CHILDREN'S CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER, POWER, AND ADULT OCCUPATION

Becky Jane Francis

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
the University of North London for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The degree is awarded by the University of North London, London, United Kingdom

JULY 1996

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Sue Lees and Merryn Hutchings for their invaluable guidance and support, and Elizabeth Wilson and Alistair Ross for their advice. Particular thanks go to Merryn Hutchings for her tireless and meticulous proof reading.

My colleagues Vanda Corrigan, Cass Mitchell-Riddle, Debbie Greer and Sarah Vaughan-Roberts have helped me greatly with humour and support. I also wish to express my deepest thanks and love to my partner Danny Hew, and to my family and friends, for their patience and continual support during my studies.

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, who has taken a rigorous interest in my work, and has been a source of immense stimulation and encouragement.

Abstract

This thesis argues that children draw on various gender discourses to construct gender in different ways. Using the topic of adult occupation as the context for the investigation, it examines the talk of 145 7 -11 year old children in role plays and interviews, to discover whether children constructed the genders as different or the same, oppositional or not oppositional, as a source of unfair discrimination or not a source of discrimination, and lastly whether or not they construct gender as a source of power. Further, the mechanisms used in children's constructions are explored.

This thesis investigates children's constructions of gender in relation to their own school lives and the issue of adult occupation. It argues that the discursive practice of gender dichotomy which positions all people as male or female leads the majority of children to construct the genders as different. Further, identification and visual demonstration of gender leads some children to construct the genders as oppositional: either in opposition, or opposite to each other. It is also found that many children construct gender as a source of unfair discrimination (and thus as a source of power) in their school lives and in adult occupation. These constructions are suggested to impact upon many children's power positions in role play interaction. There were, however, children who did not construct the genders as different or oppositional, and others who did not present gender as a scource of discrimination and power. The thesis speculates about the reasons for this.

The mechanisms of children's constructions are explored: poststructuralist discourse analysis is used in an endeavor to analyse and categorise the different gender discourses children drew on in their talk, and to investigate the bases of these. Evidence children draw upon in their constructions of gender is also examined to show the discursive resources available to children with which to challenge the construction of gender as different or oppositional. It is argued that, while equal opprtunities

discourses offer little challenge to the discursive practice of gender dichotomy, a discourse of genders as innately equal offers more potential for deconstruction.

CHILDREN'S CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER, POWER, AND ADULT OCCUPATION

Abstract

INTRODUCTION p. 1

1) LITERATURE REVIEW p. 4

2) METHODOLOGY p. 43

3) CHILDREN'S TALK IN INTERVIEWS ABOUT GENDER IN THEIR LIVES AT SCHOOL p. 72

a) Children's constructions of gender in their lives at school

b) Children's constructions of sexism in school

4) CHILDREN'S TALK IN INTERVIEWS ABOUT GENDER AND ADULT OCCUPATION p. 111

5) CHILDREN'S CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER IN ROLE PLAYS BASED ON ADULT OCCUPATION p. 147

6) CHILDREN'S CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER AND POWER IN THE ROLE PLAYS p. 166

7) DISCOURSES CHILDREN DREW ON IN THEIR CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER p. 187

8) EVIDENCE CHILDREN DREW ON IN THEIR CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER p. 209

9) CONCLUSIONS p. 225

BIBLIOGRAPHY p. 240

APPENDICES

INTRODUCTION

This study of children and gender arises from the lack of an adequate theoretical explanation of the persistently gendered nature of society. Here the research questions and their relevance are explained, and my approach to the research is discussed.

The aims of this study are:
* to investigate the ways in which children construct gender in talk about their lives in school, and in talk and role plays concerning adult occupations.
* to examine the ways in which children construct gender in relation to power in talk and role plays concerning adult occupations.
* to explore the discursive mechanisms through which these constructions are achieved.

My Approach To The Research

My research is feminist, in that it is motivated by a wish to contribute to understanding of the gendered nature of society, so that we are better able to alter this situation. An important tenet of feminist research is that no research is 'objective', but reflects or is influenced by the 'standpoint' (social position) of the researcher (Stanley and Wise, 1993; Morgan, 1972; Harding, 1991; Maynard, 1994). This idea was originally developed by symbolic interactionists in sociology (see for example Berger and Luckman, 1966; Schutz, 1972), who contested the concept of 'scientific', positivist approaches to the social sciences. They argued that there can be no 'objective' research, and that all studies are impacted upon by the researcher, whose presence in it is an integral part of the research. This concern has become central to feminist approaches, with such researchers openly declaring their political objectives. If our standpoint influences the type of study we conduct, it follows that our research should be 'reflexive' (that is, able to reflect on its own processes) (Weiner, 1994; Kehily, 1995; Gaskell, 1992; Middleton, 1992). Stanley and Wise (1993) argue that the consciousness and standpoint of the researcher influence the research, and thus a concern with the researcher's standpoint should be 'integral' to the research process: we should declare our standpoint in our writing, in order to provide the reader with some insight into the writer's perspective and motives. This involves autobiographical writing, which has often been used by feminists as a research technique as well

as for personal therapy (Blair, Holland and Sheldon, 1995; hooks, 1995). Yet this can be extremely problematic, as Weiner (1994) suggests in the preamble to her own autobiographical piece: any autobiography is itself highly selective (see Gergen, 1994; hooks, 1995), and only conveys items which the author, for whatever reason, feels it worthwhile to convey. Nevertheless, like Weiner I feel that a brief personal history is useful, "as a means of locating the author's ideas in a specific historical and cultural frame" (Weiner, 1994; p.12). Griffiths (1995a) argues that autobiography is useful as part of the research process so long as it is political and theoretical rather than simply confessional. Thus, as a feminist researcher, in Appendix One I present some personal details which may reflect my standpoint, and the motivations behind my research. I choose to make it brief in order to avoid charges of self-indulgence (see Parker and Burman, 1993). Moreover, Middleton (1992) reports the problems of combining such an autobiographical narrative style with an analytical one, thus resolving to keep his personal 'inward gaze' to a minimum in his book; and Maynard and Purvis (1994) point out that personal experience alone cannot substitute for politics and awareness of a wider picture. (See Appendix One).

The Gendered Nature of Society

Despite recent social changes, society remains gender differentiated, and I argue that women remain disadvantaged. Over the last twenty years in Britain, females have been gradually catching up with males in terms of educational achievement, to the extent that they are now matching males in exam success in the majority of subjects (Equal Opportunities Commission Report, 1996), right up to university entrance level: Lees (1993), reports that in 1992, for the first time, more women than men entered university, and a report in *The Times Educational Supplement*, 29/11/95, demonstrates that women are now as successful as men at degree level (though the genders remain fairly polarised in terms of degree subject, and more men achieve First Class Honours degrees). At the same time over the past decade the proportion of women in paid employment has increased. A growing number of women are working outside the home: over half have paid jobs, though only a quarter of these are full time (Central Statistical Office, 1995). Yet despite this increase in the number of women engaging in paid work, they still earn less than men, and still do the vast majority of housework in addition to their paid jobs (Central Statistical Office, 1995; Arber and Ginn, 1995; Connell, 1995; Hutton, 1995; Cockburn, 1987; Delphy and Leonard, 1992). Although

women's increasing success in education may be too recent a development to have made a significant impact on their career success, their gradually improved educational success has not *as yet* lead to an increase in the number of women gaining higher managerial, governmental, and professional posts (Hansard Society Commission, 1990; Lees, 1993; Heward, 1994; Connell, 1995, Central Statistical Office, 1995). Nor has the greater number of women in the British workplace had an impact on 'feminising' that environment: much gender discrimination still remains in policy and practice (Cockburn, 1987, 1991; Stafford, 1991), sexual harassment remains a frequent occurrence (Pattinson, 1991), childcare facilities remain few and far between, maternity leave is still largely portrayed as a privilege, and paternity leave remains practically non-existent (Connell, 1995). Society remains gender differentiated.

This study examines possible explanations for this situation. The primary school appeared an appropriate context for the investigation, as studies have catalogued the gendered nature of primary school interaction (Clarricoates, 1980; Sealey and Knight, 1990; Whyte, 1986; Adams and Walkerdine, 1986; Meehan and Janik, 1990), and the ways in which children themselves play an active part in constructing gender dichotomies (Thorne, 1993; Steedman; 1982; Lloyd and Duveen, 1992; Davies, 1989). Hence research in the primary school might provide further information concerning the development of constructions of gender. The research is framed around the issue of gender and adult occupation: the continuing gendered nature of adult work had been one of the issues motivating my research, and therefore this seemed an appropriate context within which to investigate children's constructions of gender. Primary school children's stereotyping of adult work has been widely catalogued (see Nemerowicz, 1979; Adams and Walkerdine, 1986; Rosenthal and Chapman, 1982; Tremaine, 1982), as has their gender-stereotypical choice of future occupation (Robb, 1981; Adams and Walkerdine, 1986; Spender, 1982). My study investigates the extent and ways in which children's constructions of adult occupation are gender stereotyped. By examining their constructions within the specific area of gender and adult occupation, in school, the study intends to provide insight concerning the minutiae of children's constructions. Further, children's constructions of gender in their own lives are compared with those of gender in adult occupation. While other studies of children's ideas about gender and adult occupation have tended to be based upon observation (e.g. Stanworth, 1981), or interviews which do not address issues of gender discrimination specifically (e.g. Nemerowicz), my

research questions the children directly about gender issues in the classroom and in adult work in order to examine children's responses, and the discourses drawn on in these.

This study uses poststructuralist analysis to examine children's discursive power positions regarding gender, and their use of gender discourse, in order to find out more about the ways in which they construct gender in relation to their own lives in school and to adult occupation.

The next chapter will explore theoretical frameworks within which such research can be carried out.

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores previous explanations concerning the gendered nature of society, and examines the potential contributions of poststructuralist, social constructionist, and discourse analytical approaches to my investigation of children's constructions of gender. It begins by discussing the dilemma posed by flaws in social learning theory for feminist researchers, and the subsequent need for alternative theories to explain the gendered nature of society. I suggest that poststructuralism offers an alternative theoretical perspective, and discuss the apparent benefits of poststructuralist theory for feminists. Discussing the work of poststructuralist feminists, particular attention is paid to the research of Bronwyn Davies, whose study *Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales* (1989) has been a major influence on my work: I discuss her findings and their implications. The notion and processes of discourse analysis are examined. There follows a commentary on the recent feminist debate concerning the more problematic, even reactionary elements of poststructuralist theory, and an exploration of apparent incompatibilities between feminism and poststructuralism. Examining the bases of these theoretical conflicts, I argue that 'pure' poststructuralism may

be an impossible, even undesirable, endeavour. Thus I suggest a combination of feminist theory with the parts of poststructuralist theory which appear useful to feminism: it is this 'postmodern modern' approach which I take to my research. Following this theoretical discussion, the chapter concludes with an outline of the key investigative themes that are developed throughout the thesis.

Theoretical Explanations of the Gendered Nature of Society

Some of the first theories addressing the gendered nature of society were those which explained it as due to biology: biological differences between girls and boys were said to predetermine their psychological development. Studies by socio-biologists such as Wilson (1978), Hutt (1978) and Bardwick (1971) imply that differences in behaviour between genders are 'natural', arguing that contrasts in gendered behaviour during infancy (supposedly before cultural factors can begin to take affect) demonstrate the biologically inherent nature of gender difference. Yet their studies have been widely criticised and their conclusions refuted (see Durkin, 1985; Archer and Lloyd, 1982). Examining the evidence presented by such studies, Archer and Lloyd (1982) criticise their findings as inconsistent and unreliable; and argue that even if these *were* consistent, there would be no reason to suppose gender differences are due to biology rather than socio-cultural influences. Moreover, they point out that differences in behaviour between genders later in life cannot automatically be traced to characteristics displayed in the early years, as there is little evidence of such straightforward continuity in psychological development. Kessler and McKenna (1978) cite various research which demonstrates that gender is socially constructed: some children whose gender is 'mis-assigned' at birth show signs of trauma at reassignment at only eighteen months of age, and Kessler and McKenna themselves point out that every characteristic usually attributed to one sex can in some instances be found in the other.

An alternative explanation for the acquisition of gendered characteristics is cognitive-developmental theory, which attempts to discover how children come to understand the social world, and in this case, acquire gender identity (see, for instance, Damon, 1977; Kohlberg, 1966). The development of gender identity is the focus of these studies, and the cognitive theory differs from previous accounts in its focus on the child as active in her or his development. Thus Kohlberg (1966) argues that the child gradually becomes aware of her or his

gender, and then begins to categorise the world in gendered terms. However, Gilligan (1982) has attacked cognitive psychologists, particularly Kohlberg, for their individualist, male-centred approach and categorisation; a criticism supported by Sampson (1989). In his discussion of gender theory, Durkin (1985) criticises cognitive accounts on the grounds that they do not adequately consider the relationship between children's development and the surrounding culture (see also Vygotsky, 1962); they ignore the *collective* and collaborative aspect of the taking on of gender roles; and further place too great an emphasis on 'cold cognitions' at the expense of a regard for affective issues. For these reasons cognitive approaches have not usually been taken up by feminists; yet their focus on the child as actively participating in development has challenged the image of the self as passively moulded by the forces of socialisation, as presented by social learning theories (see below), and has provided some useful contributions to gender research. For example, Damon (1977), Durkin (1985) and Lloyd and Duveen (1992) have observed that children actively take part in the perpetuation of gender roles, taking up gender-marked items to delineate their gender identity.

The account which has been supported most often by feminists, particularly in the 1970s and '80s, is that of social learning theory: this account offers a purely social explanation of the gendered nature of society. Spender (1982), Delamont (1980) and Sharpe (1976) maintain that the gendered nature of society is a purely social phenomenon, unrelated to biology, but imposed by patriarchy. Feminists drew on Gramsci's (1971) theory that the division of labour (men in paid work, women working in the home), is functional for capitalist society, as the male sells his labour in the capitalist workplace, and the female nurtures and maintains the workers and future workers. They also developed the Marxist theory of the 'hidden curriculum': Marxist sociologists Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) examined the ways in which school socialises children into roles beneficial for capitalism, and thus reproduces a willing capitalist workforce. Bowles and Gintis argued that the 'hidden curriculum' in school teaches pupils conformity and subservience, and smothers their creativity; thus preparing them for their future roles in the capitalist workplace. Studies by feminist researchers drew on these ideas to suggest that girls failed in educational settings because of a hidden curriculum of taught sex-roles and assumptions concerning the comparative inferiority of girls (see Spender, 1982: Stanworth, 1981; Delamont, 1980; Lobban, 1974; and Sharpe, 1976). These studies usually involved classroom observation, and effectively catalogued

numerous ways in which boys, teachers, and the curriculum itself, belittled females and female experience. Thus girls had their confidence insidiously undermined, their experience devalued, and their expectations lowered, causing them to fail academically, and preparing them for their future positions in society as subservient housewives and mothers. Unfair discrimination and sexism against girls has been seen to play a major role in this process: for example, Clarricoates (1980), and Stanworth (1981) have observed how the subtle prejudices of teachers lead to different evaluations of male and female children's work and behaviour. Concerning the sexism of pupils, Larkin (1994), Herbert (1989) and Lees (1993) use classroom observation and interview in secondary schools to show how girls suffer both verbal and physical abuse at the hands of boys, and sometimes male teachers. Herbert argues that such behaviour on the part of the boys is commonly ignored or trivialised by teachers, who claim that it is 'natural' behaviour; thus legitimising it further. Both Herbert and Lees argue that this sexist abuse functions as a control to regulate girls' behaviour.

