfortable.

One negative aspect of remaining still to observe is the temptation to take notes while observing, which risks highlighting the feelings of pressure associated with being observed (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004). For this reason, as previously noted in chapter four, Design and Methods, empty

classrooms, staff toilets and stationary cupboards were used to take notes. However, children in the state school caught me doing this in the first week of observation and understandably wanted to see the notes I was taking. I allowed them to see, because, after all, they had been in the situations I had observed and made note of and therefore already ‘knew’ the content. Children, it turned out, were more interested to see if their names had been written down than anything else. At this point in the fieldwork, I had not learnt children’s names so their curiosity in relation to this was in vain, and, as an alternative, the children decided to decorate my notebook with pink glittery stickers in the shape of my initials. Following this incident, I made the decision to avoid referring to any child by name in my written observation notes, instead simply writing ‘boy’ or ‘girl’. Any further detail about individual children was added while typing-up notes each evening. Being open about notes with children felt like the right ethical decision and is part of what Skansfors (2009: 7) calls an “ethical radar”. This idea is based upon the premise that ethical conduct *during* the research process is as important as it is at the initial gate-keeping stage and that researchers have to be alert to participants’ reactions (Skansfors, 2009: 7). Problems with assent and consent can arise not just at the start of, but also during, the research process (Skansfors, 2009: 6) which means that “merely following the research-ethical principles is not enough”. The notion of an ethical radar allowed me to adapt, over time, the technique of remaining in one place during observation according to children’s invitations to join in with their games or to accompany them around school. According to Skansfors (2009) it is important to be sensitive to both verbal and non-verbal cues signalling whether children do or do not wish to be observed. For example, Skansfors (2009: 11) noted that the children she observed often “said no” and “showed no” in different, quite subtle ways. In a classroom setting with older children who are fixed in one position, watching children’s movements and body language in order to ascertain consent becomes more difficult. However, by choosing a position in a classroom carefully, overcrowding children can be avoided. Similarly, by paying attention to which children tended to ask for my help with things in preference to the help of the teaching assistant or teacher, my ethical radar was put to use as an important guide to ensuring that ethical issues were considered not only at the point of access, but throughout the fieldwork.

Practical and Ethical Consideration of Research in the Home

Following the activity sessions, children interested in taking part in home interviews were asked to take home a further two sets of information sheets and consent forms, to be read and signed by themselves and by their parent or guardian. These documents were written in simple, clear language and stated that all members of the family were welcome to participate in the family interview.

However, every member who wished to participate must have read the information letter appropriate for their age (see Appendixes 9 and 10) and signed a consent form themselves (see Appendix 6). If participants were under the age of sixteen, they must have had a consent form signed by their parent or guardian (see Appendix 8). When children returned their consent forms, parents were contacted by telephone to arrange a convenient time for the interview, and again just prior to the interview in order to check that everyone in the household was still comfortable with the research going ahead. It was made clear that all participants would be made anonymous and that this anonymity would not be compromised by reference to particular characteristics or features of their family life. On the day of each interview, spare consent forms were taken for any additional family members who decided to participate on the day. This allowed for a flexible approach to consent, as recommended by Mason (2008), who points out that family groups may be large, fragmented and complex, including non-kin relations or people who may 'drop-by' during the fieldwork. As long as participants over the age of sixteen were willing to give written informed consent to participate in the research, or under sixteen and able to acquire parental consent at the time of the interview, then they were welcome to join in on the day at the invitation of the family whose home the interview took place in.

Practical issues of researching families in their homes were carefully considered during the planning of this stage of the research. Previous research shows that participants will often treat a researcher in their home as a guest, supporting the idea that participants need to understand the actions of a researcher in a meaningful way. For example, during Jordan's (2006) investigation of the ways families used V-chip technology to limit their children's television viewing, she found that working class families in particular were inclined to put on a show for her visits, treating her as a guest and entertaining her. Jordan (2006) discovered that some families had put in their V-chip as they knew she would be coming that day, illustrating the potential impact that visiting researchers may have upon family life, and highlighting the need for consideration of one's actions within the home, both in terms of the validity of the research and also to avoid putting participants to any trouble. In this project, visits to homes were arranged to avoid unnecessary disturbance and trouble. Consideration was also made of the potential consequences for children who were relied upon to carry me smoothly into the family home. In this way, children acted as 'sponsors' to enter family life in the same way sociological researchers have traditionally used sponsors to enter more inaccessible aspects of society. A classic example of sponsorship is Whyte's (1943) study *Street Corner Society* in which Whyte (1943) relies on Doc, an American-Italian gang member, to vouch

for him, allowing Whyte (1943) to observe the activities and behaviour of a Boston street gang. By addressing information letters to children, I placed some level of expectation upon them, as they would be the ones to make the choice about whether to vouch for me and introduce me to their family group. The relationships with children created in school were used to explain and justify my presence to families, just as Whyte (1943) used his relationship with Doc to gain status within the gang. Unlike Doc, however, children do not risk the same levels of potential alienation from their 'gang'. However, children may be sensitive to the fact that *they* are the ones bringing the researcher home (albeit with full parental consent), and therefore the researcher's actions may be understood, to some extent, as their responsibility. This situation required sensitivity and tact on the part of the researcher. I was aware of the fact that children might not want me to allude to events which happened in school, or to discuss the ways they acted or behaved in school in front of their family at home as this might potentially compromise the privacy of children. It was necessary, therefore, to attempt to predict further issues which might cause conflict or tension whilst researching in the home, and highlight the need to be sensitive to, and aware of the politics of the home, particularly issues which may affect children, who are being relied upon by the researcher. It was anticipated, for example, that there were likely to be differences between the perceptions of children and adults concerning the physical space of the home, for example, which areas are made accessible to the researcher. Children, it was anticipated, may be sensitive about their private space and resentful of parents allowing a nosy researcher to investigate their bedroom. Space is often at a premium for children who are alienated from public space and whose space in the home is regulated by adult control (Valentine, 1996). Conversely, adults are typically more conscious of concealing mess, which could lead to embarrassment or tension as children lead me away from spaces which have been prepared for a visitor. Despite the fact that the four home interviews all took place in families' living rooms and did not move around the house, it was important to bear in mind these potential issues of privacy while conducting fieldwork in the home and to remember that my presence was the result of children's effort and willingness to allow me into their family life.

Giving Back: Ethical Consequences of the Research Role

Schwartz (2011: 47) prescribes an engagement with ethics which "goes deep", along with a commitment to an intentional ethics of reciprocation in order to "give back". As part of an effort to 'give back' to the schools and children who helped with the project, a detailed and accessible report of the research findings was offered. However, the year five teachers pointed out that children, and their parents, would have moved to new secondary schools by the time the research findings were at

the point where a useful report might be made available. Furthermore, the idea of a report to take home and read would be interpreted by children as a piece of schoolwork which they were likely to discard or alternatively, feel pressured to read. Parents at both schools frequently complained about the amount of paperwork and forms sent home from school. Therefore, following discussion with year five teachers, it was decided that the best way to feedback to participants would be through an end of project talk which thanked children for their time and effort, explain in more detail what I planned to do with the data created by the project, and allowed time for them to ask any final questions before I left their respective school. I reminded children that their parents and their teachers had my email address and telephone number in case they needed to contact me again.

However, it was clear that for the children and teachers at both schools, my efforts at pitching in with the practical, day-to-day work of school life formed a more important part of giving back than any formal feedback. By arriving at school early and remaining in school after classes had finished, I made myself available to staff for the purposes of errands, tidying up and as an extra pair of hands for the more physical aspects of working in a primary school. I stayed after hours to create display boards, assisted with the organisation of school concerts, acted as a photographer for school events, helped with after school art clubs and helped to re-arrange classrooms and set up activities for the following day. These efforts to give back did not compromise my research role in any serious way, as they did not require me to exercise direct power over children. Similarly, my work as a reading volunteer with year two children took place in a different part of each school and did not concern the year five children who were the participants in the project.

However, a number of activities which formed part of my efforts to give back did require me to reinforce, to some extent, the kind of unequal age-based power relations which are familiar to a school context. Thus, as discussed in chapter three, Methodology, balancing a desire to remain removed from power relations, while also living up to the expectations of children and school staff in the field, proved to be difficult. For example, children asked for help with their work during lessons which I was observing. Despite the fact that helping children with their work risks conflating the role of researcher with that of teaching assistant, which might have consequences for the way children understand and negotiate researcher-participant power relations, I attempted to assist them where possible. To ignore children's requests for help would have seemed rude, particularly in light of the amount of help children had given me with *my* work.

Another example of the difficulty in balancing the research role with giving back concerns my efforts to help the year five state school children walk to a local sports facility for their P.E lessons one afternoon. The school struggled to find enough support staff to supervise the children as they walked, two-by-two, along a busy main road. Curious to observe the children during this outing, I offered to walk with them and was immediately allocated a section of the line to supervise. When children wandered out of the line, failed to stop, or lingered too long at road junctions and crossings, it was necessary for me to herd the line of children and shout instructions in the manner of a school staff member for the sake of children's safety. I was placed in a similar position of responsibility for children's safety and orderliness at the private school when asked to referee sports matches.

It was not only school staff who had particular expectations of my research role. My presence on the school playground meant that I was informally understood by children as a break time supervisor at both schools. Children who requested help with injuries or practical problems such as broken play equipment could be dealt with without any serious ethical consequences. However, being asked to intervene in fights and disputes between children did have potential ethical consequences and, therefore, had to be avoided to the disappointment of children who expected immediate resolution and justice from someone whom they understood to be a responsible adult.

Therefore, in many respects, the ethical issues which are significant from a school child's perspective are not concerned with overarching power relations, but more day-to-day expectations of how an adult in school ought to act. This means that from the children's perspectives, my failure to help them sort out playground disputes, referee sports matches, and conversely, my efforts to help with keeping them safe as they walked down the road, are likely to be more significant than my sociologically minded efforts to reduce age-related power differentials. My experiences of the practical application of ethical principles in the field act as an example of the differences in the understandings of aged-based power between child participants and adult researcher which were noted in chapter three, Methodology. In this project, for example, children in both schools were in the habit of calling all female adults in school 'Miss' and, as a result, struggled to remember to refer to me by my first name. I often reminded children that they did not have to call me Miss, but eventually realised that asking them to remember to change their habits in relation to me was challenging and thus accepted their use of this formal address.

In conclusion, this chapter has demonstrated the usefulness of the notion of an ethical radar, which allows ethical decisions to be made in accordance with the needs of a particular group of participants, in a particular research context. Face-to-face interaction with participants and their gatekeepers, it has been shown, is vital to the process of informed consent, and highlights the need for researcher's to give back in ways which are appropriate to the particular research context. The research question box proved to be a useful tool for allowing non-participants to feel included, to some extent, in the research, and for enabling children (particularly those less confident in asking questions face-to-face) to communicate their concerns about the research. Furthermore, the research question box was a way to ensure a vital ongoing dialogue between researcher and children - without overloading them with information - by allowing children the time and space to question their rights as participants at any time during the fieldwork. This chapter has offered some insight into the complex ethical dilemmas faced by researchers who work with children, and demonstrates the importance of careful consideration of age-based power relations despite the apparent impossibility of 'opting-out' of the existing power framework of a research context.

CHAPTER SIX: THE CHANGING BODY

This chapter will show that the ways children come to know about the body are shaped by their embodied perspectives, cultural and social locatedness, and the structural aspects of their lives including social class. Thus, this chapter accomplishes one of the main aims of the project, outlined in the introduction, to explore whether social class differences are apparent in children's experiences and understandings of the body. The selection of two very different schools allowed for the comparison of groups of children with diverse lives. The assumption that diversity among children might result in differing experiences and understandings of the body was therefore implicit in the design of this project and is supported by the findings of this chapter. Data presented here from discussions about the changing body show that the ways children come to know about the body are shaped by the structural contexts which characterise their particular experiences. However, this chapter also reveals that children themselves play an active role in the construction and reinforcement of particular understandings of the changing body. Children are thus positioned also as social actors whose bodies reflect their personal and social identities. This chapter, therefore, does not merely note differences between groups of children, but also explores the relationship between structure and agency in the processes by which children come to know about the body.

Big and Small Bodies: The Importance of Social Context

The importance of social context in relation to children's understandings of the body can be illustrated in their understandings of the relationship between height and social status. The structural contexts of children's lives, specifically their experience of daily life in school and the impending move to secondary school, are pertinent to the cultural notion, evident within the data below, that bigger equals better.

As part of the 'My Body' story activity, designed to encourage children to consider change over time, children were asked to consider the statement *When I go to secondary school, my body will be*. Each child spoke about growing taller as part of their discussion of this statement, and this was often a catalyst for wider discussion of height. In particular, this concerned the consideration of children's own height in relation to the heights of their peers.

Dodger (private school): I'm approximately in my class, second tallest.... Fourth tallest... fifth actually. If we're including girls, fifth. If we're including boys, fourth.

Harry: I'm about in the middle of small and medium.

Dodger: Has Elliot had research yet? Is he doing it?

Alice: No Elliott's not doing it. Why do you mention him?

Dodger: Because he'd be in the small part of the class.

Harry: No Matthew is smaller.

Dodger: I think he's about two foot two (laughs).

Uday (state school): I'm second tallest! First it's Nicole, then it's me, and then afterwards it's, I don't know.

Alice: What about Sasha?

Samayah: YEAH! Sasha's second, then Rosy.

Uday: No, it's me, I was at the first of the line yeah.

If I drew that I was about that big, Elliott would be about there (Barry draws a line at his shoulder and laughs)... I'm quite tall... Victoria is the tallest person in year five (Barry, private school).

Fizz (private school): I'm quite tall compared to this (pause) person. She's still in year five, she's like average size I got told!

Splash: Who? Eleanor³?

Fizz: Yeah.

Splash: (Laughs sarcastically).

As these extracts demonstrate, being the tallest in class is a desirable position for children, evidenced by the way that their respective positions in the height hierarchy are debated. Smaller children, such as Elliot and Eleanor, are the butt of the jokes made in the extracts above from Dodger, Barry, Fizz and Splash. The significance of height in relation to identity is therefore evident. James (1993) argues that children look forward to growing taller in part due to the status accorded to those who are 'bigger' within their social worlds. In everyday conversation, physical size, James (1993) argues, is often conceptually intertwined with numerical conceptions of age. "Bigness" is therefore a rather "slippery concept" (James, 1993: 111) with references to *big* school and the need to behave like a *big* boy or girl peppering children's everyday lives. Similarly, in this study, children were often reminded by teachers that the move to secondary school would mean that more would be expected of them in relation to their academic work, behaviour and social skills. For example, when children approached teachers with disputes, they were often reminded that once they reached 'big school' they would have to sort out their own problems. Children knew that growing taller meant that they were perceived by the adults around them to be capable of doing more 'grown up' things.

³ Eleanor is one of the smallest girls in the year group.

Adam (state school): I'll read mine, it says, erm, now my body is big and strong and I can do what I couldn't do when I was little.

Alice: Like what?

Adam: You can go on rides.

Alice: So what do you think about being tall?

Samayah (state school): It's nice because, erm, you know when you're like, when you're six or seven, and a baby's just been born, because last time, my other cousin was born, yeah that was long time ago when I was six or seven. I asked my mum can I pick her up, and she said "no, when you're older like nine or ten". So this is why I like being older because now I am, I can pick my baby cousin up.

The conceptual intertwining of physical size and numerical conceptions of age which James (1993) speaks of is evident in the way that Samayah, when questioned about being *tall*, begins to speak about the privileges awarded to her as a result of being *older*. It is perhaps a result of the conceptual 'slipperiness' between age, size and status that many children, including private school Harry, below, broadly associate height with power without feeling the need to specify precisely why.

I want to be taller because if anyone's mean to me I can say, "Don't say that"... like at home... I wasn't very happy, well I was just having a bad morning this morning and everyone was in a bad mood and I'd like to be taller because it would make me more powerful (Harry, private school).

Harry does not state that he would use the extra height he desires to physically overpower people. Instead, extra height in itself, Harry imagines, would provide him with the legitimacy to tell people not to say mean things to him. For children then, height is a way to gain the status and authority of a 'bigger' person.

In the extract below, however, I challenged children to consider their use of 'little' and 'big' as synonyms for youth and age.

Marcus (state school): Kids, they've got to do what adults say, and sometimes... they get bossed around because they're little. Yeah? Like, like, yesterday, I wanted to stay up, but my mum said, you've got school so you can't stay up... we shouldn't get bossed around.

Alice: So do you think children get bossed around because they are little or because they are young?

Marcus: Hmm... It's a little bit of both... like, Nicole, she's the tallest, she still gets bossed around a lot. It doesn't mean if you're big, if you're big...

Lisa: Yes, it's just about the age.

Marcus: ...you're still gonna get bossed around you know, in secondary school because there

are still people bigger than you.

Lisa: I think it really doesn't matter, because my grandma, like, doesn't live here, but my mum's mum, she's tiny and she still sometimes bosses my mum around.

This extract begins with an example of the way that correlation between size and status is entrenched in everyday conversation (James, 1993). Following my question, Marcus demonstrates, however, the ability to separate the concepts of age and size, noting that even some very tall people still get bossed around. Nonetheless, for Marcus, the relationship between age and size remains important. By pointing out that *'there will always be people bigger than you'* at secondary school, Marcus does not renounce the significance of height in relation to social status. Indeed, Marcus' reference to secondary school is telling of children's heightened awareness of the need to act 'big' when they go to 'big' school. The re-ordering of children from being the top year of primary school to the bottom year of secondary school means that children move from being the biggest to the littlest, both in terms of size and status within the school. The conceptual slipperiness between age and size is therefore only reinforced by the continuum of the logic that bigger equals better in the context of school.

However, older people, Lisa notes, boss around adults younger than them irrespective of size. Outside of the context of school, therefore, the relationship between size and status seems to be understood by children as being more flexible. This idea is further supported by the extracts of data below.

Barry (private school): I don't like being tall... I want to be really small... Because then I can fit through that little mouse hole and hide from everyone. When I was younger I used to be able to fit through the cat flap.

Bob: And he can be a Formula One driver. I'm going to be too big to be a Formula One driver.

I don't want to be taller. Not really... I like being small... Because, do you know like, pretend a robber is coming to your house yeah? Erm, like, I go under the table, and he'll probably like, go past me. Well I'd just get a pan and whack it in his face (Lionel, state school).

At home, Barry's current height means he can no longer fit through the cat flap, or hide as well as he used to when he was smaller. In the context of the Formula One racetrack, Bob notes, being small has distinct advantages. In the event of a robber entering your home, states Lionel, being small could facilitate a surprise attack. Outside of the school context then, children perceive

benefits of being small.

Importantly, however, these data indicate that children experience daily shifts in their height hierarchy as they move between different social contexts, revealing that children's own experiences shape their understandings, and therefore highlights the importance of considering the child as social actor. The child who is considered tall at school may conversely be the smallest of their siblings at home. Gertrude comments on her experience of 'changing' height between contexts.

Sometimes I like being the smallest because the smallest always gets things first but sometimes I've been the tallest and I'm not afraid to make people cry (Gertrude, private school).

Children's ability to question the relationship between height and status in contexts outside of school suggests, therefore, that it is in school that the relationship between height and status takes on a particular significance. This, it seems, is because the notion that height equals greater status is reinforced by the everyday practices of the classroom. For example, in the statement used at the beginning of this section, state school Uday defends his position as the tallest in his class by saying '*I was at the first of the line*'. This refers to an exercise in class where children had been asked to line up in height order. During this exercise, the shorter children at the back of the line were literally placed, albeit temporarily, in a position of lower status than the taller children. It is, therefore, children's position within a school system which encourages them to look forward to being 'bigger' which shapes a particular contextual understanding of the relationship between size and status.

Fat and thin Bodies: Children's Agency

The impending move to secondary school and the re-shuffling of children's status from the 'biggest' in school to the 'littlest' in school is also significant in relation to children's concerns about their body shape. Having a fat body, state school Mia and Ana point out, is likely to result in being picked on, particularly in the context of secondary school.

My friend goes to secondary school and she is quite a bit fat, and she told me that these people, they kept picking on her, saying like 'ah you eat too much, you should er, I'll give you a big bowl of sausages if you like'... And I said to her, why don't you stick up for yourself? And she said 'I told the teacher, but they carry on'. And then I said to her, why doesn't the teacher do anything? And she said 'because my teacher's so dumb, she doesn't even give any detention' (Ana, state school).

Alice: You said you want to be healthy, so what does having a healthy body mean to you?

Mia (state school): I mean like, lovely and like, slim, and (makes downward hand gestures along the length of her body)... I just feel that, erm, I feel like I just want to get a bit slimmer... Yeah, when I go to secondary school I want, I hope my body will be like healthy, and in like good shape because I don't want to get picked on! I don't like getting picked on!

The girls' concerns about being fat when they reach secondary school offer evidence in support of James' (1993: 118) argument that "not all forms of 'bigness' are viewed positively by children". Mia's concern with being picked on for having a fat body by the time she reaches secondary school reflects her struggles with attempts to change her body shape prior to the research.

My mum knows that I like dressing up... but she says it's getting hard to get you like clothes and stuff that I like, and she says you're not going to be able to fit into nice clothes and stuff if you keep eating junk and stuff. And I say I know, and that's why I have to eat healthy and stuff... I was on a diet...my auntie, she made me er, but I've gone off it. I had to do lots of exercise and stuff... after the six weeks she goes ok, that's finished, and they weighed me again, and my mum was like, 'ok, you've lost a bit of weight' but now, I've just put it back on so I'll have to start again! (Mia, state school).

Other state school children, in contrast to their private school peers, also spoke about ongoing battles with weight loss which they, and their close family members were, or had been, involved in.

Dan (state school): My two brothers... they're bigger than me, and they've got more fat!... I don't mean that, they're not fat, they've just put a few more weight on, but my brother, he doesn't actually want to eat that much fatness... He was on a diet yeah, and he has cereal and yoghurt... And he, he gets tired of eating all them things, and a few days ago he stopped it now and he's changed.

Alice: What do you mean?

Dan: Well every time my aunty brings her scale over...she's gonna see yeah, if you've changed... imagine this is a weighing scale...Then it goes whoosh! Up and up and up and up to twelve... I were just ten and then after I went up to twelve.

Alice: And does that matter to you?

Dan: Well... I think I put more pressure on... It's because, erm, I don't like people calling me fat.

Suzie (state school): I play on the *Wii Dancestar*. And er, *ZUMBA*. Because my mum says I need to lose weight. You get a free fitness belt with it. My mum's losing weight and I'm really excited because after school she tells me I lost some weight and I say how much and she tells me, two pounds or something, and I start dancing around.

Alice: So do you help each other to lose weight?

Suzie: Yeah, but she goes to the doctor to get weighed.

In their discussion of the statement ‘*When I go to secondary school, my body will be*’ other children also made plans to change their body shape in future. This was not limited to the children like Mia, Suzie and Dan who struggled with weight loss at the time of the research, but also involved other state school children who wanted to change their body shape in order to become better at sport or appear more muscular.

Dan (state school): I’d like to be fit, that’s it.

Alice: Ok, and what do you mean by fit?

Dan: Like, I’d like to get more skinny, because I’ve got some fat around my belly and I’ll watch more programmes about fitness, and then after I might go to the gym when I’m like, more older.

Alice: What would you do at the gym?

Dan: I’d do some exercise, do some weights, put some chains down, and then push-ups, and that machine (swings his arms and legs, miming a cross-trainer).

Alice: And how old do you think you’ll be when you start doing that?

Dan: Fifteen.

Suzie (state school): I’ll be skinny! Yeah, I’m gonna try to be skinny. I’m gonna eat salad, and my five a day. Because I don’t usually eat my five a day.

I feel like I just want to get a bit slimmer.... like eat healthily, eat vegetables... I’m not actually on a diet yet, I just want to, to try and be on a diet (Ana, state school).

I have a dream yeah, that one day I will be an athlete... I need to work out a lot!... Because I want to be the brand new Usain Bolt. I’m gonna be like (makes himself big and blows out his lips) pfwwww!... I wanna be more fitter if I wanna think of my dreams when I’m older... I’m gonna go, well my uncles yeah, they go to the gym like every day... they never have one rest yeah? So I’m just gonna go with them (Uday, state school).

I’ll be ripped... When I’m in the future, I imagine myself, I’m er, like terrifying muscle. When I grow up I want to have a six pack I’ll go to the gym every day, never give up on my dream (Lionel, state school).

However, what makes this data particularly interesting is the fact that private school children, in contrast, did not speak of plans to begin going to the gym in the future, nor did they talk about going on diets before they reached secondary school. In fact, one group of private school boys joked about eating more and doing *less* exercise in the future.

Alice: I want you to imagine yourself when you go to secondary school.

Barry (private school): I’ll be really plump (laughs)

Bob: You’re not fat Barry.

Barry: When I've finished university and everything I'm not going to do any exercise and I'm going to eat burgers all day.

Bob: You're not fat.

Barry: I am! You haven't seen my fat (grins). I'm quite fat. I'm quite plump. When I get in the bath I'm quite plump. I blow up like this (burps)... I have boobs (puffs out his chest).

However, this is not to say that this group of children disagreed with the idea of slimness: the reality of having a fat body in the future was an idea that was generally abhorrent to private school children.

Alice: So what will your body be like when you reach secondary school?

Dodger (private school): Hopefully I've got bigger biceps.... I want to be fit.

Alice: Is being fit important to you?

Dodger: It's very important... Because I don't want to be fat... it's disgusting...

Alice: Why is it so disgusting to be fat?

Dodger: Because you're just like walking around like blurgh blurgh... You can't even walk properly. I don't want to be fat, I want to be fit.

Alice: What about being fat or thin or anything else?

Lotty (private school): If I was fat it would matter but I'm not.

Alice: Why would it matter?

Lotty: Because I'd be fat.

Gertrude (private school): I play tennis, which keeps me healthy and slim.

Alice: So is it healthy to be slim?

Gertrude: Yes.

Amelia: Actually it's healthy to be in the middle because if you're too fat you can die or if you're too thin you can die.

Alice: So, is it just about whether you die or not, being fat or thin.

Amelia: It's the danger of dying.

Alice: So is it important to you not to get fat *only* because it might increase your risk of death?

Amelia: Yes.

Alice: So would you get fat if you knew you definitely wouldn't die from it?

Amelia: No.

Alice: No you wouldn't? Why wouldn't you?

Amelia: Because I like to keep healthy when I can.

In explaining their dislike of fat for health reasons, private school children reveal the significance of a fat body in their understanding of their social identities. Specifically, being fat would mean that, like the state school children, they might get picked on. Therefore, even if being fat would not increase the likelihood of death, private school Amelia would still rather not be fat. This demonstrates children's awareness of cultural understandings of fatness as undesirable. The

significance of body shape and size to children's identity is noted by James (1993) who found that by the age of four and five, children are already cognisant of the cultural stereotype that to be fat is to have an unacceptable body shape and potentially, an unacceptable social identity. For James (1993) children's use of stereotypes about the fat body is evidence of children's attention to features which distinguish those who are different and those who conform, forming part of

...the more generalised cultural processes through which childhood identities are created and maintained... the culture of childhood provides the context within which conformity (similarity) is competitively fought for through the playing out of hierarchies of individual esteem (difference) (James, 1993: 120).

Children's attention to conformity, rather than fatness *per se*, is also demonstrated in the final extract of this data where private school Amelia problematises bodies which are too fat and too thin. Thin children, however, conform more readily to wider cultural ideals about body shape meaning that thinness is much less of a social handicap than fatness. Fat children, therefore, are much more likely than thin children to be teased (James, 1993).

James (1993) also highlights the significance of gender in relation to body size and shape, with boys finding a positive declaration of their masculinity through their claims to have big muscles. Mora (2012: 435) also found that masculine power was ascribed to muscular male physiques by young boys and teenagers and argues that this is related to "boys awareness that their bodies are interpreted and gendered by others". Boys, therefore, tend to work on their bodies with the intent of "achieving the ideal male physique attributed to high masculine status" (Mora, 2012: 435). The focus of girls upon slimness, rather than muscle, supports James' (1993) finding that fatness was considered to be more damaging to a girl's identity than to a boy's. In this study, Mia's equation of being slim with being 'lovely' highlights the belief that a fat body is incompatible with an attractive or beautiful body which, it will be shown later, was particularly important for girls. However, both the boys' desire to become more muscular and the girls' desire to become slimmer must be understood in relation to the equation of 'bigness' with higher social status within children's social worlds. Mia, for example, wants to lose weight, in part, to allow her mother to find 'dress up' clothes which will fit her, demonstrating that body shape affects girls' ability to 'age-up' and become temporarily 'bigger'. The ways that gender shapes the ways that children come to know about the body will be discussed in more detail later on in this chapter.

In summary, it has been demonstrated that the ways children come to know about the body are shaped by their embodied perspectives - most notably gender - and their cultural and social locatedness. That is, within a culture that values slim, fit bodies, and in school, where 'bigness' is championed. Yet, alongside this, children's active role in the shaping of their identity in the face of social pressures has also been demonstrated, and thus, the importance of noting children's capacity as social actors has also been highlighted.

The Importance of Social Class

As noted above, despite some gender differences, children from both schools felt that fat, as opposed to bigger, bodies were undesirable. However, this was communicated in different ways by state and private school children. Private school children, the data showed, forcefully expressed their dislike of fat bodies, while in contrast, state school children implied their dislike of fat bodies through earnest description of their plans to become slimmer or more muscular in future. Both groups of children, then, wanted to have slim, muscular bodies. However, while state school children spoke in some detail about how they intended to adjust their lifestyles in order to bring these changes about, private school children were silent on the details of how they would achieve the muscular, slim physiques they desired, suggesting that the ways in which children envisage change happening to their bodies differs between the two schools. As I show below, for state school children, their role in the process of bodily change is an active one, whereas for private school children, their role appears to be more passive.

The private school children's silence about how they planned to bring about the changes to their body shape which they desired, does not, however, imply the belief that they would become more muscular or slimmer without eating healthily or doing exercise. In fact, private school children proved themselves to be incredibly knowledgeable, during discussion in the activity sessions, about the effects of diet and physical exercise upon health and body weight. Furthermore, the fact that a number of state school children were actively trying to lose weight at the time of the research is not the only reason why there were differences between the state and private school children's conceptualisations of their roles in the process of bodily change. This is evidenced by the way that state school children who *did not* feel that they needed to become slimmer, including Lionel and Uday, still had more active conceptualisations of their roles in bodily change in comparison to private school Dodger and Harry, who similarly desired muscular bodies in the future.

Therefore, in order to make sense of the different conceptualisations of children's own roles in the process of bodily change between the state and private schools, it is necessary to consider the specific practices which relate to each school context in detail. While children from both schools were clear in their understanding of the relationship between physical exercise and body shape, the children's engagement with physical activity as part of their daily lives differed markedly between the two schools. The difference between the ways that state and private school children envisage bodily change over time begins to reveal the interplay between structure and agency. Both groups of children essentially wanted the same kind of body in future, that is, one which adheres to social pressures for slimness and fitness. However, as the following section goes on to illustrate, the ways that children could exercise their agency in order to bring these desired changes about was strongly influenced by structural factors of their lives which shape their environments.

Children's Engagement with Physical Activity

At the private school, children were encouraged to take part in as many different kinds of sport as possible. Teachers made it clear to children that representing the school in sports was part of their responsibility as pupils. Lessons, and activity sessions during the fieldwork were often interrupted by games teachers searching for children to sign up to matches or tournaments. Children appeared to feel pressured to accept the requests of games teachers. Following an interruption to an activity session with private school Lotty and Eva, for example, they confided that although their school's sporting achievements did make them feel proud, they disliked having to attend all of the matches. Furthermore, local sports and activity club leaders were regularly invited to speak in assemblies, giving details about their sport and how children could sign up to have a go themselves. The sporting achievements of private school children were noted in the weekly sports assembly where results of inter and intra-school competitions would also be announced, with the presentation of house points, medals, trophies and certificates. Private school children were placed in first or second teams for netball, hockey, football, cricket and rugby, according to their level of ability. Intra-school 'house' matches took place on Wednesday afternoons, and inter-school matches with local competitors usually took place on Fridays and Saturdays. The fact that school sports took place after school and at the weekends made it difficult to distinguish between private school children's curricular and extra-curricular sporting activities. Importantly, however, the average week of the private school child was packed with a range of different kinds of physical activity, characterised by the extracts below from private school children Eva, Lotty and Dodger. These extracts also demonstrate that as well as the ample opportunities offered at school, private school

children also tended to benefit from familial resources which enable them to engage in even more activities.

Eva (private school): We go to running club, don't we, when it's on?

Lotty: (nods) In the summer term.

Eva: And there's four running sessions. We do gymnastic clubs don't we? On a Saturday I do dancing ten 'til half two and then I do tennis.

Lotty: I do tennis on Sundays, on Tuesdays I do gymnastics and on Friday I have a riding lesson.

Eva: And today we've got, well all of the girls, we've got a match and on Friday all of the girls have got a match too.

Rugby is my favourite at school. I'm on the first team for that and for cricket... I play for a football academy and a tennis one. When I'm twelve I'll go into the higher league and play seven matches and if I win all my seven matches I think I go through to the junior grand slams... When I'm older I'll go through to the top grand slams... I'm going to beat Nadal someday (Dodger, private school).

In contrast to the range of opportunities for physical activities offered to private school children, the opportunities for state school children to engage in physical activity were far fewer. At the state school there were no specified teachers responsible for planning and leading physical education (P.E) lessons, which took place outside on the concrete playground in good weather and inside the hall in bad weather. Both areas were smaller than those available in the private school. Furthermore, if P.E had to be moved inside due to bad weather, children were sometimes given drama activities as an alternative to sport due to the limited space of the hall, which made it difficult to get a serious game of anything going. State school Uday expresses his displeasure at this.

I hate inside P.E... because you have to do drama! We do weird drama, like (writhes about making strange whistling sounds). And Miss, it's like, I wanna be ACTIVE! Jumping around! (Uday, state school).

A local secondary school had a large indoor, multi-purpose sports facility which state school children occasionally used for P.E lessons. However, in contrast to the private school, the state school did not own a minibus. Therefore, in order to get to this facility, children and staff had to walk along a main road. The twenty minute round trip meant that the time children had to use these facilities was very limited. Off campus P.E lessons, therefore, tended to be quite rushed and stressful for children, who complained of being thirsty and tired, and similarly stressful for staff, who had to keep vigilant watch over children walking along the road. Furthermore, in contrast to

the pressure put upon children to participate in sport by games teachers at the private school, state school teachers were comparatively quick to cancel P.E lessons, as state school Adam and Hamza describe.

Adam (state school): It was meant to be this afternoon.

Hamza: We're meant to do it today but Miss said we couldn't do it. I think it's because it's a bit wet and that.

Alice: So when are you going to be doing P.E then?

Adam: Erm, next week... We only do it on Wednesdays.

Hamza: In year four we used to do two, like Tuesdays and Fridays.

Adam: But that was because we had to do swimming as well. Now, always on a Wednesday for some reason, we don't get P.E.

As a further point for comparison, consider the description of state school Mia's experience of her physical activity outside school (below) with the extracts of data from private school Lotty, Eva and Dodger, presented earlier, which described the wide range of sporting activities which, by contrast, made up their week.

Mia (state school): I was a bit tubby... Erm, my auntie, she went, you're gonna go on a diet, and for ten minutes, or like fifteen minutes, I had to keep going up and down the stairs *every day!*... And I was at my granddad's house, and for the first few times I was reaching the top, but after that I was actually crawling! I couldn't do it anymore... That was horrible. And yeah, my dad, on the weekends starting from now, he makes me, you know Greenside park, like the actual whole of the park?... He's been making me run around there, twice! TWICE! Without a DRINK?

Alice: Were you running on your own?

Mia: Yeah, my dad and my brother, they're just walking.

It is clear from these examples that state school children, who were not offered the same chances as private school children to engage in physical activity, conceptualised the changes which they planned to make to their bodies as something which *they* would have to actively bring about through changes to their own lifestyle at some point in the *future*. For private school children, engagement with physical exercise is, by contrast, a normalised aspect of their current lives. Indeed, their ongoing level of physical activity is such that it simply does not need remarking upon.

Mia's account of her experience of physical activity is an extreme example, as are private school Dodger, Lotty and Eva's accounts of their weekly schedules. There were, of course, children from the private school who disliked and avoided sport and, likewise, there were children at the state

school who enjoyed sport outside of school. One state school boy, for example, was asked to stand up during assembly and given a round of applause for his efforts in a cross country trial, which he entered with his local running team. However, this event was an anomaly at the state school, serving to highlight further the broad contrast between children's engagement with physical activity between the two schools. It can be argued therefore, that children's social class, which determines their access to the kinds of school which offer wide ranging and well-organised opportunities for sport, in turn also shapes the ways that children conceptualise the changing body. This demonstrates the complex interplay between structure and agency in children's understandings of the body, specifically bodily change. The lives of private school children offer them the opportunity to play out their knowledge of a 'healthy lifestyle' which results in the kinds of slim, fit bodies desired by all of the children. In contrast, state school have to work much harder - exercising greater, and seemingly more complex levels of agency - in order to actively shape their bodies to adhere to the ideal cultural stereotypes. While the interplay between structure and agency continues through this chapter, the significance of agency in relation to understanding how children come to know about the body will be returned to in greater detail as part of the following chapter seven, *The Experiential Body*.

Differently Networked Childhoods

The daily timelines of private school children revealed that a plethora of activities made up their daily schedules, ranging from high-wiring and circus skills to tennis and horse riding. The daily timelines of state school children, in contrast, described more unstructured free time which children spent visiting the houses of nearby friends and family or watching television. State school Amy describes how economic factors may explain why state school children did not participate in as many extra-curricular activities as private school children.

Amy (state school): You see, we have to spend more money because there are three of us.

Alice: So maybe you don't get to do all of the things you'd like to do?

Amy: No. And some things are like, fifty pounds a person or something!

Zeihner (2003) describes how children's lives have become increasingly insular and institutionalised, with Western childhoods characterised by a great many activities organised into tight daily schedules. In addition, Fotel and Thompsen (2004: 541) describe contemporary childhood as "highly networked", noting a tendency towards increased spatial and functional differentiation in urban environments, which leads to children's "insularized mobility between islands of

activities” (Fotel and Thompsen, 2004: 541). The private school children’s participation with a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular sporting events, to which they were ferried by car or minibus, closely match both Zeiher’s (2003) and Fotel and Thompsen’s (2004) descriptions of highly networked childhoods. By contrast, although a number of state school children did speak about going to their local swimming pool, their daily timelines do not convey an impression of childhoods characterised by supervised movement between islands of private leisure facilities to partake in organised sport. Neither, however, did state school children’s daily experiences resemble the more traditional model of childhood described by Postman (1994) as a lost relic of a more innocent era, where children were free to roam and explore the natural environment. For example, state school Mia’s description of being made to run by her father and brother in their local park demonstrates that state school children’s use of free local amenities for exercise was not understood by children themselves as a particularly enjoyable experience. Indeed, a number of state school children told me that their local areas could be dangerous, and described experiences of violence, racism or Islamophobia in their neighbourhoods.

Judy (state school): You know once, my mum looked out of the window, there was this drunk man. He picked up a really, really, really heavy stone and smashed up window.

Alice: Your window?

Judy: No, someone else’s, across the street.

Alice: How did that make you feel?

Judy: Scared, terrified.

Some people round my way, yeah, erm, they are racist to you because you are different, and once... these people came out and they kicked a ball at my mum’s head yeah, they tried getting it on me but it went on my mum’s head, and they started laughing. Some people are very rude (Marcus, state school).

Hamza (state school): Where I live it’s dangerous. At night they shoot Muslims because they don’t like them.

Adam: It’s a rough place for Muslims because that’s where, whenever they see someone wearing what we call a Jubah, they get...

Hamza: They attack ‘em!

Adam: Yeah they attack them and try to burn them alive. Because my uncle, he was coming out of mosque there were lots of Arabs around, there were four er, non-Muslims, and they came up to him and said to him, are you a Muslim? And he said yeah, and they started attacking him... they put him in a coma

Alice: That’s awful. How does that kind of thing make you feel?

Hamza: Scared.

Adam: Miss that day I had a nightmare.

Religio-cultural locatedness also impacts on opportunities to partake in physical activity by requiring children to devote time after school to worship and religious learning. For example, Muslim state school children described a ‘normal’ day as typically involving getting home from school, spending roughly an hour having a snack, watching television and performing the Wudu purification ritual as part of their preparation to go to mosque, then travelling to mosque with family and friends for worship.

Adam (state school): When we get home from school, about half past three, and we’ve got one and a half hours left before we have to go to mosque.

Hussein: Yeah, I’m in the same class as him.

Alice: What time does mosque start?

Ana (state school): Five o’clock... but we have to get ready... we have to do Wudu...then we’ve got this thing called the Masah... we er, kiss our fingers and we have to wash our hair, and er, after we erm, wash our ears and neck.

Ours starts at like four o’clock, half four, til half six... We come out at three o’clock, and then it takes us until about quarter past, take all our stuff off, put it away, get changed... then we go down, have something to eat. We’re not really, we’re not allowed to watch TV but we get away with it (Mia, state school).

Interestingly the Muslim state school children’s regular attendance at mosque meant that their daily experiences fit Fotel and Thomsen’s (2004) definition of highly networked childhoods in a rather different way to the daily experiences of the private school children. The mobility of these state school children was “insularized” between their homes, their mosques and the homes of nearby friends and family *instead* of between private leisure facilities. Similarly, “spatial and functional differentiation” (Fotel and Thompsen, 2004: 541) is evident in the state school children’s understandings of the limitations of where they can play safely without fear of violence or racist and Islamophobic attacks. However, despite the fact that the daily experiences of both private and state school children fit the definition of ‘highly networked’ childhoods given by Fotel and Thompsen (2004), the actual activities which make up the children’s weekly schedules differ considerably, with private school children partaking in lots of physical activity, and state school children broadly partaking in more sedentary activities.

This section has extended the argument, therefore, that the structural context of school shapes children’s understandings of the body by highlighting the ways that *specific* practices in the contexts of the state and private school shape children’s conceptualisations of bodily change. Social

class, it has been shown, is not the only factor which affects children's opportunities for physical activity. Ethnicity and religio-cultural factors are also significant to children's experiences, and affect their opportunities for engagement with physical activity in a number of complex ways. This supports Reay's (1997) argument that conceptualisations of class must span the public and private, and recognise interconnections between class and other factors of difference. The importance of gender in relation to children's understandings of body shape has already been demonstrated, and the following sections will go on to explore the particular significance of gender to children's understandings of the changing body. However, the importance of considering the interconnectedness of aspects of difference will be returned to later on in this chapter.

The 'Normally' Changing Body

While, as noted in the chapter three, Methodology, children avoided discussion of the more intimate aspects of bodily change, some children did mention other, less intimate aspects of change associated with puberty. For example, children spoke of changes to personalities which they associated with becoming a teenager.

Yeah and teenagers... they don't listen to their mums. They say I'm big enough to do that, but they're not... they think they're too big. Like my brother says to my mum when she says something to him, he says, 'mum I'm not a kid anymore'. That's what every teenager says... You know when you're a teenager, you can't help it, yeah, every teenager will be the same (Marcus, state school).

Uday: (state school) And we go on the bus yeah, and you see goths and them yeah?... They are like teenager age. They were like hanging around on the bus, going like this on the bus (scowls).

Alice: So what do you think about teenagers?

Samayah: They're like, drunk.

Uday: They're paranoid, they're possessed.

Alice: What do you mean by that?

Samayah: They're other bodies in another, a parallel, erm dimension.

Uday: I think they been in a black hole or something.

Alice: So what about teenagers?

Sasha (state school): They're GANGSTERS!

Alice: Gangsters?

Sasha: They make bad choices sometimes.

Alice: What kind of choices?

Sasha: Did you make bad choices?

Alice: Err, I hope not, I don't think anybody *always* makes good choices.

Sasha: No, because miss, have you seen these children, like in year seven, year eight, high school. Yeah? And they're just sitting there, sitting at the back at the top, on the front at the top innit? And you can hear their voices from upstairs 'till downstairs.

Marcus' statement that, *'you can't help it... every teenager will be the same'* suggests that these changes to personality are understood as an inevitable part of the process of growing up. Uday and Samayah's theories about why teenagers act the way they do draw upon supernatural and science fiction themes and, in doing so, highlight the uncertain nature, from a child's perspective, of the inevitable process of change which every teenager will face. The idea that children understand the process of change as uncertain is further supported by Sasha's eagerness to ascertain whether my own experience of being a teenager involved *'bad choices'*. After all, the children's knowledge of the changes faced by teenagers is second-hand, based upon what they have heard and witnessed in the bodies of others, but not yet experienced themselves. This understanding of bodily change as uncertain reinforces the argument, made in chapter three, Methodology, that the children's reluctance to discuss intimate matters of bodily change was due, in part, to the children's wish to avoid appearing ignorant or mistakenly saying something in the context of school which would be understood as *'inappropriate'* and might lead to them being punished by teachers.

However, a couple of references were made to the physical changes which children knew they were likely to experience during puberty.

Adam (state school): You could get teenager spots.

Alice: Right, yeah. What else happens to teenagers?

Adam: Most of them that I see, they wear braces and that.

Gertrude (private school): My face will be spotty because that changes.

Amelia: That's what happens to teenagers... my mum's already said I might have braces because my teeth are really ugly.

Braces and teenager spots, Adam points out, are things which happen to *'most'* teenagers. Similarly, Amelia follows up Gertrude's mention of spots by confidently stating *'that's what happens to teenagers'* i.e. these things form a *'normal'* part of the process of bodily change. Adherence to a *'normal'* trajectory of development, therefore, is important to children, and this is clearly expressed in the extract below from state school Rabiya and Samayah.

Alice: So how are you going to be when you're teenagers?

Rabiyah (state school): Normal!

Samayah: Just normal, I'll just be normal, not be like an idiot, not be like a weirdo.

In a previous extract of data, private school Fizz and Splash discussed, with sarcastic laughter, the idea that their notably short friend Eleanor is 'average height'. It is the girls' knowledge of average height among their peers that allows them to scoff at Eleanor's claim at being 'average'. Similar knowledge about what is 'normal' in terms of bodily change was exhibited by state school Jack in the previous extract where he claims to be *'taller than an eleven year old... by that much'*. Without knowledge of what is 'normal' height for an eleven year old, Jack could not so confidently make this statement. When developmental narratives form such an important part of lay cultural knowledge about how children 'ought' to develop (Armstrong, 1983), it is unsurprising that children themselves take note of transgressions in the development of the bodies of others. Individuals who "overstep or step outside the expectations of their age become newsworthy" (Hockey and James, 2003: 4). James (1993: 140) found that primary school children take joy in the notion of "sameness", illustrated by their enthusiastic comparison of similarities between one another, something James (1993) explains in relation to the fact that children are engaged in transitions between conformity and individuality. From the embodied perspective of a child in a rapidly changing body, stereotypical notions of how bodies ought to be at certain points in the life course act as useful guides for children in what seems like "a world of possibilities" (James, 1993: 108). Thus, while the children in this project were reluctant to discuss intimate aspects of bodily change, either as a result of lack of knowledge, fear of punishment, or a combination of both, they were, by contrast, certain of what was 'normal' or 'average' in terms of other types of bodily change.

Gendered Bodily Change

Children's discussion of bodily changes associated with puberty, presented in the extracts above, is notably gender neutral. Changes to personality, acne spots and braces may be features of growing up for both boys and girls. However, this does not mean that gender was unimportant to children's understandings of bodily change. For example, Amelia's understanding of braces as a remedy for her 'ugly' teeth contrasts to Adam's comments about braces 'in general'. However, Amelia's response also reflects a pattern, evident in data from the girls more broadly, that bodily change requires active mediation on their part in order to ensure that they became more 'beautiful' by the time they reached secondary school. These symbolic connections made by the girls are demonstrated in the extracts below and appear, at first, to cut across the social class divide.

[I will be] Very Sexy!.. I already do wear make up! Sometimes I wear, see I'm not wearing it today but sometimes foundation...I'm very pale, I'm very very pale... I want my hair to be longer (Fizz, private school).

And I want to grow my hair because mine is about up to there because it used to be quite long and then I had it cut and now I want it long... [because] It's pretty, you can do more with it (Eva, private school).

[I will be] Tall. Short skirted because all of the senior school girls look sassy (Amelia, private school).

I think I won't have chubby cheeks... I'm not going to change my beautiful hair... Well our school uniform changes when we go over there, it turns black... It looks nicer... I think black suits me more... I will wear fake nails as well at the weekend, and make-up... (Nelly, private school).

I'm going to grow my hair... I will look pretty and more grown up. I've technically changed what I've worn already... I've started wearing chequered shirts and stuff... Well having seen kids, what they do is they have these roll-up shirts and they button them and then they have a singlet top underneath that so... and I wear more tight jeans and stuff and I never used to wear jeans and I wear more trousers (Nikita, private school).

Sasha: (state school) When I, when I go to secondary school, my body will be erm, I will be beautiful!

Alice: What does being beautiful mean to you?

Sasha: Yeah, beautiful, like, erm... Erm, I will be very pretty, because I will wear like, nice clothes.

Amy (state school): When I am older I hope I get really, really beautiful.

Alice: What does being beautiful mean to you?

Amy: Like, you need very beautiful shoes and that. Like girls, we could have diamonds on them...

Jess: Erm, if you have your ears pierced you could have like posh dangly ear-rings.

Alice: Oh ok, and that would make you more beautiful would it?

Amy: Yeah!

As this data clearly shows, forms of bodily decoration including clothing, make-up, jewellery and hairstyles, are understood by girls as a way of mediating bodily change. Boys, in contrast, did not discuss bodily decoration with the same enthusiasm or emphasise the potential for bodily decoration as a way of mediating change. This can be explained, to some extent, in relation to gender differences in cultural understandings of the body. For example, Durham (2008) argues that the beauty industry communicates patriarchal notions that female worth lies in appearance, and reinforces the idea that girls must consume i.e. buy clothing, make-up and jewellery, in order to

achieve this ideal. Female worth, as Reay (2013) points out, continues to be discussed in terms of appearance in contemporary Western cultures and the notion that the journey to womanhood requires greater attention to, and responsibility for, their appearance is commonplace among girls. This idea is broadly evident in the extracts above, and summed up in the extract below from state school Ana.

Yeah you start thinking more about how you look because, you know, when you're young, you have loads of little clothes and dungarees and all them. But when you get older, you're more in public and you're more, you need to sense how you look. Because there's this girl in year six, Samantha her name is, and she told me, when she was young, she used to dress up in dungarees, you know boring old dungarees, but now she's grown up she always puts bling bling⁴ on! (Ana, state school).

The marketing of products aimed at 'tweens' or children aged between eight and twelve began in the early 1990's (Cook and Kaiser, 2004) and the high street spending power of the tween consumer relies upon the idea that children experience pressure to "age-up" (Pilcher, 2010: 461) using forms of bodily decoration, particularly make-up and high heels which are central to sexual presentations of adult femininity within contemporary culture (Cook and Kaiser, 2004). Thus, the explanation for gendered differences in understandings of bodily change between boys and girls in this project lies not just in the fact that girls focused enthusiastically upon bodily decoration while boys actively played down its importance, but also in the impact that these understandings of bodily change have for boys and girls. Girls' focus upon bodily decoration must be considered in relation to the idea, noted previously, that in children's social worlds, being 'bigger' is equated by children with greater social status. Using bodily decoration, particularly those aspects of clothing, hair and make-up which act as symbols of adult female sexuality, are a way for girls to 'age-up' and become 'bigger'. This appears to be less significant to boys who cannot use bodily decoration to 'age up' in the same way. Children's alertness to the idea that their bodies ought to be doing certain things at particular points was noted earlier in relation to data which showed that children had very specific ideas about how tall they should be at a given age in order to be 'normal' or 'average'. This awareness of bodily age-appropriateness is also evident in discussions with girls about bodily decoration. For example, one afternoon, state school Amy came in from the playground crying because some other girls had told her that her glittery flower hair clips were 'stupid and babyish'. However, using bodily decoration to 'age up' too fast can also be problematic, as the extract below demonstrates.

⁴ Sparkly, ostentatious jewellery

Amelia (private school): I'd like to have my ears pierced but (pause).
Alice: When do you think you'll get your ears pierced?
Amelia: I think when I'm thirteen.
Gertrude: Thirteen is a sensible age.
Amelia: Eva got hers done in year *three*!

Therefore, the girls' critical discussion of the use of bodily decoration, in contrast to that of boys, did not concern the overstepping of gender boundaries per se, as much as the breaking of *particular* rules concerning bodily decoration which had been constructed by the girls in the context of school and in relation to their knowledge of appropriate or 'normal' ways to use bodily decoration for their particular age.

These findings support Pilcher's (2010) argument that girls, far from being passive in the face of the marketing of clothing and beauty products, are savvy and discerning consumers capable of using bodily decoration in sophisticated ways to carefully reproduce the kinds of feminine identity they wish to reflect. For example, Pilcher (2010) found that while twelve year old girls were drawn to items of clothing with hyper-feminine styling, they rejected revealing styles of clothing on the basis that they were "tarty" (Pilcher, 2010: 467). Girls in Pilcher's (2010) study "articulated their own reflexive and skilful understandings of how 'what to wear and where' is contingent upon contexts" (Pilcher, 2010: 465). For example, girls were found to carefully distinguish between dressing up as a form of role play or rehearsal of adult femininity enacted inside the house, and dressing up for going out (Pilcher, 2010). So, while children must not be positioned as passive to gendered stereotypes, their gendered standpoint, along with their particular embodied experience of rapid and uncertain physical change, powerfully shapes their understandings of the changing body.

Amelia's consideration of braces as a remedy for the 'ugliness' of her teeth must therefore be understood in relation to the broader understanding among girls that mediating bodily change using bodily decoration (or even braces) in order to become more beautiful is part of the particularly

female experience of growing up, and is also closely connected to the role of girls as consumers and their identities as girls⁵.

Indeed, according to James (1993), children rely upon gender stereotypes to understand their particular embodied experience of bodily change. Childhood, James (1993) argues, is a period of rapid physical change characterised by flux. Stereotypes, therefore, act as useful guiding principles for children, offering children “an understanding of ideal types for the Self through processes of comparison” (James, 1993: 122).

The cognitive value of stereotypes for children, then, lies in the bringing of an element of certainty into an uncertain environment. In this sense, stereotypes work as hesitant assertions of facts – ‘boys are naughty’, ‘fat people are ugly’, ‘girls are nice’. As characterisations, badly made, they invite confirmation or denial from other children and, in this sense, their usage represents a form of questioning and enquiry (James, 1993:108).

Stereotypes allow children to distinguish between those who are different and those who conform as part of what James (1993: 121) refers to as “the generalised cultural processes through which childhood identities are created and maintained”. Furthermore, James (1993) argues that

Stereo/ideal types furnish children with a conceptual base from which to begin to contemplate their own futures or to countenance conceptions of radical change... for it is the changing body which, in Western cultures, images for children aspects of their developing social identities (James, 1993: 120).

Gender stereotypes, James (1993: 123) points out, were “daily reinforced in the children’s mutual conversation, their resonance as gender signifiers sustained through the toys they played with in the classroom”. Therefore, just as the relationship between height and status was found to be reinforced through classroom activities, norms of gendered behaviour are also maintained in school.

The importance of normality in relation to bodily change was demonstrated earlier in this chapter and therefore, the way the girls draw upon stereotypical gendered ideas about the importance of

⁵ However, Featherstone (1982: 22) points out that the cosmetic and fashion industries ‘are eager to redress gender imbalance and promote men alongside women to enjoy the dubious equality of consumers in the market place’. The marketing of forms of bodily decoration, in particular clothing, is aimed at boys too. Therefore, explaining the girls’ focus upon aspects of bodily decoration through understandings of consumption alone risks characterising girls as cultural dopes (Walkerdine, 2001).

appearance in their discussion of bodily change can be understood as an example of children bringing an element of certainty into an uncertain environment. For the girls in this project, that certainty is their knowledge of what is 'normal' for girls as they grow up; to use bodily decoration to become more beautiful.

Coming to Know the Body via Peer Pressure

James (1993) claims that children's use of stereotypes as a buffer to flux is not, however, entirely passive. Instead, James (1993) found that children reinforce and challenge stereotypes via their mutual conversations. James' (2013) work on children's active role in the process of socialisation similarly highlights the significance of interaction, most notably in the form of 'peer pressure' - that is, children's ability to exert power over one another's decisions - in the process of how children come to understand the social world and their place within it. This section explores the way that children's critical discussions of ideas about the body, which can be broadly understood as forms of 'peer pressure', are significant in relation to how children come to know about the body. Not only is the importance of peer pressure apparent in girls' discussion of their plans to mediate change using bodily decoration, but also in the absence of data from boys about bodily decoration. More specifically, the handful of boys who *did* attempt to discuss bodily decoration were subtly reprimanded by their peers, as the extract below demonstrates. Here, private school Monkey attempts to discuss his future plans to style his hair.

Monkey (private school): When I'm older I'm going to have it shaved here and long there so it points to the side. Not like completely shaved off. Just really short.

Bob: If you want something like that why don't we just take it to another level and get a Mohican?

Monkey: I don't want a Mohican. I'm never going to get a Mohican.

Barry: And dye it red!

Bob: Dye it pink!

Alice: Why do you think people change their hair when they get older?

Barry: Because they're tired of it.

Monkey: Because they think it's the latest thing but it's not, it just makes them look rubbish... Yeah because I once saw this kid, they were like teenagers, and this kid he was in so much torture he had an earring there, an earring there and one there, a nose piercing, mouth piercing and a little tattoo on his neck. He had all his hair shaved off apart from a huge Mohican.

By joking about the possibilities of Monkey's future hairstyle, the boys are collectively constructing the boundaries about what boys should and should not do with their hair. Bob's suggestion that Monkey '*just take it to another level and get a Mohican*' implies that Monkey's consideration of his

future hairstyle equates with a use of bodily decoration considered to be ridiculous by the boys. This can therefore be understood as a reprimand - a form of peer pressure - to Monkey for talking about hair in the first place. Monkey's criticism of the boy with piercings, tattoos and a Mohican hairstyle is a way for him to separate his own far less elaborate plans to change his hair in future from those kind of teenagers who pay *too much* attention to bodily decoration and '*think it's the latest thing*'. The following extract confirms the importance, for these boys, of appearing not to care too much about bodily decoration. This is, they appear to be saying, what is normal for boys:

Alice: So do you think the way people dress tells you anything about them?

Bob (private school): If you're an idiot teenager or not.

Alice: Okay (pause). What kind of things do idiot teenagers wear?

Bob: Hoodies.

Monkey: I like hoodies... and I like it when people have chains hanging out of their pockets.

Alice: So do you think that might be your style in future?

Monkey: Yes.

Bob: I'll just wear teenager.

Alice: What does wearing teenager mean?

Bob: Like hoodies and putting on random stuff... I just put on random stuff and it just goes together.

Alice: So kind of casual?

Monkey: My mum's really fussy about my clothes because she doesn't like me just saying, "Ooh that's good and that's good" and putting them together. It's like...I've got these trousers with braces. They're red and sometimes I put on this blue top with them and she says it doesn't go with them... but I usually like wear a black hoody over it.