Schooling, then, has been singled out as having particular significance by feminists since the nineteenth century, not only as a major perpetuator of traditional gender roles, but also as having the potential to educate children with more egalitarian values and thus changing society for the better (see Bryant, 1979; Deem, 1980). As I noted above, many feminists (e.g. Spender, 1982; Stanworth, 1981; Delamont, 1980; Lobban, 1974; Sharpe, 1976) drew upon social learning theories to explain women's lack of power in society as resulting from a process of socialisation beginning in the family and reinforced in schools (see Deem, 1980; Mitchell, 1971; Wex, 1979). However, flaws in this 'reproduction of roles' idea gradually became evident. In his influential study of working-class groups of boys at a secondary school, Willis (1977) showed that although on leaving school these boys did take up the roles which would have been predicted by Bowles and Gintis (1976), these were not the ones into which the school was attempting to socialise them. Willis demonstrated that the boys did not simply take up their roles in any passive or uniform way, but actively constructed their own positions, often resisting the guidance of the school. The concept of resistance, and the issue of change in social relationships over time, cannot be accounted for by socialisation (including sex-role) theories, because such theories see fixed roles being reproduced continually by the agents of socialisation (see Connell, 1987, 1995; Lees, 1993).

According to Davies (1989) and Baker and Davies (1989), the implicit assumption of gender role theory is that gender is fixed, and appropriate behaviour taught by adults to reproduce gender roles. However, the fact that women have attained far greater educational success over the last twenty years (see Walkerdine, 1988; Arnot, 1996), and that more than half of all British women now engage in paid work (Central Statistical Office, 1995; Hutton, 1995), illustrate two recent social changes which cannot be explained by socialisation theories of role reproduction. As I noted previously, despite their apparently continuing marginalisation in the classroom, on average girls are now as successful as boys in terms of exam achievement and may even be slightly exceeding their performance overall (although boys continue to do better at subjects such as Chemistry, see Arnot, 1996). Therefore girls are apparently performing better than they used to *despite* continuing discrimination and harassment on the part of male students and staff, which feminists previously postulated as explaining girls' comparative failure in the education system. However, school equal opportunities policies, founded on the assumption that female educational success would lead to a change in the male domination of the market place as women enter more powerful occupational positions, have proved over-optimistic (see Connell, 1987; Nilan, 1995): as I noted above, despite their educational achievement, there has been a lack of change in terms of women's equality with men in the work place (Connell, 1995, Central Statistical Office, 1995). Thus Connell (1987, 1995) concludes that socialisation and sex role theories founder because they cannot account for changes in gender relations.

Moreover, socialisation theories present the self as monolithic and passive, moulded into appropriate roles by the forces of socialisation. These accounts leave no room for resistance, contradiction, or any action by the self on the world (Connell, 1987; Davies, 1989; Davis, 1988; Sarbin and Kituse, 1994). Many feminist studies have recently addressed this issue, arguing, for example, that girls take up gender roles in multiple and contradictory ways, simultaneously accommodating and resisting them (Anyon, 1983; Lees, 1993, Riddell, 1989). Gaskell (1992) shows how teenage schoolgirls in her study recognised and resisted sexism, but also accommodated it by lowering their career expectations due to the realistic acknowledgement that the adult workplace favours men, and that therefore their future husbands' careers would take priority. Conducting observation in the classroom, Lees (1986, 1987, 1993), Thorne, (1993) Anyon (1983) and Riddell (1989), show how 'gender roles' are themselves multiple and

contradictory, and that these are simultaneously accommodated and resisted by schoolgirls. The self is not simply a passive recipient of socialisation, but actively constructs and impacts upon the world (Davies, 1989; Henshaw *et al*, 1992).

Thus a new and more coherent explanation of the gendered nature of society was required, and some feminists have turned to poststructuralist theory to provide of this.

The Benefits of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism

Many recent feminist studies have used the poststructuralist theory of discursive positioning as an analytical tool in their investigations. Foucault (1972, 1977, 1980) argues that the self is not fixed: instead it is positioned and positions in 'discourse' - socially and culturally produced patterns of language, which constitute power by constructing objects in particular ways. This theory appears to offer an explanation which can incorporate the notions of resistance and contradiction which proved so problematic for sex-role theory. The self is passively positioned in certain discourse, but is at the same time active in *positioning* in other discourse. According to Foucault (1980), wherever there is discourse there is resistance: for instance, if a self is positioned as powerless by one discourse, s/he may position her/himself as powerful via an alternative discourse. Moreover, discourses are not fixed, but change over time as the social institutions which produce them change. Poststructuralism can explain the gendered nature of society as caused by discourses which position all people as men or women, and present these categories as relational (see Davies, 1989). However, such discourses can be resisted through use of alternative ones, and gender discourses are only some of a multitude within which we are positioned and position.

There are three other important reasons why Foucauldian poststructuralist theory has been embraced by some feminists as appealing. Firstly, Foucault (1977, 1980) shares the feminist criticism of 'enlightenment' discourses and constructs, which take a 'scientific' approach to the world, implying a possible analytical objectivity, and a separating off of the reasoning mind (constructed as male), from the emotions and body (constructed as female). Foucault (1972, 1980) reveals enlightenment discourse to be a socially constructed power narrative, an argument made by many feminists (e.g. Harding, 1984,1991; Grimshaw, 1993;

Maynard and Purvis, 1994; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Griffiths, 1995a). Secondly, to some feminists this kind of poststructuralist discourse analysis appears to offer an explanation for some of the theoretical complexities that have challenged feminism: for example, the ways in which power is constituted between women (and between men), as well as between men and women. Black, working class, gay, and disabled feminists have drawn white, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual feminists' attention to the fact that oppressive power relationships are not only dependent on gender, but can occur due to a host of other factors, and can exist between women (e.g. hooks, 1982, 1989; Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989; Rich, 1981; Phoenix, 1994; Collins, 1991). Hence, the second attraction to feminists is the Foucauldian theory that power is not a possession, but is constituted through multiple, and constantly shifting discourses. Foucault (1980) describes power as,

"never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as commodity or a piece of wealth. Power is exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application". (1980, p.98)

Power is embedded in discourses due to their ability to produce subjects and objects in certain ways: we can, for instance, be rendered powerless by gender discourse in one instance, while positioning ourselves (or being positioned) as powerful via social class discourse in another (see, for example, Walkerdine, 1988, 1990; Jones, 1993; Ramazanoglu, 1993; Bailey, 1993, who endorse this poststructuralist explanation). Discourses struggle and compete with one another as people attempt to position themselves powerfully in interaction. From a Foucauldian perspective, power is not necessarily negative or oppressive (see Foucault, 1980; Middleton, 1992; Davis, 1988): the word is used in this chapter to describe positions which *em*power us. Thus a position of power could be a domineering masculine one, a child's discursive alignment with a teacher, a friend's positional support of another, or a teacher's position over pupils. A powerful position could be created by making friends laugh, or by drawing on discourse to position another person/group as subordinate.

The poststructuralist rejection of the concept of the fixed self leads to the third reason poststructuralism appears a useful, even liberating theory to some feminists: gender itself is deconstructed by poststructuralist theory. The repudiation of a fixed self means that gender is not fixed, but that the self is positioned in gender discourse. This not only answers some of the previously discussed questions concerning resistance to gender roles inexplicable by sex-role theory, but challenges gender essentialism. Radical and *difference* feminist notions that an 'essential feminine' exists, positioning 'womanhood' as an essential, homogeneous group (Cixous, 1976, 1990; Irigary, 1985a; Assiter, 1995), have appeared to other feminists to be self-subverting as they effectively explain, and therefore in a sense *legitimise,* the difference between women's and men's social power. Poststructuralist theory can free us from essentialist binary dichotomies of masculine/feminine (see Davies, 1989, Davies and Banks, 1992), and enable us to argue that there is no essential 'femaleness' (Soper, 1990, 1993; Harding, 1990; Game, 1991; Weiner, 1994; Nicholson and Seidman, 1995). Following from this, some feminists argue that the terms 'woman' and 'girl' may be misleading and redundant, implying a fixity and homogeneity which do not exist (e.g. Riley, 1988; Jones, 1993). Jones argues for a poststructuralist approach to be taken to gender and education, and claims that feminists have often failed to recognise both the complexities involved in 'being a girl', and the differences between girls. She acknowledges that the term 'girl' may have to be retained by feminists for practical purposes, but argues that we should use it more carefully.

The idea that we are positioned but also position ourselves and one another in discourse has been interpreted as positive and encouraging by some feminists. For instance, Davies (1989), Davies and Banks (1992), and Weiner (1994) argue that the analysis of gender discourse will provide us with a new understanding of the way in which power is constituted, and the ways in which we are positioned within that discourse. They and others maintain that this raises the possibility of our creating *new* gender discourses, and thus reconstituting ourselves through discourse (Weedon, 1987; Davies, 1989; Davies and Banks, 1992; Weiner, 1994, Ramazanoglu, 1993).

Another body of social psychology and sociological work which shares an interest in discourse analysis is 'social constructionism' (Burr 1995; Burman and Parker, 1993). The idea of people constructing their worlds through interaction originated

with Piagetian (1964, 1972) cognition theories, and was developed by symbolic interactionists (e.g. Goffman, 1959; Schutz, 1972) who argued that social actors give objects *meaning*, and that meaning is a product of social interaction (see Sarbin and Kituse, 1994). Recently many social constructionist thinkers have drawn on poststructuralism in their work (see Burr, 1995; Sarbin and Kituse, 1994), concerning themselves specifically with the social aspects of discourse (the ways in which the self is constructed in social interaction with others; Shotter, 1993). However, much confusion remains over the identity of social constructionists: for example, Davies (1989) disassociates her poststructuralist work from social constructionism, arguing that constructionists see the individual as a fixed end product. While this could be said of Piagetian theory, recent social constructionists (e.g. Shotter, 1993, Sarbin, 1986, Sampson, 1989) share Davies' (poststructuralist) view of the self continually constituted and reconstituted through discursive practices. For this reason Burr (1995) makes a distinction between Piagetian *constructivism*, and the recent school of thought influenced by poststructuralism, which she refers to as *constructionism.* A further confusion remains over which of these constructionist thinkers are poststructuralist, or simply draw on some poststructuralist ideas. For example, while Shotter (1993) argues that social constructionism *is* poststructuralist, social constructionists Potter and Wetherell (1988; Potter *et al*, 1990) insist they are not. Other writers may describe themselves differently (for instance, Parker, 1991a, 1992, describes himself as a poststructuralist), but are still referred to by Burr (1995) as social constructionists.

A focus on the socio-cultural historical context of interaction and discourse is a feature of this type of social constructionist work (see Shotter, 1993; Burman and Parker, 1993). In Shotter and Gergen's *Texts of Identity* (1989), the contributors take issue with psychology's traditional focus on the individual, rather than on the social processes of the production of identity. While this type of constructionism is based upon poststructuralist perspectives, as its name suggests, it is more concerned with *construction* than nihilistic deconstruction. As such, social constructionist perspectives appear more grounded in the social than does pure poststructuralism, and seem more geared toward research involving action than purely intellectual theorising. In this respect this type of social constructionism is perhaps more able to meet feminist theoretical needs than pure poststructural deconstruction, which has been accused by some feminists of being self-indulgent and nihilistic (see Soper, 1990, Hartsock, 1990).

Social constructionists see the self as constructed through interaction (Sampson, 1989; Shotter, 1989, 1993; Buckingham, 1993). Thus social constructionist researchers often use discourse analysis to examine how people construct identities socially. This approach appears both compatible with my own concerns, and with feminist theory generally (it avoids essentialism, for instance, and focuses on the social nature of identity). This approach has already been used in research in the primary school: Merttens (1993) has applied Billig (1987) and Shotter's (1993) concept of the rhetorical nature of human discourse to an analysis of primary school documents for parents, arguing that they use a common sense, objective tone to discuss issues which are neither common sensical nor objective. Focusing on social interactive environments and children's constructions within them, Buckingham (1993) has used a similar approach to examine primary school children's talk about television. He interviewed 7 - 12 year old school children in different sized groups, and groups which varied in terms of gender and ethnicity. These groups discussed television generally, advertising, and television scripts. Taking a discourse-analytical approach to his data, Buckingham found that the ways children talked about television differed according to interactive context, and that moreover, children used such talk to construct positions for themselves in interaction. He argued that television scripts will be interpreted and used in different ways by different viewers in different contexts, and that consequently we should not look for a single, consistent reading. Thus, drawing on Vygotsky (1962, 1978), Buckingham concluded that meaning is given in the social processes of viewing and in social discussion of that viewing.

Discourse Analysis

I now move to a more detailed examination of discourse analysis.

Foucault (1972, 1980, 1981) describes discourses as: " practices which form the objects of which they speak" (1972, p.49). They are described by Parker (1992) as "a system of statements which constructs an object" (Parker, 1992). Discourses are socially and culturally produced language systems which produce a version of events (see Foucault, 1972; Davies, 1989). A housewife, for example, could be positioned as fulfilling her natural role through traditionalist discourses of gender essentialism, or could be positioned as a victim of

oppression in feminist discourse. Discourses are perpetuated by social structure and practices (Foucault, 1977). Power is embedded in discourses because they produce subjects and objects in certain ways; thus they differ from ideas or explanations. Explanations and ideas belong to different discourses, which contain all these that present a particular reading, or 'narrative' of objects and events (Parker, 1992). By analysing discourses we can deconstruct or open up the text to different readings (see Burman and Parker, 1993). As the self is not coherent, but is positioned and positions in multiple, shifting discourses, instead of studying the 'thought' of a person (as though they have a coherent personality which can be studied), discourse analysts study spoken and written texts, in which discursive constructions can be identified. Hence such analysis can examine how accounts are constructed and used by the speaker or writer (see Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Edwards and Potter, 1992; Gill, 1993), and in this way feminist discourse analysts can investigate the use of gender discourse, and the ways in which such discourse can position women (and men).

There are different forms of discourse analysis. Some analysts are concerned with the analysis of discourses as *situated practices* produced in social interaction (see Potter *et al*, 1990). Burr (1995) describes this as 'discourse analysis', in that it analyses constructions of speech. Thus researchers such as Gill (1993), and Wetherell and Potter (1988), focus upon the ways in which discourses are socially produced in particular contexts. For example, Gill (1993) analyses the ways in which male disc jockeys seek to justify the lack of women disc jockeys, observing the ways in which the male disc jockeys disclaim gender discrimination, yet implicitly draw on discriminatory discourse in their explanations. Similarly, Wetherell and Potter (1988) examine white New Zealander's talk about race, observing that, while many articulated discriminatory arguments, they simultaneously disclaimed racism, constructing it as Other. Potter *et al* (1990), and Potter and Wetherell (1987), prefer the term 'interpretative repertoires', with its emphasis on the social, to the term 'discourse' which they consider objectifying.

Other writers, particularly poststructuralists (e.g. Parker, 1988, 1990a, 1990b, 1992; Foucault, 1972, 1977) are concerned with the analysis of the natures of discourses themselves: for instance, identifying and describing different discourses (Parker, 1990a; Macnaghten, 1993; Jordan, 1995), and examining the ways in which discourses come to be dominant and used by institutions at

particular moments in history (Foucault's 'genealogical' approach; 1972, 1977, 1981; Walkerdine, 1988; Walkerdine *et al*, 1989; Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989). Burr (1995) refers to these as 'analysts of discourse'. Parker (1990a; 1992) and Macnaghten (1993) are both concerned with the identification and analysis of different discourses and the ways in which they overlap and contradict one another: Macnaghten (1993) examines the discourses drawn on in the construction of nature in a public inquiry (concerning a planning application for a landfill site). He identifies a number of distinct discourses within the general category of 'nature' discourse: these were, 'nature as wilderness', 'nature as passive visual harmony', 'nature as the visual harmony of activities', and 'nature as ecological balance'. He found that the discourse of 'nature as wilderness' was dominant, and that the discourses, though distinct, overlapped. Some discourse analysts use a mixture of these 'discourse analytical' and 'analysis of discourse' approaches: Davies (1989) and Davies and Banks (1992) investigate both the nature of dominant gender discourse, and the ways in which young children draw on different discourses in discussion of 'feminist fairy tales'. Similarly Nilan (1995) observes interaction in a secondary school drama lesson, and identifies both gender and social class discourses as being salient: she examines the ways in which these discourses appear to be drawn upon by students in their interaction.

However, discourse analysis is not unproblematic. Because discourses are produced within a particular interactive environment, discourse analysts must limit their findings to that particular interactive context (Gill, 1993). This tension between the research and the context has also been observed by Figueroa and Lopez (1991) who question how far the researcher should go beyond a particular text they are analysing to arrive at an interpretation of the things going on in it. If responses are always constructed according to the discursive environment, it becomes impossible to apply them to different contexts (see Wetherell and Potter, 1988; Gill, 1993). Gill (1993) argues that respondents' explanations are designed for and produced by specific interactive environments, and that generalising conclusions are exactly what discourse analysis demonstrates to be futile: however, she and Parker and Burman (1993) have observed that it can feel frustrating not to be able to make broad generalisations in conclusion to one's findings, or to apply one's findings to wider contexts. This inability to apply discourse analytical findings to different contexts means that generalisations cannot be made concerning power inequalities; which is a second criticism of this

type of analysis. Figueroa and Lopez (1991) and Parker and Burman (1993) have observed the potential of discourse analysis to result in simple descriptions of interviewee responses, without a focus on theoretical issues of power: attention may be paid to language at the expense of an analysis of material power.

Other writers (e.g. Stenner, 1993; Moir, 1993, Burr, 1995) have levelled criticism at the dissection of speech and text involved in discourse analysis. Moir (1993) argues that the researcher claiming to have 'discovered' something in what people say is oppressive, exercises a power relationship, and elevates the analyst over the analysed. Moreover, Stenner (1993) claims that discourse analysis involves attempts to 'close' texts by presenting particular readings of them, rather than allowing textuality (different readings, see Derrida, 1966). This argument is supported by Marks (1993), who maintains that this attempt at textual control is worse when it is disguised with an illusion of methodological 'democratisation' and empowerment.

There has also been criticism of the description and identification of discourses involved in such analysis. Davis (1988) has accused Foucault of failing to adequately define the word 'discourse', or to explain the way in which it can be identified, and similar criticism could be levelled at much discourse-analytical research (Burr, 1995). Davis also notes that the actual process of identifying different discourses is extremely vague, with many analysts providing only brief explanations of these processes, if discussing them at all. While it has become common practice to refer to discourses in passing without explaining the processes of their identification (see, for example, the work of Walkerdine, 1989, 1990; Foucault, 1977, 1980, 1991; Davies, 1989), there have been attempts to do so. Responding to such objections to the lack of clarity regarding processes of discourse identification, the poststructuralist discourse analyst Parker (1990a) sets out his criteria for the definition of discourses in the following way:

1) " A discourse is a coherent system of meanings" (p. 192).
2) "A discourse is realised in texts" (p. 193).
3) "A discourse reflects on its own way of speaking" (p. 194).
4) "A discourse refers to other discourses" (p. 195).
5) "A discourse is about objects" (p. 196),
6) "A discourse contains subjects" (p. 197),
7) "A discourse is historically located" (p. 198).

Parker also observes three further aspects of discourse which he argues research should acknowledge: discourses i) support institutions, ii) reproduce power relations, and iii) have ideological effects. Responding to Parker's (1990a) criteria, Potter *et al* (1990) criticise his approach, arguing that he 'reifies' discourses as objects. According to Potter *et al*, Parker's concept of discourse is based upon Foucauldian notions of discourses as coherent systems, a concept which misses the ways in which they are drawn on in social practices within specific interactive environments. Thus Potter *et al* argue for the term 'interpretative repertoires' to replace that of 'discourse'. They criticise Parker (1990a) further for alluding to single discourses (e.g. that of 'science'), when in fact they are made up of two or more different discourses. In a subsequent paper, Parker (1990b) acknowledges the concerns of Potter *et al* concerning the 'reification' of discourse, but disputes their argument, maintaining that it is important to identify different discourses in order to observe the differences between them. Abrams and Hogg (1990) maintain that Parker's criteria of discourse is 'non-distinctive' (p.219); yet while it is true that Parker's criteria offer no help regarding the separating out of discourses from one another, they are adequate in other senses, and may be useful for allowing proper description of the analysis of discourses.

Poststructuralist discourse analysis is suggested by Burr (1995) to offer political researchers no way of evaluating the relative importance of different discourses. Foucault (1980) explains that some discourses come to be dominant when they come to be politically or economically useful at certain times, and thus come to be 'colonised' and maintained by institutions. This idea appears similar to Marxist theories of 'hegemony' (see Gramsci, 1971): the dispersal of socio-cultural ideologies (or, as Foucault would say, discourses) of the dominant social structures through society. As Burr notes, some political researchers have begun to use terms such as 'prevailing discourse' in order to construct political interpretations in the face of poststructuralist nihilism (Squires, 1993), yet no categories have been offered to explain how these evaluations have been made. Moreover, Burman (1992) notes that while discourse analysis is useful for 'opening up' or deconstructing responses, it is theoretically unable to privilege one reading over another. Thus motivated political research, which offers a particular reading, cannot claim to be 'the correct' reading, and we return to liberal pluralism. This is an important consideration for feminists and other

political researchers, and I return to this issue of 'correct readings' or 'truth claims' later in this chapter.

However, despite these criticisms, Burman and Parker (1993) observe that discourse analysis can be used as an effective tool by 'critical' or feminist researchers who seeks to comment on the social processes which constitute structures of oppression. Several feminists have used poststructuralist discourse analysis in their research to provide new ways of understanding gender relations: For example, taking a Foucauldian, genealogical approach (see Foucault, 1981), Nuquist (1987) deconstructs Milton's *Paradise Lost* to show how masculine critical discourses have attempted to place their historically specific meaning and interpretation on the text. Turning to feminist educational research, Walkerdine has used poststructuralist discourse analysis extensively in her work, particularly developing the idea that the gendered self is not unitary, but is "produced as a nexus of subjectivities" (1990, p.3), and exploring the ways that different discourses can position girls and women as powerful or powerless.

Developing these ideas, and drawing on Foucault's (1972, 1981) approach in locating and investigating discourses in history, Walkerdine (1988) has subsequently shown how girls are seen to 'fail' at maths because of their positioning in various, historically specific, discourses (see also Walkerdine *et al*, 1989). She argues that educational, child-centred discourses (born of the popularisation of Piagetian approaches to education of the 1960s) delineate a 'right way' of learning maths, based on ideas of play and experimentation. These replaced previously dominant discourses of rote learning which stressed diligence and practice rather than play. Thus boys' experimentation with maths is positioned through child-centred discourses as 'the correct way' to learn maths, whereas girls' more diligent approach is associated with conformity and rote learning, and is positioned as repressive and erroneous. Walkerdine also examines how liberal-democratic and child-centred discourses position mothers and teachers as facilitators to the development of 'the child', and shows how gendered positions fluctuate depending on the discursive environment (Walkerdine, 1985, 1990; Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989). However, while she refers to various discourses, she does not define them or set out the whole range of discourses within which they exist.

Davies' Work

In a similar way to Walkerdine, Davies (1989) and Davies and Banks (1992) used a poststructuralist analysis for their research in the pre-school. Davies' research was motivated by a concern to discover why, despite anti-sexist parenting, children often still appear to take up gender in stereotypical ways. She had also noticed that when she read what she had interpreted as an anti-sexist fairy tale to a young female listener, the child did not interpret or 'hear' the story in the same way that Davies did. Therefore she decided to investigate the processes through which pre-school children are constituted as either male or female. She read feminist stories to individual 4 - 5 year old children and discussed the stories with them, and conducted participant classroom and playground observation with children in the pre-school. Applying poststructuralist analysis to the data gathered from this, Davies concludes from her findings that gender discourse presents the social world as split into a clear, relational dichotomy of male/female duality.

Children construct the taking up of these relational gendered positions as vital for social competence and identity. The depiction of gender identity is a public achievement: therefore, Davies argues, children take up aspects of gender-stereotypical behaviour in order to publicly delineate their gender identification. A child who does not conform to gender norms of behaviour may be marginalised and viewed as 'not a real person', and because one gender is only recognised in relation to the other, such a child also challenges the gender identities of other children by throwing the gender dichotomy into doubt. Thus in order to protect their identities children participate in 'gender category maintenance work': this involves the taking up of a gender position with outward shows of stereotypical masculinity or femininity, and coercing fellow children to do the same in an attempt to create a firmer gender identity. Thus gender is *collectively* constructed and maintained. Psychologists such as Damon (1977), Durkin (1985), and Lloyd and Duveen (1992) argue that the marking of gender to maintain gender identity is most rigorous between the ages of five and seven, and Davies similarly found that gender category maintenance is strongest during this period. Young children do not yet comprehend the permanent nature of biologically assigned sex (Grabrucker, 1988), and so visual display of a relational gender dichotomy is particularly important to children at this age as signification of their gender identity. By the age of seven, however, the fixed nature of sex has normally been understood, and at this point children begin to refine and elaborate their understanding of gender issues (Durkin, 1985). Researchers of child development

claim that taking up gender marked items to delineate gender identity decreases at this age, and continues to do so until adolescence (Damon, 1977, Lloyd and Duveen, 1992). This suggests that children's constructions of gender change over time. However, the evidence for such changes is limited, and not conclusive. An attempt to assess changes over time was that of Davies and Banks (1992): they re-interviewed members of the group of children, now aged eight, who had participated in Davies' study, in order to see whether their interpretations of the 'feminist tales' have shifted since their previous interviews, and found that there has been little change.

According to Davies, children and adults have access to different discourses: though we all draw on the dominant discourse of a dualistic gender dichotomy, gender maintenance and discourses pertaining to child behaviour - e.g. 'naughtiness', 'messiness', etc. - are more salient to children, whereas other discourses may be more salient to adults. This, she claimed, was the reason why feminist stories were not 'heard' by children in the same way as adults. Davies found that the ways in which children took up gender were multiple, complex and contradictory, and that the gender dichotomy was resisted by some children. This finding supports her poststructuralist argument that if children can refuse certain discursive practices, it may be possible to resist the dominant discourse of gender duality by creating new forms of discourse, allowing new gender positionings. Davies notes that children may be constrained from doing so by the existing discursive practices, but concludes that the creation of such new discourses should be our task; as this is the only means by which the gender dualism can be effectively deconstructed. She argues that, while male power was by no means the only sort of power wielded in child interaction, "The essence of the male-female dualism...is that power resides in the male" (1989, p.138). Therefore she concludes that this power imbalance will continue in any discourse which does not break down the male-female dualism; deconstruction of the dualism may be the only way to change gender relations. In this way she suggests that liberal feminist equal opportunities schemes and counter-stereotyping educational materials are not enough to disturb the dominant gender dichotomy (and resulting power imbalance). Her conclusions concerning the resistance of some children to the discursive practice of gender dichotomy also support her original, anti-essentialist, argument that there is no 'essential' masculinity/femininity; a position supported by Connell (1995). Davies examines this issue in depth, pointing out that although words may be bipolar, people are

not. After drawing on Kessler and McKenna's (1978) research on sex 'mis-assignment' to demonstrate that gender is socially constructed, she concludes,

"The idea of man and woman as bipolar opposites has no more basis in physiology than the conceptual division of the world into stupid and intelligent people, or short and tall people, or beautiful and ugly people" (1989, p.8-9).

Thus Davies' findings go some way towards explaining the persistently gendered nature of society: she argues that children do not take up gender positions because of some inherent urge, but because of dominant discursive practices which position us all as either male or female, as though the two are relational categories.

Studies Investigating Constructions of Gender

I turn now to a discussion of social constructionist studies relating particularly to gender, as these are most pertinent to my study.

In her observational study of primary school girls, Belotti (1975) observes that girls worked diligently, neatly and conscientiously, in an attempt to impress and win the approval of the teacher. Belotti argues that girls aimed to be viewed as mature, well-behaved and sensible. The boys in Belotti's study apparently did not share these concerns, and were naughty, immature and messy. This situation resulted in boys gaining most of the teacher's attention, and girls often clearing up after the boys in their attempts to gain the teacher's appreciation. Walkerdine (1990) analyses this phenomenon more fully, and argues that child-centred discourses in education have created an image of the school as a 'facilitating environment' catering for the needs of 'the child' (usually assumed to be a male). The child is the individual, whose needs must be met by the teacher (usually female): the teacher simply becomes part of the child's facilitating environment. Thus a dichotomy forms:

teacher - child
passive - active
feminine - masculine

According to Walkerdine there is no position for girls to take up as active child: they can take up the position of 'feminine object of masculine gaze', or of a quasi-teacher. The latter position involves identification with the teacher in the way that Belotti catalogues. Girls become 'mature' and self-consciously hard-working, attempting to behave like the teacher or as the teacher seems to expect, in an attempt to win her approval. Girls who do *not* conform to this behaviour are often penalised more heavily by teachers than are boys: boys' naughtiness is perceived as 'natural', whereas naughty girls are 'little madams' (Clarricoates, 1980; Spender, 1982). Ironically however, studies have shown that girls rarely win the teacher's favour through their selfless behaviour, and that in fact some teachers actively disdain such behaviour (Stanworth, 1981; Spender, 1982; Sharpe, 1976; Clarricoates, 1980). Walkerdine (1990) suggests that female primary school teachers actually despise the qualities of obedience, diligence and neatness which they urge as teachers, as well as the girls which practice them, because they see their own girlhood reflected in these conforming, sensible qualities. Belotti and Walkerdine's studies suggest that children present themselves differently according to gender.

Discussing her study of gender and maths, Walkerdine (1990) shows how female performance at maths is presented as *different* to that of the boys, and goes on to argue that this difference is constituted as "deficiency" (p.62). This demonstrates how the construction of gender difference can result in gender discrimination. Such discrimination is based on sexism, and Walkerdine (1981) has shown that pupils are able to draw on 'sexist discourses' (1990, p.4). She reports an instance where young boys draw on sexist discourse to position themselves powerfully in relation to their female teacher: the boys position the teacher as powerless by referring to her in sexist terms, constructing their power as males as more salient than her power as a teacher. The incident begins when a boy challenges a female classmate with an abusive reference to female genitalia: "You're a stupid cunt, Annie" (p.4). The teacher rebukes the boy, who then turns his sexist abuse in her direction. Thus Walkerdine shows that resistance is not always revolutionary: the boys' resistance to their teacher's power can be seen as reactionary. It is the confrontation between boys and teacher which is focused on by Walkerdine, rather than that between the boy and girl. Reay (1990b) supports Walkerdine's findings, describing a similar incident where a primary school boy used sexism as a strategy of power against her (the teacher). However, less attention has been paid to the issue of sexism amongst

children in the primary school. In their study of racism in the lives of primary school children, Troyna and Hatcher (1992) also observe "aggressive verbal and physical behaviour by some, though not all, of the boys, both among themselves and directed at the girls" (p.54), and report that many of the girls in their study talked in their interviews about harassment and name-calling by boys. Troyna and Hatcher say they did not observe boys using 'sexist terms', but do not define what these might be. While this 'aggressive verbal and physical behaviour' on the part of the boys is explained in terms of the construction and maintenance of gender identities, an analysis is not developed due to the study's specific focus on children's talk about racism. Short (1993) interviewed children concerning gender stereotypical roles, and finds that many children rejected traditional stereotypes but still participated in gender-discriminatory behaviour in the classroom. However, the nature and extent of such gender discrimination are not fully discussed.

Thorne (1993) observes children's interaction in the primary school classroom and playground. Rather than looking at differences between girls and boys, she focuses on the ways in which children actively construct gender in interaction. She observes that the interactive environment affects children's constructions of gender: the large number of children as potential playmates at school, and regimented segregation according to age and sometimes gender, (e.g. separate toilets or lines), provides children with the resources to segregate according to gender. Thorne observes that where gender boundaries are evoked they are often accompanied by stylised, ritualised forms of action, and like Davies she too observed the way children use this ritualised behaviour to denote gender identity. This ritual action sometimes involved the construction of the genders as rival groups, and thus *in opposition* in school. Thus the constructed difference of the genders leads children to construct the genders as in opposition to one another. However, she notes children can, and frequently do, cross and resist gender boundaries, and concludes (like Davies, 1989) that gender is fluid, and is less or more important or relevant depending on the social situation.

Jordan (1995) has drawn on Davies' (1989) arguments concerning the discursive gender dichotomy to examine the gendered constructions of primary school boys. She argues that some boys construct themselves as Other to females, and shows how they use 'macho' hero and warrior fantasies to position themselves as separate from girls and 'wimp'-ish boys through naughty and violent behaviour.