In contrast to Monkey, who exhibits an enthusiasm for bodily decoration and ideas about style more akin to that of the girls, Bob checks himself, commenting that he 'just' wears 'teenager'. This, Bob explains, consists of an effort to appear as if no consideration whatsoever has gone into his choice of bodily decoration. It is, as he puts it, 'random'. Monkey, whose over-attention to the details of bodily decoration has been noted by Bob, quickly counteracts the implied criticism by highlighting his mother's 'fussiness' and, by doing so, reinforces the idea that attention to matters of bodily decoration is a predominantly female concern. In contrast to his mother's wishes, he claims to just put outfits together or evades the problem of clashing colours by wearing a black hoody, a further nod to the importance of the appearance of 'effortlessness' in the boy's understanding of their use of bodily decoration. Thus, the boys, it seems, constructed and reinforced the boundaries for the explicit use of bodily decoration in relation to stereotypical understandings of masculine identity and the male body. By affecting a lack of attention to bodily decoration, the boys conform to

traditional notions of masculinity in which men, in contrast to women, do not concern themselves with physical appearance.

This kind of reinforcement of gender norms in relation to the use of bodily decoration was also evident in conversations between mixed sex groups of children. For example, in the extracts below, state school Sasha powerfully emphasises her understanding of stereotypical gendered rules of bodily decoration in response to Jack's attempt to speak of his own use of bodily decoration.

Jack (state school): When I had my hair long, erm, I didn't want to cut it for ages, so I left it long, I had to start brushing it! (giggles)

Alice: Oh did you? And why are you laughing at that?

Jack: Because, I don't know, it's just...

Sasha: Because it's a girly thing!... Once, I saw this boy, his hair was up to there (indicates just past her shoulders) and I was like, how *long* is his hair?!

Alice: Did it look nice?

Sasha: Er, from the back, he looked like a bit of a, handsome person, (giggles) but from the front, NO!

...

Jack: Boys, they don't wear makeup and stuff. They have earrings. Well some do.

Sasha: Yeah one earring there (indicates earlobe).

Jack: Like, this boy in year three, he has an earring in one ear.

Alice: And what do you think of that? Would you have one yourself?

Jack: Nah.

Sasha: If I was a boy, I wouldn't do it...There was this guy I saw once, he was wearing *blue nail varnish*.

Alice: Is that something you might do Jack? Wear blue nail varnish?

Jack: No. I do wear pink gloves. They're just like normal gloves for boys. I've seen people wearing them and they look cool. They have different colours so they have luminous pink on one and luminous yellow on another.

Despite Sasha's disparaging description of the boy with long hair, she admits that from certain angles, long hair on a boy can even be handsome. This, along with the mention of boys who wear diamond earrings and blue nail polish, and the teenage boy with piercings, tattoos and a Mohican discussed by Barry, Monkey and Bob, demonstrates that children are aware of the possibility of stepping outside the boundaries of gendered use of bodily decoration. However, the children firmly communicated that they did not plan to do this themselves. Adhering instead to what they understand as 'normal' gendered use of bodily decoration, and thereby further demonstrating the importance, for children, of their knowledge of 'normality' as an element of certainty in an

uncertain and changing bodily environment. Even Jack's concession to wearing pink gloves is made alongside a justification that they are just '*normal*' gloves for boys.

Thus children's critical attention to aspects of difference in the use of bodily decoration, and the way they checked one another for overstepping gendered boundaries in their use of bodily decoration, can be understood in relation to Jenkins (2008: 18) definition of identity as "denoting the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their relations with other individuals and collectives". Identification is "the systematic establishment and signification between individuals, collectivities and between relationships of similarity and difference" (Jenkins, 2008: 18-19). Similarity and difference, therefore, are the dynamic principles of identification which form the "heart of the human world" (Jenkins, 2008: 18). Defining "us", Jenkins (2008: 102) argues, also involves defining a range of "thems". When we say something about others, we are often saying something about ourselves (Jenkins, 2008). In essence then, the examples of boys who wear blue nail polish, diamond earrings or demonstrably pay too much attention to their appearance in ways which defy stereotypical notions of masculinity are being positioned, by the children in this project, as the 'thems' against which boys can establish the rules for their own gendered use of bodily decoration.

Children's understanding of bodily change, therefore, is not merely being shaped by stereotypical ideas about gender or the body, but by children themselves who are actively reinforcing and constructing gendered norms in relation to the everyday use and understanding of bodily decoration. Not only this but, just as James (1993) argued, children could be seen to cognitively translate general stereotypes into more specific types of ideals for the self.

Gertrude (private school): I will probably wear a bit of make-up.

Amelia: Make-up to cover spots.

Gertrude: I wouldn't wear mascara and dark red lipstick.

Amelia: I'd wear foundation.

Gertrude: I'd wear earrings because you're allowed to wear small.

Alice: Okay. So foundation to cover up spots but not mascara and not lipstick?

Amelia: Not blusher

Gertrude: No, because you can see.

Amelia and Gertrude's understanding of how make-up and jewellery ought to be used is very much context specific, relating to school rules about the kinds of jewellery which they are 'allowed' to

wear and the avoidance of make-up which ‘you can see’. Make-up in secondary school, the girls understand, is tolerated as long as it is not very obvious to teachers. The rules about the use of make-up and jewellery are, therefore, constructed by girls not only in relation to ‘normal’ gendered ideas about bodily decoration, but also in relation to the particular context of their social worlds. In the extract below, private school Nikita describes the importance of ensuring that her use of hair dye is careful enough to appear to be ‘natural’. Again, this can be understood in relation to school rules forbidding ‘unnatural’ hair colours.

Well my mum wants to put lighter streaks in my hair and I do have a choice whether I say, “yeah, it would look really good” or “maybe it’s a bad idea until I’m older”... if I had light streaks it would suddenly grow out and people would actually know that I had, well, but if I put lemon juice all over my hair, my whole hair would go lighter and it would look more natural... When I was in Wales there was a girl and she had brown hair and she dyed the two front parts really bright blond and everyone laughed at her. She looked stupid. She looked quite weird (Nikita, private school).

In this extract, Nikita, like Amelia and Gertrude, establishes what she considers to be the boundaries for ‘proper’ use of bodily decoration. While the girls undoubtedly draw upon the rules of their school concerning bodily decoration in order to construct these boundaries, Nikita’s description of the girl in Wales who misused hair-dye and, as a consequence became the object of ridicule, provides an example of the ways that girls use discussion to reinforce the rules about bodily decoration which they have constructed within their social worlds. Furthermore, Nikita’s experience of seeing this girl ridiculed by other children demonstrates the importance of experience, alongside mutual discussion, in shaping her understandings of the gendered rules of bodily decoration. This event acts as a warning to Nikita about the consequences of contravening what is acceptable, from children’s perspectives, in relation to the use of bodily decoration. Nikita is not, therefore, merely accepting stereotypical ideas about gendered use of bodily decoration, but is actively drawing upon experiences to reinforce these ideas.

This section has considered the ways that structural factors relating to gendered cultural stereotypes about bodily decoration shape children’s understandings of the body *alongside* the ways that children turn these general stereotypes into more specific types of ideal for the self. The complexity involved in the relationship between structure and agency has, therefore, begun to be highlighted. The following section, however, reveals further layers of complexity in the interplay of structure

and agency as children come to know about the body by considering the ways that children's religious and cultural beliefs shape their understandings of the changing body.

Religio-Cultural Understandings of the Changing Body

It has already been shown that religio-cultural locatedness, specifically children's Islamic faith, impacts the time they have available to take part in physical activities after school, alongside important social class differences. Similarly, children's religious identities, developed through religious and cultural teachings of Islam, were found to be significant to their understandings of how their bodies would change over time. For example, Uday, a Muslim state school boy, planned to use bodily decoration in ways which contrast sharply with the majority of his male peers. Instead of affecting a distinct lack of concern with matters of bodily decoration, Uday intends to use clothing to look smart.

Uday (state school): Miss shall I tell you what I'm gonna do when I go to secondary school?... in school time yeah, I'm gonna wear smart clothes... Like a suit yeah?... I don't want to be with people who wear not nice clothes.

The way in which Uday's cultural locatedness shapes his particular understanding of bodily decoration becomes evident upon further questioning.

Alice: Why is it important to wear nice smart clothes?

Rabiyah (state school): You can't get *backbite*.

Uday: Yeah, it means when somebody talks behind you.

Samayah: 'Oh look at that fat' but they don't know.

Alice: What's it called, *backbite*?

Uday: Yeah, in our language, it means like 'eat it', and do you know, it's like, for when you're getting married yeah, and you wanna, like say they're er, stinky or something. It's hard to explain.

Samayah: Yeah like, urgh, have you seen her, she's so fat and ugly, I'm not gonna marry her! Like proper behind her back.

Uday: But if you wear suits, and you look nice, everyone says, he's a pretty good guy.

Samayah: That's not backbiting, that's just, good.

Uday's use of marriage as a context to explain the concept of 'backbite', specifically the idea that someone might want to 'backbite', or comment on the appearance of their betrothed behind their back, suggests that 'backbiting' is understood as having a function connected to the process of arranged marriage, seemingly as a way for those involved in arranged marriage to vent a sense of disappointment. Thus, the children's points of reference are drawn upon from a particular cultural

context, where arranged marriage is more common and accepted. Uday, Rabiya and Samayah understand the concept of 'backbite' to be particular to the children's shared Islamic culture, illustrated by the use of the phrase 'in our language'. Islam, in fact, originates in six distinct linguistic and geographical zones, each with different histories and cultures (Lewis, 2007) and indeed, the native languages spoken by the adults of the three children's respective families differ. However, as Dwyer (1999) notes, the significance of *Umma*, the concept of a universal "brotherhood" of Islam, is used "as a way to unite Muslims across the world regardless of race or ethnicity" (Dwyer, 1999: 60). For Uday then, it is the shared experience of being Muslim which is the important factor in their understanding of the concept of 'backbite' and how this relates to Uday's plan to only wear smart clothes in future.

Research by Jacobson (1998) found that Muslim youths tended to have a comparatively stronger sense of identity in comparison to their non-religious peers. This, Jacobson (1998) argues, is due to the stringent demands of Islam on formal practices, routine behaviour and social conduct which results in the placement of more salient boundaries between self and other for Muslims. This helps to account for Uday's ideas about gender and bodily decoration, which were unique among the boys involved in this project. From his particular perspective, avoiding 'backbite' by dressing smartly was more significant than the idea, apparent within data from other boys, that preoccupation with matters of appearance is a feminine trait. Furthermore, Ramji (2007) notes that working class Muslim boys often lack economic, social and cultural capital, occupying a relatively powerless position in comparison to their middle class and non-Muslim peers. Uday's plan to use bodily decoration in a way which differed from other boys may, therefore, also form part of an alternative means of gaining status and power.

However, Nesbitt (2004) demonstrates that children's interpretations of religion often differ quite markedly from those of adults of the same faith, and that real life religious practices can be modified by children's religious agency. Therefore, Uday's planned use of bodily decoration may also be understood as a particular interpretation of his Islamic beliefs which he wishes to embody, perhaps, we can assume, relating to Islamic notions of a respectful and pious appearance. Uday, it must be remembered, was not the only Muslim boy at the state school. Thus the fact that other Muslim boys did not place a similar importance upon dressing smartly in future demonstrates not only the significant role of Uday's own active agency but also the diversity of Muslim identities

between children.

For girls, the importance of bodily decoration in relation to the changing body has been demonstrated above, and Muslim girls are no exception to this. However, their specific uses of bodily decoration are shaped by the girls' religious beliefs and cultural standpoints in various ways. For example, in the extract below, state school Sasha talks about the groups of teenage girls she sees on her bus ride home, revealing how her beliefs about the use of bodily decoration are shaped by what she calls 'Muslim law'.

Because Muslim girls, they're meant to wear fully scarves and everything and *they* don't! They're not meant to wear like, lots of cheap tight jeans. Yeah, and they're meant to cover their body. They're not meant to wear stuff too tight on their self, like that (standing up, pulls her loose fitting tunic tighter around her hips) and, they have these *tight* little jeans on, they have these things, these little T-shirts up to there (indicates midriff) and they just straighten their hair, and that's like, against Muslim law (Sasha, state school).

Sasha, like other girls, planned to use bodily decoration in future in order to be 'pretty'. In the extract below, Sasha explains how she plans to achieve this goal within the boundaries of notions of modesty.

Erm, I will be very pretty, because I will wear like, nice clothes. I won't wear make-up when I start high school because, from my opinion, God made me this face, and I wouldn't want to make it even more prettier because I want my face like how God made it right? So I'll just wear a black dress that's up to my legs, and, a nice scarf (Sasha, state school).

Like Uday, Sasha has a very definite sense of how she plans to use bodily decoration in accordance with her religious beliefs, and in doing so, supports Jacobsen's (1998) conclusion that a strong sense of identity characterises Muslim youths in comparison to their non-religious peers. However, this confident sense of self does not characterise data from all the Muslim children in this project. Compare, for example, state school Rabiya's attitude to wearing a headscarf with that of state school Sasha.

Alice: Can you talk to me about how your body connects to Islam?

Uday (state school): So like it's like women innit, you wear scarf (laughs)... it says so in the Koran.

Samayah: Yeah.

Rabiya: Yeah.

Alice: (To Rabiya) But you don't wear a scarf do you?

Uday: No! (looks sharply at Rabiya).

Rabiya: *Sometimes*, only to Mosque. I look fat when I wear a scarf!

Negotiation of a "hybrid identity" is a common experience for Muslim girls living in a Western context (Dwyer, 1999: 57) and the extract above illustrates Rabiya's position between the traditional requirements of her Islamic identity and more contemporary aesthetic requirements of her identity as a British female. Dwyer (1999: 63) also notes that it is usual for Muslim girls to readily use Islamic discourses in some contexts but refuse to be defined by them in others. Dwyer's (1999) study of British Muslim girls also describes how they often feel situated between two 'communities' at the national and local level. For some, the national community of Muslims to which they belong offers possibilities for challenging the narrow confines of behaviour and parental control proscribed by the local community of Muslims where the girls live (Dwyer, 1999: 64). The sharp 'no' that Rabiya receives from Uday as a reprimand for not wearing a scarf is an example of the kind of monitoring which Muslim girls experience as a member of their local community, which Dwyer (1999) points out, is often handed out by boys who draw upon the previously discussed notion of *Umma*, or universal brotherhood of Islam, to construct female members of their community as sisters who require their protection and guidance (Dwyer, 1999). However, this also acts as a further example of the capacity of children to construct and reinforce rules about their own forms of religious identity within their own peer cultures. In the extract below, Rabiya's choice not to wear a scarf is justified by drawing upon the loosely defined rules about headscarves which form part of the national community of Muslims.

Uday (state school): Kids yeah, they're allowed to like, wear no scarf, or a scarf. They can like choose.

Alice: You're talking about kids, like how old?

Uday: Like, six seven eight.

Rabiya: In primary, in primary.

Uday: In primary they don't *have* to wear it. But when they get to secondary.

Alice: Ah, (To Rabiya) so that's why you don't wear one at the moment, you just choose do you?

Rabiya: When I want to.

Alice: And you choose not to for school.

Rabiya: I look FAT! That's why I don't wear it in school I look fat.

Samayah: They're not gonna make a mickey out of you.

Rabiya: They *will*.

Samayah: I should know that.

It is Rabiya's position as part of a national community of Muslims, where headscarf wearing is optional, which allows her to argue that she can choose whether or not to wear a scarf until she reaches secondary school. In the previous section, children were shown to reprimand one another for breaking the gendered rules about the use of bodily decoration as part of their active construction and reinforcement of these rules. Similarly, Uday and Samayah's subjection of Rabiya to pressure to conform to Islamic gendered rules of bodily decoration by wearing a scarf can be understood as part of the process of the construction and reinforcement of their notions of gendered identity as Muslims. Hemming and Madge (2012) note that friends and peers, who are integral to the lives of most children and young people, are likely to influence levels of religious observance, beliefs and practices, which reinforces the argument that forms of interaction between children, including 'peer pressure' are significant to understanding how children come to know about the body. As the data demonstrates, however, peer pressure does not only take the form of reprimands, but can also be meted out in the form of support, as in Samayah's positioning of herself and Rabiya as alike in their difference. Dwyer (1999) helps to make sense of Samayah's actions in relation to her Islamic identity.

Muslim identities are articulated in relation to, and in resistance against, dominant racialised discourses of national community. Thus identifications as Muslims are forged in relation to specific discourses of exclusion which operate at the level of both the local and national community (Dwyer, 1999: 57).

In reassuring Rabiya that she will not be made fun of for wearing a headscarf, Samayah positions herself, a headscarf wearer, alongside Rabiya in opposition to 'they' who represent those whom are not members of the Muslim community, global or local. For Muslim children, therefore, the 'thems' not only include those who step outside gendered norms of behaviour but also those who step outside norms of *Islamic* gendered behaviour which, as the data has demonstrated, can mean that their understandings of the body, specifically their use of bodily decoration, can differ from that of their non-Muslim peers.

It is important, however, to note that diverse understandings of the body exist within the group of Muslim children who participated in this project. As the data has shown, Muslim children were not all the same. Dwyer (1999: 61) notes that the term Muslim is "open to countless re-definitions by the individual". Indeed, in this project, it is the diversity of opinions *between* Muslim children which provides the evidence of children's own active roles in the construction and reinforcement of

the rules about Islamic gendered use of bodily decoration. Through discussion of the teenage girls she sees on the bus, Sasha reinforces her culturally situated understanding of the rules of gendered use of bodily decoration by positioning those girls as ‘other’. Similarly, Uday’s admonishment of Rabiya for her refusal to wear a headscarf, and Samayah’s attempts to reassure Rabiya that they are alike in their difference as Muslim girls, demonstrates children’s powers of persuasion through the critical noting of difference. The pressures upon Muslims to conform to particular gendered rules of behaviour, therefore, come not only from parental and patriarchal authority within the local community as Dwyer (1999) suggests, but are also a result of children’s own active role in the construction and reinforcement of these rules.

The idea that children play an important role in the construction and reinforcement of Islamic gendered rules of bodily decoration is most evident in the enthusiastic discussion of Muslim girls about dressing up for *Eid al-fitr*. This festival, which ends the month of *Ramadan*, was spoken about by Muslim girls as a time when everyday restrictions upon their use of bodily decoration were temporarily lifted and they were encouraged, by their families, to dress up and ‘show off’.

Alice: Do you always wear a scarf?

Sasha (state school): Yeah ...Except Eid because my mum does my hair pretty, yeah, and then I like to show off!.. She plaits it, like this way and this way with nice whirls and stuff like that, and sometimes she straightens, she like, plaits one part, puts erm, a rubber band on and then straightens all the parts there (at the back of her head) because she does it in patternish whirls and everything... And after that. She holds it, and twists it all up, and I wear my party dress.

It’s a celebration for all our fasts... we really dress up and wear really nice clothes and stuff... you know on Eid, I looked really nice, I wore like a red dress, and make up and everything. And you know my auntie, she doesn’t curl her hair with curlers, she uses a straightener... It looks *really, really* nice. And I had like this really nice lip gloss on, and I give my uncle a kiss, and he had lipstick all on his face! (laughter). And my auntie, she took loads of pictures of me posing and everything... And I wore like, this really nice kind of goldy colour, and I had like a flower clip in my hair and my hair was like that, (lifts the crown section of her hair) half up (Mia, state school).

The specific ways which Muslim girls were allowed to use bodily decoration as part of their family’s Eid celebrations mirrored their more everyday use, or plans to use, bodily decoration. For Sasha, who, it has been noted, was adamant that wearing make-up was haram, her use of bodily decoration at Eid involved the styling and uncovering of her hair and wearing a party dress. For Mia, who does not plan to wear a headscarf and who regularly borrows her mother’s make-up box

to 'dress up' at home, Eid is an opportunity to use all manner of bodily decoration and to extend her everyday experience of 'dressing up' into a more public realm. Although Mia is allowed to borrow her mother's make-up, leaving a lipstick mark upon her uncle's face is an example of playing at adult femininity worthy of special mention, and understood by Mia as appropriate in the context of the Eid festivities. Indeed, the importance of context to Sasha and Mia's use of bodily decoration lends further support to Pilcher's (2010: 465) argument that girls are sophisticated users of clothing, specifically, the idea that girls articulate their own reflexive and skilful understandings of "what to wear and where". This data, along with the previous discussion of girls' use of bodily decoration more broadly, demonstrates that these reflexive and skilful understandings of appropriate use of clothing in context also extends to other forms of bodily decoration including hairstyles, make-up and jewellery. Furthermore, diversity in children's understandings of contextualised use of bodily decoration has been revealed through the consideration of the experiences of Muslim girls. Therefore, while religio-cultural standpoint shapes children's understandings of the body, specifically in relation to the use of bodily decoration, children are not passive in this. In contrast, the data show that children are capable of negotiation by adopting hybrid identities and playing an active role in the construction and reinforcement of rules about gendered use of bodily decoration in relation to their particular beliefs. This provides further evidence of children's active roles as social agents who construct their own social worlds.

In conclusion, this chapter has considered three issues, social class, gender and religious belief, which have each demonstrated the complex interplay between structure and agency in relation to how children come to know about the body. It was shown that the structural factors of children's lives, relating to social class, determine the opportunities available to children to engage in physical activity. Similarly, children's religious beliefs were shown to influence their activities after school, and traditional teachings of Islam were shown to shape Muslim children's understandings of the body in significant ways. Cultural expectations of gender behaviour also powerfully shaped the differences in understandings of bodily change between boys and girls in this project.

However, the state school children's particular conceptualisation of their active role in mediating bodily change through changes to their future lifestyles has been positioned not only as the result of structural factors, but as a form of negotiation and resilience. In the face of limited opportunities to partake in the kinds of physical exercise which they knew they needed to do in order to have the

slim, muscular bodies they desired, state school children conceptualised the process of bodily change in particular ways which allowed them to imagine themselves achieving their goals for mediating bodily change in future.

Similarly, Muslim children were far from passive to the influence of the rules of Islam. By contrast, they were found to apply aspects of their religious belief in ways which suited their individual needs. Thus, while Muslim children's ideas about the changing body were characterised by a strong sense of identity, in comparison with their non-Muslim peers as noted by Jacobsen (1998), this chapter has also highlighted diversity among Muslim children which demonstrates how they make sense of the changing body using aspects of Islam in ways which make sense in relation to their particular, individual standpoint.

This chapter has also shown that children did not merely accept gender stereotypes, but, in contrast, actively reinforced them via mutual discussion. Furthermore, children were found to construct gendered rules for the use of bodily decoration in the context of their particular social worlds, demonstrating their ability to turn general stereotypes into a more specific type of ideal for the self in what James' (1993: 122) refers to as a process of "cognitive translation".

The importance of the notion of 'normal' for children, has also been highlighted in this chapter. It was argued that the significance of being 'normal' is a result of children's particular embodied experience - unique to them as a social group - of a rapidly changing body. Children's embodiment, therefore, is highly significant to how they understand the body. However, the importance of children's embodiment lies not only in their *shared* experience of rapid bodily change, but also in relation to the particular circumstances of individual children's everyday lives relating to social class, gender, and children's religio-cultural locatedness. The finding that state school children's conceptualisations of the changing body differ from those of their private school peers as a result of the engagement of their school in sporting activity, environmental factors of their lives, and their religious and cultural identity, demonstrates the complexity of the interrelating factors which affect the ways that children's knowledge of the body, including their health knowledge, may be put into practice as part of their everyday lives.

Connections between constructions of ‘appropriate’ knowledge of the body for children, and children’s ability to directly challenge stereotypes about the body, have also been highlighted by this chapter. More specifically, it was found that children’s use of mutual discussion helps to reinforce and construct stereotypical ideas about the body in relation to their own experience. However, while it has been shown that children reinforce and construct gender stereotypes in relation to their particular social worlds, the children’s reluctance to challenge gender stereotypes must be considered not only in relation to their need for an element of certainty in an uncertain environment of bodily change, but also in relation to their unwillingness to discuss intimate aspects of bodily change. Although children are likely to have discussed intimate aspects of bodily change among themselves, the broad limitations upon what they can discuss in the presence of adults are likely to contribute to the perception of bodily change as uncertain. In contrast to height, which could be openly debated and discussed, aspects of the gendered body, aside from bodily decoration, were more difficult to talk about (see discussion of this in chapter three, Methodology). Thus, without mutual discussion, stereotypes are likely to remain unchallenged. This idea supports the argument, made in the literature review, that children’s lives are powerfully shaped by cultural constructions of childhood. In this case, it is the construction of childhood as a time of innocence which shapes children’s access to knowledge about the gendered body and, as a consequence, the ways in which they understand gender and bodily change.

This chapter set out to examine how children’s understandings of bodily change are shaped by social class, gender and religio-cultural standpoint, and has indeed identified differences between state and private school children, boys and girls, and Muslim and non-Muslim children. However, this chapter has equally highlighted the importance of considering individual children’s capacity for agency alongside, or even in spite of, wider group differences or structural aspects of children’s lives. The following chapter will consider children’s understandings of the body from the perspective of the individual child, and examine the cognitive processes involved in children’s construction of meaning about the body.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE EXPERIENTIAL BODY

This chapter introduces the concepts of ‘experiential logic’ and the ‘thought experiment’ as tools for understanding how children come to know about the body in relation to their individual knowledge and experiences. Thus, the argument about the importance of agency in understanding children’s conceptualisations of the body, made in the previous chapter, is extended here. It will be argued that the way children construct knowledge of the body is agentic, and more specifically, borne of personal embodied experience. Furthermore, children’s experiential knowledge of the body will be shown to form the basis for their critique of ideas about the body which are presented to them in school. Children’s capacity for agency, therefore, is demonstrated to mediate the structural issues which have been argued, in the previous chapter, to shape their understandings of the body. However, the complexity of the relationship between structure and agency continues to be acknowledged, as children’s experiences are, of course, shaped by structural factors of children’s lives. This chapter aims to demonstrate *how* children actively engage in meaning making about the body as part of their everyday lives, or what children (below) refer to as the ‘natural day’.

The Natural Day

Children’s understandings of the body, it was noted in the literature review, differ from those of adults as a result of children’s particular embodied experiences, and the particular contexts of children’s lives. However, little consideration has been given to the ways that children themselves understand how they, as a social group that is distinct from adults, come to know about the body. The extract below from private school Lotty and Eva offers some insight into this.

Lotty (private school): Crisps don’t fill you up. You could eat a whole bucket full.

Eva: But you can’t.

Alice: But what would happen if you ate a whole bucketful of crisps?

Lotty: You would start feeling sick and also you would get fat.

Alice: So how do you know these things?

Lotty: I don’t know.

Eva: Because we went to *Eureka!*⁶, and that’s all about keeping your body healthy and all that.

Alice: Oh okay. So do you think that’s where you learnt most about your body?

Lotty: No.

⁶ Eureka! Children’s Museum, Halifax, where children are presented with ‘science facts’ about the body and can play with large models of body parts, including a giant human mouth complete with wobbly teeth www.eureka.org.uk

Alice: Where do you think you learnt most about it?
Lotty: Just like in a natural day.
Alice: Natural day? What do you mean by that?
Eva: We just learn don't we?
Lotty: Yes like we just learn.

For Lotty and Eva, both formal sources of learning and experiential knowledge are understood to be integral to the ways they come to know about the body. Eva mentions a recent visit to the *Eureka!* children's museum, which she cites as an important source of information about the body for her. However, in the girls understanding of why 'you can't' eat 'a bucketful of crisps', they demonstrate also the importance of experiential knowledge for understanding this particular aspect of the body. Lotty's reasoning that 'You would start feeling sick' suggests that she has herself experienced the feeling of nausea after eating too much. By positing the risk of getting fat as a further reason not to eat too many crisps, Lotty draws upon knowledge about the relationship between diet and body weight which may be experiential, formed as part of her school-based learning about the body, from contemporary media or film, or from an entirely different source of information. Lotty also draws upon a knowledge of cultural bodily conventions noted in the previous chapter - that fat bodies are undesirable. Lotty offers 'you would get fat' as one reason why a person should not eat too many crisps.

James's (2013) work on children's roles in the process of socialisation similarly found that the ways children come to understand the social world and their place within it, is via the experiences they gain through their family lives, forms of interaction, embodied and emotional feelings, their experience of institutions such as school, and their biographical understandings of "their everyday personal lives being lived" (2013: 137). Children's coming to know about the body can thus be understood as a one specific element of the socialisation process. After all, bodily comportment and the physical expression of emotion, also known as habitus (Bourdieu, 1985), are integral to the reproduction of culture which constitutes the socialisation process. Just as James (2013) found that children's roles in the the process of socialisation require them to actively draw upon their experiences of a range of different contexts and sources of information, here it is apparent that children also do this as they come to know about the body. Furthermore, the particular extract of data from Eva and Lotty demonstrates that no *particular* source of knowledge about the body is necessarily prioritised by children. Rather, it is the process of drawing together information from various sources that is characteristic of children's experience of making meaning about the body.

The ways these sources of information are drawn upon by children is dependent upon context, as discussed below. However, most importantly, as Lotty states, it is this process which forms part of the ‘*natural day*’ in which children ‘*just learn*’.

Children’s Use of School-based Learning about the Body

In the context of school, children tended to rely heavily upon their school-based learning about the body when answering questions during the research. In British primary schools, formal learning about the body forms part of the science, personal social and health education (PSHE) curricula, and physical education (P.E.) curricula. At primary school level, topics on the body are broken down into separate ‘systems’; skeletal, reproductive, digestive etc. The science curriculum is relatively fixed by a number of compulsory subjects, and both schools had, as noted earlier, recently undertaken a project on the human skeletal system. Observation of children’s work books and wall displays, demonstrated that the lesson content for this project in both schools included the number of bones in the human skeleton, an emphasis upon the importance of bones, and information about how nutrients such as calcium help to grow and strengthen the skeletal system.