Like Davies, she argues that equal opportunities policies cannot adequately challenge the fundamental gender dichotomy which presents gender as relational, and perpetuates a 'cycle of masculinity'.

These studies show that the gendered self is not fixed, but is constructed in social interaction, and that children position themselves and are positioned through discourse in interaction. They variously find children constructing the genders as different and/or in opposition, and constructing gender as a source of discrimination. While they all suggest that children construct the genders as *different*, they do not all use Davies' (1989) term 'relational' to describe these constructions (Jordan, 1995, is an exception). The word 'relational' describes a specific relation in constructed behaviour, whereas 'different' is more ambiguous, and can be used to describe all differences in gendered behaviour (for instance, children might construct it as acceptable for girls to play with all kinds of male and female dolls, but as unacceptable for boys to play with any dolls apart from Action Men: this constructs genders as different, but not relational). The researchers' effective use of a constructionist approach to the study of gender indicated that such theory would provide a useful theoretical aid to my research, and would complement my use of Davies' work, contributing a greater emphasis on social practices and the social construction of the self through interaction. However, there are a number of reasons why the combination of poststructuralist and feminist theory is problematic: I discuss these in the following section.

Is Poststructuralist-Feminist' an Oxymoron? Difficulties With the Combination of Feminism and Poststructuralism

Despite the apparent benefits for feminism of poststructuralist discourse analysis, and theories of power and the self, there appear to be two fundamental conflicts between feminist and poststructuralist theory, which make them incompatible. The first is the clash between modernist (feminist) and poststructuralist positions; and the second is the poststructuralist aim of deconstruction compared to the feminist need for a system to explain the socio-economic reality of gender difference. My research is concerned to investigate the multiple selves and power positions formed through gender discourse in interaction (based on a poststructuralist perspective). It also aims to analyse the impact of gender discourses on children's constructions of gender, in order to provide a better understanding of these discursive processes, so that we have a better chance of

changing them (based on feminist concerns). The latter, emancipatory, concerns are dismissed by poststructuralists as a modernist truth narrative which should itself be deconstructed rather than developed. Feminism is an inherently modernist theory (see Balbus, 1987) in that it supposes a founding subject ('womanhood'), is based on the 'truth narrative' that patriarchy oppresses women, and the moral assumption that such oppression is wrong, and that we should work to end this oppression. Hence feminism is an enlightenment project, born of the humanist, enlightenment idea that the world can be made a better place through human project (Soper, 1990). To poststructuralists, 'truth discourses' or 'grand narratives' exercise a power relationship, as they claim truths or moral correctness (see Shotter, 1993) and involve totalitarian generalisations. The work of Barthes (1973; 1990) and Derrida (1966) aims to reveal the redundancy of 'positive truth claims', by deconstructing narratives to allow textual 'play'. Game (1991) refers to Foucault's assertion that we should reject all narratives/movements which claim to be global or radical (a position she supports). Thus, poststructuralism deconstructs truth discourses, even emancipatory ones such as feminism (Soper, 1990; Di Stefano, 1990). The founding subject 'woman' would also be deconstructed according to poststructuralist theory, as there is no fixed self: the self is continually positioned and repositioned in endlessly shifting discursive practices. While some feminists (whom I discussed earlier) have found this theory useful to explain differences between women, Soper (1990), Bordo (1990), Hartsock, (1990), and Balbus (1987) have observed that 'womanhood' is indispensable to feminism: it is the very basis of feminist thought, and without it there would be no feminism.

This concern over the deconstruction or retainment of the category 'woman' ties in with another feminist criticism of poststructuralism; the suggestion that the theory is divorced from social reality. For example, Soper (1990) notes Derrida's (1976) argument that we should abandon the category 'woman' in order to break down the gender dichotomy; yet Soper observes that not only is Derrida's argument self-subverting in that he must allude to the category in order to urge us to abandon it, but also that Derrida shows a lack of understanding concerning the social reality of the influences of gender discourse on social practice and interaction: a woman may still fear a man when walking alone at night, whether or not she agrees theoretically that we should reject the categories 'male' and 'female'. Similarly, Lloyd and Duveen (1992) argue that poststructuralist analysis allows inadequate recognition that, for instance, gender positions constrain

certain types of interaction. 'Power' is used by Foucault in a very general sense (Soper 1990b), and Foucauldian theory has still not provided an adequate explanation of the nature and source of power, and the way in which it is exercised against women (see Soper, 1993a). Lloyd and Duveen (1992), and Soper (1990, 1993b) observe that Foucauldian theory lacks an explanation of the ways in which power can be exercised by one group over another, and how discourse can limit the powerful positions taken up by certain groups (e.g. women). Moreover, Davis (1988) points out that in Foucauldian theory power is portrayed as something 'out there', and that where power may affect people's lives in very real ways it is not investigated at that level.

Feminist research is motivated by emancipatory aims (see Stanley and Wise, 1993; Kelly, Burton and Regan, 1994; Griffiths, 1995a). Yet, because of poststucturalism's rejection of structured narratives and truth discourses (including emancipatory ones), and its dispersal of identity, poststructuralism is, according to many feminists, unable to engage in theorising, or work for, social change (Maynard and Purvis, 1994; Soper, 1993a). As Squires (1993) puts it, poststructuralism deconstructs all 'principled positions' (ethical evaluations), thus causing political and ethical paralysis. Said (1984) notes that the poststructuralist obsession with the text is conservative, as it has distracted them from broader social issues, and this assertion is supported by Spretnak (1993), who observes that poststructuralism cannot engage with any emancipatory movements because 'groundlessness' is the only constant it recognises. Moreover, without grand narratives it becomes impossible to generalise about power relations: Ramazanoglu (1993) notes that such narratives are essential for explaining power differences, and Maynard and Purvis (1994) agree, concluding that poststructuralist theory renders social research pointless.

The feminist need to describe society in order to analyse and change it is deconstructed by poststructuralism. Soper (1990) and Shotter (1993) have argued that this poststructuralist focus on deconstruction rather than construction eventuates in political nihilism and fatalism. This view is supported by Maynard (1994) and Bennett (1987), who question the relevance of a theory which deconstructs other theories, but appears to provide nothing to replace them with. This poststructuralist tendency to deconstruct emancipatory aims, leaving nothing in their place, has been conceded by Foucault: Ramazanoglu (1993) reports Foucault's acknowledgement of the gap between his own liberal

impulses and the conservative implications of his theory which removes the grounds for political action. Other writers argue that, more than simply failing to help feminism, poststructuralism is an androcentric, even reactionary theory. Cole and Hill (1995) argue that postmodernism reveals its reactionary tendencies in its rejection of emancipatory meta-narratives: they maintain it disempowers the oppressed, and upholds the Radical Right. While supporting some aspects of poststructuralism, Middleton (1992) suggests that poststructuralists avoid gender issues in fear that they will be held accountable for their gender (assumed male), and so fail to recognise the dilemmas of modern masculinities as being their problem. Soper (1993a) attacks the androcentricity of poststructuralism, claiming that the theory blocks feminism's emancipatory aims. Bordo (1990) and Hartsock (1990) go even further, suggesting that poststructuralism is a reactionary male ploy to undermine the gains of feminist theory: Hartsock asks,

"Why is it that just at the moment when so many of us who have been silenced begin to demand the right to name ourselves, to act as subjects rather than objects of history, that just then the concept of subjecthood becomes problematic? Just when we are forming our own theories of the world, uncertainty emerges about whether the world can be theorised" (1990, p.163)

Thus Hartsock builds on Balbus' (1987) argument that poststructuralist theory deprives feminists of the conceptual tools they had developed to explain and combat their subordination.

Some pro-poststructuralist feminists have tried to circumvent these apparent incompatibilities: for example, Fraser and Nicholson (1990) and Weedon (1987) argue that it is acceptable to continue with the feminist grand narrative intact, so long as we acknowledge the 'historicity' of our theories. However, this does not seem acceptable, as it sounds as though we are apologising for our narrative: like Spretnak (1993), I suggest that we should not be ashamed of our emancipatory aims and beliefs, and note that this emancipatory narrative is the basis of most feminist research (Stanley and Wise, 1993; Griffiths, 1995b, Kelly, Burton and Regan, 1994). Moreover, the arguments observed above suggest that feminists who have used poststructuralist theory in their research have in fact only done so partially, as they have retained the categories 'men' and 'women' (or 'boys' and 'girls'), and have stated their feminist - thus modernist, and emancipatory - approach. I suggest that this is not a fully poststructuralist position. Davies

(1989) argues that because of her poststructuralist perspective she no longer has to worry about the contradictions or inconsistencies between the different theories she utilises; poststructuralist theory reveals the impossibility of coherence and unity. While I agree that we all think and behave in multiple and contradictory ways (see Shotter, 1993; Billig, 1987; Billig *et al*, 1988), the acceptance of total incoherence and contradiction could endorse the use of reactionary discourse, or could fragment the feminist narrative altogether.

Therefore my problems with poststructuralism remain. My own research agenda conflicts with poststructuralism because it is conceived on the basis of the feminist truth narrative: as such, it aims to analyse the social impact of gender discourses and the ways children take them up. Moreover, because of my commitment to this feminist truth narrative my research is conceived with emancipatory goals (also rejected by poststructuralism), and used the categories 'girl' and 'boy' as part of my analysis. I aim towards a breaking down of the male/female binary dichotomy, and recognise differences in experience and power position between women (and between men). However, to adopt a gender indifferent stance in a society where biological sex differences still have a major impact on our social power position (e.g. Lees, 1993; Connell, 1995; Walkerdine, 1990; Delphy and Leonard, 1992, etc.) would be to inflict loss of Voice upon ourselves, leaving us with no theoretical means with which to identify or alter our circumstances (Balbus, 1987; Hartsock, 1990; Ramazanoglu, 1993).

My Combination of Constructionism and Poststructuralism with Feminism

In combining a poststructuralist and feminist approach, issues concerning truth narratives and human agency arise. At what point does an idea become a theory, and a theory become a narrative? Shotter warns us to be suspicious of all narratives, even 'small stories', in their attempts to produce intelligibility; yet is not constructionism (and poststructuralism) itself a narrative of sorts? Does Shotter's own work not attempt to produce an intelligible reading of the world? Although truth discourses present a narrative search for order (which is an 'enlightenment project' according to Foucauldian poststructuralists), I argue that discourses which preach *disorder* and deconstruction are also grand narratives, albeit subversive ones, as despite the absence of belief in a 'founding subject' they are still based on a theory or position about the world (the theory that there is no coherent subject, and that there can be no modernist certainty or truth), and

they postulate an ideal or method to follow (deconstruction of truth narratives). Balbus (1987) supports this interpretation, maintaining that even in Foucault's writings there appears a 'latent discourse' where the evils of 'continuous history', 'totality' etc. retain a prominent place; and where the argument that history consists of a succession of power/knowledge discourses constitutes a claim to Truth. Balbus argues:

"To hold, as Foucault does, disciplining technologies responsible for the very constitution of the modern-individual-as object-and subject is necessarily to attribute to them a totalising power that only a totalising theory can name" (1987, p. 122).

The structuring of our experience in the form of narratives is universal throughout human culture, according to Sarbin (1986). He argues that the formation of explanatory and structuring narratives is an inherent part of being human. Therefore narratives may be present in poststructuralist and constructionist works as well as in modernist theory, despite denial, for theorists from both perspectives hold their humanity in common.

Spretnak (1993) scathingly observes that many academics self-consciously attempt not to make generalisations, 'truth claims', or even appear hopeful about social change, in their attempts to appear 'poststructurally correct'. She claims that people who were formerly concerned to act upon the world with egalitarian motives have been rendered impotent by the nihilistic tendencies of postmodern theory, which denies the validity of humanist projects and emancipatory aims. Spretnak (1993) implies that these people still *feel* that we should act on the world, but cannot harmonise this feeling with their cynical postmodern theories: this view is supported by Conner (1993), who argues that issues of value have not disappeared in poststructuralist work, but have rather simply been relegated to the critical 'not saids' (see Ball, 1990). To return to Shotter's (1993) wariness of stories and narratives, it is hard to believe that he would have been motivated to write a book if he did not *feel* that his theoretical analysis is valid, and more adequate than modernist readings; in which case his work must constitute some form of narrative. Shotter supports Billig's (1987, 1988, 1992, 1995) theory that all ideology and argument is dilemmatic: for every argument we articulate we are aware of a contrary, counter-argument, which is also a part of our construction. I too feel that this is a useful analysis of our thought processes and use of

discourse. However, I stress the word *feel*, because (as Billig's theory implies) at the same time I articulate my support for this position I am aware of a counter-argument that suggests thought is unitary. I *feel* that Billig's explanation is a better argument than the counter-argument. My point is that, as Billig's argument suggests, there can still be one side of arguments which we agree with or feel is 'true', despite our acceptance that we have other discourses to draw on, or that the self is positioned in discourse and constructed in social interaction. Shotter (1993) himself refers to Wittgenstein, Austin, and Ryle, and their arguments that in all human conduct we are constantly making value judgements. Middleton (1992) argues that these evaluations are often based on feeling and impulse. He suggests that many male academics, including poststructuralists, suffer from the male fear of feeling (impulse) and emotion, based on the idea of the separation between the reasoning mind (male), and the emotional body (female). By 'giving way' to impulsive feeling, the reasoning mind can no longer be separated from the (uncivilised) body. Yet, Middleton argues, feeling and emotion *do* count in our thoughts and expressions. As Kvale (1995) observes, interpretation and verification are normal activities in human interaction. Thus to deny our feelings and preferences (which form, and give preference to, narratives), is to maintain a falsehood, and to deny subjectivity (Abram, 1996). As Rose (1989) argues, we have to recognise our socially produced modernity.

I conclude, then, that while we may agree theoretically that the self is constituted and constitutes through discourse, we still *feel* ourselves to have agency, moral obligation, and preferences for different kinds of discourse; and that creating narratives to structure, or describe our lives, is part of being human. This position, which can combine a theoretical constructionism with an acknowledgement that our socially produced modernism means that we still *feel* ourselves active, choice-making human agents, is far more compatible with a feminist perspective. Thus I still *feel* that the feminist argument is valid, despite my recognition that it is a modernist grand narrative, based on (probably over-) essentialist generalisations concerning 'males' and 'females'. Soper (1990) argues that although feminism should move towards indifference feminism and away from *difference* (essentialist) feminism, we should retain the category 'woman' on the grounds that it is needed to describe and transform women's lives in order to bring us to a position where we can afford to be gender-indifferent. Bailey (1993) supports this view, calling it 'strategic essentialism'. Thus we can embrace *solidarity* as well as difference (see Squires, 1993).

Similarly Harding (1990, 1991) argues that enlightenment discourses have progressive as well as regressive tendencies, and that we need poststructuralist *and* enlightenment agendas at this time in history. These arguments advocate a kind of 'postmodern-modern', in which feminists can combine postmodern theories and aims with a humanist approach as a method of reaching a position where we can realise postmodern aims. Balbus (1987) maintains that we can (and should) distinguish between libertarian and authoritarian truth discourses, and that feminism is a libertarian discourse. This involves a value judgement, but as I have argued, making value judgements is part of being human. Griffiths (1995a) observes that she feels herself a feminist first and foremost, and that feminists should use poststructuralist techniques only so far as they help us in our feminist project. Hence I use the parts of poststructuralism which I *feel* are useful for feminism, but only engage in poststructuralism as an 'analytical tool' (Weiner, 1994) in order to aid feminism. This is certainly a 'post-modern modern' position, but I recognise the inconsistencies in this and claim them as a part of the dilemmatic human condition (see Billig, 1987, 1988, 1992).

Hence, in my research, poststructuralist-constructionist approaches and forms of analysis are used in a humanist endeavour. Gender indifference and deconstruction of masculine/feminine dichotomies is my aim, but I retain the description 'woman/man', 'girl/boy', as the analysis of the power difference between the two, and an ending to the power differences based on the gender dichotomy, appears the only way to reach a position where gender indifference can be realised. This aim of deconstruction of the gender dichotomy warrants some discussion: Soper (1990, 1993b) has questioned the necessary desirability of a 'genderless utopia', arguing that feminists' allusions to such a society appear very vague. Certainly, while the essentialism supported by Cixous (1976, 1990) and Irigary (1985a; 1985b) has been criticised by many feminists as over-stereotyped and restrictive (see, for instance, Nicholson, 1990, 1995; Soper, 1990), relatively few feminists have declared themselves in favour of the deconstruction of the gender dichotomy (notable exceptions include Davies, 1989, and Jones, 1993). A 'genderless society' may have limited appeal, when much of our sense of identity is derived from our gender. Many feminists have celebrated women's difference from men, focusing on the benefits of being female (Cixous, 1976; Assiter, 1995; Ruddick, 1989; Morgan, 1972), and the negativity of masculinity (Rich, 1981; Gilligan, 1982). This lack of commitment

to the deconstruction of gender may explain why feminism has tended to fight for equal opportunities (equality of opportunity despite differences), rather than for the recognition of, and work for, equality. 'Equality' may be perceived as equal with men, and thus 'like men'. However, the deconstruction of the gender dichotomy would involve the deconstruction of 'masculine' and 'feminine' qualities, and the value system behind this dichotomy. Thus I support Connell's (1987) view that a resulting society would be one of endless diversity rather than sameness.

The combination of poststructuralist and feminist, modernist approaches permeates my research aims. For example, I intend to emphasise the social effects of gender discourse, as gender discourse positions men and women in different ways which result in a very real difference in social experiences. Moreover, while Davies (1989) provides an insight to some of the general positions that the girls in her study took up, there has yet to be an analysis of the range of gender discourses used by children, and thus I hope that my research can provide an insight in this area. Finally, I am concerned to examine the issue of power: Foucauldian theory of discursive positioning maintains that power resides in discourse, and consequently we can all be positioned in discourse as powerful or powerless. However, as the figures discussed earlier show, *generally* women still perform different tasks in our society, and have less access to controlling power than men. From a Foucauldian perspective one cannot quantify whether the generalisation of being a 'girl' or a 'boy' makes a difference to one's interactive power position: I suggest that it does, and I intend to explore this point in my research.

Conclusion

Thus I have identified the poststructuralist-constructionist work I intend to build on to investigate children's constructions of gender, power, and adult occupation. I intend to use discourse analysis to examine the ways in which primary school children construct gender in interaction, and in discussion of gender in their school lives, and in adult occupation. Further, poststructuralist constructionist research (e.g. by Davies, 1989; Gill, 1993; Davies and Banks, 1992; Jordan, 1995; Nilan, 1995) has been criticised for an inadequate focus on the distribution of power resulting from gender constructions (see Soper, 1993a; Parker and Burman, 1993). Davies (1989) does draw some conclusions concerning power in

her study, observing that power appears to be constructed by children as male, with female power constructed as valid only in the domestic realm or as helpers of men. However, I intend to provide a more detailed analysis of the impact of children's gender constructions on their power positions. The study also uses analysis of discourse (Burr, 1995) to identify the different gender discourses children draw on in their constructions.

Explanation of Development of Themes Through the Thesis

Therefore, my investigation explores children's constructions of gender, and their construction of gender as a source of power. The main areas of focus have been raised from my discussion of the literature. These can be listed as:

a) constructions of i) genders as different
ii) genders as oppositional
iii) gender as a source of unfair discrimination
iv) gender as a source of power

b) differences in children's constructions according to age and gender.

These issues, and their development through the data chapters of this thesis, are briefly outlined below

Chapter Two explains the methodology used in the research. Chapter Three considers children's talk in interviews about gender in their lives at school. It is divided into two sections. The first section examines children's constructions of gender in their lives at school, arguing that some constructions produce genders as different, while others present them as not different. Concerning the children that construct the genders as different, I develop Davies' theory that children do so because of the discursive practice which presents the genders as relational. They construct the genders as different because of the gender category maintenance required to demonstrate their gender identity.

This latter construction of behavioural difference leads me to go further than Davies, as I suggest that some children constructed the genders not just as different, but as *oppositional*. Thorne (1993) has noted how young school children create a sense of "opposite sides" (p. 63) between genders in school, which involved evoking gender boundaries. In my study I found children achieving this oppositional construction in two ways: by constructing the genders as *in opposition* (for instance, depicting gender relations as a 'battle of the sexes'), and

as *opposite*. Thus where Thorne (1993) simply examines the various ways in which children evoked gender boundaries, I examine their constructions of genders as in opposition and opposite separately, as they appeared to have differing interactive implications. I argue that the construction of genders as opposite led many children to behave in certain ways according to their gender. Drawing on the findings of Belotti (1975) and Walkerdine (1990), discussed earlier, I investigate whether girls take up similar sensible, facilitating positions in my study, and whether boys take up the opposite 'childish' construct involving disruptive, demanding behaviour. I argue that such behaviour is due to children constructing the genders as *opposite*: because the children understand gender as different, gender category maintenance and the need to demonstrate gender identity leads many children to take up dichotomous behaviour in interaction. I also investigate whether children constructed genders as *not* different (the same), and whether children's gender constructions contained contradiction.

The second section of Chapter Three examines children's constructions of sexism in school, arguing that some children constructed gender as a source of unfair discrimination, while others did not. Here the issue of gender as a source of power is raised for the first time: I argue that those who present gender as an unjust source of discrimination also construct gender as a source of power. Those children who do not construct gender as a source of discrimination, do not construct it as a source of power. In discussion of these issues I use the term 'sexism' to describe assumptions that one sex is superior to the other (see Chapter Three), and 'gender discrimination' to describe the application of sexism in practice. By 'discrimination' I refer specifically to *unfair* discrimination: while 'gender discrimination' could refer simply to the separation of men and women, for instance in the case of public toilets, I use the term only to evoke the practice of sexism.

Throughout the chapter I compare children's constructions according to age and gender in order to show how the constructions of children of different ages vary, and how the constructions of girls and boys are different. I continue to do so in the following chapters.

Chapter Four considers children's talk in interviews about gender and adult occupation. They are asked to respond to questions about their own choice of future occupation, gender ability in adult work, and relations between the

genders in the adult workplace. Hence this chapter develops ideas from both sections of the previous chapter, as it includes the issue of children constructing the genders as different or the same; and gender as a source of discrimination or not as a source of discrimination (and hence gender as an issue of power and not as an issue of power), but this time in relation to adult occupation rather than the children's own lives.

Chapters Five and Six both explore children's presentation of gender in role plays based on adult occupation, examining children's behaviour in role play groups. Chapter Five discusses children's choices of occupational role in the plays, and examines group constructions of gender; while Chapter Six focuses on the issue of gender as a source of power. It is in Chapter Five that I develop my investigation of the way children constructed gender as oppositional or not oppositional which was originated in Chapter Three. In this chapter I argue that children's constructions of the genders as opposite resulted in the appearance of constructed gender cultures in the primary school, based on children's dichotomous 'sensible-selfless/silly-selfish' positions in interaction. Gendered action and play amongst children has lead other researchers to conclude that two separate gender cultures exist in the primary school (see, for example, Lever, 1978; Maltz and Borker, 1983; Lloyd and Duveen, 1992). Although Thorne (1993) argues that children actively construct 'the girls' and 'the boys' as rival groups through stylised gendered action and different types of play, she rejects the concept of gender cultures as used by social psychological studies, as she maintains they suggest differences between girls' and boys' behaviour are fixed and essential. Thorne shows that children's constructed gender boundaries are not fixed, and are frequently crossed. I agree that gender cultures are fluid, and often ignored and resisted: however, I maintain that the term is a useful description of the manifestation of children's construction of gender as oppositional in the primary school, and thus retain it here. I argue in this chapter that children use outward behaviour to demonstrate gender identity and to bond with other members of the same gender, in order to signify their gender allegiance, and this results in the appearance of gender cultures in the role play groups. I also use this chapter to discuss whether children appeared to present the genders as more or less different in talk about their own lives, or whether stereotypes of adult occupations led to more polarised constructions when acting about adult occupation.

The Sixth chapter examines children's constructions of gender and power in the role plays. Here I examine gender as a source of power in *interaction*. As feminists have criticised poststructuralism for its lack of engagement with issues of *structural* power differences (see earlier discussion), I attempt to 'ground' discourse analysis by exploring how those of gender impact upon children's power positionings during the role play interaction. Drawing on data concerning children's behaviour and data concerning children's acting I argue that children construct gender both as a source of power, and *not* a source of power.

Having explored the issues of gender construction and gender as a source of power in Chapters Three - Six, in Chapters Seven and Eight I examine the mechanisms which lead to these constructions. Chapter Seven investigates discourses children draw on in their constructions of gender, aiming to catalogue and analyse these discourses, and to relate them to constructions discussed in previous chapters. As Davies (1989) has observed, children learn to see and explain the world in terms of gender discourses, and they also learn the patterns of power and desire embedded within them. She does not see discourses as static, however, and concludes that,

"If we see society as being constantly created through discursive practices then it is possible to see the power of those practices, not only to create and sustain the world but also to see how we can change that world through a refusal of certain discourses and the generation of new ones" (1989, p. xi)

By analysing the different types of discourse used by children regarding gender, it may become possible to understand which they utilise most, why they utilise some rather than others, and subsequently to discover how we can generate new ones with which to disrupt gender-discriminatory practices. I also discuss the contexts in which the different discourses were used, and the possible reasons why children pick one gender discourse over another.

Chapter Eight investigates evidence children draw on in their constructions of gender. Where Chapter Seven attempts to analyse the gender discourses children drew upon in their constructions, this chapter focuses on the material world, developing my argument that discourses available to children may depend on material circumstance.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

This thesis examines the ways in which children construct gender in talk about their lives in school, and in talk and role play concerning adult occupation. It investigates the ways in which these constructions impact on children's interactive power positions, and the discourses they draw upon in these constructions. This chapter explains the methods used in this investigation to obtain data about the ways in which children construct gender in talk. It describes the rationale behind my choice of techniques, and the ways in which they were used. The main methods were:

1) Role plays based on adult work contexts. 34 groups of four children (totalling 134 children) participated in these role plays.
2) Semi-structured individual interviews, conducted with 145 children, including the 134 who were also involved in the role plays. Children were asked to talk about the role plays (in the cases of those who participated in these), their choice of future occupation, gender issues relating to adult occupation, and gender issues in school.

I also collected small amounts of data by other methods:

3) Questionnaires covering children's choice of future adult occupation, and allocation of jobs to the different sexes.
4) Informal observation of playground interaction
5) Interviews with some parents

This approach combines different methods: these are discussed one by one. The two main methods used in this study are explained first, and because of their qualitative nature I pause to reflect on the issue of validity in qualitative research before moving on to discuss the other methods. The samples of schools and respondents, and numbers of respondents participating in the different types of research methods, are then described. Moving back to methodological theory, some feminist issues are considered, and my methodology discussed in relation to feminism, examining the advantages and disadvantages of my methods from a feminist perspective. Issues of 'race' and social class relating to the methodology

are then examined, before moving on to the practical processes of the research, such as transcribing, and data analysis.

Rationale for Methodology

In recent years there have been a small number of studies investigating children's discursive gender positionings (e.g. Davies, 1989; Walkerdine, 1990; Nilan, 1995). In her study, Davies (1989) combined techniques of interview and participant observation (see Chapter One). Individual interviews were conducted with a small number of children in their homes, in order to examine their reactions to the challenge to gender stereotypes posed by the 'feminist tales' she read them. Participant observation was used with different children in the pre-school classroom to enable Davies to examine child discourse and discursive positionings. These combined methods proved effective in her study, the interviews providing insight into children's own gender identities and the clash between adult and child discourses, and the classroom observation enabling an investigation of children's communal construction and maintenance of gender identity. I adopted a similar combination of methods to investigate and compare children's constructions of gender in different interactive environments. However, my methodological needs differed from those of Davies: where she conducted interviews with some children, and participant observation with others, this research examines how children's constructions of gender differed according to the discursive environment. Thus I needed to use different research methods with the *same* group of children. Moreover, I wanted to question these children directly concerning their constructions in the different environments. By positioning herself as 'child' in participant observation, Davies abandoned her authoritative adult status in order to gain access into the children's 'world' and fantasies: this proved an effective way of investigating child discourse and collective gender category maintenance. However, I aimed to investigate children's discursive practices in different interactive environments, and to question them explicitly about these practices. Davies could not have done this in her non-privileged position of 'child', as interrogation concerning the children's behaviour would have positioned her as an adult authority figure once more.

In his examination of children's discussion of television, Buckingham (1993) used semi-participant observation methods, interviewing groups of children together and observing their constructions of group dynamics and power positions through

their discourse. These methods were more akin to my objectives, as Buckingham remained in the position of adult outsider, and was thus able to remain in a privileged directive role. Such an approach would enable me to observe children's discursive practices in group interaction at close hand, and also to question the children individually about their interaction afterwards, to examine whether their constructions differed in a different interactive environment. However, my methodological needs differed from Buckingham's because of this latter concern (to observe children's constructions of power in different interactive environments). I also required methods which allowed me to question children about their constructions of gender.

Therefore I decided to use a combination of research techniques in order to observe children's interaction and responses in different discursive environments, and to question children about their responses. This could be said to constitute a form of triangulation. Traditionally such combined methods have been used in order to compare the results of different methods in an endeavour to demonstrate the similarity between results, and thus to give credibility to findings (see Smaling, 1993). However, because the poststructuralist understanding of the 'self' is far more fluid and less fixed than such an approach suggests, I did not use triangulation to demonstrate a fixed 'truth' or 'reality' which can be demonstrated through the comparison of findings from different techniques. Rather, my hypothesis expected to find different, rather than identical, constructions, depending on the discursive environment: people draw upon different discourses in order to construct different positions depending on the interactive situation. Thus I use triangulation rather as a set of mirrors, in order to reflect the different methods on one another. My initial choice of methods comprised a combination of group role play, individual interviews, and written questionnaires.

Pilot Study

These methods were tested during my pilot study, which involved 28 children participating in role plays and interviews, and 45 completing questionnaires. While I did not continue to use questionnaires in the rest of the study (see my explanation below), the methodological structure was not altered in other ways in the following research, and therefore I have included the data from the pilot study in my analysis.

Role Plays Based On Adult Work Contexts

Small groups of children were asked to conduct role plays based upon an adult occupational scenario, and the interaction was recorded. This method was chosen because it appeared an appropriate way to observe and analyse discursive practices and power constructions in child interaction, and their group constructions of gender roles. Vicks (1990) involved groups of children in drama, and found a clear gender dichotomy being constructed in the plays, which she was able to analyse in her study. Examining secondary school students' gendered interaction in drama classes, Nilan (1995) also found children constructed a gender dichotomy, and was able to analyse the ways in which discourses of social class impacted upon gender positions. Building on the group discussion techniques practised by Buckingham (1993) and Bennett (1991), this method provides a means of observing children's interaction and discussion of particular issues within a controlled and easily observable environment. There were four children in each role play group; this provided a group large enough to illustrate children's interaction together, yet still allowed a manageable analysis of discursive practices.

As I had chosen the subject of adult occupation on which to base my investigations, the role plays were given an occupational theme, and a choice of role play contexts were designed based on hospital, hotel, or school settings. These contexts were chosen in view of the number of different hierarchical, and traditionally gendered, occupational positions within them, with which the children might be familiar either through real life or television. Within each context were four work roles, and a given scenario relating to that occupation, on which to base the play. The scenarios all involved problems to solve, which were intended to provoke discussion amongst the children in the play. These were:

1) *Context*: Hospital. *Roles*: doctor, nurse, patient, and receptionist. *Scenario*: patient complains of receiving inadequate treatment. A group meeting is called to decide what action to take.
2) *Context*: Hotel. *Roles*: manager, receptionist, chef and room service attendant. *Scenario*: a guest has complained to the receptionist that the hotel food was poor and her room was a mess, and a group meeting is called to discuss the problem.

3) *Context*: School. *Roles*: headteacher, teacher, caretaker, and playground supervisor. *Scenario*: the caretaker complains about the amount of litter children were dropping in the playground, and the group hold a meeting to discuss what to do about it.