Under the Education Act (1996) and the Learning and Skills Act (2000), schools have discretion to shape the PSHE curriculum taught at their school according to their own needs. Similarly, a school’s decision to engage with health promotion materials is also discretionary. As a consequence, engagement with learning about the body differed between the two schools in a number of ways. At the private school, children had been given multiple choice tests in PSHE lessons to find out what ‘kind’ of brain they had. The tests revealed whether children were left or right brain dominant, and whether they could be categorised as kinaesthetic, auditory or visual learners. The results of the tests were written in a grid on the children’s exercise books and, in theory, this was supposed to act as a guide for teachers in how to explain things to children in a way that suited their particular learning needs. At the state school, children had undertaken a project called *Water of Life*. The primary aim of this project was to inform children about the importance of hydration and convey facts about how much water ought to be drunk in a day, which comes under the non-statutory PSHE key stage one topics of how to make simple choices that improve health and wellbeing and an understanding that humans and other animals need food and water to stay alive (Department for Education, 2013). Learning materials for the project included poems about water, diagrams of the water cycle and pictures of aquatic and amphibious animals, which emphasised the importance of

water for all forms of life on earth. Children took part in water themed activities and attended a special assembly on the subject of water.

Health promotion was notably absent from the private school. At the state school, in contrast, literature from the *Change4Life*⁷ government sponsored health promotion scheme was visible in poster and leaflet form, encouraging children to ‘Eat Well, Move More, Live Longer’. The campaign advocated swapping sugary snacks with healthier, low fat foods, and spending less time watching television and computer games and more time being ‘active’ outside. The ‘*five-a-day*’ slogan, which encourages the consumption of five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, was printed on large colourful posters in the school canteen.

A correspondence between the ways in which children had engaged with the body as part of their school learning and their focus during the activity sessions is evident in the data generated in each school. For example, in response to the ‘About Me’ information sheet introductory activity (see chapter four, Design and Methods), private school children would often refer to the results of their ‘brain’ project.

I play the piano. I have a dog called Lucy and my brain is right side dominant (Harry, private school).

Nikita (private school): I’m a kinaesthetic and I’m a both sider... Kinaesthetic means I learn by touch was it? Or I learn by doing it, I have to do it otherwise I just sit there like this (slumps down open-mouthed and stares into space).

Nelly: I am auditory and visual... Visual is where you see and auditory is where you listen. And right sided brain.

Gertrude (private school): I have quite a creative mind... I do a lot of creative stuff and I’m quite messy... I like to learn by doing things, that’s kinaesthetic... I’m right hemisphere... It means I’m better with my right side. I’m right handed. I think I’m left footed.

Amelia: ...I’m both side dominant. I have an efficient mind... It means that I can remember things a lot easier than...I think I remember that pattern better than you describing it, I need to look at it.

Barry (private school): I put that I’m a right sided thinker... It means you’re like, creative and stuff...

Monkey: I’m right and I’m visual and auditory.

Bob: I’m visual, auditory and kinaesthetically.

⁷ www.nhs.uk/Change4Life

Monkey: There's visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. Visual is like how you learn and stuff so I'm visual and auditory meaning I work better when I can see an example of what I'm supposed to do or (pause) I'm not sure what kinaesthetic would be though.

Barry: It means doing things. And auditory means listening.

It is clear from these examples that children's engagement with the body as part of their school-based learning shaped their discussions during the fieldwork. Similarly, state school children, who had undertaken the *Water of Life* project, spoke about water in various ways with great enthusiasm.

Sasha (state school): Every little thing and object needs it, like something that has life, trees, people...

Jack: Animals.

Sasha: Animals, like everything, that's like life...

Jack: The planet.

Hmmm, water, water I love it. Water is so, it's like wet air, it's like you're drinking wet air... I drank it this morning, it's so refreshing (Suzie, state school).

Alice: So why do you drink water?

Judy (state school): Oh, to live!

Lionel: Miss, do you know, er, you can survive without food for like a month, but you can't survive without water.

Judy: You need water to live.

Another example of the power of school-based learning can be seen in the presence of the *Change4Life* health promotion literature in the state school, and lack thereof in the private school. This resulted in a difference between state and private school children's use of terminology when discussing diet. Private school children, for instance, tended to speak about having a 'healthy diet', as Splash does in the extract below.

Fizz (private school): being too fat, that's not good.

Splash: You need to be, well, you need to have a healthy diet...

Fizz: And do exercise, like go for a jog every now and again!... I ride nearly every night and that's quite healthy isn't it?

By contrast, state school children tended to use the term '*five-a-day*' - a phrase prominent in the *Change4Life* posters and leaflets - to communicate the importance of a healthy diet⁸. A further example of state school children's use of the *five-a-day* phrase is provided by state school Judy, who

⁸This was demonstrated in children's discussion of plans to change body shape in the future, in the previous chapter.

copied the phrase in large letters around the edge of her self-portrait.

Alice: (looks at Judy's sheet). So why *five-a-day*?

Judy (state school): It helps you to be healthy... it grows your BONES!

In the extract below, Lionel also uses the phrase during a description of his daily timeline.

I get home from school, have my *five-a-day*. Well I have my dinner, *then* have my *five-a-day*, yeah... That's my energy so I can be active (Lionel, state school).

As noted previously, the idea that the school, as an institution, powerfully shapes the way children come to know about the social world and their place within it is put forward by James (2013), who also argues more specifically that children's unique experience of spending large amounts of their time within the institution of school is undoubtedly significant in understanding how children experience the process of socialisation. However, James (2013) argues, structures such as social class, political systems or social institutions "just provide the context within which children learn and choose to do what they do" (2013: 126). As the rest of this chapter will go on to demonstrate, despite the way that children's school-based learning of the body clearly shaped their discussion of the body during the fieldwork activities, how children come to know about the body is much more closely tied to their capacities for, and exercise of, agency.

Making Sense of School-based Knowledge

Children's discussion of bones, water, and the brain noted above may, however, be a consequence of the particular power relations present in school where children are habitually expected to recall the things they have learnt in lessons for adults on command. Age based power structures (as noted in chapter three, Methodology) exist before a researcher arrives in the field and are impossible to neutralise. As Fendler (2001) notes, the school is a complex political space over which children have little or no control. Thus, children's apparent interest in the aspects of the body which they had learnt about in school may not necessarily be an expression of what matters to them, but more a reflection of expectations about their behaviour in school.

However, to disregard children's focus upon, and enthusiasm for, particular subjects relating to the body as merely a consequence of the context of the research fails to address the fact that children themselves are a part of these power structures. Ergo, the information they have been given by their

school about the body is important for the very fact that it has become part of the children's knowledge about the body. The topics which children chose to discuss, therefore, must be positioned as significant to them, as children, even though they are inevitably shaped by the particular power relations of the school. It was pointed out, in the methodology section, that the eloquence with which children spoke about "particular feelings, incidents and places" during fieldwork suggests that "these were important to them, as children" (James, 2013:176).

Indeed, the ways that children drew upon their school-based knowledge offers an insight into how the placing of information into the particular contexts of children's everyday lives is key to understanding how they come to know about the body more broadly. For example, in the previous section, children used knowledge from their learning about the brain project to fill in the 'About Me' information sheets, and the state school children's knowledge of water was drawn upon in discussions about health. In doing so, children make sense of information they have been presented with in school in relation to the particular questions being asked during fieldwork. Similarly, during the 'My Body' story activity, a number of children from both schools answered questions about how their bodies had changed from 'when they were little' to the present time with reference to changes to their skeletal systems, which they knew to be a form of bodily change experienced by all humans.

When I was little I had more bones than I have now because they fuse together and it forms bigger bones (Harry, private school).

Hamza (state school): Inside of me might change when I go to secondary school.

Alice: Inside of you, how will that change?

Hamza: Erm, it might get bigger.

Alice: What do you mean?

Adam: Well you get lesser bones in your body when you're taller, when you're older.

Alice: So I want you to look at the next one now, the one that says, 'Now My Body Is' and think about how you've changed from when you were little, to how your body is now.

Rosy (state school): Miss, you've got two bones here, (indicating lower arm) and one here (upper arm).

Marcus: Yeah, one here two here (indicates arm)... We learned about it with Miss Millicent. You've got three hundred and...

Lisa: Two hundred and six.

Marcus: Two hundred and sixty.

Rosy: Two hundred and *six* bones in your body.

At first glance, Rosy and Marcus' response seems to have very little to do with the question being asked. It is only in relation to the other extracts of data from Harry, Adam and Hamza that Rosy and Marcus' response is clarified as an 'answer' to the question about how they have changed. By referring to the number of bones in the human body, the association, on children's part, between bodily change and the skeletal system is implied. Thus, children are drawing upon their learning about one particular aspect of the body in order to answer the questions I presented them with, and, in doing so, are actively placing their school-based knowledge in context. Children from both schools also referred to bones in answer to the question 'what is the most important part of your body?'

Marcus (state school): Erm, Miss, because what makes your body necessarily, erm, well your body is, like, your bones. It's not your skin, it's your *bones*, yeah.

Alice: So are you saying that the bones are the most important thing?

Lisa: Your bones, they've got blood, and it's a skin coloured all over it so that...

Marcus: The blood comes into your bones, the blood *actually* comes in.

Alice: So what's the most important part of your body?

Splash (private school): My bones. My bones keeps my body together, and well, my spine because it keeps me straight.

Therefore, while the children's school based learning shaped the broad focus of the discussions and the children's use of terminology, the ways this learning was used by children is far from passive. When children drew upon their school-based learning about the body, they were not simply recalling what they have been taught. Instead, they seemed to make sense of the information about the body in context and piece this together with their knowledge from wider sources, to actively guide discussion.

Experiential Logic

However, children not only drew upon their school-based learning about the body in ways which made logical sense in relation to the questions asked during fieldwork, but conversely, they could also be seen to draw upon alternative sources of knowledge to make sense of the ideas about the body which they were presented with in school. For example, private school Harry mentioned that he got a 'right side dominant' result for his brain test during discussion of the 'About Me' introductory activity, and, when questioned about *why* he considers this important enough to mention as part of the introductory activity, he draws upon his knowledge of how the body would act if the facts about the brain he has been told in school were not so.

Alice: Ok, so why do you mention being right side dominant?

Harry (private school): Well it is weird because the right part of the brain controls the left side and the left controls the right, so if, like, your right part of the brain or whatever didn't work very well you would probably move very *slow* like an astronaut on the moon [waves his arms about as if he is floating in slow motion] woah woah!

The project on the brain which Harry, along with his year five classmates, has undertaken, undoubtedly emphasises the importance of knowing which hemisphere of the brain is dominant. Indeed, this appears to be the main aim of the project along with discovering what kind of learner each child is. However, it seems that the project failed to explain to children exactly *why* it is important to know which hemisphere of the brain is dominant. In the extract above, Harry does not necessarily answer the question about why he considers it important that he is right side dominant, but fills in gaps in his understanding of school-based information about the body with recourse to alternative sources of knowledge. The way that Harry's particular experience helps to inform his understanding of the brain acts as an example of the importance of context for shaping opportunities for children to make sense of the body.

Below is a similar example of children drawing upon alternative sources of knowledge which have little to do with the body in order to make sense of information they have been given about the body in school as part of their bones project.

Alice: So which part of your body is the most important?

Sasha (state school): I think your ribs ... Because they protect your heart. Like, I am eating a cookie right now... Erm, well if I didn't have the rib cage to, take, like protection. Er, it's a little house for the heart. Because if we didn't have bones then, our insides, well imagine if I was to eat this cookie, and it went inside and inside my heart, but it wouldn't because the, erm, rib cage would erm...

Jack: Deflect!

Sasha: Yeah, deflect it.

As previously noted, the human skeleton project had emphasised the importance of bones for the body. Sasha's answer, therefore, is likely to be shaped by her school-based learning on the body. However, as before, it appears that children's learning about the body in school as part of the bones project had, for Sasha, not extended to explaining *why* the bones were so important. Or alternatively, perhaps the explanation of why they were important did not make sense to Sasha in relation to every eventuality. Sasha therefore draws upon experiential knowledge of the ways that

cages and houses protect things to make sense of *why* bones, and specifically the rib-cage, are important for the body in a logical way. Here, I term this experiential logic, which can be defined as a kind of meaning making engaged in by children, whereby experiences of phenomena, memories and other experiences are drawn upon to make sense of the body. A further example of children's use of experiential logic is provided in the extract below from state school Rosy, Marcus and Lisa.

Rosy (state school): It's your bones what are the most important because they make you stand up and everything, and walk. Yeah I think your bones and your heart, and well, your heart makes you stay alive and most of all your bones, because if you can't walk or anything, then your heart, and your brain, you'd just be something on the floor.

Alice: And what if you were just something on the floor?

Marcus: Well, if everybody was like, a blob, how are you supposed to go to the shops? Even eat? How are you supposed to build a building?

Rosy: Because you can't walk or do anything, and you won't be able to like, if you were at school and that just happened now, you won't be able to go home, you won't be able to eat.

Marcus: Miss, there won't be a building!

Lisa: That's why, if you're just like a, if you don't have bones, and you're just like a puddle of skin, then, well, imagine there was some people that are just doing something interesting and you really want to have a go, but you can't because you can't even walk.

In this extract, the children draw upon their experience of shapeless forms such as blobs and puddles in order to imagine the body without bones and envisage how different life would be for boneless humans. They do this in order to make sense of their school-based learning about the function of the skeletal system. Children, as social actors, therefore, use experiential logic to both challenge the ideas which are presented to them as part of their school-based learning, and to help fill *gaps* in understanding left by this school-based learning.

Thought Experiments

In both the extracts of data above, children imagine a 'what if' situation as part of the process of making logical sense of the information about the body which they draw upon. Sasha asks 'what if' the rib cage did not 'deflect' food away from the heart. Marcus, Rosy and Lisa ask 'what if' the body had no bones, and go on to imagine how a body without bones would not only be useless on an everyday practical level, but bones, according to the children's view, are fundamental for society itself. These thought experiments allow the children to extend their experience through the realms of imagination. A further example comes from state school Adam, who is asked to explain his

previous statement that *'you get lesser bones in your body when you're taller, when you're older.'*

I don't know. I think the tiny bones become big and crush other bones. When you're little, you have an average of about two hundred bones and then when you're older you get about one hundred and fifty (Adam, state school).

These imaginative leaps are necessary for children to bridge gaps in understanding. For example, Sasha's understanding of the digestive system - as merging into the respiratory system if it were not for the ribs - makes logical sense in light of the way she has been taught about the body in school. As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, the primary science curriculum breaks down the body into separate 'systems'. It is up to Sasha, therefore, to make the imaginative leap in the form of a thought experiment to make sense of the way these bodily systems fit together in order to justify the idea that the ribs are an important part of the body. Similarly, while Adam has been given the information about the number of bones in the human body changing over time, he comes up with an explanation for how, exactly, this happens by drawing upon his experiential knowledge of big objects crushing smaller ones.

Experiential logic and thought experiments also proved to be important tools for children attempting to explain their claims about the importance of water (presented earlier in this chapter) as the extracts below illustrate.

Water cures me... Erm, because last time I was poorly, I went to bed, and I had some medicine, and then my mum, she erm, put some water in the fridge and then she got it out when it was proper cold, and then I drank it, like nearly all, and then the next day when I woke up, I weren't ill then. Like my throat was ok... Erm, I think, it flowed down through the dry parts and which was hurting like, and it sweeps away the bad parts (Samayah, state school).

When you're poorly, drink like, water, it cleans your stomach. Miss, er, you know, it cleans bacteria (Marcus, state school).

If you have a drink when you have a headache, if you keep on drinking water, it goes everywhere and cleans all the bacteria in your head and everything (Rosy, state school).

In their descriptions of water which 'flows' and 'sweeps' children draw upon their everyday experiences of the nature of water. Children have seen water cleansing the outer surface of the body, and the act of drinking water is therefore imagined as a way of cleansing the inside of the body.

Rosy and Samayah both imagine water as having agency of its own, as actively seeking out ‘dry parts’. In this, it is clear that girls have witnessed the character of water as unbounded and flowing; when it is spilt it spreads itself across an area, permeating any available crevices. Furthermore, although bacteria are not usually associated with headaches, the idea of cleansing bacteria away using water is familiar to children through daily healthcare routines such as hand washing or tooth brushing. It is through the thought experiment, therefore, that children imagine how water might have a similar effect upon the inside of the body. Thus, the function of thought experiments is to make the information, which children are given about the body as part of their school learning, meaningful in terms of their own experiential knowledge.

The Body from a Child’s Experiential Perspective

In the extracts of data presented so far, identifying how children pieced together knowledge and experience to make sense of the body in a logical way is relatively clear. However, this was not always the case. Take, for example, this extract of data from state school Lisa.

Sometimes, when I have like a toothache, I get something like, to chew, like a caramel sweet or something, so that it has some exercise (Lisa, state school).

Lisa’s idea that chewing caramel sweets might be used as a *cure* for toothache stands in stark opposition to dental health narratives which would generally attempt to discourage children from eating sweets entirely to avoid tooth decay, and would not recommend them as a remedy for oral problems. At the state school, children had experienced dental health check-ups in school and, as previously mentioned, health promotion in the state school included the *Change4Life* campaign literature, parts of which mention that swapping sugary drinks and snacks for water and non-sugary snacks reduces calorie intake and helps to keep teeth healthy. It is unlikely, therefore, that Lisa is unaware of dental health narratives which emphasise the connection between oral health and the consumption of sticky, high sugar foods such as caramel sweets.

Lisa might be applying her understanding of exercise as good for the body *in general* to make the imaginative leap that little bits of exercise are logically good for little bits of the body. However, in order to fully understand this data, Lisa’s understanding of the mouth must be placed in the context of her particular embodied state as a nine-year-old child. More specifically, children of Lisa’s age commonly experience the loss of their first set of teeth and the growth of their second set. A number

of participants had wobbly teeth or gaps in their mouths after losing teeth and had experienced pain as a result of this.

Ana (state school): I've hurt my tooth.

Alice: Is it a wobbly tooth?

Ana: Mmm (nods).

Alice: Let me see, is it alright?

Ana: It really wobbles (opens her mouth and wobbles the tooth with her tongue). It really hurts.

Alice: Oh yeah, you've bitten into it and made it very wobbly!

Ana: (Laughs) Yeah, owwww!

Alice: Does that happen a lot?

Ana: Mmm, yeah.

As the data below demonstrates, it was, in part, the pain associated with wobbly teeth that made children so keen to get them out as soon as possible.

Lotty (private school): Shall I pull my tooth out?

Alice: Let's have a look.

Lotty: It *is* wobbly.

Alice: I don't think it's ready. It's got to be half off hasn't it?

Lotty: Hmm, but it hurts.

At the minute I'm working on a baby tooth and every time it gets more wobbly I just get some material, put it there and it loosens it (Dodger, private school).

'Exercising' teeth using chewy sweets would help to get a wobbly tooth moving and uprooted from the gum faster. Therefore, Lisa's understanding of chewing caramel sweets to cure toothache makes sense in the context of Lisa's own embodied perspective – specifically the experience of pain related to losing milk teeth shapes her understandings of the mouth. James (2013) argues that embodied and emotional aspects of children's personal lives are "critical to the socialisation process" (James, 2013: 101), and here, the ways in which children come to know about the body are similarly demonstrated to be very much embodied. Lisa's understanding of teeth, therefore, is not simply illustrative of children's *lack* of knowledge about the body, but a consequence of their *particular* embodied experience. This demonstrates the importance of recognising how the experiential knowledge drawn upon by children is particular both to them as individuals, and to them as children. It was noted in the previous chapter that children experience a period of rapid growth and change particular to their social group. It is, therefore, both children's individual

knowledge and experience *and* their embodied perspectives as children, which shapes how children come to know about the body.

Children's Critical Understandings

This final section will demonstrate how children challenged the ideas presented to them about the body in school through experiential logic and recourse to their embodied knowledge. For example, state school Judy questions the idea that being 'active', as she has been told in the *Change4Life* health promotion material at her school, is necessarily the best thing for her body.

Judy (state school): I don't like P.E, I like maths.

Alice: Why don't you like P.E?

Judy: Mmm, too much active stuff.

Alice: How does active stuff make you feel?

Judy: Hyper.

Alice: Hyper?

Judy: Hyperactive.

Alice: Ok (pause). So you don't like feeling hyperactive?

Judy: No. I don't like being active at all.

Link and Phelan (2001: 368) note how the medical term ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) has "become part of common parlance" and, in a similar fashion, children in this project had reclaimed the the term 'hyper', and freely applied it to any kind of boisterousness or overexcitement. Judy's use of the word hyper reflects a particular feeling she has experienced during physical activity, perhaps of being breathless or rushed, which she does not enjoy. Judy therefore, draws upon her embodied experience of being 'active' and her particular understanding of the term 'hyper' in her explanation of why she does not enjoy P.E. In doing so, Judy uses her experiential knowledge to challenge the notion that exercise is always necessarily healthy for the body.

It was demonstrated in the previous chapter that a school's engagement with the body through P.E has practical consequences for children's everyday lives. The ways that ideas about the body are presented in school, therefore, shapes what children do with their bodies.

However, as the data presented in this chapter has begun to show, a school's ability to determine *what* children do with their bodies does not determine *how* they will understand the body. For example, in the extracts below, private school children question the idea that taking part in as

many forms of physical activity as possible is indeed the best thing for the body. As the previous chapter demonstrated, private school children were expected to be enthusiastic about representing their school in sporting events, and to regularly attend training sessions and fixtures.

Louis, he does a lot. On Tuesdays he does football training, Thursdays he does football training, Saturdays he does football training, Sunday he has a match and Mondays he's doing homework, Wednesdays he's doing homework. So pretty much there's no day of the week that he gets off. That's why he's always white in the face on Mondays, because he does so much. That's why he's not at school today. He's tired and he feels horrendous (Barry, private school).

I think it's bad that you do so much because you can only do so much until your body tires out (Amelia, private school).

In order to question the ideas about the body presented in their school, Barry and Amelia draw upon their experiential, embodied knowledge. For example, Amelia speaks of how the body *'tires out'*, something we can assume she has experienced herself, or witnessed other people's experiences of this. Barry's opinion about doing *'too much'* appears to be shaped by his experience of seeing his friend suffering from exhaustion, being *'white in the face'* and having to take time off school as a consequence. Private school children similarly drew upon their embodied experiential knowledge to critique the ideas presented to them as part of the brain project they had engaged with.

Alice: So what does it mean to you in school having a particular kind of brain?

Eva (private school): Well we don't really take it as different do we?

Lotty: No...We don't care... It was a stupid test... It was like, "Do you like checking your work?" and "Do you keep your bedroom tidy?"

Eva: I do keep mine tidy... Everything has to be perfect.

Lotty: My room is always neat so we both put yes and we got right sided but we're both arty so we should have been left sided because left siders are good at creative stuff.

Alice: So do you think it's been helpful for anyone?

Eva: No. There's no point really.

Lotty: If we don't get it they just explain it in the same way

Nelly (private school): The chart is in your book so the teacher knows so they can help you.

Nikita: ...But they don't look at our books very much. They only check them on Mondays.

Alice: Do you think it's been helpful for you to know what kind of brain you have?

Dodger (private school): No it just doesn't help. It doesn't do anything. Okay so we're that learner. Okay now what do we do with it? We don't do *anything*... I think it's for the teachers wanting to know but they haven't taught us any differently to what they've done before and it's unfair because it's, mostly they give favouritism.

Alice: What do you mean?

Dodger: Just like people who are always goody two shoes.

Alice: What kind of learners would they be?

Dodger: Auditory. But really like, take Jonathon for example, every time he likes...he always has to be first and every time at home time he's like, "Mummy" and all that and he acts all innocent... you just have to like, deal with it.

Eva and Lotty draw upon knowledge of their own talents and skills to contradict the outcomes of the test they took to find out what kind of brains they had. The data above also demonstrates the children's agreement that any worth of the brain project was negated by the failure, on the part of teachers, to actually employ the recommended methods for explaining things for children who had been labelled as auditory, visual or kinaesthetic learners as a result of the multiple choice test. As Eva and Lotty state *'If we don't get it they just explain it in the same way'*. Dodger argues that the brain project was a way to justify the favouritism he has witnessed in the classroom, where children who learn in a particular way continue to be rewarded above other, alternative kinds of learners. Children, of course, have little power over their teacher's decision to implement the findings of the brain project. As Dodger states, *'you just have to like, deal with it'*. However, by contrasting the ideas presented to them about the body as part of their school learning with their practical experience of how these ideas fit into their everyday lives, children demonstrate a sophisticated ability to critique and challenge their school-based learning about the body using experiential logic, thought experiments and embodied knowledge.

In conclusion, it was noted in the literature review that children tend to make sense of the body in context of their own social worlds (Backett-Millburn, 2000), yet, aside from Christensen's (2000) discussion of the process of bricolage, the details of how children make sense of the body from an individual perspective has been relatively little explored. By considering the way children come to know about the body, in detail, this chapter offers new insights into children's understandings and experiences.

This chapter has demonstrated *how* it is that children come to know about the body, not just what they know. It is through the use of experiential logic, thought experiments and embodied knowledge that children come to know about the body. This data, therefore, challenges traditional constructions of the child as a passive learner which were discussed in the literature review, and also provides support for James' (2013) claim that children play an active role in the socialisation process, of

which coming to know about the body forms one specific part. Children's school-based learning about the body was clearly a significant source of information, yet, importantly, the priority that children accorded to any one particular source of knowledge was dependent upon context. In making sense of the body, children drew together experiential knowledge, embodied knowledge, school-based knowledge and wider cultural knowledge. Furthermore, taken alongside *The Changing Body*, which emphasised the body as subject to structural factors, this chapter further highlights the importance of embodied perspectives or the body as object, to children's understandings. Taken together, the chapters offer support to the argument that the experience of 'being' and 'having' a body are both significant to understanding (Lyon and Barbalet, 1994).

This chapter has also demonstrated children's awareness of the discrepancies between the ideas about the body presented to them as part of their formal school-based learning, and the ways in which these ideas are practically implemented as part of their everyday lives in school. It is upon these contradictions that a number of children built their critical understandings of the ideas about the body presented to them as part of their school-based learning. The findings of this chapter, therefore, challenge the simplistic notion, implicit in education and health promotion policy, that there exists a clear relationship between what children are taught about the body, and their understandings of the body. Indeed, the kinds of health promotion literature discussed in this chapter are essentially based upon the notion of children as passive learners who, as a receptive audience, will take into their futures the ideas instilled in them during childhood. Indeed, this notion of futurity is central to the idea that children ought to be educated about the body and exposed to health promotion in school.

As James (2013) points out, the theory underpinning policy is an assumption that it is possible to influence the behaviour of individual agents via the adjustments of variables and a resulting proportionality of change. Policy targets, which include those for curriculum based learning, are made "irrespective of the particularities of any individual child's own life circumstances; or indeed, of the effects of the intersection of a range of so called variables" (James, 2013: 136). This model, James (2013: 136) points out, requires "the child as passive, with an inherent plasticity of nature that can simply be remodelled, in this way or that, to produce a desired effect". However, this chapter has found that children use their experiential knowledge to challenge the ideas about the body presented to them in school and by conducting thought experiments to fill in the gaps in their

understanding left by their school-based learning, thus demonstrating their capabilities as active social agents, rather than passive learners. For example, it has become clear, throughout the course of this chapter, that the way children come to know about the body is, in part, a result of the particular power structures characteristic of their everyday lives in school. Children's school-based learning about the body, it was noted, is piecemeal rather than holistic. Children are expected to learn a series of facts about the body, usually as part of a discrete project. These they dutifully recalled during fieldwork but these facts were often inadequate to answer questions about the body that children themselves had. This chapter raises questions, therefore, about how children engage with ideas about the body with which they are presented in school. The following chapter will go on to consider this further by exploring the ways that children make use of ideas from school-based health promotion, for example, to negotiate forms of discipline.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE DISCIPLINED BODY

This chapter provides a further illustration of the everyday interplay between structure and agency in children's lives and experiences by demonstrating how children use their bodies to subvert the adult-child power relations of the school. In order to explore this idea, the chapter draws upon two specific examples of bodily strategy: faking illness and bodily hydration at school. The chapter will show that knowledge of such bodily strategies in school is the result of children's particular embodied and experiential standpoint, and, as a result, these strategies are hidden from the view of adults. Children, it is shown, have built up knowledge of the body by employing a set of bodily strategies to negotiate discipline in school. The problematisation of policy assumptions about children's position as passive learners, begun in the previous chapter, is thus continued here with the argument that children actively use the information presented to them as part of their school-based learning, including health promotion, to negotiate and challenge forms of discipline in school. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to reposition children not simply as social actors who use their bodies but, more complexly, as *generators* of knowledge about the body.

Taking Water Breaks

The previous chapter described the state school's engagement with the *Water of Life* project, which presented children with information about the importance of water for the body. Dehydration, children were told, can lead to headaches, lack of concentration and digestive problems, which can affect children's ability to study and perform in sport. These ideas about the body were made manifest in the school's drinks policy, which required children to bring a labelled, re-usable bottle to school which could be filled from the school's water coolers. These bottles were then placed in a tray in the classroom, allowing children to drink during lessons. However, in practice, children often forgot to fill their bottles during break or lunch, and would ask to leave the classroom during lessons in order to fetch water.

Decisions about whether a child would be allowed to leave the lesson to fetch water were made at the teacher's discretion. If the class had been well behaved, quiet and hardworking, and the lesson was perceived, by the teacher, to be going well and under control, then individual children might be allowed to go to fetch water. However, as the extract below demonstrates, children were not

allowed to fetch water every time they asked, and furthermore, had to carefully consider the timing of their requests for water in order to improve the likelihood of success.