Each group of children was asked to decide which occupational context they preferred. They were then asked to decide amongst themselves who would play each of the four roles. Following this decision I provided them with the work scenario described above: these scenarios were designed to have potential to involve everyone, and to encourage group participation and discussion. This enabled me to observe possible gendered constructions in the way children took up and acted their roles, and to see whether role choice appeared gendered; besides gaining information about children's constructions of adult occupations and occupational environments. An investigation of the dynamics and power positionings constructed by the group members through their interaction was a further concern, and therefore I worked with both single and mixed-sex groups of children, in order to examine whether constructions of gender and power varied with the gender composition of the group. The mixed sex groups comprised two girls and two boys.

My active participation in the role plays varied depending on the degree to which children turned to me for direction: if they were quiet and looked to me for assistance I sometimes gave them suggestions or asked them questions about their role in order to keep the play going and to encourage them to participate. Children sometimes appealed to me directly for advice or support, and occasionally even included me in their role play (for instance, giving me a part to play). Thus occasionally plays were almost completely directed by me, while in others I hardly participated at all: yet my very presence meant that I was involved in the group's interactive constructions (see Buckingham, 1993; Denscombe, 1995; Harding, 1984, 1991). The role play took between ten and twenty-five minutes for each group to complete, depending on how quickly they came to a unanimous decision about the problem I set them, and how long they chose to prolong the role play.

All but the first four plays in the pilot study were video-recorded: it became clear during the pilot study that this was vital in order to record the exchanged looks, gesticulations, non-verbal comment, pressure, and indication which played an

integral part of the group's communication, interaction, and power construction. In this the video recordings proved extremely effective. The presence of the video-camera on its tall tripod was imposing, and might have distracted the children. However, although its presence and impact in the interaction and group construction must be acknowledged, it did not appear to influence the nature of the role plays greatly (this finding is supported by Lloyd and Duveen, 1992). For the most part it filled children with interest and excitement on their entry into the room; however, once they were informed that the film was only for my benefit, and given the role play scenario, they appeared to forget all about it. A small minority of children can be seen smiling coyly at the camera from time to time during the role play, and a few would demand or beg to watch the film when it was finished: in this case I would allow them to look at it in replay through the view-finder. However, it was far more common for children to ask to listen to replays of their interviews on my more traditional dictaphone; suggesting that the video camera had no more of a salient effect on the children's interaction than other recording methods.

My presence as an observer/participant in the role plays presented a limitation in that the interaction could not be said to be only interaction between children: my presence inevitably impacted upon children's constructions. As such, it becomes impossible to apply findings concerning the role play groups to child interaction generally. However, as Gill (1993) and Parker and Burman (1993) observe, responses are produced in specific interactive environments, and therefore cannot be applied to other, general contexts. My intention was simply to examine children's constructions in particular interactive environments; this one being role play groups at which I was present. However, as I have noted, my presence affected the role play groups in practical ways too: in some groups participation was stilted and children drew on me for assistance and suggestions. Thus it could be argued that these groups' constructions were actually led by me: for this reason I attempted to keep my verbal participation at a minimum. Other groups, though randomly selected, coincidentally contained close friends, and these groups may have been more lively as a consequence; so the sample groups may have affected the children's communal constructions. Such factors appear inevitable in a school context, but should be observed as having a potential impact on the consequent constructions.

Individual Interviews

Following the role play I conducted an individual interview with each child involved, to ask them about the role play interaction and gender issues relating to the school and adult occupation. These interviews were semi-structured: Denzin (1970) argues that a flexible, open ended approach allows the respondent autonomy of articulation, and enables flexible sequences of questioning according to the respondent concerned. However, my intentions in using flexible interviews are different from those of Denzin: while he argues that such methods encourage empathy, thus enabling the researcher to gain a more open and consequently 'true' response, I used the interviews to examine people's constructions when talking to me. As Baker (1982) and Baruch (1982) observe, interviews are *local accomplishments*: constructions produced in particular situated environments. Moreover, the interviewer plays an integral part in the construction (see Baker, 1984; Eichler, 1988; Harding, 1984, 1991; Stanley and Wise, 1993). Thus my intention in using semi-structured interviews was simply to allow a relatively unrestricted discussion of gender issues in children's own lives and adult occupation, that I could examine their constructions of these subjects.

Conducting these individual interviews with the children from the role play groups provided a different discursive environment, and an opportunity to see whether their constructions would change accordingly. Individual interviews have also proved effective resources for discourse analysis (see for example Gill, 1993; Wetherell and Potter, 1988; Davies, 1989; Davies and Banks, 1992), and they enabled me to examine the ways in which children drew on different discourses to construct gender. Children were questioned specifically about gender issues, as this appeared a useful way of maximising discourse on the subject in order to investigate their different gender constructions. Moreover, I questioned children about their previous role play constructions, and about their statements regarding gender issues, in an attempt to discover some of the discursive resources they were drawing on to form these constructions. This contrasts with Davies (1989) and Buckingham (1993), who did not question the children about their interactive constructions, relying on their own interpretations of group constructions and discursive positionings.

Thus, following the play's completion, the children were taken one at a time for an individual interview of about twenty minutes duration. These interviews were

always conducted on the same day as the role play. The first group of questions concerned children's explanations of the role play interaction, their choice of role, and the way they acted their parts, in order to investigate children's own interpretations of the interaction. I then went on to ask each child about their choice of future occupation, and whether men and women are equally capable at different types of work, as well as asking them to speculate on issues of gender in the adult work place: this section investigated children's statements concerning gender issues and adult occupation. The final group of questions related to children's constructions of gender, their talk concerning male/female behaviour, and their experience or observation of sexism in school; thus examining children's constructions of gender and gender issues in school. (See Appendix 2 for a full list of the questions asked).

The interviews involved probing children's answers and often asking them to qualify and explain their responses and reasoning. While I did not contradict children's sexist statements, I did question their justification for such statements, and occasionally provided new information which countered their assumptions (for example, that there are male nurses, or female astronauts). Moreover, I often supported children's anti-sexist statements, and was sympathetic to complaints about sexism. As such I was very much engaged in discussion, rather than running through a set list of questions in a 'detached' manner. I argued above that the interviewer necessarily plays a joint part in the construction of meaning during the interview: studies such as those of Davies (1989), Buckingham (1993), and Skeggs (1994) also refute assumptions that children's responses can simply be influenced by an adult interviewer in any straight-forward way. Davies (1989) and Buckingham (1993) found that in some constructions, approval from adults and proved literacy in adult discourse (demonstrating an ability to use adult value systems and interpretations) were important for children, while in others they were to be actively scoffed at. In Davies' study children often vehemently disagreed with her non-sexist statements, and were eager to correct her 'errors' and convert her to a more stereotyped outlook. The interviewer plays an integral part in the interaction and construction of the interview discourse: *all* interviews involve the interviewer affecting the respondent, though not in any unitary way, as the respondent may give a 'required' answer or a deliberately subversive one depending on the discourses they draw upon. Hence it is important to bear in mind that in this study children's interview responses are given in this context of individual interview with an adult, female, white interviewer, and that this must

impact upon the child's (and my) discursive positioning, and the discourses and resources s/he draws on when constructing responses.

These individual interviews were recorded but not filmed, as there were fewer instances of talking at the same time, and less non-verbal communication, than in the role play groups. Moreover, the interviews were more static than the role plays: participants moved around less. Hence they involved less non-verbal action and communication that could not be recorded by a dictaphone.

As with the role plays, the interview responses were given in a particular interactive environment; and thus cannot be transferred and applied to other interactive scenarios (Gill, 1993; Parker and Burman, 1993). Moreover, though it is tempting to interpret children's responses as their fixed opinions or attitudes towards gender issues, Potter and Wetherell (1987) and Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that 'attitudes' and 'opinions' are simply one response in a particular interactive environment. Therefore I avoid using the word 'attitude' or 'opinion' to describe children's expressions, and when discussing children's responses I consider these simply to be constructions specific to the interactive environment of the interviews.

Discussion of Validity

The methods discussed above are both qualitative. Because qualitative data is non-numeric, and cannot usually be presented in totality in a study, questions have often been raised concerning the validity of the findings of such research (see Silverman, 1993; Smaling, 1993). It has been asked whether such research necessarily provides an accurate representation of the social action it purports to describe. Silverman (1993) complains about the anecdotal quality of much qualitative research, supporting the claims of Fielding and Fielding (1986) that qualitative researchers often select data to fit their particular contentions, and focus on dramatic data at the expense of other evidence. Bryman (1988) and Silverman (1993) both observe a tendency for such research to present only snippets of data to support particular arguments, without stating whether this evidence can be considered representative.

As observed above, I take a political (feminist) approach to the research, and see children's responses as constructions produced in the particular interactive

environment concerned, not as fixed articulations. Thus I do not claim that the research is objective in any detached sense (see Harding, 1984; Stanley and Wise, 1993), or that it represents children's 'real' or fixed opinions. However, as I explained in Chapter One, my intention is to produce a study useful to other feminists: in order to be so it must not be simply anecdotal, but must take a critical, rigorous approach, and show that my presentation of children's constructions are representative of the whole sample. Silverman (1993) advocates simple counting as a technique to aid validity in qualitative research: presenting the numbers of respondents behaving or speaking in certain ways allows the reader to assess the data as a whole rather than merely accepting the researcher's interpretation. He argues that this technique can also aid researchers, enabling them to test their conclusions against the figures, and revise their assumptions if necessary. Silverman admits that counting can be arbitrary, but maintains that so long as the researcher continues to see the data as the respondents' constructions of the world, and does not get carried away with figurative work, numerical data benefits qualitative studies. This technique has sometimes been used implicitly: Phillips (1971) observes that many qualitative studies are implicitly quantitative, in that they count patterns of behaviour (for instance describing them as occurring 'frequently', 'seldom', etc.). However, other studies have taken a more rigorous approach to counting: for example, Becker *et al* (1968) present some of their findings in the form of numerical tables. Therefore, I present the data numerically where possible, in order to demonstrate that the qualitative data I discuss is representative.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were issued during the pilot study to gain a broad sample of children's responses concerning their choice of future work, and their assignment of jobs to different genders.

These questionnaires were formulated to comprise a further discursive environment, where children would give written, rather than verbal responses to questions about gender and adult occupation. The original aim of the questionnaire was to elicit a responses from a greater number of children to some of the interview questions regarding this issue: a broader overview of children's responses on the topic could be gained by the quantitative use of secondary data. The principal element of my questionnaire was a chart listing various

occupations: children were asked whose jobs these were, and had the option of assigning each job to men, women, or men and women. This device was used in studies by Adams and Walkerdine (1986) and Robb (1981), who found children's responses to be extremely gender-stereotypical. I felt that the highly gender-stereotypical response to the questionnaires in these studies could have been exaggerated by the suggestive order of category in their table of occupations: their choice of categories ran; 'a man's job'/'a woman's job'/'could be done by either', thus giving the equal opportunities answer as the final choice, and making it appear a last resort answer, as well as prioritising 'man's job' by giving that category first. Therefore in my questionnaire this version was restructured to place 'can be done by men or women' as the first choice, followed by 'women's job', and lastly 'men's job'.

The questionnaire was only used in my pilot study, as I found that it had limited value: the responses were very one-dimensional, with little variation between children. I suggest the questionnaire format imposed practical limitations on children's responses: the format involved ticking an appropriate box, with little space for explanation. Thus children may have felt they were required to divide answers according to what they assume are the most accepted modes in society, when responding to the occupation table in the questionnaire. It was a limited formula, with restrictive given options. In their interviews children were free of such encumbering formulas, and subsequently their responses could be explained and qualified. For instance, many children observed in their interviews that occupations such as builder and lorry driver are commonly seen as 'men's jobs', but that in fact there is nothing to stop women doing them, and that indeed many women do perform such jobs. Other children pointed out that women and men often do not gain employment in areas of work traditionally performed by the opposite sex, due to the sexist discrimination of employers. While I had planned to use questionnaires in order to reach a wider sample of children, these findings in my pilot study lead me to conclude that the lack of opportunity for children to explain their answers, and restrictive format of the questionnaire, could neither meet my purposes nor give proper space for the children to voice their constructions. However, despite abandoning the questionnaire after the pilot study, I retained my analysis of this questionnaire sample, as it offers a further illustration of children taking up different discourses and positions in different discursive environments (see Chapter Four for discussion).

Informal Observation

Besides the main research methods described above, there are two other sources of information concerning the children's constructions of gender which I draw on occasionally in my data analysis: the first is informal observation of children in the playground. This observation was undertaken in order to note the general extent of sex-segregation or mixing in the playground, and to gain an impression of gendered playground interaction.

In all schools where I conducted research I was able to observe the children in the playground at break times. I worked in each school for four or five days, and observed at least two break-times in each school. This was not a formal part of my research, and the observation was in no way rigorous: I had not intended to engage in participant observation (by which I mean, positioning myself as a fellow child, as did Davies, 1989), or rigorous playground observation such as that carried out by Thorne (1993), as I wanted to retain my adult authority status needed for this administering of the role plays and interviews. Therefore I observed playground interaction only occasionally, and at a distance. General, impressionistic observations were noted down.

This non-rigorous approach is severely limited due to its impressionistic basis, and lack of system or formal record. However, while inappropriate as a method of collecting data for formal analysis, this informal observation was sometimes helpful for small details in my analysis, such as whether girls were seen to join in at football, or who dominated playground space.

Interviews With Some Parents

I also conducted informal, semi-structured interviews with some of the children's parents at two schools (the different schools are listed below: I did not interview parents at Crowborough school, as this aspect of the research had not yet been devised when the pilot study was conducted, and the headteacher at Lady Mary school asked me not to involve parents at her school). These interviews were conducted in an endeavour to ascertain some of the resources and discourses children were drawing on from outside school in their constructions of gender: parents' descriptions of their children's behaviour and activities at home might provide extra insight regarding their gender constructions.

I had sent letters home to parents of all the children involved in my research, asking their permission for their children to participate. In the letters sent home at two schools (St. Luke's and Oldfield Schools: see below), there was an extra clause asking parents to meet me for an informal interview. As these interviews were intended to ask parents about their child's activities and constructions of gender issues when at home, I asked what the child's hobbies and main leisure pastimes were, whether gender issues were discussed in the home, and what the child said about gender issues. The intention was to gain some insight regarding the types of gender discourse available in the home, who the child spends the most time with, and whether or not the types of activity they engage in is gendered. The interviews which subsequently took place were unstructured in order to provide an informal, relaxed atmosphere, and usually lasted about fifteen minutes. I did not tape these interviews, as I had assured parents they would be informal, and did not want to intimidate. Thus I recorded what was said by writing down what was said during the interview so that the parents could see what I was writing. I acknowledge that such a method is not wholly satisfactory, as I may have missed recording some important points. However, I felt that the approach was worthwhile in order to avoid alarming respondents, particularly as these interviews were merely an attempt to ascertain more information about the children.

Sample

School Sample

The primary schools in this study are all situated in London, and have been given pseudonyms. Due to practical and financial constraints the research took place within my locality (London). Schools were then selected according to their representation of different sectors of London, and willingness to participate. After contacting the headteachers interviews were arranged to discuss the feasibility of the research. It was explained to headteachers that I would require an empty school room in which to conduct the role plays and interviews, and that I wished to remove groups of children from their Year Three and Six classes temporarily in order to do this. Letters would be sent to the parents of children in these classes requesting their permission for their child to participate, and asking whether they themselves would be willing to engage in an informal interview about their

children. The letters to parents guaranteed confidentiality, and that participants' names would changed in any subsequent publication (see Appendix 3). Of the various schools I approached, four headteachers refused my request, arguing that the research would be too disruptive. Where the school in which I conducted the pilot study was chosen because of its links with my university, three other schools were selected in inner-city, semi-suburban, and suburban areas respectively, in order to gain a broad sample of London primary school children. I volunteered to return to the schools after my data analysis to present tentative findings concerning children's constructions of gender and adult occupation: this offer was taken up by two schools (Oldfield and Lady Mary). The presentations were made to teachers rather than pupils, but the concern was to feed the information back into the school, giving teachers the option of discussing the findings with their classes if they wished.