Alice: So you know when you're in school, through the day, I've seen you drink lots of water, and I've noticed...

Marcus (state school): Oh yeah, it's good for you.

Alice: So you're allowed to go and get water?

Marcus: Miss, not every time, not every time.

Lisa: Er, in our class, yes, you can sometimes go but I usually get thirsty, so I always fill my water bottle when its reading, and I get it and then I come sit down.

Rosy: You're meant to do it at lunch time or playtime.

Marcus: I don't normally go at lunch time and playtime... You know when you're eating, with food you get a cup of water, that's the time when you can easily, you don't need to tell anybody. The best time to go and get water is when you're eating because nobody tells you if you can or can't... After lunch if you say 'I've been doing sport' and it's really hot then Miss will let you go.

Lisa describes how her approach to negotiating a water break involves careful timing and consideration of bodily comportment. She requests a water break during 'reading', when children are expected to choose a book from the shelf in their classroom to read silently by themselves. This period of the day, following afternoon registration, was usually used by teachers for administration, or helping the less able children with their reading while the more confident readers worked independently. Lisa has noticed that it is easy for her, a proficient reader, to be excused from reading time to fetch water. To smooth the process further, Lisa describes how she then 'comes and sits down'. In fact she slips back into the classroom silently, eyes downcast, and immediately takes up her book to continue reading.

Marcus has also noticed that there are particular times in the day when it becomes easier for children to fetch water. Furthermore, Marcus states that the temperature of the classroom and whether or not a child has been playing sport are also significant to negotiating a water break from class. This attention to factors such as heat and activity levels was demonstrated by other state school children requesting water breaks from class. For example, children would pull at their clothes and puff out their cheeks in a display, aimed at the teacher, to give the impression that they were hot and flustered as they asked for permission to leave the classroom. Of course, some children might have displayed these signs because they were genuinely hot. However, in the extract below, Hussein candidly explains that this is not always the case.

Hussein (state school): Sometimes, I just go out when I'm thirsty, and sometimes I just wanna go out of the class for a bit (smiles).

Alice: Are you always allowed to go out?

Hussein: Well (pause) because after lunch time, I'm sweating, after the like (pause) and I ask Miss if I can go for water and she says yes (smiles).

Alice: If you're sweating?

Hussein: Yeah... When I sit next to the heater its boiling... I ask miss if I can fill my water bottle and she'll usually let me then.

James (2000: 29) notes how children use bodily strategies to “alter the perceived shape and appearance of their own and other people’s bodies” in order to “gain salvation from... potential stigma or exclusion”. This, James (2000) argues, forms part of children’s “work” on their unfinished bodies, and relies upon children’s ability to interpret the information gained from the bodies of others to judge the status of one’s own body and in order to make one’s own body seem “as if” it were another type of body (James, 2000: 34). In the extracts above, children are using bodily strategies not to avoid stigma or exclusion, but in order to negotiate with teachers to take a water break from class. Lisa’s strategy for doing this involves a keen sense of timing and attention to bodily comportment. She makes her body seem ‘as if’ it is behaving appropriately in the context of the classroom, despite the fact that she is intending to use the relative freedom of the reading period to *leave* the classroom. Following her water break, Lisa remains inconspicuous, causing so little disruption to the lesson that it seems ‘as if’ she has not left her seat at all. Hussein and Marcus, along with the other children observed pulling at their clothes and puffing out their cheeks, make their bodies seem ‘as if’ they are hot and flustered. Just as James (2000) describes, they interpret information gained from the bodies of others, about being ‘well behaved’, inconspicuous, or hot, for example, in order to do this.

Children’s use of the body to negotiate forms of discipline in school has been noted previously in the literature review. For example, Christensen *et al* (2001: 204) found that reading time is a point in the school day which children recognise as more under their control than “curriculum time”. Children’s ability to negotiate classroom rules at this time, Christensen *et al* (2001: 216) argue, depends upon their practical mastery of the body or “knowing attention to bodily posture and appearance” in order to successfully *appear* to be adhering to the orders of the teacher. Lisa’s use of reading time to take a water break, therefore, provides further evidence for the ideas of Christensen *et al* (2001) that children are acutely aware of the points in the school day where they are more able to apply their practical mastery of the body to negotiate forms of discipline.

Interestingly, however, children's engagement in those bodily strategies which involve the display of signs of being 'too hot', demonstrate that children do not only draw upon "information from the bodies of others" (James, 2000: 34), but also upon their school based learning about the body. Children had been told – as part of the *Water of Life* project noted above and discussed in the previous chapter - that temperature affected hydration levels. They can be seen to make use of this knowledge via bodily strategies to make themselves appear hot and flustered in order to convince teachers they were in need of water. Marcus demonstrates how his school-based knowledge about the risk of becoming dehydrated if his body is hot as a result of doing sport helps him to convince the teacher to allow him out of class to fetch water. Similarly, Hussein knows that his teacher will be more inclined to allow him to fetch water if he is sweating, and complains about being seated next to the heater in order to be granted water breaks.

In the previous chapter, it was argued that children relied upon their formal learning about the body during the research activity sessions as a result of the research context, specifically the expectation that pupils should recall what they have learnt for adults in school. Here, however, children demonstrate that their formal learning about the body acts as a useful source of knowledge in children's everyday lives, specifically in children's employment of bodily strategies in school. Children, it has been shown, draw upon different forms of knowledge relating to temporal aspects of the school day, what is considered to be 'good' behaviour and bodily comportment in class, and facts about dehydration, as a means to an end: that of taking a water break from class. This piecing together of diverse forms of knowledge, in context, constitutes a practical example of experiential logic, discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, the children's use of their formal learning in their bodily strategies adds a further dimension to the discussion in the previous chapter about the relationship between what children are 'taught' about the body, and how they actually 'learn' and how such learning becomes meaningful for them, which is not necessarily the same. In this case, children are actively using their school based learning about the body to negotiate breaks from class.

Faking Illness

Children were as candid about faking illness in school as they were about negotiating water breaks from class, and the reasons for this have been discussed in detail as part of the chapter five, Ethics. Some children, however, were far more ready to discuss their experiences of faking illness than

others. Private school Monkey, for example chose to speak about his experiences of witnessing his peers faking illness, rather than admitting that he did this himself.

She sprained her ankle and then she started crying at school because she said her ankle hurt and then we saw her going up the stairs by her own with ease. So we knew she was faking. But she's faked so many times she's learnt how to make tears come out of her eyes (Monkey, private school).

Private school Patrick, below, as the data below shows, was also cautious not to admit faking illness himself, but insinuated that he would be willing to do this in certain circumstances.

It depends what games it is. If it's rugby I'd rather get out of it than anything in the whole entire world (Patrick, private school).

Other children, in contrast, were extremely candid about their own attempts to fake illness in school.

Jess (state school): I might say, can I go home, because my family's all had it.

Alice: Ok, so if you know that other people around you have been poorly, then it looks more likely that you are really poorly then?

Jess: Yeah.

I've never actually got ill. I usually just fake it... They don't usually know... They tend to kill you if they find out (Bob, private school)

Once I pretended to be ill just because my sister was ill... sometimes Melanie (a classmate) fakes to be ill. They'll always come back the next day and you always know they're not actually ill. She missed the netball game... I think it's probably because she just didn't want to go to do netball (Lotty, private school).

It was noted in chapter one, Literature Review that Wilkinson (1988) found children to be willing to employ rather extreme methods (purposefully raising temperatures, pretending to be sick, putting talcum powder on their faces) in order to convince adults that they are ill. This, Wilkinson (1988) argued, was an essential part of children's learning about "the construction of the locally approved illness behaviour" and how "children's knowledge of the minutiae of their culture's value system about illness is elaborated for them" (Wilkinson, 1988: 118-119).

The children's bodily strategies for faking illness described in the extracts of data above, show that these children, aged nine and ten, had already learnt about 'locally approved illness behaviour' and 'their culture's value system about illness', and thus the data supports Wilkinson's (1988) findings. For example, private school Monkey described how his classmate faked a limp and made herself cry. Similarly, state school Jess notes how she is more likely to be believed by teachers if she tells them that her family have suffered from similar ailments, and private school Lotty admits that she faked illness when her sister was ill. These extracts therefore demonstrate children's knowledge of the contagious and infectious nature of many illnesses common to children in a school context. However, not only are children learning about illness behaviour and cultural understandings of illness, as Wilkinson (1988) argues, but the extracts of data above also demonstrate that children come to know about the body through engaging in bodily strategies to fake illness. A successful bodily strategy requires a child to draw upon information from the bodies of other children around them to make them seem 'as if' their bodies were ill. This is particularly apparent in the extract below from state school Hussein.

Hussein (state school): Sometimes people just pretend so they want to go home.

Alice: So is it easy to get sent home?

Hussein: Not *that* easy.

Alice: So how can they tell the difference between someone who is really poorly and...

Hussein: I think it's like, their reaction... Yeah. Because, they have, most of the time, when it's that kind of illness, they have other people in before and their reaction is worsen... the same people, one like might be really serious about it then someone else would come along and say that they were ill, like had a tummy ache, but it's not the same.

For Hussein, a key point in employing a successful bodily strategy is noting '*their reaction*'. That is, the reaction of any child who might have made a claim of illness prior to him, and, perhaps also the reaction of the adult to whom the illness is reported. Any child wishing to successfully fake illness, Hussein argues, must make a claim that appears equally, or more serious than the last child's reaction to the same symptom or symptoms. The bodily strategy of the truly convincing faker, therefore, must be *relational* to the bodily strategies of others in terms of the symptoms they report and the way they report them. The complexity involved in the maintenance of a bodily strategy to fake illness in school is demonstrated in the extract below from private school Lotty.

The teachers watch you just to make sure you're not pretending... Itching your ear, that's what says you're lying, and your nose... When you're in playtime if you're shouting and

playing football they'll know you're not ill because you're playing and shouting (Lotty, private school).

Lotty shows that a successful bodily strategy to fake illness does not just require knowledge of illness and the body, but also a consideration, on the part of children, about how children's bodies are understood by adults in school. This understanding emerges in Lotty's consideration of how seemingly innocuous forms of bodily comportment, such as *'itching your ear'*, are understood as 'tells' which might signify to teachers that a child is engaged in a bodily strategy. Lotty also knows, perhaps from personal experience, that children are watched by teachers throughout the school day.

The idea that children possess sophisticated understandings of the viewpoints of the adults around them has been amply demonstrated by Bluebond-Langer (1978), who found that children suffering terminal illness were able to conceal the extent of their knowledge about their condition in order to save the feelings of their adult family members. Terminally ill children, Bluebond-Langer (1978) argues, play a key role in the maintenance of mutual pretence which surrounds their hospital beds. A further example which demonstrates children's use of their insight into the understandings of adults around them to fake illness in school comes from private school Fizz.

Splash (private school): They take your head temperature.

Alice: And that's how they tell if you're really ill or not?

Splash: (nods).

Alice: And do they always know?

Fizz: No, sometimes what I do if I don't like the work, like once, after my mum and dad split up, we were doing work about families...I started crying... Mrs. Jones said "are you ok Fizz, would you like to stop?" And I said "can we stop and do something else because I don't feel very well"...Well sometimes I don't feel like doing it, I just feel like, like, I'm not enjoying the lesson and it's not even helping me with my education... sometimes it's really boring and I don't feel up to it.

Fizz's parents had recently divorced, and regardless of whether Fizz did in fact become upset during the classroom work about families, she is aware that her personal family situation, seen from the perspective of teachers, could be used as a reasonable excuse to enable her to avoid doing the work of that lesson. This example is illustrative of the idea put forward by James (2013), that an important part of children's socialisation is the process of learning, via embodied experience, "culturally appropriate ways in which the bodily feelings they experience can - and cannot - be voiced" (James, 2013: 111). Indeed, the display of emotion which Fizz describes demonstrates an

awareness of the expectations which teachers are likely to have of a child whose parents have recently divorced. Fizz therefore demonstrates her knowledge of culturally appropriate expression of emotion. However, it is Fizz's sensitivity to timing and context which turns her appropriate expression of emotion into a successful bodily strategy which allowed her to re-direct the focus of the lesson which she found 'boring'. Therefore, along with the importance of care and vigilance demonstrated by private school Lotty, a sense of timing, an understanding of culturally appropriate expression of emotion, and an appreciation of how adults see children's bodies in school are also required in order to successfully fake illness.

Children's Bodily Strategies as Peer Culture

Children's bodily strategies for faking illness and taking water breaks from class both require careful timing and vigilance, along with an appreciation of the understanding of children's bodies in school, from an adult perspective. It is clear that their engagement in bodily strategies is usually kept beneath the radar of adults. Children, however, can tell when other children are engaged in bodily strategies, as the extract below demonstrates.

Alice: Do they ever really know if you're not really poorly, if you're just pretending?

Nelly: (private school) No. The children do but the teachers don't.

Nikki: Because we know that Helena gets ill, Simone acts it as well and Emily acts it because Molly acts it.

Alice: So how do the children know?

Nelly: We're kids.

Nikki: I don't really know. Because we're friends and we know when someone actually feels ill and someone doesn't actually feel ill.

Nelly: We've known each other for longer.

For children then, bodily strategies are experienced as inaccessible or hidden from the world of adults. Children can sense that their peers are engaged in bodily strategies for faking illness even when adults have not recognised this and are, therefore, complicit in their use of bodily strategies. Corsaro and Eder (1990: 197) define children's peer culture as "a stable set of activities or routines, artefacts, values and concerns that children produce and share in interaction with peers". Two central themes evident in children's concerns are attempts to gain control of their lives, and the sharing of this control with their peers (Corsaro and Eder, 1990). Here, children use bodily strategies to gain control over what they do and when, in school. As Nikki and Nelly explain, this knowledge is shared among peers, particularly among friends who have known each other for longer than teachers, allowing them to intuit whether a fellow child '*actually feels ill*'.

However, it seems that children's complicity in the employment of bodily strategies is not simply based upon friendship, but more broadly upon a shared experience of being a child. For example, in an earlier extract, private school Monkey describes the bodily strategy of a girl who is able to fake a sprained ankle and cry on command. This girl is not someone who Monkey considers to be a friend, yet, he recognises her bodily strategy nonetheless. While knowing one another for longer and being friends is likely to help children understand and recognise one another's particular bodily strategies, as Nelly explains, the very fact that '*we're kids*' means that children, who are part of a particular social world that is separate from adults, are privy to knowledge about one another which adults are not.

'Wet' Children

However, not *every* child develops the knowledge and understanding which allows them to employ successful bodily strategies to fake illness. State school Amy, who had a regular habit of putting her head on the desk and sobbing during lessons, was one such child. Other children would roll their eyes and whisper to one another as, at the start of every P.E lesson, Amy would complain of pain in her leg. Similarly, just before a test of any kind, Amy would complain of a head or stomach ache, sometimes both at the same time. Amy was often left out of activities and games by the other children and Amy's behaviour was described as 'dramatic' by teachers and support staff, who warned me not to take too much notice of Amy's complaints about feeling ill or being injured as she was 'just attention seeking'. Teachers generally used sympathetic tones to speak to Amy and listened patiently to her complaints. However, Amy was identified by her teachers as prone to 'overact' or 'milk it'. Most importantly, in contrast to other children, Amy never seemed to be given permission to get out of doing the activities which she attempted to avoid. In the extract below, Amy gives her account of making claims of illness in school. This differs markedly from the accounts of other children who, in contrast to Amy, had successfully mastered the bodily strategies required to fake illness.

Once I told miss that I didn't feel well and she said 'just sit there', and I did what she said but after playtime I said I felt really, really sick and she just said, 'just see how you are after dinner time', and I did, and after dinner time I felt really, really sick and she didn't, she just told me to 'go and sit down' and she didn't sort me out... I don't think it's right... *why* don't they just sort you out. If something's really hurting, and you tell them, they should say 'can you wait a minute because I need to sort Amy out', or whoever it is, and if, and then if

you tell them that you feel *really, really* sick I think they should send you out so you can get away from everyone who is shouting at me (Amy, state school).

Amy's account of reporting illness in school in the extract above suggests that she has, at times, genuinely felt ill and needed to go home. Yet, despite this, Amy's complaints were not believed by teachers, a direct result of her claims of illness being too frequent. Thus, compared to private school Fizz who made a successful claim to illness at just the right moment in the knowledge that her teacher would accept that the content of a particular lesson might upset Fizz, Amy failed in her timing. Too many complaints were made by Amy out of context. Furthermore, Amy also failed to employ a bodily strategy which was sufficiently *relational* when compared with the strategies of successful children. Amy's claims were also disunited, one moment an injured leg, the next a headache. In her claims to illness she does not take into account the general character of children's illnesses in school, nor how and when particular symptoms are being reported by her classmates.

State school Amy is an example of a child who would be identified as 'wet' by the teachers in Prout's (2008) study of primary school children's experiences of the body in school. Prout (2008) found that primary school teachers engaged in battles to 'dry out' or 'toughen up' the children who they identified as 'wet', or prone to dramatic complaints of make-believe illness. Teachers in Prout's (2008) study felt these 'wet' children had been coddled by hypochondriac mothers. Wetness, therefore, represented a defect or failing in the children's moral characters, caused by parental childrearing, for which teachers felt that they had to compensate and which they hoped might be remediable. Wetness was a phenomenological category adequate to this task because it "rooted the problem not only in biography, the individual failings of particular mothers, but also in history, [and] the collective characteristics of their community" (Prout, 2008: 128). However, the active role of children themselves in the identification of 'wetness' is demonstrated here to be more important than Prout's (2008) focus upon teachers' assumptions about children's family life suggests. Attempts to fake illness appear to be routine, or if not routine, then part of the landscape, for many children in this project, yet it was only Amy who was consistently ignored and labelled as dramatic and prone to 'milking it'. Therefore, it is the child's level of mastery over the art of employing a successful bodily strategy which is key in deciding whether that child is identified as 'wet', and as a consequence, whether that child is excluded from aspects of peer culture.

Being 'Killed'

With the exception of state school Amy's failed attempts to avoid P.E and tests by making claims of illness, no child was discovered by teachers, during the fieldwork, for faking illness. Neither were any children accused of requesting a water break as a way to get out of class. When questioned about what would happen if they were caught faking illness, children would say that they would 'be killed'. Indeed, in an earlier extract, private school Bob explained that he never actually gets ill, but fakes it, adding that although teachers '*don't usually know... They tend to kill you if they find out*'. A number of children from both schools referred to punishment in school as being 'killed' and exactly what they mean by this relates to the use of space, time and the body in forms of discipline in school which was highlighted in the literature review. Children were subject to these spatial-temporal forms of discipline at both the private and state school. For example, teachers would routinely issue detentions and often used a variation of the phrase '*it's your time you're wasting, not mine*', when children did not quieten down at the start of a lesson or line up as they had been asked to. Time, therefore, is used as a unit of currency in school, with free time, including break and playtimes, traded in return for good behaviour during curriculum time in much the same way that Christensen *et al* (2001) found it to be in their study of primary school discipline. Spatial-temporal forms of discipline were also used in school to create what Christensen *et al* (2001: 220) called "visible public bodily exposure". For example, in both schools, children who were caught talking in assembly would be seated with younger children, where their relatively large bodies were rendered conspicuous. Repeat offenders in class might be sent to do their work in the classrooms of younger students. As Christensen *et al* (2001) note, this practice provides a corporeal reminder of children's offence as the body of the child being punished stands out from the bodies of the younger, and usually much smaller children he or she has been made to sit with. The placing of children in the wrong space at the wrong time thus reflects their offence of acting in the wrong way at the wrong time. This idea is also implicit in the rule, operating in both schools, which meant that children who forgot their P.E or games kit at either school were given items of clothing from lost property to wear, which tended not to fit correctly. The ill fit of the borrowed clothing acted as a very visible reminder that by forgetting to bring the correct clothing children had failed to fit their bodies into the schools' rule system.

Assembly was also used as a platform for communicating moral messages, just as Christensen *et al* (2001) noted. For example, private school Eva describes the way that teachers used the body and

space to encourage children to be proud of themselves for taking part in sports matches, and to feel embarrassed if they had failed to do so.

Mr Parker does say like to some people, like a few weeks ago in sports assembly, “Stand up if you’ve been in a match” and nearly everybody stood up. It was just five people sat down looking really embarrassed. Well I said there aren’t many schools where you can say that, but it’s not very fair because still, people are sat down (Eva, private school).

For serious or repeatedly bad behaviour, children at both schools would be sent to the head teachers’ office, where they would always be made to sit outside and wait before entering the office for a telling off from the head. The position of the seats outside the head teacher’s office, at the entrance and reception area of the school, also doubled as a waiting area for visitors, and therefore ensured maximum public exposure of the miscreant.

The description of being punished as being ‘killed’, suggests an understanding, on the children’s part, of spatial-temporal forms of punishment as a kind of social death. Children are ‘killed’ by their separation, either physical or symbolic, from the communal body of the school. The example noted above of children being made to sit with their younger peers highlights a child’s inability to live up to expectations of their age group. In effect, this punishment casts them out from their own peer group and leaves them temporarily bereft of the rights associated with having reached a particular age or stage of their education. Such forms of punishment work on the principle of normalisation, or the ‘power of the norm’ which is established in school through the standardisation of education and the comparison of individual children through examinations. As Foucault (1979) proposed, such normalisation practice ensures that membership of a homogenous social body becomes a kind of status. This principle means that children are expected to excel at fitting in at school, both in terms of the formal curriculum and what James and James (2005: 117) identify as the “hidden curriculum of cultural values” which includes bodily comportment and behaviour. It is, therefore, the anti-social element of the child, the aspect of his or her being which fails to conform to the school’s rules which is being ‘killed’.

The treatment of children who made claims of illness in school mirrored the ‘killing’ process, outlined above, in a number of ways. For example, in both schools, children who claimed to be ill were made to wait for a decision about whether they were deemed ill enough to be sent home in the very same place where miscreant children would be sent to await a telling off from the head teacher.

This meant that children who claimed to feel ill were likely to have to sit with unfamiliar adults including visitors to the school and, what is worse, in this area of ‘maximum public exposure’ they might easily be mistaken for a child who had been ‘killed’. Indeed, being outside of the head teacher’s office made it likely that the head teacher would notice them and as private school Splash explains, this was far from ideal, particularly if children were genuinely feeling unwell.

There is the office here and the library there and this side of the library you’ve got a little chair, and you get sent to sit on the chair, and if the head teacher comes out, he says, ‘get outside, go and get on with life’ and stuff. And I’m like SHHHH! I feel poorly! (Splash, private school).

Sick children’s proximity to the headteacher can be understood as a further line of defence against children’s faking illness. Indeed, the requirement for children claiming illness to go through a process which so closely resembles the ‘killing’ process is itself a form of discipline designed to dissuade children from faking illness. However, the ways children use their bodies to negotiate these forms of discipline in school has been demonstrated by private school Fizz, who chose to employ a bodily strategy which enabled her to appear upset, rather than ill, in order to encourage the teacher to change the planned content of the lesson. Fizz managed to avoid doing the activity which she described as ‘boring’ without having to be separated from the social group and being ‘killed’ in the way a child claiming illness would have been. Therefore, regardless of how capable a child might be of employing a successful strategy to fake illness, it is understandable that they may not always necessarily want to be subject to the forms of spatial-temporal discipline which are required in order to be sent home, as the extracts below illustrate.

By the time you actually get sent home, because you’re waiting around for ages, it’s not really worth it... for headaches and things, it’s better to just drink lots of water (Jess, state school).

They will think about your condition, and see if there’s like a, if they think that you need to be sent home...that usually takes, well, it can take ages, so the way you act is, it’s just like a tummy ache, it’s not that bad and you can go back to class. Just have a lot of water (Adam, state school).

There may be also a temporal element to Jess and Adam’s bodily strategies which involve ‘drinking and waiting’ in class, rather than being separated from the social group. Negotiating a break from class to drink water, whether as part of a longer strategy or as a form of temporary relief, is

understood as an alternative to negotiating an immediate and permanent removal from class by claiming illness. The children have been told, as part of the *Water of Life* project described in the previous chapter, that drinking water can help to relieve headaches and stomach aches which are caused by dehydration. Jess and Adam can be seen to draw upon this knowledge to avoid being separated from the social group and being made to wait in a visible and exposed position as part of the processing of ill children in school. Therefore, children also employ bodily strategies to convince teachers they are *not* ill when, in fact, they are, with their preferred course of action being to be released from class to fetch water. This fetching of water is experienced by the children as a temporary break and furthermore, drinking water is understood by children to have health benefits. Employing a bodily strategy to appear in need of a drink, rather than in need of being sent home, enables children to control, quite precisely, how they negotiate forms of discipline in school.

In conclusion, this chapter has reinforced the importance of considering children's embodied experiences as social actors by showing that being a child in a child's body means children's understandings of the body differ from those of adults, an idea confirmed in previous literature about children's experiences of the body (Backett-Millburn, 2000 and Christensen, 2000). However, the finding that children's bodily strategies are understood, by children themselves, to be under the radar of adults, provides new insight into children's own awareness of the difference between their understandings of the body and those of adults, and how they experience this in everyday life.

Previous work on faking illness has focused upon the importance of faking in relation to how children learn about constructions of approved illness behaviour and their culture's value system about illness (Wilkinson, 1988). Children, Wilkinson (1988) argued, learn *from* their experiences of faking illness. This chapter has confirmed this, and offers further insight into the ways that children make use of their knowledge of the body in order to employ bodily strategies: they are learning *to*, not just learning from. This repositions children, therefore, as generators of knowledge, as an alternative to their traditional position as recipients of knowledge.

This chapter has also further complicated the ongoing discussion of the relationship between structure and agency in relation to how children come to know about the body. The school, it has been shown, is an institution characterised by rigid rules about children's behaviour. Failure to adhere to these rules, it was shown, leads to forms of spatial-temporal punishment which children

experience as being 'killed'. However, rather than merely constraining children's capacity to exercise agency, this chapter has shown that the school, and its rules, merely 'provide the context in which children make their choices', as James (2013) has argued is true of institutions, and forms of social structure, more broadly. As evidence of this, children in this project demonstrated an ability to employ bodily strategies in order to negotiate, with some precision, what, how, and when things happen to them in school.

Children's position as generators of knowledge and as negotiators of discipline has consequences for the way policy is understood to affect children. In contrast to a linear cause and effect model of health promotion policy such as the *Water of Life* project shaping children's health behaviour, this chapter has demonstrated that individual children will take what they will from the information they are subject to in the form of health promotion. While the children's exposure to health promotion about hydration may have increased their knowledge about the health benefits of water, the knowledge they gained was also used as a way to negotiate child-adult power relations which, it can be assumed, is an unintended consequence of policy level bodily discipline. Furthermore, children's knowledge of bodily strategies, it was argued, is kept under the radar of adults and can be understood as a form of peer culture. Indeed, it is this very exposure - outing - of this culture that eventually leads to 'killing'. This offers an additional challenge to the traditional position of children as learners who simply absorb adult culture. In contrast, children's shared concern to gain greater control over their lives has been shown to be an important basis for their peer culture.

The argument that children's bodily strategies can be understood to form part of their peer cultures offers further insight into the processes which contribute to low peer status and the rejection of certain children from peer groups, which Corsaro and Eder (1990) identify as in need as further investigation. This chapter has shown that children such as state school Amy, who fail to employ effective bodily strategies are not only identified as wet by teachers, but are left out of important aspects of peer culture. Children's level of mastery over the body may, therefore, be key to understanding why some children are poorly integrated into peer groups.

CHAPTER NINE: EMBODIED, EXPERIENTIAL AGENCY IN CONTEXT

This chapter brings together and further develops the ideas presented in chapters six, seven and eight. Its central aim is to consider the findings of these chapters in relation to current sociological debates about the body and also to consider how the findings of this project address the research questions outlined in chapter two. This chapter also considers the limitations of this research and suggests some potential future research directions. In the first section of this chapter, the body is considered from a constructionist perspective via the exploration of the ways that the body can be understood as the subject of structural factors. This includes the ways that the school, as an institution, contributes to children's understandings and experiences of the body. This section, therefore, addresses the research question *'To what extent are children's experiences and understandings of the body shaped by structural factors of their lives?'* The second section of this chapter considers evidence, presented in chapters six, seven and eight, that children are active social agents who respond to, and make sense of knowledge about the body in relation to a complex range of factors that constitute the individual experiences of each particular child. Thus, this section of the chapter responds to the broad research question *'How do children come to know about the body?'* The final section of this chapter reflects upon the lived experience of both 'having' and 'being' a body by highlighting the importance of children's capacity as embodied social agents. This section of the chapter, therefore, considers the findings of this project in relation to the research question *In what ways does children's embodiment impact upon their understandings of the body?* Specifically, it was children's experience of a period of rapid physical growth, along with other aspects of embodied experience that are unique to children as a social group, which were found to be significant in understanding how children come to know about the body. However, this section of the chapter also considers the findings of this project which challenge assumptions about children's engagement with health policy and formal learning about the body in school. In doing so, the question *'How do social constructions of childhood impact upon children's everyday experiences of the body?'* which is alluded to throughout this chapter, is further addressed. The final part of the chapter, therefore, draws upon an embodied approach which maintains the argument that individual children exercise agency in diverse ways as a response to both the everyday contexts of their lives, and their embodiment. Thus, this chapter will demonstrate the importance of the simultaneous consideration of structure and agency, and the interplay between the two, for understanding how children come to know about the body.