The pilot study was conducted in Crowborough School. It is a single form entry school, situated in a deprived inner-city area with a great deal of council housing, and consequently the vast majority of children are working class. Crowborough School is multi-racial, (over a third of the children are Bengali). The school had a female head teacher, and all the teachers at the school were female except one, who taught the Year Six class (teachers' gender is recorded because it may have been a factor drawn on by children in their constructions of gender).

Oldfield school is a double form entry school built in the centre of an area of council housing estates near to an underground station, and the majority of its pupils are working-class. It is multi-racial, but at Oldfield there were fewer South Asian children and more Afro-Caribbean children than at Crowborough. The head teacher was female, and was very enthusiastic concerning equal opportunities issues, personally leading class discussions on the subject. She was away on leave during the week in which I engaged in the research, and the two male teachers of the school were sharing the acting headship.

St. Luke's School is also a double form entry school, but is situated in a semi-suburban area of London. There is a mixed social class intake in the school; the catchment area includes both owner-occupied housing and many council estates. Again, it is a multi-racial school, with a similar racial mix to Oldfield School. All the teachers at the school were women except one (who taught a Year Five class).

The final school is Lady Mary, a single entry Catholic school situated in a suburban catchment area containing owner-occupied housing; the pupils at the school are generally middle class. The teachers were all female except one, who taught the Year Six class. The great majority of the children were white (including a large proportion of children of Irish parentage). My research in this school was slightly more restricted than in the others, as the head teacher placed some conditions on my working in the school: namely that I would not conduct interviews with parents, that I should limit my research to four groups each from the two chosen classes, and that I should conduct research there for four days only (as opposed to five days in the other schools). This was apparently to ensure that my research was not unduly disruptive or time-consuming.

The data is not analysed according to school: my concern was to gain a broad cross-section of London primary school children as respondents, and the four schools were selected to provide this.

Number of Children in the Sample

I had intended to include sixty children of each gender, involving ten single sex groups for each gender, and ten mixed-sex groups, in order to gain a broad response for my analysis of their various constructions of gender. In total research was conducted with 145 children: more were involved than I had planned, due to the large number of children wanting to participate in the research. These were analysed according to gender and age. Of the 145 children, 81 were girls, and 64 were boys. The research was conducted with children from the 7-11 year old age group, focusing particularly on the 7-8 and 10-11 year old groups from Years Three and Six. Buckingham (1993) worked with children in different age groups, and found that group constructions varied according to age: this discovery encouraged me to work with different age groups of primary school children in order to compare their constructions of gender and the discourses they drew upon in these. The 7-8 year old age groups interested me because various researchers (Lloyd and Duveen, 1992; Damon, 1977; Kohlberg, 1966; Davies, 1989) have suggested that children engage in the most vigorous assertion of gender identity between five and seven years of age: furthermore, Piaget (1964) argues that it is around the age of seven that ideas of moral and social justice become extremely important to children, and a factor in their

constructions. I intended to investigate whether these ideas about social justice might impact on the children's use of gender discourse. Thus I expected the 7-8 year old age group to be just leaving their period of rigorous gender category maintenance. The gender constructions of 10-11 year old children (the oldest primary school group) were also of interest to me, as according to the research noted above, these children would have a more elaborate understanding of gender issues than the younger group, and would have even less commitment to gender category maintenance. The sample also includes four 8-9 year old, and eight 9-10 year old children, who participated in my pilot study at Crowborough School. Table 2:1 shows the number of girls and boys in each age group.

Table 2:1 Numbers of children in each age group

	No. of Girls	No. of Boys
AGE 7-8	36	33
AGE 8-9	2	2
AGE 9-10	4	4
AGE 10-11	39	25
TOTAL:	81	64

Table 2:2 shows the number of girls and boys who participated in my research at each school. Differences in number are largely due to the availability of children at each school: at St. Luke's more children were involved because teachers had sent my request forms home with children from all four Year Three and Six classes, and the vast majority of these had been returned giving permission for the children to participate in the research. Consequently I felt obliged to include all four classes, where I had intended to only involve two. As I observed above, the headteacher at Lady Mary School limited the number of respondents, and at Crowborough I conducted research with small groups of children from different age-groups, rather than with whole classes.

Table 2:2 Numbers of children participating at different schools

	No. of Girls	No. of Boys
St. Luke's	29	23
Crowborough	14	14
Lady Mary	14	12
Oldfield	24	15
TOTAL:	81	64

Although ethnicity was not central to my investigations, I intended my sample to be representative of racial diversity in the various areas of London. A description of the way in which ethnicity is ascribed can be found later in this chapter. Table 2:3 sets out the number of girls and boys from different ethnic groups:

Table 2:3 Numbers of children from various ethnic groups

	No. of Girls	No. of Boys
South Asian	9	15
Afro-Caribbean	15	10
Anglo-British	46	30
Greek-Cypriot	4	3
African	2	1
South American	0	2
East Asian	1	2
Mediterranean	4	1
N	81	64

The 145 children that participated were usually randomly selected by myself from the returned form slips of the letters permitting me to interview them (occasionally the class teacher picked children out of the classroom). My actual selection of random samples was restricted in some instances according to the number of children who returned these letters: for instance, at Lady Mary School only a small proportion of notes had been returned in the Year Six class, which

meant that I could only work with three groups of children from that class. At this school two girls participated in two role plays, to make up the numbers. Due to the variation in numbers of children given permission to participate in the research from certain classes, eleven children could not be incorporated into role play groups: the role plays involved groups of four, so occasionally there were children left over. Rather than exclude these children altogether, interviews were conducted with them.

Numbers of respondents involved in the role play groups

This section explains the numbers of children participating in each of the research methods. There were fifteen mixed-sex role play groups, usually consisting of two girls and two boys (in one instance in a mixed sex group at St. Luke's School, a group involves three girls and only one boy, as there were not even numbers of girls and boys left). There were also eleven single-sex girls' groups, and eight single-sex boys' groups. (Most of the classes of children I worked with contained more girls than boys, which explains this imbalance). Table 2:4 explains the numbers of groups worked with in each of the schools: differences in number are due to size of class, number of girls and boys in each class, permission from parents for the children's participation, and availability. Thus where my original design required me to work with 120 children in role plays, I actually worked with 134. Table 2:4 also shows the ages of the children involved, and the gender make-up of the groups.

Table 2:4 Age and gender in the role play groups

School:	Oldfield	St. Luke's	Lady Mary	Crowborough	*Total*
Year Three					
Mixed group	0	1	3	2	*6*
Girls' group	2	3	0	0	*5*
Boys' group	1	3	1	0	*5*
Year Six					
Mixed group	1	2	1	2	*6*
Girls' group	2	2	2	0	*6*
Boys' group	1	2	0	0	*3*

N.B. There were also two Year Five mixed-sex groups, and one Year Four mixed-sex group, in the pilot study at Crowborough school.

All 145 children took part in individual interviews. The questionnaire used in the pilot study was administered to the Year Six (10-11 year olds) and Year Three (7-8 year olds) classes at Crowborough school, and was completed by seventeen 7-8 year old boys, nine 7-8 year old girls, eleven 10-11 year old boys, and eight 10-11 year old girls. Concerning the interviews with parents, fourteen were conducted in total. One of those interviewed was the parent of two children participating in the research. Thus interviews were conducted with parents of 15 children (10%) involved in the research.

Feminist Methodological Concerns

I have explained in Chapter One that my concern to conduct this investigation emerged from my desire as a feminist to discover more about the ways in which children construct gender and power, in order that my findings might be used for emancipatory purposes. In declaring my political motivations I am taking a traditionally feminist methodological stance (see for example Stanley and Wise, 1993; Brewster, 1980; Stanley, 1990; Maynard and Purvis, 1994; Griffiths, 1995a). These writers suggest that all research is inherently subjective, but that most traditional researchers are unwilling to admit this as it means rejecting masculine concerns and claims of 'scientific objectivity'.

In this section I examine feminist methodologies, and the extent to which my methodology exemplifies such an approach. There has been much discussion as to whether or not an identifiable feminist research method exists. Stanley and Wise (1993) argue against the traditional feminist view that feminist research should be conducted by, concerned with, and for women (e.g. Kleiber and Light, 1978). They propose that the main goal of feminist research should be its emancipatory aims (which the former concerns do not necessarily guarantee), and as such should include research of the oppressor as well as the oppressed (males, as well as females). This position is supported by Kelly, Burton and Regan (1994), and although no single feminist method exists (Weiner, 1994; Stanley and Wise, 1993), this goal of emancipation appears to be a consensual starting-point in recent feminist thought (e.g. Maynard, 1994; Kelly, Burton and Regan, 1994; Griffiths, 1995b). Thus there appears widespread agreement that feminist

research is politically motivated, and hence unequivocally subjective: moreover, that feminists should make this point explicit in their research. So far, I argue, my research fulfils this criteria. Leading from this consensus it is also agreed that feminist methodologies should reflect these emancipatory and reflexive aims, and that this can be done by acknowledging the role of the researcher in the practice of research (thus countering discourses of science and objectivity), and by making the methods as unexploitative as possible (Stanley and Wise, 1993; Maynard, 1994). Other feminists argue further that feminist methodology, as well as research, should be emancipatory (Duelli Klein, 1983; Opie, 1992).

I will address each of these issues in turn. In my explanation of chosen methods and elsewhere I acknowledge that my presence must affect the children's group constructions, and the discourses they draw on in their responses and interaction. Thus my methods conform to the feminist recognition of the subjective nature of research methods (Stanley and Wise, 1993; Maynard, 1994), and the claim that feminist or 'emancipatory' research should be reflexive (Weiner, 1994; Troyna, 1993). However, the issue of 'unexploitative methods' is more complex, and relates to the further question of 'emancipatory methodology'.

I shall first examine my different research techniques in the light of such feminist discussion, arguing that they can be described as unexploitative. Denscombe (1995) argues that group work empowers respondents to a certain extent, and that concessions such as allowing respondents to choose their seating arrangements can also help them to feel more in control. My use of role play incorporated both these aspects, as well as allowing children to choose their own roles and decide the course and lengths of the play, thus allowing the children a certain amount of control. Questionnaires fall into the 'quantitative techniques' category traditionally viewed with suspicion by feminists (see Maynard, 1994), yet Kelly, Burton and Regan (1994) contest this position, arguing that questionnaires can be useful, and need be no more exploitative (indeed, they are often less intrusive) than other methods (see also Stacey, 1988). My questionnaires were administered in class, and thus the children had little option but to do them, which could be seen as exploitative. However, my reason for abandoning the questionnaire following my pilot study was the inability for children to qualify their statements, and the one-sided lack of redress (for instance, children had to answer my questions, and could not in turn ask me

any). The interviews were semi-structured, to allow children space to talk about their own concerns. Children frequently prolonged the interviews in order to chat, ask me questions, or to confide in me. Their questions were sometimes extremely personal, but I made an effort to answer them in view of the fact that they had been prepared to consider and answer my questions: thus I feel this approach created an atmosphere of mutual respect, and positioned me in a more equal position to the child than more traditional, 'objective' interview techniques. I also attempted to position myself as closer to the child and less as an adult authority figure by using colloquial speech, and, where possible, the children's terminology. In the same way, my responses to the children's answers were subjective (for instance, sympathetically shocked if a child told me about an incident of sexism or bullying): this seemed to make children more relaxed because of the supportive atmosphere and chatty informality, and because their contributions were being taken seriously. The children were also able to listen to their interview tape if they wished.

Thus I would conclude that my methods minimised the exploitative atmosphere of a 'scientific experiment', and empowered children as far as possible within my methodological aims. However, the claim of Stanley and Wise (1993) that the researcher should not view or present themselves as intellectually privileged over the researched becomes especially problematic when working with young children: obviously to attempt to maintain such a 'non-privileged' position would involve falsification. While I attempted to position myself as closer to the children than teachers, my position as an adult interviewing children remains, and such differences of power and experience inevitably affect the interview (Phoenix, 1994). However, children appeared to relish this situation in which their statements are seriously, and confidentially, listened to; a point supported by the findings of Troyna and Hatcher (1992) and Skeggs (1994), who argue that children enjoy such respectful conversation, and gain a feeling of self-worth when their views are taken seriously by an adult.

The next question concerns the notion of 'emancipatory research', which aims to change society through research: does my methodology constitute an example of this? Denscombe (1995) describes his colleague Bob Bennett's research as 'emancipatory' and 'partisan' in that he approached his research with a similar aim of change, and promoted his views within his methods (Bennett, 1991, was using group work to examine attitudes to dance in schools, with the aim of

raising the status of dance in schools). Like feminists, Bennett has rejected notions of 'objectivity', and as his reasons for conducting research were political, so his methodology was unashamedly political, and actually confronted those respondents with opposing opinions. His methods aimed to raise the consciousness of the participants. Vicks (1990) and Holland *et al* (1995) share this concern, arguing that children could take the meaningful experiences gained from participation in their research to their 'real' world, and Skeggs (1994) similarly argued that girls were politicised, and thus empowered, through their participation in her feminist research, as they were able to articulate and thus understand their experiences. While less explicitly partisan than Bennett's, my research held a similar function: gender issues were explicitly discussed in the interviews, and although I never contradicted the children's sexist statements, I did question their justification for these. Moreover, I often supported children's anti-sexist statements. The possible raising of consciousness through my methods raises two ethical concerns: firstly, for those children whose anti-sexist constructions have been supported and strengthened through their participation in the research, and secondly for those children whose sexist responses have been undermined through their participation (of course, participation will have affected children in different ways: some children may remain unaffected, and others might have strengthened their sexist constructions by articulating them). The awareness of children whose anti-sexist statements have been supported has been raised, but as Denscombe (1995) observes, social reality has remained the same, which could leave children vulnerable. An example from my data is a girl's report about two girlfriends whom I had interviewed previously: in their interviews they had complained about the boys' refusal to let them join in at football (and had received my sympathy). According to the first girl these girlfriends had, following their interviews, challenged the boys about this, but had again been rejected by the boys. However, Denscombe suggests that the advantages of greater awareness outweigh such possible disappointments. The issues of children whose sexist constructions may have been undermined are more problematic: as Denscombe points out, while 'giving voice' to those who share the researcher's constructions, the voice of those whose responses differ can be repressed. Thus Denscombe concludes that 'emancipatory research' cannot necessarily be said to benefit all participants, and may still be experienced as oppressive by some.

So, is 'emancipatory' research 'unexploitative', and is it really significantly different from other, more traditional forms of research? The pupils' limited control in my methods, and my provision of reports on my findings to the schools concerned (that the respondents might benefit from my findings), may not alter power dichotomies significantly between the researcher and the researched. As Stanley and Wise (1993) observe:

"ethical issues and dilemmas are solved neither by 'being nice' nor by 'taking research back', because alongside ethical issues and dilemmas concerning the use and abuse of 'subjects' are epistemological issues; these concern whose knowledge, seen in what terms, around whose definitions and standards, and judged by whose as well as what criteria, should count as 'knowledge' itself" (p. 202).

Denscombe (1995) notes that the researcher, in ethnographic as much as positivist research, initiates contact with respondents, chooses the setting, selects the interview sample, guides the interview process, takes responsibility for recording events, formally terminates the interviews, and analyses the outcome. My research is no different. Thus I conclude that the best we can do as feminists is acknowledge these problematic issues in our research; and indeed, this self-reflexivity is an aspect of feminist research in itself (Weiner, 1994; Glucksmann, 1994; Stanley and Wise, 1993).

'Race' and Social Class

Ethnicity has been shown to have an impact on research (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1982; Marshall, 1994; Phoenix, 1987): it affects the discourses one has recourse to, and positions of power within discourse. White feminists have been criticised for ignoring this issue (or viewing racial discrimination as interchangeable with gender discrimination) in the past (see hooks, 1982, 1989; Phoenix, 1987; Arnot, 1985). While as a white feminist my position obviously differs from black feminists (Collins, 1991), I was concerned that my research should acknowledge the existence and difference of all ethnic groups, rather than ignoring the existence of 'non-whites' in my research, or marginalising ethnic minorities and presenting them as Other (Phoenix, 1987).