The Structural Shaping of the Body

The presence of health promotion at the state school, and its notable absence from the private school, provides evidence of the political nature of school health policy. Working class schools have, as Pilcher (2007) notes, been particularly important sites for the provision of health policy since the early twentieth century. Thus, health promotion, it seems, specifically targets the people who are perceived to need it more than others, i.e. the working classes who are assumed, at a policy level, to be unable to take full responsibility for the wellbeing of their children (Pilcher, 2007). In contrast, middle class parents are understood, from a policy perspective, to be more capable of fulfilling the health needs of their children. The idea that middle class families are more capable than working class families of making choices for their children is reinforced by the way that private schools, in contrast to state schools, do not have to follow the National Curriculum. Middle class parents can thus choose a school with a curriculum of learning which they believe best suits their particular child's needs.

Health promotion present in the state school included *Change4Life* literature and the *Water of Life* project. The differing use of phrases such as *Five-a-Day* and 'healthy diet' between state and private school children respectively, was understood, in chapter seven, *The Experiential Body*, to be a result of their contrasting exposure to forms of health promotion. Similarly, the children's focus upon particular aspects of the body, for example the bones or the importance of hydration, were also shown to be shaped by their engagement with forms of health promotion. Yet, as the next section of this chapter - which focuses upon children's agency - will explain, children were not passive to the messages of health promotion, but in contrast, actively challenged and constructed ideas about the body *in relation* to the forms of health policy to which they were exposed.

However, discussion of the subject of body weight has provided a clear demonstration of the ways that structural factors of children's lives shape the ways they come to know about the body, specifically in relation to children's understanding of bodily change. Connell's (1987) notion of transcendence, which notes the effect of social ideas upon the physical body, is useful for understanding how the structural aspects of children's lives can, quite literally, shape their bodies. The example which Connell (1987) uses to demonstrate this is the way that the culturally constructed *idea* of girls as weaker and more delicate than boys has meant that their involvement in physical activity tends to be limited, and much less is expected of them in terms of physical performance. As a result, female children tend to spend less time than male children doing sport. This alters their physical bodies in tangible ways, since the bodies of boys, in contrast to those of

girls, become more practiced and accomplished at sport. Moreover, if girls do decide to re-enter the sphere of sport following puberty, they are at a distinct physical disadvantage to their male peers who have grown up practising the skills necessary for sporting prowess.

Chapter six, *The Changing Body* noted differences between children's engagement with physical activity in the state and private school. Private school children enjoyed a wide range of extracurricular activities and a well-organised curriculum of sport in school. In contrast, state school children had few opportunities to engage in physical activity either in, or outside of school. This, it was shown, shaped children's understandings of their role in the process of bodily change. For private school children, who engaged in a wide range of sport as part of their daily lives, the importance of physical activity in relation to transforming their bodies into the slim or muscular shape that children in this project desired, did not require comment. In contrast, state school children, a number of whom were involved in struggles with weight loss at the time of the fieldwork, spoke about their plans to begin diet and exercise regimes in the future. Thus, state school children conceptualised their roles in the process of bodily change as more active than private school children.

Just as Connell (1987) shows that differences in the sporting prowess of boys and girls are shaped by cultural notions of gender, this project has demonstrated that children's opportunities for physical activity, and thus, their actual physicality, are powerfully shaped by social ideas relating to class, ethnicity and religious or cultural identity. For example, ethnic minority and Muslim state school children reported being subjected to racism and Islamophobia in their local areas which limited their access to outdoor space for physical activity. Edmunds (2012) notes that old colonial ideas have resurfaced as a result of new forms of governance of Muslims since the bombing of the World Trade Centre in 2001. Signs of religious belief, including wearing of traditional Islamic clothing have become understood as "a potential threat to national identity and security" (Edmunds, 2012: 65). Edmunds (2012) further explains how cultural narratives of Islam in the Western world affect the everyday lives of Muslim people.

Operating through a combination of legal mechanisms and popular narratives based on themes associated with colonial governance, Muslims have been 'cast out' of law and politics. With decolonization, this narrative has been transformed into one about a 'home-grown' alien force whose transnational attachments, thought to be evident in a refusal to confine religious identity to the private sphere, are presented as a risk that needs to be contained (Edmunds, 2012: 67).

The children who reported feeling unsafe outside of their homes in their local neighbourhoods due to racist and aggressive Islamophobia demonstrate how their everyday lives must be considered in the context of global events. Smart's (2007) notion of personal life is a useful tool for gaining insight into the ways that children's everyday lives are shaped by, and connected to, the wider global context. Smart (2007) argues that

To live a personal life is to have agency and make choices, but the personhood implicit in the concept requires the presence of others to respond to and contextualise those actions and choices (Smart, 2007: 28).

Personal lives, in contrast to private lives, must be understood as "embedded", or "lived out in relation to one's class position, ethnicity, gender and so on" (Smart, 2007: 28). James (2013) uses the notion of personal life as a way to bridge structure and agency, more specifically, to understand "how lives are lived across time and space and are transformed by the connections made with others, and lived lives may also lead to social change" (James, 2013: 11). For James (2013) the notion of personal life offers a way of thinking about children as social actors with agency, but nonetheless "remains mindful of children's embeddedness in the social and their connectedness" with, for example, such issues as "class, gender and race; with cultural moralities; with institutional constraints; with the material and emotional demands of their changing bodies; and with the historical moments of their own biographies" (James, 2013: 15). The notion of children's personal lives, along with Connell's (1987) notion of transcendence, therefore, helps to make sense of the way that cultural ideas about Muslims and ethnic minority children, specifically racist and Islamophobic narratives, can be understood as social factors which shape children's access to outdoor space and, as a result, quite literally shape their physical bodies. The significance of structural factors in shaping how children come to know about the body is further demonstrated through the consideration of why it was that the state school in this project was unable to access the funding and resources necessary to engage their pupils in physical activity in the same way that the private school did. For Bourdieu (1978), differences between the lives of children from different social class groups can be understood as examples of wider societal patterns whereby the dominant classes, who can access alternative sources of economic capital, tend to have more valuable opportunities than the working classes to convert physical capital into cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1978). For example, as Shilling (2003) points out

...while polo and golf may be available to pupils at elite private schools in England, those in state schools are usually channelled into playing soccer or netball. Further, developing a taste for elite sporting and leisure activities is important as while these activities may not always

represent a *direct* route to a career for the dominant classes, they can lead to social situations which indirectly facilitate entry into a profession or allow business contacts to be forged... (and) can also serve the purpose of finding ‘appropriate’ marriage partners... hence safeguarding the transmission of their own economic capital (Shilling, 2003: 120).

Indeed, Shilling (2003) argues that class distinctiveness is reinforced by steering working class children away from activities engaged in by dominant classes. Willis’ (1977) study of working class boys, for example, demonstrated how learning to labour has been understood, in the past, as an alternative to academic achievement.

However, ideas about what is ‘best’ for working class children, from a policy perspective, have changed over time, thus further demonstrating that children’s personal lives are embedded in the context of wider social events and processes. For example, Carrington’s (1982) study of black working class youth showed that being pushed into sport was an alternative to academic studies that was embedded in racist and classist assumptions about the ‘natural’ aptitude for sport of black youths and their corresponding lack of talent for academic pursuits. Carrington (1982) highlights, therefore, a pattern of working class children being offered access to sport, or particular kinds of non-elite sport, as an alternative to the academic success enjoyed by the elite classes.

In contrast to Carrington’s (1982) finding that working class and ethnic minority children were offered access to sport as an alternative to academic success, the state school children in this project were offered very limited access to physical activity of any kind. As a result, the ability to convert physical capital into alternative forms of capital - which has traditionally been an option for working class youth, albeit a limited one⁹ - is apparently no longer available to the working class state school children involved in this project. This shift in understanding of the importance of sport to the lives of working class children can be traced to the educational policies of the 1997-2007 Labour government under Tony Blair and the mantra *Education, education, education*. Through the *Standards and Effectiveness Unit* and the parliamentary white paper *Excellence in Schools*, the Blair government aimed to bridge the gap in educational attainment between rich and poor children through stricter testing and the use of educational targets for literacy and numeracy monitored through Ofsted inspections. However, Smithers (2001) points out that

⁹Shilling (2003) points out that working class children’s potential to exchange sporting prowess or physical capital into other forms of capital is limited by the fact that only a small percentage (mostly males) can hope to earn a living through sport, and for those who do, this form of convertibility is usually partial and transient due to the risk of injury.

In order to allow sufficient time for these literacy and numeracy programmes, the statutory curriculum for primary schools was reduced to a core of English, maths, science, information technology – and swimming. Schools are required to teach the other subjects, but it is for them to decide how much time to spend on each and how to fit them in (Smithers, 2001: 419).

State school children's reports that their P.E lessons were often cancelled or replaced with drama activities suggest that the neglect of physical education may be a consequence of policy which encourages schools with limited resources - such as the state school involved in this project - to focus upon targets for literacy and numeracy. Therefore, despite the fact that funding for school sports has been increased in the past five years through the *Sport England* initiative¹⁰ (Timpson *et al*, 2013), the state school involved in this project has clearly not been able to create opportunities for its working class pupils to engage in the physical activities which children themselves understand as important to keeping healthy and shaping their bodies. Indeed, Lupton and Thompson (2015) point out that although some education budgets have been 'protected', overall UK spending on education was reduced, falling £3.6 billion (4 per cent) in real terms between 2009/10 and 2013/14. Furthermore, Lupton and Thompson (2015) argue that the name change of the *Department for Children, Schools and Families* (DCSF) to the *Department for Education* signifies

...a narrowing of intent which was accompanied by the dropping of policies relating to wider children's well-being (notably *Every Child Matters*)... and a [shift in] focus on marginalised groups which had developed in the former DCSF since 2007 (Lupton and Thompson, 2015: 22).

Therefore, despite the aims of initiatives such as *Sport England*, the drive for austerity, which has characterised political debate throughout the time that this project was active, involves the further depletion of community provision and local welfare services, and thus allows us to predict a widening of the gap in opportunities for physical activity between rich and poor children. The differences in experiences and understandings of the changing body identified in this project between state and private school children can, therefore, be understood as powerfully shaped by structural factors including cultural narratives of race and religion, and assumptions about social class embedded in the political and economic goals of educational policies.

The concept of personal lives (Smart, 2007 and James, 2013) enables the appreciation of how children's everyday experiences are shaped in significant ways by their "embeddedness in the

¹⁰Previously known as the English Sports Council, *Sport England* provides services and funding to sport in England using funds from the National Lottery.

social” (James, 2013: 15). Thus, even though, as the next section of this chapter demonstrates, children critically assess the information that they are presented with about the body in school, there are evident constraints in children’s lives which mean that they are limited in how they might put the ideas of health promotion into practice. For instance, state school children are told, by the *Change4Life* literature present in their school, that exercise is important for a healthy body, and indeed, data in chapter seven, *The Experiential Body* demonstrated children’s knowledge of this. However, these same children were given little opportunity to exercise as part of their everyday lives. Ironically, if the notion, implicit in health policy, that those perceived to be most ‘in need’ ought to be targeted, is followed to its logical conclusion, then working class children - whose families do not have the means to afford regular private leisure activities and who do not live in areas where it is safe to use free outdoor facilities - ought to be offered greater opportunity for physical activity in school than private school children, whose parents, it has been shown, can afford to pay for private leisure activities.

In summary, the bodies of children in this project can be understood, to some extent, as the texts “upon which the power of society is inscribed” (Lyon and Barbalet, 1994: 49). The ways children come to know about the body, it has been shown, are shaped by social processes outside of the control of individual agents. However, as discussion of the notion of children’s personal lives (Smart, 2007 and James, 2013) has begun to reveal, constructionist approaches - while integral to understanding how children come to know about the body - cannot tell the full story, in which children’s agency and embodiment also play important roles.

However, while the significance of structure to the question of how children come to know about the body has been demonstrated by this project, it is important to also note the limitations of the research in relation to this. Specifically, on reflection, it is clear that the ‘comparatively simple’ measure of social class discussed in chapter four, *Design and Methods* did not offer as thorough a consideration of social class as the consideration of the nuances of religio-cultural (specifically Islamic) identity in chapter six, *The Changing Body*. While the ‘broad assumption’ that children from the state school were working class, and children from the private school were middle class was justified to some extent by the obvious differences between the lives of the children at the two schools, further opportunity remains to explore the notion that the boundaries between social classes are “flames whose edges are in constant movement” (Bourdieu, 1984: 13). Most importantly, diversity between the ways that social class identity is understood by individual

children was not acknowledged. For example, a more nuanced examination of children's social class identities across the schools might have offered greater insight into the ways that social class shapes the ways that children actively construct and reinforce gender stereotypes (see chapter six, *The Changing Body*). Specifically, a better understanding of the social class identities of individual girls and boys across the schools may offer insight into the ways that their ideas about use of bodily decoration might be 'classed' or related to their individual social class identities. It is also important to connect the 'broad assumption' made in this project, about social class, to the notion of reflexivity discussed in Chapter Three, *Methodology*. The assumption that state school children would be working class is, in part, a consequence of this researcher's own childhood experiences of an inner city state school, and the significance of this to my own social class identity. The broad assumption about the social class of the children in the two schools was undoubtedly shaped by the feeling of familiarity I felt upon entering the state school, and conversely, the experience of being out-of-place at the private school. The ways in which this researcher's own social class identity and past experience of schooling might have shaped the discussion of social class were not explored in the same way that the researcher's position within child-adult power relations in school was reflexively considered. This not only highlights the importance of reflexivity throughout a research project at all levels, but also presents an opportunity for further exploration of the ways that the structures of children's lives - specifically the social class identities of individual children - shape how they come to know about the body.

Children as Social Agents

Findings which position the individual child at the centre of the processes by which children come to know about the body are the focus of this section. However, as the previous section began to illustrate the contestation that children's personal lives are embedded in wider social contexts, means that factors of structure and agency must be considered simultaneously in order to understand how children come to know about the body. Prout (2000: 16) argues that the idea that children can exercise agency "should not be considered a terminus, but a point of analytical embarkation". Therefore, this section will not simply note children's capacity for agency, but will examine the findings from this project which demonstrate children's individual agency in relation to social constructions of childhood and the child. Specifically, children's capacity for agency will be considered in relation to evidence from this project that children are active generators of knowledge, rather than the passive vessels of information they are assumed to be in

developmentalist conceptualisations of learning about the body (see chapter one, Literature Review).

Valentine (2011: 356) notes the tendency, within childhood studies, to treat the notion of agency as “straightforwardly a personal capacity or attribute”. Yet agency, Valentine (2011) points out, is not simply the same as competence or capability. Therefore, childhood studies must provide “an account of agency that is sensitive to differences between children, as well as differences between children and adults” (Valentine, 2011: 253). The findings of this project, particularly the observations about children’s use of experiential logic and thought experiments in chapter seven, *The Experiential Body*, demonstrate that children’s role as active social agents in coming to know about the body requires more than just competence or capability. Children, it was shown, come to know about the body by making sense of information in relation to their own individual experiences, which are the consequences of the particular contexts of their lives. These findings from chapter seven, *The Experiential Body*, when considered alongside the findings about differences between children in chapter six, *The Changing Body*, demonstrate the complex interplay between structure and agency in how children come to know about the body. Data from Muslim state school pupils provides the clearest example of this complexity. For example, it was found that children’s religious and cultural beliefs - which can be understood as structural factors of their lives - were clearly shown to shape their understandings of the body. Yet, Muslim children also made sense of their bodies in relation to Islam, in ways particular to them as individuals. So, on one hand, Muslim children drew upon Islamic ideas about dressing modestly, and were found to actively uphold the notion of *Umma*, or the universal brotherhood of Islam, through the construction of female Muslim peers as sisters who required their protection and guidance. However, on the other hand, use of Islamic clothing was related, by children, to Western ideas about bodyweight and appearance. Children were conversely shown to interpret traditional Western use of clothing - for example, the wearing of ‘smart suits’ - in relation to Islamic cultural beliefs about pious and respectable appearance in ways that were individual to them. Therefore, Muslim children were not simply absorbing ideas about Islam passed down from adults, but making sense of their bodies, in relation to Islam, in ways which were meaningful for them as individual social agents.

The concept of ‘biteback’, discussed by the Muslim state school children, can be understood as an example of “the exterior territories or surfaces of the body” being used to “symbolize the

self’ (Shilling, 2003: 3). Children explained that if the outer body did not appear smart and attractive, if for example, it was *‘fat and stinky’*, then *‘no one would want to marry you’*. The idea that the appearance of the outer body represents a person’s inner qualities was understood by Muslim children as an Islamic idea, indicated by their use of the phrase *in our language* as a synonym for *in our culture*. Interestingly, Shilling (2003: 2) argues that the tendency for people in high modernity to place “ever more importance on the body as constitutive of the self” has increased with the decline of religious frameworks in the West. The Muslim children in this project, however, used their religion as a base upon which to build their understanding of the importance of the body as a project; something to work upon and accomplish over the lifetime which theorists, including Shilling (2003) tend to understand as a contemporary *alternative* to religious belief.

Muslim children’s understandings of the use of bodily decoration, therefore, can be seen to draw upon Islamic ideas, yet each Muslim child retained an entirely individual interpretation. Children demonstrated an ability to synthesise ideas about the body from Western and Islamic culture in ways which had individual meaning to them. The influence of both Islamic law and individual preferences upon Muslim children’s understandings of the body provides further support for a personal lives approach (Smart, 2007 and James, 2013) which considers the interconnectedness of aspects of difference in order to understand how children come to know about the body.

The importance of the interconnectedness of aspects of difference is further highlighted by the ways that gender intersects with religio-cultural standpoints to create, for example, difference between the understandings of the body between Muslim boys and girls. However, this was not limited to Muslim children, as broad gender differences in understandings of the body were identified between boys and girls across the two schools. Gender difference in children’s understandings demonstrate children’s position in a social context framed by particular gender stereotypes, most notably the idea that girls and women ought to pay close attention to their appearance, whereas boys and men, in contrast, ought to avoid appearing to care *too much* about their appearance. Children from both schools were shown to draw upon these gender stereotypes, yet, the fact that they did this most notably during discussion of their changing bodies demonstrates that children were actively reinforcing and constructing gender stereotypes in relation to issues which were important to them, as children. The rapidly changing body, as the final section of this chapter will go on to discuss in greater detail, characterises childhood as a biological phenomenon, and is therefore significant to

children as a social group. Through the deployment of gender stereotypes in relation to the subject of the changing body, children demonstrate their ability to use information from their social contexts in order to make sense of issues pertinent to their daily lives and embodied standpoint.

The differences in the understandings of the body between children in this project must, therefore, be understood as a reflection of children's participation in different social settings just as James (2013) has argued. More specifically, as chapter seven, *The Experiential Body* explained, the ways that each child comes to know about the body reflect their individual experiences. Thus, individual children's negotiations of their social settings - including their family's religion or cultural background, and their position with respect to particular social understandings of gender - is what creates difference between children and shapes the ways they come to know about the body.

This offers an interesting prospect for future research, specifically the consideration of how the embodiment, or embodied experiences, of a more diverse range of children shapes the ways in which they come to know about the body. Diversity in this respect could include children with disabilities and children who identify as transgender. Indeed, it is important to note that there may have been children in this project who had disabilities or identified as transgender, but declined to speak about this during the fieldwork. The fact that the participants in this project were very much in control of what they chose to speak about is demonstrated by the omission of data about intimate aspects of bodily change. In Chapter five, *Ethics*, it is argued that one reason for this is likely to be children's fear of reprisal from teachers for talking about things which are considered in school to be 'inappropriate'. For non cis gender children, discussion of their gender identification would be likely to also be considered to be an 'inappropriate' topic for discussion in school. For disabled children, possible reasons for choosing not to discuss their experiences of disability are likely to be complex and varied. Yet, in light of the finding in Chapter Six, *The Changing Body*, that children spoke of their desire to be 'normal', which, it was argued, is in part a consequence of the experience of flux characteristic of children's rapidly changing bodies. This, it was suggested, means that for children, a body which does not adhere to developmental notions of 'normality' in terms of its abilities, is likely to be a source of stigma. Furthermore, James' (1993) discussion of the notion of 'normally different' and 'differently normal' understandings of illness, demonstrates that 'difference' between children's bodies (whether that is illness, disability, or any kind of 'difference') is understood by individual families in particular ways. Some families in James (1993) study made sense of illness by encouraging their children to be as 'normal' as possible, while others emphasised

the idea that all children are different - that difference is, in essence, normal. This highlights the fact that children may not necessarily identify with the label 'disabled' for a number of different reasons. Whatever the reasons for the absence of data on the subjects of disability and non-cis gender identification in this project, its absence highlights a potential way to further the ideas of this project by drawing upon work which has considered the experiences of disabled children (Davis *et al*, 2000 and Watson, 2012) and those of non cis gender children (Kennedy and Hellen, 2010) in order to explore, in greater depth, the ways that the particular embodied experiences of individual children shape the ways they come to know about the body.

Children's Social Worlds, Peer Cultures and The Body

The findings of this project support James' (2013) proposal that it is children's participation in particular social settings which differentiates them from adults. More specifically, it is children's daily lives, in comparison to those of adults, which shape their particular understandings of the body. For example, it was not unusual for children to experience daily shifts in their position in the height hierarchy. It was shown that a child may be the smallest in their class, yet the tallest of their family or vice versa. This means that children understand, from daily experience, the positive and negative aspects of different height statuses. The finding that children's belief in the idea that 'bigger equals better' was far stronger in the context of school than it was outside of school demonstrates children's use of experiential knowledge in their everyday lives, and illustrates how experiences which characterise Western childhoods - including the process of schooling - are significant to understanding how children come to know about the body.

Similarly, private school girls spoke about how they planned to use make-up and change their hair colour in ways which appeared '*natural*'. The girls spoke of this as if it were an important part of their particular sense of style, yet this concern with 'naturalness' also meant that girls could use make-up and hair dye in ways which did not contravene school rules about the use of bodily decoration. This offers further evidence that the social settings of the children's lives - here the context of school - are integral to understanding how they come to know about the body. However, this particular example also demonstrates the ways that children actively make sense of ideas about the body, including stereotypes, through mutual discussion. By talking about girls who '*looked weird*', or had made choices about bodily decoration deemed to be age-inappropriate, girls actively reinforced their understandings of stereotypical ideas about gendered use of bodily decoration with experiential knowledge of what might happen if *they* failed to observe these rules themselves.

Children, therefore, were found to construct ideas about the body - including boundaries of gendered bodily decoration - in relation to their particular experiences. Thus, the social construction of children as passive vessels of learning - demonstrated most clearly in developmentalist narratives of children's role in the process of cognitive development (discussed in chapter one, Literature Review) - is challenged.

James (2013) notes the importance of interaction between children for understanding their active roles in the process of socialisation. In particular, James (2013) highlights the potential for peer pressure to be understood not merely as “an intimidatory form of bullying” (2013: 87) but, in contrast, to be understood

...in more neutral and relational terms as an everyday process in children's personal lives: the process by which children choose to adopt - or not - the social norms and ways of behaving displayed by other children. Seen in this way, peer pressure becomes a form of socialisation expressive of children's desire for connectedness, to belong, to speak or dress like others do (James, 2013: 87).

James' (2013) understanding of peer pressure as illustrative of children's active role in the socialisation process was noted in chapter six, *The Changing Body*, specifically in relation to a discussion about the use of bodily decoration between a group of private school boys. It was observed that one boy in particular reprimanded his friend for paying too much attention to appearance, and thus exhibited what the boys understood to be non-masculine traits. Through this reprimand, or form of peer pressure, the boys constructed, via interaction, their understandings of the boundaries of gendered use of bodily decoration. Children, therefore, were not uncritically accepting stereotypical ideas about the body, but instead made sense of these ideas in relation to their particular experience and via interaction with their peers, sometimes in the form of peer pressure.

James (2013: 87) argues that peer pressure is not a “mode of being specific to children”. Rather, it is integral to the process of social identification through which socialisation takes place, at any point within the life course (Hockey and James, 2003). The notion of socialisation as a process which spans the life course is important for a biographical approach to understanding social lives, and as a reminder of the fact that socialisation is not a process which ‘finishes’ at a set point in the life course where children can be deemed fully socialised adults. However, the findings of this study

highlight the importance of understanding how the particular experiences of children shape the ways that they come to know about the body. So, while peer pressure may not be a mode of being specific to children, experiential logic and the thought experiment are, in contrast, modes of being which reflect certain particularities of children's social worlds. For example, it was noted, in chapter seven, *The Experiential Body*, that formal learning about the body in school takes the form of series of 'systems'. As the chapter demonstrated, not all of the children's questions about the body had been answered by this 'systems' approach to the body. Furthermore, children's access to information about the body is limited as a result of the innocence discourse, which means that children are often left with gaps in understanding about the body. By highlighting how children fill these gaps using experiential logic and thought experiments, this project has demonstrated that it is children's positioning within age-based power relations which shapes the tendency for adult control over the flow of information about the body. Of course, formal learning about the body in school is but one source of knowledge, and furthermore, children's negotiation of their limited access to information about the body by drawing upon experiential knowledge demonstrates their capacity as active social agents. However, the need to deploy experiential logic and thought experiments to make sense of the body can be understood as characteristic of children's social worlds, where, due to protectionist constructions of the child, access to information about the body is limited, and seemingly under adult control to a large extent.

However, the particular circumstances of children's social worlds must also be considered in relation to their construction of peer cultures, as discussed in chapter eight, *The Disciplined Body*. For instance, the fact that children kept their understanding of one another's bodily strategies under the radar of adults in school is evidence of the reciprocal nature of power relations in the context of school, demonstrating that children, and not only adults, control certain aspects of information about the body. The need for children to conceal their ability to employ bodily strategies, therefore, is not just a result of their fear of 'being killed' (see chapter eight, *The Disciplined Body*), but can be understood more broadly as a form of resistance to age-based power relations which characterise the school as an institution. It was noted that Corsaro and Eder (1990) identify two central themes evident in children's creation of peer culture; these are attempts to gain control of their lives, and the sharing of this control with their peers (1990: 201). Children's bodily strategies to fake illness and take breaks from class were a means for children to do both of these things, thereby demonstrating that children's knowledge of the body, gained as a result of their particular

experiences within their social worlds, was important in relation to the construction of their peer cultures. Thus, children used their bodies both as a way to negotiate age-based power relations, and in the formation of their peer cultures. This confirms James' (1993) idea that the body is a crucial resource for making and breaking children's social identities, and, furthermore, suggests that coming to know the body via experiential logic may be key to the importance of the body to children's social identities.

The Embodied Body

This section extends the argument that the particular experiences of children as a social group, including their embodied experiences, are important for making sense of how they come to know about the body. This is achieved through a focus upon arguments developed in chapter eight, *The Disciplined Body*, which relate to children's employment of bodily strategies. In particular, the finding that children drew upon their formal learning about the body in school to inform their bodily strategies will be discussed in relation to understandings of how policy, made manifest through health promotion and learning about the body in school, is engaged with by children. Traditional ideas about children as the passive vessels into which information about the body is poured, will be further challenged using evidence, from this project, that children play an active role in drawing upon and negotiating ideas about the body that are presented to them as part of their formal learning. Thus, the question '*how do social constructions of childhood impact upon children's everyday experiences of the body*' is further addressed here.

The notion that the behaviour of individual agents can be influenced provides the theoretical underpinning of public policy (Sanderson, 2000). This perspective, James (2013) argues, assumes

... linear, successions causality, stability and symmetry in relationships between variables and a resulting proportionality of change in response to policy intervention. These assumptions provide confidence in a capacity to control social systems and an ability to predict the consequences of policy interventions (James, 2013: 134).

Children's role in this process is thus assumed to be passive. They absorb information, and this, it is assumed by policy makers, will result in changes to children's behaviour which will bring about particular outcomes in relation to health, both for children and the adults they will become in the future. The findings of this project challenge the conceptualisation of linear successionist causality between health policy and children's actions and understandings. Indeed, in direct contrast to the

construction of children as passive learners, this project has demonstrated how children actively engage with information about the body from health policy in a number of complex ways. For example, in chapter seven, *The Experiential Body*, it was shown that state school children drew upon their knowledge of dehydration gleaned from their *Water of Life* project to make sense of how water could make them feel better when they were ill, hungry or had headaches. Conversely, through experiential logic and thought experiments, children were shown to draw upon their individual embodied experience to make sense of ideas presented to them within forms of health promotion and formal learning about the body in school. For example, the idea that bones are important - presented to children as part of their projects on the human skeleton - was made sense of by children in relation to the importance of social interaction in their everyday lives. Without bones, children argued, you would be '*a blob on the floor*' and '*couldn't join in with things*'. The concepts of experiential logic and the thought experiment demonstrate some of the complexity present in the children's relationships with ideas about the body that are presented to them in school, and begin to unseat the assumption that there exists a linear flow of knowledge from adult policymakers to children.

A further challenge to traditional constructions of children's role in the learning process is the way that children used their experiential embodied knowledge to question the ideas presented to them in their school-based learning about the body. For example, children referred to *feelings* of tiredness and exhaustion in order to question the notion that it is healthy to take part in lots of different kinds of physical activity. The children used their experiential logic to argue that it was possible to do '*too much*', and thereby relied upon their embodied agency to form critical opinions about the busy routines of their peers. Similarly, the negative effect of sweets upon dental health, widely accepted among the adult population and present in the *Change4Life* literature at the state school, was challenged in relation to the experience of painful wobbly teeth which required '*exercise*'. The argument for the importance of considering children's embodied knowledge in how they come to know about the body was extended further through the demonstration of children's employment of bodily strategies in chapter eight, *The Disciplined Body*. Here, state school children drew upon knowledge from their *Water of Life* project in order to convince their teachers to allow them to take a break from class to fetch water. This challenges the idea, implicit in health promotion policy, that children are passive and malleable to the influence of health promotion literature. State school children were instead complicit in the re-construction of their school's drinks policy from its

intended use as a way of ensuring that children were hydrated, into a reward system for those children who were most adept at engaging in bodily strategies to *appear* as if they were behaving well and working hard.

Interestingly, while the threat of being ‘killed’ - that is, symbolically separated from the social group via forms of spatial-temporal discipline - is so effective as a means of controlling children, in part, due to their embodied state, children also deployed their embodied state to negotiate forms of discipline in school. For example, children were shown to challenge adult control over their bodies in school by harnessing the *potential* agency of their bodies through the bodily strategy, and used this to negotiate forms of discipline in school. The interruption of school discipline by the child’s body - which needs regular drinks, overheats, sweats, and becomes tired or sick - demonstrates children’s ability to use their bodies as tools to disrupt age-based power relations in school. This supports Simpson’s (2000) finding (discussed in chapter one, Literature Review) that children use their unruly bodies to their advantage in negotiation of age-based power relations in school, and furthermore, clearly demonstrates the importance of an embodied approach to understanding how children come to know about the body. While, as this chapter has shown, it is important to consider how social constructions of the body shape children’s everyday experiences, neglecting the fleshy, material aspects of the body risks losing sight of how the body “forms the basis for, and contributes towards, social life” (Shilling, 2003: 61). This idea is also relevant to making sense of children’s understandings of change, which, it was argued in the first section of this chapter, are shaped by the structural aspects of children’s lives. However, in chapter six, *The Changing Body*, it was also shown that children’s reliance upon stereotypes about the gendered body, particularly their gendered use of bodily decoration, and the significance of the notion of ‘normality’, were shaped by the level of uncertainty associated with children’s particular experience of bodily change. Childhood, it was pointed out, is characterised by flux, and children experience a period of rapid bodily change which is particular to them as a social group. Thus, it is the body’s uncertain biology, located in its fleshy materiality, which was found to drive children’s understandings of bodily change and to shape their reliance upon bodily stereotypes.

Importantly, however, the fact that state school children were able to challenge age-based power relations in school via the particular bodily strategy to fetch water is no coincidence, but a result of the particular context of children’s learning about the body in the state school. As noted in the

previous section, most of the children's school-based learning about the body related to 'systems' of the body. However, in contrast to the 'systems' approach to learning epitomised by the human skeleton projects children at both schools had engaged with (see chapter seven, *The Experiential Body*), the *Water of Life* project in the state school took a more holistic approach to the body. That is, it discussed the ways that a number of different aspects of the body can be affected by water (or lack of water) including the brain's ability to concentrate, and the physical body's ability to perform, for example during sport. This way of presenting information about the body enabled children to place the things they had been taught about water in the context of their everyday lives. Ironically, children's ability to negotiate discipline in school so effectively via bodily strategies which drew upon information about water and hydration, was a direct result of their formal learning about the body in school. Therefore, children in this project were more able to effectively negotiate discipline in school - and thus disrupt adult control over the child's body in school - when they had a more detailed knowledge of the body. Essentially, then, the children's ability to exercise agency over matters concerning their bodies was found to be influenced by their access to knowledge *about* their bodies.

Therefore, the tendency for school-based learning about the body to be separated into 'systems' can be understood as a tool through which docile bodies are created, or, at least, the creation of docile bodies is an effect of this particular framing of the body in children's school-based learning. Although school-based knowledge is by no means the only source of knowledge about the body drawn upon by children, it seems that the greater knowledge children have, the more they are able to challenge adult control over their bodies.

The notion that uninformed children make more docile bodies helps to account for the peculiarly British approach to sex and relationships education (SRE) identified in chapter one, Literature Review. Lewis and Knijn (2001) found that in comparison to other European countries, SRE in the UK begins at a much later age and is far more focused upon the *dangers* of sex. Thus, the British approach to SRE appears to be based upon the idea that keeping children ignorant of certain aspects of sex will mean that they defer their engagement in sexual activity. Furthermore, the bulk of British children's SRE is formed of learning about the reproductive system as part of the science curriculum at Key Stage three when children move to secondary school. Thus, the kind of 'systems' approach, identified in chapter seven, *The Experiential Body*, is also evident in this kind of formal learning about the body. The greater split between the emotional, social and biological sides of

British SRE (Lewis and Knijn, 2001:61, see chapter one, Literature Review), it was argued, reflects peculiarly British restrictions upon children's access to information about sex and sexual relationships, specifically the result of the combined influence of Cartesian constructs of the body, which separate carnal and spiritual matters, and the innocence discourse, which constructs children as asexual and in need of protection from adult sexuality. Children's reluctance to discuss what they understood as 'inappropriate' aspects of the body (see chapter five, Ethics) demonstrates their ability to differentiate between sexual and non-sexual aspects of the body and thus supports Reay's (2013) argument that the assumption that children change, quite suddenly from asexual, to sexual beings, is absurd. Instead, the process of becoming sexual is gradual, and unique to the life course of each individual.

However, this project has also shown that while children's use of experiential knowledge has a definite *logic* to it, it does not necessarily reflect the reality of how the body works. The examples of children's understandings of water 'washing' away bacteria to 'cure' headaches and the use of caramel sweets to 'exercise' teeth clearly demonstrates this. While children's use of experiential logic may seem relatively benign in relation to headaches and dental care, when it comes to making sense of certain aspects of the body including sexual health, children's use of experiential knowledge to fill gaps in knowledge caused by a 'systems' approach to learning about the body may have potentially serious consequences, particularly in light of the fact that the UK has the highest rates of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases in Western Europe (Avery and Lazdane, 2008). The efforts to keep children innocent of sex are understood, from a policy perspective, in relation to the misguided notion that if children's exposure to knowledge about sex is delayed, so will the process of becoming sexual (Reay, 2013). This demonstrates the impact of social constructions of childhood upon children's everyday experiences of the body. This project has shown, however, that what children are 'taught' about the body, is not necessarily all they learn, and that in order to understand how children come to know about the body, children's role as active social agents and their capacities for making use of information about the body in relation to their particular experiences via experiential logic, must be acknowledged. Therefore, the relationship between children and the information about the body presented to them by adults is far more complex than the linear process between children's exposure to information, and children's behaviour assumed within policy discourse.

James (2013) acknowledges the impossibility of tailor-making policy for individual children:

...social policies cannot, realistically, be tailored for each and every individual or life circumstance. However, the fact they cannot also means that policies may not be as effective as they might be for the individual children who are on the receiving end (James, 2013: 175).

Yet, although policy cannot be tailored to suit the needs of individual children, this does not mean that the findings of this thesis cannot impact policy areas including health promotion and sex education. This chapter has highlighted the need for an approach to understanding how children come to know the body which takes into account the importance of both individual *and* embodied experiences. Findings which demonstrate children's active role in the process of coming to know about the body through mutual discussion, peer pressure, and the use of individual embodied experience to make sense of ideas, pose a challenge to traditional constructions of children as passive learners. These findings demonstrate that, in contrast, children are active generators of knowledge. Thus assumptions about the ways that policy, manifest in health promotion and school-based learning, is understood to work upon children have been unsettled. A potential future research direction could therefore involve the making of recommendations for health promotion aimed at children, including sex and relationships education in school.

In conclusion, it has been shown that children's bodies are, quite literally, shaped by social forces which limit their access to certain opportunities related to their particular experiences of schooling, and the wider contexts of their lives. As a result of this, differences between the children's conceptualisations of bodily change as either more 'passive' (private school children) or more 'active' (state school children), were identified. Therefore, not only do structural factors of children's lives shape the physical body in the way that Connell (1987) proposed, but they also help to shape children's understandings of the body. These findings in relation to structure demonstrate the importance of listening to children's voices. While children may be highly attuned to factors of difference, they may not be able to express the ways that their everyday lives are directly shaped by structural factors such as social class. However, through careful attention to the more subtle meanings of children's discussions about their everyday lives, the ways in which structural factors shape how and what they come to know about the body can be discerned. Indeed, as this project has illustrated, small differences in children's ways of communicating their understandings of the body can be significant to wider social patterns of difference in relation to class. In doing so, this project offers insight into the messy process of data analysis, where the things which participants omit saying are potentially as significant as the things they do say. For example, it was the absence of the

subject of body size in discussions of bodily change among the private school children which highlighted the differences between the ways that state and private school children conceptualised the changing body. Making decisions about data analysis based upon an *absence* of data requires a researcher to reflexively contemplate their ‘right’ to interpret the more subtle actions of their participants, rather than sticking more rigidly to a straightforward reading of transcripts. This project has demonstrated the importance of analysing data in context, and making decisions about the interpretation of data in relation to the various layers of knowledge offered to a researcher in the field. Discussion of the ‘Daily Timeline Activity’ (see chapter four, Design and Methods) offers further demonstration that a messy and multilayered approach to data analysis can work well for qualitative studies. While this activity was not engaged with by children in the way it was predicted they would, the resulting discussion of children’s after-school activities acted as a gateway to a better understanding of how the structures of children’s lives affected their access to opportunities to shape their bodies. This, in consequence, led to the identification of difference between state and private school children’s conceptualisations of bodily change. Thus, this project demonstrates that through a reflexive analytical process, the messiness of qualitative data analysis can be useful for gaining insights into aspects of the social group in ways which cannot be predicted prior to entering the field.

More broadly, however, the findings of the project have demonstrated the importance of an approach which considers both structure and agency in understanding how children come to know about the body. This interplay between structure and agency is epitomised by the simultaneous shaping of children’s understandings of the body by macro level political shifts in educational policy, and children’s use of formal learning about the body to employ bodily strategies in school at a more micro level. The call for the employment of an embodied approach to the study of children and childhood, integral to the social studies of childhood, has thus been reinforced by the findings of this project. More specifically, Shilling’s (2003) notion of the body as biologically unfinished at birth, and acted upon by forces which are simultaneously biological and social, has been shown to be particularly useful for understanding how children come to know about the body.

Children come to know about the body via their embodied experience, demonstrated by their use of experiential logic which characterises their discussions of the body. The body, therefore, is not merely constructed by discourse in the way that constructionist approaches posit, but, in contrast,

forms an integral part of social relations. The finding that children come to know about the body via experiential logic not only reveals the value of children's knowledge and experience, but also highlights the importance of the notion of embodiment, and furthermore, demonstrates the role of children's agency in the learning process. Children, it has been found, make sense of information about the body in relation to their particular embodied experiences and knowledge. Furthermore, the idea that children come to know about the body via experiential logic challenges traditional assumptions about children's role in the process of learning as passive vessels for information passed down from adults, and questions the idea that what a child is taught will necessarily be all that a child understands. While social constructions of the child and childhood - for example, the idea that children are passive vessels of information - do clearly shape children's everyday lives, children have been shown to actively negotiate this by using the information which forms part of their formal learning about the body to challenge adult power in school. This project, therefore, has positioned children as generators of, rather than merely receptors for, knowledge.

References

- ALDERSON, P. and MORROW, V. (2004) *Ethics, social research and consulting with children and young people* Ilford: Barnardo's
- ARIES, P. (1962) *Centuries of Childhood* London: Jonathan Cape
- ARMSTRONG, D. (1983) *Political Anatomy of the Body: Medical Knowledge in Britain in the Twentieth Century* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- ATKINSON, D. (2008) 'Pedagogy against the State' *International Journal of Art and Design Education* 27 (3): 226-240
- ATKINSON, P. (1990) *The Ethnographic Imagination: Textual Constructions of Reality* Abingdon: Routledge
- AVERY, L. and LAZDANE, G. (2008) 'What do we know about sexual and reproductive health of adolescents in Europe?' *European Journal of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care* 13 (1): 58-70
- BACKETT-MILLBURN, K. (2000) 'Parents, children and the Construction of the Healthy Body in Middle-class Families' in Prout, A. (eds). *The Body, Children and Society* Chapter 5: 79-100
- BAGNALL, P. (1997) 'The future contribution of school nurses to the health of school age children' *Health Education* 97 (4): 127 - 131
- BAGNOLI, A. (2009) 'Beyond the Standard Interview: the use of graphic elicitation and arts-based methods' *Qualitative Research* 9 (5): 574-576
- BAZANGER, I. and DODIER, N. (1997) 'Ethnography: Relating the Part to the Whole', in Silverman, D. (eds.) *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*: 8-23. London: Sage
- BLUMER, H. (1959) *Symbolic Interactionism; perspective and method* New Jersey: Prentice Hall
- BLUEBOND-LANGER, M. (1978) *The Private Worlds of Dying Children* New Jersey: Princeton University Press
- BLUEBOND-LANGER, M. (1996) *In The Shadow of Illness* New Jersey: Princeton University Press
- BOURDIEU, P. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* Trans. Nice, R. London: Routledge Paul
- BOURDIEU, P. (1985) 'The social space and the genesis of groups' *Theory and Society* 14 (6): 723-44

- BOURDIEU, P. (1974) 'The school as a conservative force: scholastic and cultural inequalities' in Eggleton, J. (ed.) *Contemporary Research in the Sociology of Education* London: Methuen
- BOURDIEU, P. (1978) 'Sport and Social Class' *Social Science Information* 17: 819-40
- CARRINGTON, B. (1982) 'Sport as Sidetrack', In Barton, L. and Walker, S. (eds.) *Race, Class and Education* London: Croom Helm
- CAREY, S. (1985) *Conceptual Change in Childhood* Cambridge MA, MIT Press.
- CHRISTENSEN, P. and JAMES, A. (2008) (eds.) *Research With Children, Perspectives and Practices* (2nd ed) London: Routledge
- CHRISTENSEN, P. JAMES, A. and JENKS, C. (2001) 'All we needed to do was blow the whistle: Children's Embodiment of Time' in Cunningham-Burley, S. and Backett-Millburn, K. (eds.) *Exploring The Body* Chapter 11: 201-221
- CHRISTENSEN, P. (2000) 'Childhood and the Cultural Construction of Vulnerable Bodies' (in Prout, A. (eds.) *The Body, Children and Society* Chapter 3: 38-59
- CONNELL, R.W. (1987) *Gender and Power* Cambridge: Polity
- CONNOLLY, P. (1995) 'Boys will be boys? racism, sexuality and the construction of masculine identities amongst infant boys' in Holland, J. Blair, M. and Sheldon, S. (eds.) *Debates and Issues in Feminist Research and Pedagogy*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters in association with the Open University
- COOK, D.T and KAISER, S.B. (2004) 'Betwixt and Be Tween: Age ambiguity and the sexualization of the female consuming subject' *Journal of Consumer Culture* 4 (2)
- CORSARO, W. A. and EDER, D. (1990) 'Children's Peer Cultures' *Annual Review of Sociology* 16: 197-220
- CRAWFORD, A. and LISTER, S. (2007) *The use and impact of dispersal orders. Sticking plasters and wake-up calls* Bristol: Policy Press for Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- DALLEY-TRIM, L. (2007) 'The Boys' Presents: Hegemonic Masculinity: a Performance of Multiple Acts' *Gender and Education* 19 (2):199-217
- DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION (2013) *Guidance: Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education* Available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-social-health-and-economic-education-pshe/personal-social-health-and-economic-pshe-education> Accessed June 2014

- DAVIS, J. WATSON, N. and CUNNINGHAM-BURLEY, S. (2000) 'Learning the lives of disabled children. Developing a reflexive approach' in Christensen, P. and James, A. (eds.) *Research with Children* Falmer: London.
- DIMAGGIO, P. (2012) 'Sociological Perspectives on the face-to-face enactment of class distinction' in Fiske, S. T. and Markus, H. R. (eds.) *Facing Social Class: How Societal Rank Influences Interaction* New York: Russel Sage Foundation
- DWYER, C. (1999) 'Contradictions of community: Questions of identity for young British Muslim women' *Environment and Planning A* 31(1): 53-68
- EDMUNDS, J. (2012) 'The 'new' barbarians: governmentality, securitization and Islam in Western Europe' *Contemporary Islam* 6 (1): 67-84
- EDUCATION ACT (1996) C. 56 Available Online at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents> Accessed June 2014.
- EGAN, D. (2013) *Becoming Sexual* London: Polity
- EMERSON, R.M. , FRETZ, R.I. and SHAW, L.L. (1995) *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press
- FACTORY ACT, THE (1844) *British Parliamentary Papers* HC Deb 12 Feb 1844 Vol 72 cc518-9
- FEATHERSTONE, M. (1982) 'The Body in Consumer Society' *Theory, Culture and Society* 1 (2): 18-33
- FENDLER, L. (2001) 'Educating Flexible Souls: The construction of subjectivity through developmentality and interaction' in Hultqvist, K. and Dhalberg, G. (eds) *Governing the Child in the New Millennium* New York: RoutledgeFalmer
- FINE, G.A. and SANDSTROM, K.L. (1988) *Knowing Children. Participant Observation with Minors* London: Sage
- FORSTER ACT, THE (1870) *British Parliamentary Papers* HC Deb 25 July 1870 Vol 203 cc821-65
- FOTEL, T. And THOMPSON, T. U. (2004) 'The Surveillance of Children's Mobility' *Surveillance and Society* 1 (4): 535-554
- FOUCAULT, M. (1979) *Discipline and Punish, the birth of the prison* Trans. Sheriden, A. Harmondsworth: Penguin
- GABB, J. (2010) 'Home truths: ethical issues in family research' *Qualitative Research*, 10 (4): 461-478
- GALLACHER, L.A. and GALLAGHER, M. (2008) 'Methodological Immaturity in Childhood Research. Thinking through participatory methods' *Childhood* 15 (4): 499-516

- GEERTZ, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* New York: BasicBooks
- GEERTZ, C. (1983) *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* New York: Basic Books Inc.
- GILLBORN, D. (1990) *'Race', Ethnicity and Education: Teaching and Learning in Multi-ethnic Schools* London: Unwin Hyman
- GIROUX, H. (2001) *Stealing Innocence* London: Palgrave Macmillan
- GOFFMAN, I. (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* New York: Anchor
- GRIFFITHS, M. (2011): 'Favoured Free-time: Comparing Children's Activity Preferences in the UK and USA' *Children & Society* 25 (3): 190-203
- HAMMERSLEY, M. (2010) 'Can we re-use qualitative data via secondary analysis? Notes on some terminological and substantive issues' *Sociological Research Online* 15(1).
- HARRAWAY, D. (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* London: Free
- HEMMING, P. J and MADGE, N. (2012) 'Researching children, youth and religion: Identity, complexity and agency' *Childhood* 19 (38)
- HOCKEY, J. and JAMES, A. (2003) *Social Identities Across the Lifecourse* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- HUNLETH, J. (2011) 'Beyond on or with: Questioning power dynamics and knowledge production in 'child-oriented' research methodology' *Childhood* 18 (1): 81-93
- INAGAKI, K. and HATANO, G. (2006) 'Young Children's Conceptualisations of the Biological World' *Current Debates in Psychological Science* 15 (4): 177-181
- JACOBSEN, J. (1998) *Islam in Transition: religion and identity among British Pakistani youth* London: Routledge
- JAAKKOLA, R. and SLAUGHTER, V. (2002) 'Children's body knowledge: Understanding 'life' as a biological goal' *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 20 (3): 325-342
- JAMES, A. (1993) *Childhood Identities Self and Social Relationships in the Experience of the Child* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- JAMES, A. (2000) 'Embodied Being(s): Understanding the Self and the Body in Childhood' In *The Body, Childhood and Society* (eds.) Prout, A. Chap. 2: 19-37
- JAMES, A. (2012) 'Seeking the analytical imagination: Reflections on the process of interpreting qualitative data' *Qualitative Research* 13 (5): 562-577

- JAMES, A. (2013) *Socialising Children* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- JAMES, A. and HOCKEY, J. (2007) *Embodying Health Identities* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke
- JAMES, A. and JAMES, A.L. (2005) *Constructing Childhood Theory, Policy and Social Practice* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke
- JAMES, A. JENKS, C. and PROUT, A. (1998) *Theorizing Childhood*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- JAMES, A. and PROUT, A. (1997) (eds.) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: contemporary issues in the sociological studies of childhood* London: Routledge Falmer
- JENKS, C. (2005) *Childhood* (2nd ed.) London: Routledge
- JENKINS, R. (1992) *Pierre Bourdieu* London: Routledge
- JENKINS, R. (2008) *Social Identity* Abingdon: Routledge
- JORDAN, A. B. (2006) 'Make yourself at home: the social construction of research roles in family studies' *Qualitative Research*, 6 (2): 169-185
- KAY, E., TISDALL, M., DAVIS, J. M. and GALLAGHER, M. (2009) *Researching with Children and Young People. Research Design, Methods and Analysis* London: Sage
- KEIL, F.C. (1992) 'The origins of an autonomous biology' In M.R. Gunnar & M. Maratsos (Eds.), *Modularity and constraints in language and cognition: The Minnesota Symposia on Child Psychology* 25:103–137 Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- KENNEDY, N and HELLEN, M. (2010) 'Transgender Children, more than a theoretical challenge' *Graduate Journal of Social Science* 7 (2).
- KORO-LJUNGBERG, M. and GREKHAMER, T. (2005) 'Strategic turns labeled 'ethnography': from description to openly ideological production of cultures' *Qualitative Research* 5: 285
- KNOBLAUNCH, H. (2005) 'Focused Ethnography' *Qualitative Social Research* 6 (3)
- LEARNING AND SKILLS ACT (2000) Ch. 2100 Available Online at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/21/contents> Accessed April 2015
- LECOMPTE, M. and PREISSLE, J. (1993) *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research* (2nd edn). San Diego, CA: Academic Press

- LEE, N. (2001) *Children and Society, Growing up in an age of uncertainty* Buckingham: Open University Press
- LEWIS, P. (2007) *Young, British and Muslim* London: Continuum
- LEWIS, J. AND KNIJN, T. (2001) 'A Comparison of English and Dutch Sex Education in the Classroom' *Education and Health* 19 (4): 59-64
- LUPTON, R. and THOMPSON, S. (2015). *The Coalition's Record on Schools: Policy, Spending and Outcomes 2010-2015*. Working Paper 13. Manchester: University of Manchester, London School of Economics and the University of York. Available online at: [<http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spcc/WP13.pdf>]. Accessed 12/05/15
- LYON, M.L. and BARBALET, J.M. (1994) 'Society's Body: emotion and the "somatization" of social theory' in Csordas, T. J. (eds) *Embodiment and Experience The Existential Ground of Culture and Self* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge
- MASON, J. (2008) 'Tangible affinities and the real life fascination of kinship' *Sociology* Vol. 42 (1): 29-45
- MAYALL, B. (1996) *Children, Health and the Social Order* Buckingham: Open University Press
- MAYALL, B. (2002) *Towards a Sociology for Childhood: Thinking from children's lives* Buckingham: Open University Press.
- MAYALL, B. (2008) 'Conversations With Children: Working with Generational Issues' in Christensen, P. and James, A. (eds) *Research with Children Perspectives and Practices* 2nd ed. Chapter 5:109-122. London: Routledge
- MCEWING, G. (1996) 'Children's understanding of their internal body parts' *British Journal of Nursing* 5 (7): 423-9
- MCINTOSH, C. and STEPHENS, C. and LYONS, A. (2013) 'Young children's meaning making about the causes of illness within the family context' *Health* 17 (1): 3-19
- MCLAUGHLIN, J. and COLMAN-FOUNTAIN, E. (2014) 'The Unfinished Body: The Medical and Social Reshaping of Disabled Young Bodies' *Social Science and Medicine* 120: 76-84
- MEYER, A. (2007) 'The moral rhetoric of childhood' *Childhood*, 14 (1): 85-100
- MILLS. C.W. (1959) *The Sociological Imagination* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- MORA, R. (2012) "Do it for all Your Pubic Hairs!" Latino Boys, Masculinity, and Puberty' *Gender and Society* 26 (3): 433-460

- MOTHERS UNION, THE (2015) *Bye Buy Childhood, Impact Report 2015* Available Online at:
<http://www.byebuychildhood.org/impact-report-2015>
- MURCOTT, A. (1993) 'Purity and pollution: Body management and the social place of infancy' In Scott, S. and Morgan, D. *Body Matters: Essays on the Sociology of the Body* Chapter 8: 125-137 London: Falmer
- NESBITT, E. (2004) *Intercultural Education: Ethnographic and Religious Approaches* Brighton: Sussex Academic Press
- OLIVER, P. (2003) *The Student's Guide to Research Ethics*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- OPIE, I, A. and OPIE, P. (1977) *Three Centuries of Nursery Rhymes and Poetry for Children* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- PILCHER, J. (2007) 'Body Work: Childhood, Gender and School Health Education in England, 1870-1977' *Childhood* 14 (2): 215-233
- PILCHER, J. (2010) 'What Not to Wear? Girls, Clothing and 'Showing' the Body' *Children & Society* 24: 461-470
- POSTMAN, N. (1994) *The Disappearance of Childhood* New York: Random House
- POTTER, D. MASHBURN, A. and GRISSMER, D. (2013) 'The family, neuroscience, and academic skills: An interdisciplinary account of social class gaps in children's test scores' *Social Science Research* 42 (2): 446-462
- PRENDERGAST, S. (2000) 'To Become Dizzy in Our Turning: Girls, Body Maps and Gender as Childhood Ends' In Prout, A. *The Body, Childhood and Society* Chapter 6: 101-124 Basingstoke: Macmillan
- PRIDMORE, P. and BENDELOW, G. (1995) 'Images of health: exploring beliefs of children using 'draw and write' technique' *Health Education Journal* 54: 473-488
- PROUT, A. (2000) (eds.) *The Body, Childhood and Society* Houndmills: Palsgrave Macmillan
- PROUT, A. (2008) 'Wet children and little actresses: Going sick in primary school' *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 8 (2): 113-136
- PUNCH, S. (2002) 'Research with Children: The Same or Different from Research with Adults?' *Childhood*, 9 (3): 321-341.
- PYETT, P. RAYNER, J. VENN, A. BRUINSMA, F. WERTHER, G and LUMLEY, J. (2005) 'Using hormone treatment to reduce the adult height of tall girls: are women satisfied with the decision in later years?' *Social Science and Medicine* 61 (8): 1629-39

- QVORTRUP, J. BARDY, M. SGRITTA, G. and WINTERSBERGER, H. (1994) (eds.) *Childhood Matters: Social Theory, Practice and Politics* Aldershot: Avebury
- QVORTRUP, J. (2008) 'Macroanalysis of Childhood' in Christensen, P. and James, A. (eds) *Research with Children Perspectives and Practices* 2nd ed. Chapter 3: 66-86. London: Routledge
- RAIBEE, F. (2004) 'Focus-group interpretation and data analysis' *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society* 63: 655-660
- RAMJI, H. (2007) 'Dynamics of religion and gender amongst young British Muslims' *Sociology* 41 (6): 1171-1189
- RAMSAY, P. (1991) 'Young Children's Awareness and Understanding of Social Class Differences' *Journal of Genetic Psychology* 152 (1): 71-82
- RAPPORT, N. (1994) *The Prose and the Passion* Manchester: Manchester University Press
- RAYNER, J. PYETT, P and ASTBURY, J. (2010) 'The medicalisation of 'tall' girls: A discourse analysis of medical literature on the use of synthetic oestrogen to reduce female height' *Social Science and Medicine* 71(6):1076-83
- REAY, D. (1997) 'Feminist Theory, Habitus and Social Class: Disrupting Notions of Classlessness' *Women's Studies International Forum* 20 (2): 225-533
- RYAN, P.J. (2008) 'How New is the 'New' Social Study of Childhood? The Myth of the Paradigm Shift' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* xxxviii (4): 553-576
- SADLER, M. (1832) *Report of the Select Committee on the Bill for the Regulation of Factories* Parliamentary Papers 1831-32, volume XV
- SANDEOWSKI, M. (1995) 'Focus on qualitative methods. Qualitative analysis: what it is and how to begin' *Research in Nursing, Health* 18: 371-375
- SCHWARTZ, S. (2011) 'Going deep and giving back: strategies for exceeding ethical expectations when researching amongst vulnerable youth' *Qualitative Research* 11 (47)
- SCOTT, S. and MORGAN, D. (eds.) (1993) *Body Matters, Essays on the Sociology of the Body* London: Falmer
- SEERS, K. (2011) 'Qualitative data Analysis' *Evidence-based Nursing* 15 (2): 2
- SHILLING, C. (2003) *The Body and Social Theory* London: Sage

- SIMPSON, B. (2000) 'The Body as a Site of Contestation in School' In Prout, A. *The Body, Childhood and Society* Chapter 4: 60-78 Basingstoke: Macmillan
- SKEGGS, B. (2001) 'Feminist Ethnography', in Atkinson, P. Coffey, A. Delamont, S. Lofland, J. and Lofland, L. (eds.) *Handbook of Ethnography* London: Sage
- SKANSFORS, L. (2009) 'Ethics in Child Research: Children's Agency and Researchers' 'Ethical Radar' *Childhoods Today*: 3 (1): 1-12
- SMART, C. (2007) *Personal Life* Cambridge: Polity
- SMITH, D. J. (1995) *The Sleep of Reason, the James Bulger case* London: Faber and Faber
- SMITHERS, A. (2001) 'Educational Policy' In Seldon, A (Eds.) *The Blair Effect* Chap. 19: 405-428 London: Little, Brown
- SOLBERG, A. (1990) 'The Challenge in Childhood Research: From 'Being' to 'Doing'' in Brannen, J. and O'Brien, A. (1996) *Children in Families: Research and Policy* London: Falmer
- SPENCER, N. (2008) *Health Consequences of Poverty for Children* End Child Poverty Available online at http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/files/Health_consequences_of_Poverty_for_children.pdf Accessed 10/10/14
- SPRADLEY, J. P. (1970) *You Owe Yourself a Drunk: An Ethnography of Urban Nomads*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.
- STURGES, J. E. and HANRAHAN, K. J. (2004) 'Comparing Telephone and Face-to-Face Qualitative Interviewing: a Research Note' *Qualitative Research* 4 (1): 107-118
- TIMPSON, E. GRANT, H. and JAVID, S. (2013) '2010 - 2015 government policy: Sports participation Department of Media, Culture and Sport and Department of Education' Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-sports-participation/2010-to-2015-government-policy-sports-participation> Accessed 12/05/15
- TURNER, B. (1996) *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory* 2nd ed. London: Sage
- UPRICHARD, E. (2008) 'Children as "Being and Becomings": Children, Childhood and Temporality' *Children and Society* 22: 303-13
- URWIN, K. and SHARLAND, E. (1992) 'From Bodies to Minds in Childcare Literature: Advice to Parents in Inter-war Britain' in Cooter, R. (ed.) *In the Name of the Child: Health and Welfare, 1880-1940* London: Routledge

- VALENTINE, G. (1996) 'Children should be seen and not heard: the production and transgression of adults' public space' *Urban Geography* 17 (3)
- VALENTINE, K. (2011) 'Accounting for Agency' *Children and Society* 25 (5): 347-358
- WATSON, N. (2012) 'Theorising the Lives of Disabled Children: How Can Disability Theory Help?' *Children and Society* 26 (3): 192-202
- WILES, R., CHARLES, K., CROW, G, and HEATH, S. (2006) 'Researching the Researchers: Lessons in Research Ethics' *Qualitative Research* 6 (3): 283-299
- WHITE, A., BUSHKIN, N., CARPENA-MENDEZ, F. and NI LAOIR, C. (2010) 'Using Visual Methodologies to Explore Contemporary Irish Childhoods' *Qualitative Research* 10 (2): 143-185
- WHYTE, W. F. (1943) *Street Corner Society: the social structure of an Italian slum*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- WILKINSON, S. R. (1988) *The Child's World of Illness* Cambridge University Press
- WILLIS, E. (1977) *Learning to Labour* Farnborough: Saxon House
- WOODHEAD, M. (1997) 'Psychology and the Cultural Construction of Children's Needs' In James and Prout (eds) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood* Chap. 3: 61-82 London: Routledge Falmer
- ZEIHER, H. (2003) 'Shaping Daily Life in Urbanised Environments' in Christensen, P. and O'Brien, M. (eds.) *Children in the City: Home Neighbourhood and Community* London: Routledge Falmer
- ZELIZER, V. (1994) *Pricing the Priceless Child* Chichester: Princeton University Press

Bibliography

- AITKIN, S. C. 2001. *Geographies of Young People: The Morally Contested Spaces of Identity*. London: Routledge
- ALDERSON, P. (1993) *Children's Consent to Surgery* Buckingham: Open University Press
- ALBRECHT, G. L. SEELMAN, K. D. and BURY, M. (2001) *Handbook of Disability Studies*. London: Sage
- ARMSTRONG, D. (2001) 'The Invention of Childhood Mortality' *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 8 (3)
- ARMSTRONG, D. (2008) 'The Rise of Surveillance Medicine' *Sociology of Health and Illness* 17 (3) 393-404
- ATKINSON, P. COFFEY, A. DELAMONT, S. LOFLAND, J. and LOFLAND. L. (2001) (eds) *Handbook of Ethnography* London: Sage
- AZZARIO, L. and SOLOMON, M. (2006) 'A Feminist Poststructuralist View on Student Bodies in Physical Education: Sites of Compliance, Resistance, and Transformation', *Journal of teaching in physical education*, 25 (2): 200-225
- BARNETT, R. C. GAREIS, K. C., SABATTINI, L. and CARTER, N. M. (2010) 'Parental Concerns About After-School Time: Antecedents and Correlates Among Dual-Earner Parents' *Journal of Family Issues*, 31(5): 606-625
- BRADLEY, H. (1996) *Fractured Identities: Changing Patterns of Inequality* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- BARONOWSKI, T., BARANOWSKI, J., THOMPSON, D., BUDAY, R., JAGO, R., GRIFFIN, M. J., ISLAM, N., NGUYEN, N. and WATSON, K. B. (2011) 'Video Game Play, Child Diet, and Physical Activity Behavior Change A Randomized Clinical Trial' *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 40 (1): 33-38
- BIDDLE, S. J. H., PEARSON, N., ROSS, G. M. and BRAITHWAITE, R. (2010) 'Tracking of sedentary behaviours of young people: A systematic review' *Preventive Medicine*, 51(5): 345-351
- BOURDIEU, P. (1995) *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. London: Routledge and Keegan Paul
- BRANNEN, J. (2004) 'Childhood Across the Generations: Stories from women in four-generation English Families' *Childhood*, 11(4): 409-428

- BUCHMANN, C., CONDRON, D. J. and ROSCIGNO, V. J. (2010) 'Shadow Education, American Style: Test Preparation, the SAT and College Enrollment', *Social Forces*, 89 (2): 435-461
- CANNING, N. (2010a) 'The influence of the outdoor environment: den-making in three different contexts', *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 18 (4): 555-566
- CANNING, N. (2010b) 'The influence of the outdoor environment: den-making in three different contexts', *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 18(4): 555-566
- CARRYER, J. (2001) 'Embodied largeness: a significant women's health issue' *Nursing Inquiry* 8 (2) 90-97
- CARSTEN, J. (2007) *After Kinship* Cambridge: University Press
- CLAY, S., BOND, V. and NYBLADE, L. (2003) *We can tell them: AIDS doesn't come through being together. Children's experiences of HIV and AIDS-related stigma in Zambia 2002-2003* Lusaka: Zambart Project and Kara Counselling and Training Trust
- CONNOLLY, P. (2006) 'The Masculine Habitus as 'distributed cognition: A case study of 5 - 6 year old boys in an English, inner-city, multi-ethnic primary school', *Children and Society*, 20: 140-152
- COVER, R. (2003) 'The naked subject: Nudity, context and sexualisation in contemporary culture' *Body and Society* 9 (3): 53-72
- COWLEY, S. (2004) 'Structuring health needs assessments: the medicalisation of health visiting' *Sociology of Health and Illness* 26 (5) 503-526
- CSORDAS, T. J. (1994) *Embodiment and Experience* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- CURTIS, P. (2008) 'The experiences of young people with obesity in secondary school: some implications for the healthy school agenda' *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 16 (4): 410-418
- DARBYSHIRE, P., MACDOUGALL, C. and SCHILLER, W. (2005) 'Multiple methods in qualitative research with children, more insight or just more?' *Qualitative Research* 5: 417-436.
- DAVIS, C. (1983) 'General practitioners and the pull of prevention' *Sociology of Health and Illness* 6 (3): 267-289
- DAVIS, C. S. (2006) 'Sylvia's story - Narrative, storytelling, and power in a children's community mental health system of care', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(6): 1220-1243

- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (2013) *Physical education programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2 National curriculum in England* Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239040/PRIMARY_national_curriculum_-_Physical_education.pdf
- DOUGLAS, M. (1970) *Natural Symbols: explorations in cosmology*. London: Barry and Rockcliffe
- ELIAS, N. *The Civilising Process Volume 1, The History of Manners*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- ELVAADSON, A. (2003) 'Throwing like a girl: situating gender differences in physicality across game contexts', *Childhood*, 10 (4): 473-495
- FEATHERSTONE, M. (1987) 'Leisure, symbolic power and the life course' in J. Horne, D. Jary and A. Tomlinson (eds.) *Sport, Leisure and Social Relations* Abingdon: Routledge
- FOUCAULT, M. (1973) *The Birth of the Clinic: an archaeology of medical perception*. London: Tavistock.
- FOUCAULT, M. (1980) *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977* New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf
- FOURCADE, M. (2010) 'The problem of embodiment in the sociology of knowledge: afterword to the special issue on knowledge in practice' *Qualitative Sociology* 33 (4) 569-574
- FREDERICK, C. B. SNELLMAN, K. and PUTNAM, R. D. (2014) 'Increasing Socioeconomic Disparities in Adolescent Obesity' *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 111 (4): 1338-1342
- EVANS, B. (2010) *Anticipating Fatness: Childhood, affect and the pre-emptive war on obesity*. Transactions of the institute of British geographers 35 (1): 21-38
- GANS, H. J. (2010) 'Public Ethnography; Ethnography as Public Sociology', *Qualitative Sociology*, 33 (1): 97-104
- GHATE, D. (2000) 'Family Violence and Violence Against Children' *Children and Society*, 14 (5).
- GRAU, A. (2005) 'When the landscape become flesh: an investigation into body boundaries with special reference to Tiwi dance and western classical ballet'. *Body and Society* 11 (4): 141-163
- GREEN, S. E. (2001) 'Oh those therapists will become your best friends: maternal satisfaction with clinics providing physical, occupational and speech therapy services to children with disabilities'. *Sociology of Health and Illness* 23 (6): 798-828

- GUBRIUM, J.F. and HOLSTEIN, J.A. (1997) *The New Language of Qualitative Method* New York: Oxford University Press
- GUSTAFSSON, U. (2002) 'School meals policy: the problem with governing children' *Social Policy and Administration* 36 (6): 685-697
- HAINES, E. (2003) 'Embodied Spaces, Social Places and Bourdieu: Locating and Dislocating the Child in Family Relationships' *Body and Society* 9 (1): 11-33
- HEWITT, N. (2002) Insight into paediatric in-patient population in the Victorian hospital: information from the census returns of 1881. *Archives of Disease in Children - BMJ* 8 (1)
- HILLIARD, R. (1981) 'Categorising children in the clinic' *Sociology of Health and Illness* 3 (3): 317-336
- HOCHSCHILD, A. and MACHUNG, A. (1998) *The second shift: Working parents and the revolution at home*. New York: Viking
- HOLLIDAY, R. and HASSARD, J. (ed.) (2001) *Contested Bodies*. London: Routledge
- HOLT, L. (2007) 'Children's sociospatial (re)production of disability within primary school playgrounds', *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space*, 25(5): 783-802
- IKEDA, J. P. CRAWFORD, P.B. WOODWARD, L. G. (2006) 'BMI screening in schools: helpful or harmful?' *Health Education Research* 21 (6): 761-749
- JORDAN, T. (1995) 'Collective Bodies, Raving and the politics of Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari', *Body and Society*, 1 (1): 125-144
- KING, M. L. (2007) 'Concepts of childhood: What we know and where we might go', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 60 (2): 371-407
- KOFOED, J. (2008) 'Appropriate pupilness: social categories intersecting in school' *Childhood*, 15 (3): 415-430
- KURTZ, Z. a. T., J. (1991) 'How do we value our children today? As reflected by health, health care and policy' *Children and Society*, 5 (3): 207-224
- LAITENEN, J. POWER, C. and JARVELIN, M. (2001) 'Family social class, maternal body mass index, childhood body mass index, and age at menarche, as predictors of adult obesity' *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 74: 287-94

- LAMBERT, P.S. (2006) 'The British Household Panel Survey: Introduction to a Longitudinal Data Resource' Institute for Social and Economic Research Available Online at: <https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/research/publications/509913> (Accessed June 2015).
- LECOMPTE, M., MILLROY, W. and PREISSLE, J. (eds) (1992) *The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press
- LEE, N. (2008) 'Awake, asleep, adult, child: an A-humanist account of persons' *Body and Society* 14 (4): 57-74
- LEYSHON, M. and BULL, J. (2011) 'The Bricollage of the here: Young people's narratives of identity in the countryside' *Social and Cultural Geography*, 12 (2): 159-180
- LI, J. (2008) 'Ethical Challenges in Participant Observation: A reflection on Ethnographic Fieldwork' *The Qualitative Report*, 13 (1): 100-115
- LULL, J. (1980) 'The social uses of television' *Human Communication Research*, 6 (3): 197-209
- LULL, J. (1985) 'Ethnographic Studies of Broadcast Media Audiences', in Fletcher, J.D.a.J. (eds.) *Broadcasting Research Methods*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon
- MANNAY, D. (2010) 'Making The Familiar Strange: can visual research render the familiar setting more perceptible?', *Qualitative Research*, 10 (1): 91-111
- MAUTNER, M. (1997) 'Methodological aspects of collecting data from children: lessons from three research projects', *Children and Society*, 11 (1)
- MASON, J. (2002) *Qualitative Researching* 2nd ed London: Sage
- MCLAREN, L. (2007) 'Socioeconomic Status and Obesity' *Epidemiological Reviews* 201(29): 28-48
- MORGAN, M. GIBS, S. MAXWELL, K. And BRITTEN, N. (2002) 'Hearing children's voices: methodological issues in conducting focus groups with children aged 7-11 years' *Qualitative Research* 2 (1): 5-20
- MONAGHAN, L. HOLLANDS, R. and PRITCHARD, G. (2010) 'Obesity epidemic entrepreneurs. types, practices and interests' *Body and Society* 16 (2): 37-71
- MONASTA, L., BATTY, G. D., CATTANEO, A., LUTJE, V., RONFANI, L., VAN LENTHE, F. J. and BRUG, J. (2010) 'Early-life determinants of overweight and obesity: a review of systematic reviews', *Obesity Reviews*, 11 (10): 695-708
- MYERS, K. and RAYMOND, L. (2010) 'Elementary School Girls and Heteronormativity: The Girl Project' *Gender & Society*, 24 (2): 167-188

- NATIONAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INFORMATION CENTRE (2014) *National Child Measurement Programme - England, 2013-14* Available online at: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/ncmp>
- NELSON, K. (2010) 'Developmental Narratives of the Experiencing Child', *Child Development Perspectives*, 4 (1): 42-47
- NYAK, A. (2003) 'Through children's eyes: Childhood, place and the fear of crime', *Geoforum*, 34 (3): 305-315
- OAKLEY, A. (1981) 'Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms', in Roberts, H. (eds.) *Doing Feminist Research*. London: Keegan Paul
- O'DELL, L. (ed.) (2012) 'Contested Bodies of Childhood and Youth' *Children and Society* 26 (2): 163-164
- PARR, A. (2005) 'The deterritorializing language of child detainees. Self-harm or embodied graffiti?', *Childhood*, 12 (3): 281-299. POPAY, J. B. S. THOMAS, C. WILLIAMS, G. GATTREL, A. and BOSTOCK, A. (2003) 'Beyond 'beer, fags, egg and chips' Exploring lay understandings of social inequalities in health', 25 (1): 1-23.
- RICHARDSON, L. (2005) 'Sticks and stones: An exploration of the embodiment of social classism', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(4): 485-491
- ROETNERS, A., VAN DER LIPPE, T. and KLUWER, E. S. (2010) 'Work Characteristics and Parent-Child Relationship Quality: The Mediating Role of Temporal Involvement' *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 72 (5): 1317-1328
- SAHOTA, P. (2014) 'Childhood Obesity: Current challenges and future directions' Inaugural Lecture presented at Leeds Metropolitan University, Rosebowl, Leeds, 22nd January 2014
- SCORSOLINI-COMIN, F. and AMORIM, K. D. (2010) 'In My Gesture is Your Gesture: Inclusion of Disabled Children in School', *Psicologia-Reflexao E Critica*, 23 (2): 261-269
- SEALE, C. CAVERS, D. and DIXON-WOODS, M. (2006) 'Commodification of Body Parts: By Medicine or by Media?' *The Body and Society* 12 (1): 25-37
- SHEPER-HUGHES, N. and LOCK., M. (1987) 'The mindful body: a prolegomenon to future work in medical anthropology', *Medical anthropology quarterly*, 1 (1): 6-41
- SHORT, G. (1991) 'Perceptions of Inequality: Primary School Children's Discourse on Social Class' *Educational Studies* 17 (1): 89-106

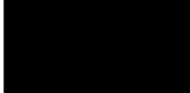
- SPAGNOLA, M. and FEISE, H. (2007) 'Family Routines and Rituals: a context for development on the lives of young children', *Infants and Children*, 20 (4): 284-299
- TAHHAN, D. A. (2008) Depth and space in sleep: Intimacy, touch and the body in Japanese co-sleeping rituals. *Body and Society* 14 (4): 37-56
- TANNER, J. M. (1971) 'Sequence, tempo and individual variation in the growth and development of boys and girls aged twelve to sixteen' *Daedalus* 1 (4): 907-930
- WARDMAN, N. HUCHESSON, R. GOTTSCHALL, K. DREW, C. and SALTMARSH, S. (2010) 'Starry eyes and subservient selves: well rounded girlhood in the prospectuses of all-girl elite private schools' *Australian Journal of Education* 53 (4): 249-261
- WARIN, M. TURNER, K. MOORE, V. MICHAEL, D. (2008) 'Bodies, mothers and identities: rethinking obesity and the BMI' *Sociology of Health and Illness* 30 (1): 97-111
- WELLS, N. M. EVANS, G. W. BEAVIS, A. and ONG, A. D. (2010) 'Early Childhood Poverty, Cumulative Risk Exposure, and Body Mass Index Trajectories Through Young Adulthood', *American Journal of Public Health*, 100 (12): 2507-2512
- WITZ, A. (2000) 'Whose body matters? Feminist Sociology and the corporeal turn in sociology and feminism', *Body and Society* 6 (2):1-24
- WOOLEY, H. (2007) 'Where do the children play? How policies can influence practice', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers-Municipal Engineer*, 160 (2): 89-95
- YOUNG, K. (2002) 'In Memory of the Flesh: the family body in somatic psychology' *Body and Society* 8 (3): 25-47

Appendix 1: Letter to Schools



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Mr. [REDACTED]
Head Teacher



9th September 2011

Graduate Research Centre
North Campus
64 Garden Street
Sheffield
S1 4BJ

Telephone: +44 (0) 7412667228
Email: a.palmer@sheffield.ac.uk
www.sheffield.ac.uk/snm

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]

I am a PhD student supervised by Professor Allison James and Dr. Penny Curtis. The University of Sheffield is funding me to study children's understandings and experiences of their bodies. I am writing to ask for your permission to work with around twenty students in Year Five from [REDACTED]. Participation in the research will involve creative bodymapping in groups of three while discussing 'how I look after my body' and working in pairs to create a time-line of a school day while discussing 'my body through the day'. Each activity will take around forty minutes per pair or group. I would also like to observe playtimes, mealtimes, registrations and assemblies for three weeks in order to further understand the importance of the body for children's identity, and how children might use notions of difference.

I am very flexible, and the sessions can take place at times which are convenient for students and staff over the period of a school year. Ideally I would like to begin research as soon as is conveniently possible. In return for allowing me to research with children at [REDACTED] I can offer my service as a general assistant or lunchtime helper. I am a trained ESCAL reading volunteer, and I would enjoy the opportunity to help with reading activities or any other projects. Furthermore, following completion of the research, a detailed and accessible report will be provided for staff and parents, along with a child-friendly version for students.

All aspects of the research will abide by the University of Sheffield's ethical guidelines, including the requirement for researchers to have an advanced CRB check. Informed consent will be sought from children and their parents via clear and simple information letters and consent forms which I can provide. Care will be taken to ensure that the school and participants are made anonymous in the write up of this research, which will take the form of a PhD thesis. If you, your staff, parents or students have any further questions, please use the details above to contact me, preferably by email.

Yours faithfully

Alice Palmer



Appendix 2: About Me Information Sheet
About Me..

My name is... _____

The fake name I choose for the research is.. _____

The most important thing you need to know about me is.... _____

I am _____ years old.

My birthday is on: DATE _____ MONTH _____ YEAR _____

I have _____ brothers, and _____ sisters.

I live with...

My religion (if you have one) is... _____

I agree to take part in this research

Appendix 3: My Body Story

My Body Story....

When I was younger, my body was...

Now, my body is...

When I go to secondary school, my body will be...

Appendix 4: Daily Timeline Template

My Body on a School day

Wake up Go to sleep

Appendix 5: Child Information Sheet

Me and My Body Research: Information Letter

Thank you for looking at this information letter. It will help you to know who I am, why I am in your school, and what will happen if you choose to help me.

The Researcher – Alice Palmer



I am student at the University of Sheffield.

I am 24 years old.

I live in Sheffield.

The Research

I have one sister.

I want to understand what it is like to be a child, like you, aged nine or ten. I want to know what it is like for you to have your body. To do this, I want to see the sorts of things you do every day in school, talk to you, and do some activities in pairs or threes.

Activity 1: Making Self Portraits

You will be asked to get into a group of three (you can choose your friends)

Then you will be asked to make a full-body picture of yourself.

I will ask you about **what** you have made and **why**?

Activity 2: Making Timelines

You will be asked to get into pairs (you can choose your friends).

You will be asked to make a time-line starting with 'waking up' and ending with 'going to sleep'.

While you are making your timeline I will ask you...

how you look after your body, and **how your body feels** through the day.

You can draw or write things on your timeline

Things You Need To Know



The things we talk about when we do the activities will be **recorded**.

(I will tell you each time I am recording)



I will **write down** the things that were said and **study** them.



You will be given a **fake name** so no one will know what you said.



You are always allowed to **ask questions**.



You are allowed to **stop** at any point for any reason.



If you want to take part, **you need to fill out the consent form, and ask a parent to fill out their consent form to give permission. Return both forms and KEEP THIS LETTER.**

Appendix 6: Child Consent Form

Title of Research Project: 'Me and My Body – Research'

Name of Researcher: *Alice Palmer*

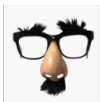
Please tick each box to show that you understand



I understand that I will be recorded, but I will be told when this is happening.



I agree to things being written down about me and for *Alice Palmer* to study them and use them in her future research.



I understand that my real name will not be used, and instead I will be given a fake name so that no one will know what I have said.



I have read and understand the information letter and I have been able to ask questions if I needed to.



I know that during the research, I am free to stop at any time, for any reason.



I agree to take part in the research.

Your Name

Date

Researcher's name

Date

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copy to be given to child

Appendix 7: Adult Information Sheet

	Graduate Research Centre North Campus 64 Garden Street Sheffield S1 4BJ
23rd November 2011	Telephone: +44 (0) 7412667228 Email: a.palmer@sheffield.ac.uk

‘Me and My Body’ research project

Dear parent/guardian

Your child is being invited to take part in a research project and has expressed an interest in doing so. Before you decide whether to consent to your child’s participation, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information in this letter carefully, and discuss it with your child. Take time to make your decision, and feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. If you are then happy for your child to take part in this research project, you will need to sign and return the consent form that is attached to this letter.

The Research

This research aims to explore what it is like to be a child in a child’s body. In order to do this, I would like to observe the activities of children in school at playtimes, meal times, registration and assembly. I would also like to ask your child to participate in some creative activities.

Activity 1: Self Portraits

In small groups, children will be asked to create a full-body self portrait, using free hand drawing, or if they prefer, a template with written descriptions. During this activity children will be encouraged to discuss aspects of their body which are important or significant to them, and to think about how their body was when they were younger, and will be when they go to secondary school.

Activity 2: Timelines

In friendship pairs, children will be asked to create a one-day time line, starting with ‘waking up’ and ending with ‘going to sleep’. Children will be asked to label their time line, describing things they normally do, and discuss ‘how I look after my body’ and ‘how my body feels through the day’.

Other Things You Need To Know

I have asked your child's school to put me in contact with both form groups in Year 5. I would like to talk to at least 20 children in your child's school. **I have chosen your child** to talk to because only young people like your child *can* provide information that helps us to understand young people's perspectives. The results of this study will be used in my PhD thesis. I will also provide a summary report for your child's school. This study has been funded by the University of Sheffield and has been subject to ethics review and approved by the University of Sheffield's ethics review panel.

If Your Child Does Take Part

It will be made clear to your child that they are free to stop at any time for any reason. They will not need to give a reason.

Pseudonyms will be given to ensure that neither your child, nor your child's school will be identifiable in any part of the thesis, or report that I write.

Discussion during the activities will be recorded using a Dictaphone. I will then type up what the children say to me and analyse it. Following completion of the project, recordings will be destroyed.

If you are happy for your child to take part in the research, please fill in the parental consent form attached to this letter and remind children to fill in the child consent form if they wish to take part. Please return both consent forms to your child's school and keep this information letter.

Yours faithfully

Alice Palmer

Appendix 8: Adult Consent Form

Me and My Body Research: Consent Form for Parent/Guardian

Name of Researcher: *Alice Palmer*

Please initial each box to show that you understand

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information letter explaining the above research project and I have discussed the research with my child and had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

2. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should my child not wish to answer any particular question or questions, they are free to decline.

3. I understand that information about my child and their school will be made anonymous.

4. I agree for the data collected from my child to be used in future research

5. I agree for my child to take part in the above research project.

Name of Child (participant)

Name of Parent/Guardian giving consent

Date

Signature

The final section below will be signed and dated by the researcher (Alice Palmer) in the presence of the participant

Researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix 9: Home Interview Participant Information Sheet for Children

	Graduate Research Centre North Campus 64 Garden Street Sheffield S1 4BJ
27 th February 2012	Telephone: +44 (0) 7412667228 Email: a.palmer@sheffield.ac.uk

Dear parent/guardian

You may remember giving consent for your child to participate in some research in their school about 'Me and My Body'. The research project has been very successful so far, and your child's contribution has been extremely valuable to me. Your family is now being invited to take part in further research as part of the same project. Before you decide whether you wish to help me with this research, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information in this letter carefully, and discuss it with your family. Take time to make your decision together, and feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. If you and your family are happy to take part, you will need to sign and return the attached consent form.

Why Further Research? The research with your child in school explored how children understand their bodies. Now, I would like to explore how children understand and experience 'change over time' in relation to their bodies. To do this, I would like to discuss with you, your child and any other family members, how your child's body has changed over time. To do this, it would be really helpful if you would talk to me about any photographs that are significant to your family, that have been taken since your child was a baby. Everyone in the family is welcome to join in, and the session aims to be very relaxed and informal.

How long will it take? The session will take as long as is convenient for you and your family, but ideally I would like to talk with your family for around one hour.

What will we need to do if we choose to help you? I will need to arrange a convenient time to visit your home, when you and your child will be free to participate. All members of your family or household are welcome to join in too, but they do not have to. I would like you to gather some family photographs that you feel are especially significant for your family, and which show how your child has changed over time, have them ready for the session in digital or hard copy. You do not have to give any photographs to me, I just want to discuss them with you and your family.

What will the information be used for? The results of this study will be used in my PhD thesis alongside the earlier data collected from children in school. I am happy to provide feedback and discuss the results of the project with you and your family at any point.

Who is organising and funding the research? This study has been funded by the University of Sheffield and has been subject to ethics review and approved by the University of Sheffield's ethics review panel.

If your family does decide to take part:



It will be made clear to everyone that they are free to stop at any time for any reason. They will not have to give a reason.

Pseudonyms will be given to ensure that nobody will be identifiable in any part of the thesis, or report that I write.

Discussion during the session will be recorded using a Dictaphone. I will then type up what is said and analyse it. Following the completion of the project, all recordings will be destroyed.

If you are interested in becoming involved in this research, then please sign and return the yellow consent form, and remind your child to fill out their yellow consent form and give both yellow forms to their teacher. Any other family members who wish to participate can sign up later. Please contact me if you require any more consent forms. It is fine if some members wish to participate and others do not, as long as everyone is comfortable with the session taking place in their home. I would greatly appreciate your help with this project, and look forward to the possibility of meeting you in the near future.

Yours faithfully

Alice Palmer

Appendix 10: Participant Information and Groupings

The names listed below are pseudonyms chosen by the children themselves. **M.** or **F.** refer to male or female, and children's ethnicity and religion are noted along with the formation of the groups which they chose to work in.

State School (21 Participants)

'About Me' Information Sheets, Self-portraits and Body Story Activity Sessions

1. Marcus (**M.** British Pakistani, Muslim), Rosy (**F.** Dual Heritage British Pakistani, Muslim), Lisa (**F.** British Slovakian, no religion).
2. Jess (**F.** White British, no religion), Daniel (**M.** British Pakistani, Muslim), Amy (White British, no religion).
3. Sasha (**F.** British Somali, Muslim), Jack (**M.** White British, no religion). Nicole (**F.** Black British, Christian).
4. Ana (**F.** British Pakistani, Muslim). Mia (**F.** British Pakistani, Muslim).
5. Suzie (**F.** British Pakistani, Muslim), Judy (**F.** British Pakistani, Muslim), Lionel (British Yemeni, Muslim).
6. Adam (**M.** British Pakistani, Muslim), Hamza (**M.** British Somali, Muslim).
7. Samayah (**F.** British Pakistani, Muslim), Rabiya (**F.** British Pakistani, Muslim), Uday (**M.** British Somali, Muslim).
8. Sophie (**F.** British Pakistani, Muslim), Naseem (**M.** British Yemeni, Muslim).

Timeline Activity Sessions

1. Jess, Amy
2. Mia, Ana
3. Rosy, Marcus
4. Sasha, Rimsha
5. Lionel, Judy
6. Lisa, Suzie
7. Sophie, Daniel
8. Nicole, Jack
9. Adam, Hamza, Fareed
10. Uday, Sabiyah

Private School (18 Participants)

About Me' Information Sheets, Self-portraits and Body Story Activity Sessions

2. Luke (**M.** White British, Christian), Patrick (**M.** White British, no religion), Darth (**M.** White British, Jedi Knight).
3. Eva (**F.** White British, no religion). Lotty (**F.** White British, no religion).
4. Nelly (**F.** White British, no religion), Nikita (**F.** White British, no religion).
5. Fizz (**F.** White British, no religion), Splash (**F.** White British Italian, Catholic).
6. Amelia (**F.** White British, no religion), Gertrude (**F.** White British, no religion).
7. Monkey (**M.** White British, no religion), Bob (**M.** White British, no religion), Barry (**M.** White British, no religion).
8. Harry (**M.** White British, no religion), Dodger (**M.** White British, no religion).
9. Poppy (**F.** White British, Christian), Pippi (**F.** White British, no religion).

Timeline Activity Sessions

1. Luke, Patrick, Darth
2. Eva, Lotty
3. Poppy, Pippi
4. Fizz, Splash
5. Nelly, Nikita
6. Amelia, Gertrude
7. Monkey, Bob, Barry
8. Harry, Dodger