There is a certain dilemma for all white researchers when interviewing respondents from racial minority groups which is discussed by Edwards (1990). She does not wish to present black people as 'abnormal' by focusing on their differences with whites; yet neither wants to exclude or ignore black people. She argues that when interviewing black women she found that positioning herself as a woman rather than a white person helped the interview rapport, but Phoenix (1994) warns that shared womanhood is not enough to eradicate problems of racial power positioning. In *The Empire Strikes Back* (1982) the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies criticise white people researching black people; they claim differences in status, and white people's lack of understanding of what it means to be black, mean that white researchers are not able to elicit 'meaningful' responses from black respondents. While my research did not focus on the black community, but on children from different ethnic groups in a primary school context, these power positionings concerning race inevitably impacted on my interviews with children from ethnic minority groups. Thus I recognise that, besides gender, class and age, race was another factor affecting the power dynamics between myself and my respondents in my interviews with children, and that this must have affected discourses drawn on by my respondents.

Likewise, social class has also been found to impact on children's discourses (Walkerdine, 1990; Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989). However, analysis of children's use of discourse according to race and social class is beyond the scope of this study (which could not cover everything), but would constitute important further research concerning children's discursive power constructions.

Categorisation of 'Race' and Gender

Due to the concerns discussed above it appeared necessary to categorise children according to 'race', as well as gender and age, in order to explain the numbers of children from different ethnic groups included in the study. I did not ask children how they would describe their racial origins, as they or their parents might have felt concerned about my motives for enquiring. Therefore unless they told me themselves I ascertained their racial origins myself from their appearance, name, and information they gave me in the interviews. Concerning my categorisation of gender I refer only to biologically assigned sex, as I disagree with the attempts of some psychologists to 'measure' masculinity and femininity according to their pre-conceived ideas about what these categories consist of

(see Signorella, 1987; Skitka and Maslach, 1990; Lloyd and Duveen, 1992; Bem, 1981; Spence and Helmreich, 1978). Besides failing to see how such measurements can be in any way useful, I would argue that, rather than measurable characteristics, masculinity and femininity are relational positions which are constructed in discourse, and which can be accommodated or resisted.

Transcribing

My interview transcripts follow the basic conventions (Stubbs, 1983; Edwards and Westgate, 1987; Billig, 1992), highlighting pauses, emphases, interruptions, etc. (see figure 2:1). The video transcripts are more complex and detailed than the individual interviews because there are more people involved, and non-verbal communication must be recorded also. Thus for the videos I have added a transcript device in order to include description of non-verbal communication.

Figure 2:1

(.) Short pause.

(2) Pause of two seconds duration (number changes to indicate length of pause in seconds).

= To indicate lack of pause between speakers; for instance when one speaker gives way to another.

[
[To indicate two or more people speaking at the same time.

Italics To indicate emphasised words

.... Inaudible speech.

{} Descriptive addition, e.g. {giggling}

: To indicate a long, drawn out word, e.g. No:o

[ ] My addition, for instance explaining what someone is referring to.

( ) Descriptive addition to observe gestures, expressions, and the direction and object of speech (i.e. to record who a person is talking to).

All the children's (and teachers', etc.) names have been changed, but I have replaced the names with gender and ethnicity-appropriate alternatives. In the transcript extracts the child concerned is represented by their pseudonym initial (i.e. Tracy = T). I am represented throughout as 'I' (I = Interviewer).

Whenever I refer to a child or their transcript, a coded identification follows their name, representing their gender and age. Hence 'Claudette (F, 10)' describes Claudette who is female (F), and ten years of age (10). Gender is represented by 'M/F' for 'male/female', and the child's age is given in years.

Analysis

I use a discourse analytical approach (see Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Davies, 1989; Burman and Parker, 1993), the theoretical benefits of which are discussed in Chapter One. Following Davies (1989), Davies and Banks (1992) and Nilan (1995), I use both poststructuralist 'analysis of discourse' and more general 'discourse analysis': as I noted in Chapter One, Potter *et al* (1990) use these headings to distinguish between poststructuralist identification and examination of discourses (see, for example, Parker, 1990a, 1992; Foucault, 1972, 1979, 1981; Macnaghten, 1993), and the examination of discourses as situated practices (see, for example, Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Gill, 1993). The identification of discourses in my analysis is based on the list of features provided by Parker (1990a) (see Chapter One): however, I found that this criteria had limited use in its lack of clarification concerning the distinction and separating out of different discourses. In identifying discourse, Macnaghten (1993) observes that it is not adequate to simply use grammatical evidence as indication of a discourse's presence (for instance, relying on key words and phrases). He argues,

"Discursive constructions obviously use grammar but what lies central to each construction is not the use of the same grammatical terms but the social relationship encapsulated by these terms, the outlook they engender, and the activities they legitimate" (p.55)

Therefore, I attempt to identify discourse in terms of social functions rather than simply in grammatical terms: as well as reading and rereading the transcripts in order to note phrases and keywords linked to the issue of gender (see Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Marshall and Raabe, 1993), I pick out narratives which produce gender in certain ways. In this I follow Macnaghten's process of coding transcript extracts to identify text relating to gender, and then coding the different discourses implicit in these extracts. This approach raises difficulties, however: as Macnaghten himself observes, some arguments were more explicit than others in their link to the topic of study. This raised few problems when analysing children's talk in the interviews, as these discussions were largely about gender, but became more relevant when examining the role play texts. Macnaghten has observed a further complication, in that many of the different discourses shared similar grammatical forms (e.g. the phrase 'that's sexist' could occur in equal opportunities, or innate equality discourses), which made them hard to distinguish from one another. However, I argue that this problem can be overcome by analysing the narratives according to their differing social implications. Thus I attempt to identify the different gender discourses in children's responses, and analyse the ways in which children appear positioned and position in gender discourse during interaction. Drawing upon Foucauldian (1980) ideas of 'colonisation' of discourse by institutions, and Gramscian (1971) theories of hegemony, I use the term 'hegemonic discourses' in my data analysis when referring to discourses are dominant in society, and which are born of, and support, powerful groups or systems (e.g. the discourse of individual freedom, which supports capitalism; see Sampson, 1989).

In response to arguments that discourse analysis is oppressive in its claims to 'discovery' and textual closure (Moir, 1993; Stenner, 1993; Marks, 1993), I acknowledge my own use of discourse and positioning in discourse. I include a transcript extract in my appendices (see Appendix 4) so that readers can assess my interpretations of the text, and apply their own interpretations if they wish (see Gill, 1993; Wetherell and Potter, 1988). Discourse analysis has also been criticised for its lack of political orientation: it is easy simply to identify discourses in responses, and to neglect the way that language impacts upon social relationships and material power (Parker and Burman, 1993). As I observed in Chapter One, an analysis of the ways in which gender and gender discourse impacts upon discursive power positions is central to my research aims. To do this I frequently combine poststructuralist theory of discursive positions with

modernist counting; providing figures to count the children's different gender constructions, with the emancipatory intention of identifying the different types of gender construction, that we are better able to understand and change them. For the same reasons, I also attempt to *list* the different discourses children use within my research in their constructions of gender.

In analysing my qualitative data I used 'The Cut-Up-And-Put-In-Folders Approach', as described by Bogdan and Biklen (1982), and Tesch (1990). This involved making several copies of the interview transcripts, and then categorising the data into different areas I wanted to analyse. The data is analysed according to age and gender. It is not analysed by school, class or ethnicity: while the sample of schools was chosen to include a broad cross-section of London children of different races and social classes, specific analysis of these factors is beyond the scope of this study.

Summary

I have demonstrated the reasoning which lead to my choice of combined methods involving group role plays, individual interviews, and questionnaires, and the rationale behind my choice of sample. Further, I have described how the data is analysed according to age and gender, and catalogued the mechanics of my methodology. Issues of power and reflexivity have been considered, with an acknowledgement that problems of power can never be completely eradicated from research.

CHAPTER THREE: CHILDREN'S TALK IN INTERVIEWS ABOUT GENDER IN THEIR LIVES AT SCHOOL

This chapter investigates children's constructions of gender in their lives at school, analysing their responses according to the three categories discussed in Chapter One: children's constructions of the genders as different or the same, oppositional or not oppositional, and a source of discrimination or not a source of discrimination. The chapter is divided into ttwo sections: in the first I attempt to contribute to understanding of how children take up gender identities as different and oppositional. In Chapter One it was observed that poststructuralist approaches have been criticised (e.g. by Harstock, 1991; Lloyd and Duveen, 1992; and Soper, 1991, 1993b) for their lack of engagement with the ways in which discursive positions impact and constrain people in their day-to-day lives. Thus in order to engage with this issue, the second section investigates children's discussion and reports of sexism in school, drawing attention to some of the ways in which children construct gender in their lives. The data discussed in this chapter is drawn from individual interviews with children and parents.

A) CHILDREN'S CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER IN THEIR LIVES AT SCHOOL

This section will explore children's constructions of gender in their interview responses. In their observational studies of the primary classrooms, Davies (1989), and Jordan (1995) catalogue the ways in which gender is actively constructed, accommodated, resisted, and manipulated by children, and argue that gender is constructed by children as *relational*: as masculinity is defined by its difference to femininity, children construct gender as two relational groups. While I agree that children often constructed the genders as relational, I suggest that there were occasions when children constructed the genders as different, but not necessarily relational to one another (see Chapter One). Thus I use the more inclusive word 'different' to describe such constructions.

I noted in Chapter One how gender category maintenance has been found important for perpetuating the gender dichotomy, and maintaining stable gender identities (see Davies, 1989; Davies and Banks, 1992). Thorne (1993) observes that children often construct 'the girls' and 'the boys' as *rival* groups, and as such in opposition to one another (see Chapter One). I will argue that in this study, gender category maintenance is evident in the children's constructions,

and that because of this many children constructed gender as *oppositional*. This exploration of children's gendered constructions then leads to a discussion of the contradictions within these, resistance to gendered constructions, and children's constructions of gender as the same. The hegemonic discourse which presents the genders as different, described by Davies (1989), and Davies and Banks (1992) as the 'discourse of gender duality', is referred to here as that of 'gender dichotomy': I prefer this term because it more adequately evokes the contrast between genders which it portrays.

This analysis of children's talk about gender begins by reporting their responses to the interview questions. Those I asked children concerning their constructions of gender were:

a) 'Do girls and boys behave differently in class or not?'

b) 'Are girls and boys just acting differently, or are they really different inside ?'

The first question was devised to discover whether or not children presented classroom interaction as gendered, and (if they said that the genders *do* behave differently) the differences they reported. The second question intended to find out whether they said that any gender disparities in children's behaviour are due to superficial, or to inherent, differences between the sexes (in a sense asking them to contribute to the 'nature or nurture' debate; see Archer and Lloyd, 1982).

Children's Presentation of a Gender Dichotomy

i) Children's Construction of the Genders as Different

In response to the question 'Do girls and boys behave differently in class or not?', 95% of the girls, and 75% of the boys, provided affirmative answers. Moreover, although around a third of children said they did not know or did not respond when asked whether the genders are simply acting differently or are really different inside, over a third of children opted for the response that differences in behaviour between genders are due to the genders being different inside rather than just acting differently: 36% of girls, and 32% of boys, said that girls and boys are really different inside (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Are girls and boys just acting differently, or are they really different inside?

AGE	7-8		10-11	
	girls	boys	girls	boys
	%	%	%	%
different inside	47	36	25	28
just acting differently	25	24	49	40
don't know and no response	28	40	26	32
N	*36*	*33*	*39*	*25*

These figures suggest a general consensus among the children involved in my study that the two gender groups behave in different ways in school. However, the figures suggest a contrast between the age-groups' constructions of differences between the genders: far more children in the older group said that differences in behaviour involve just acting differently than their younger counterparts (the majority of whom said that boys and girls are different inside). The younger children's greater support of the idea that the genders are different inside could be seen as part of gender category maintenance: I observed in Chapter One that research suggests a reduction in the assertion of gender-marked traits amongst children in the older primary years (see Durkin, 1985; Davies, 1989; Lloyd and Duveen, 1992). Thus the older children may be less keen to rigidly assign types of behaviour as inherently gendered, explaining the difference in responses between the age-groups.

In their discussion of these questions, and of other subjects concerning their school life, children often alluded to gender as though there is a clear dichotomy between the sexes, supporting Davies' (1989) suggestion that children take up gender positions as though the two genders are relational. I found that they constructed the genders as visually and behaviourally different. These two kinds of difference were often inter-related in children's constructions.

ii) Children's Construction of Gender as Different Through Visual Signs and Behaviour

I now examine the constructions of gender in the children's talk, showing that visual *signs* of gender, involving stereotypically gendered accessories, clothes, and behaviour, play a crucial part in children's construction of gender identity. Hence it is demonstrated that they construct gender as *visually* and *behaviourally* different: gender identity appeared strongly connected to outward signs. Hence children take these up as signifiers of their gender allegiance. I go on to argue that such processes encourage many children to construct gender as *oppositional*: either in opposition, or as opposite to one another (see Chapter One).

Clothes appear important indicators of gender identity. When I ask Zoe (F, 7) whether boys behave differently to girls in her class, she replies, "Yeah, because boys don't wear skirts, or kni-knickers, or mini-skirts or belly-tops or, or that sort of stuff (.) and they don't wear ribbons in their hair". The link between clothes and gendered behaviour is emphasised when I ask Zoe *why* boys do not wear those clothes, as she replies (laughing at my question), "Because (2) *they* like, like *Streetfighter 2* and like *wrestlers*, and say, *Oh, Yeah*". Such visual behaviour (watching 'macho' films and sports, and using particular phrases) is still connected to outward appearance and signs, and Zoe poses boys' engagement with these as the reason boys do not wear 'feminine' clothes. Gender-typed clothing was taken up almost as a *part* of one's gender. For example, Somina (F, 11) maintains that women cannot be builders because they wear dresses, and when I point out that women can wear trousers Somina replies, "Ye- yeah, but, like, they don't um (.) they don't feel very good with trousers on, or something, like *they* [men] do". Thus women cannot perform the traditionally masculine job of builder because they wear dresses, and dresses appear here a part of the identity of being a woman. Similarly, Zoe (F, 7) claims that to be a builder a woman would have to "dress up as a boy". The gender dichotomy appears so fixed in Zoe's construction that to take up a traditionally male role a woman must actually appear to be a male.

These findings echo Davies' (1989) argument that gender is a public achievement. Similarly, Thorne (1993) points out that where gender boundaries are evoked by children, they are often accompanied by ritualised or stylised forms

of action: a visual show. Catia (F, 8), a keen cyclist, points out the connection with clothing and identity when complaining about having to wear a dress as part of her school uniform: "in this dress you wouldn't think I like cycling, would you?" In Catia's mind it seems that her dress identifies her with non-physical pursuits. Catia observes that children look different when wearing their school uniform. Similarly Rebecca (F, 8) tells how she convinced some boys that she could play football by scoring a goal in high-heeled shoes: these shoes appear linked to the boys' accusation that she was too "girly-girly" to play, and Rebecca's pride is based upon the fact that she scored a goal *despite* wearing these shoes. Both these examples also demonstrate the link between feminine clothes and an inability to engage in physical pursuits: as well as signalling a gender difference, the clothes actively enforce it by encumbering girls thus and reducing their ability to engage in 'masculine' activity. By encouraging girls to wear dresses or skirts as part of a school uniform, some schools help to enforce this situation. Regarding the link between outward signs and gender identity, the following extract from Zoe's (F, 7) transcript is revealing. Having pointed out that girls wear different clothes from boys, she continues:

Z: But there's *one* girl in our class who wants to be a boy, and there's my friend called Rosanne, and she dresses as a boy, she won't have *anything* in her hair

I: Does she? what do you think about that?

Z: Erm (2) *strange*

I: Strange (.) but you don't mind, or do you?

Z: Mm, don't really *mind*, but (.) *Sarah* says that she's a boy, but *I* don't really believe her

Thus we see again how what you wear can indicate your identity, as Sarah claims that she *is* a boy, not just that she would prefer to be one. While Zoe says that she does not believe Sarah, her declaration includes the uncertain and hesitant qualification "really" ("I don't really believe her"), suggesting that Zoe has at least considered the legitimacy of Sarah's claim. This illustrates both the ways in which outward signs of gender depict gender identity for them, and the reason that gender category maintenance is so important for children: Sarah's claim of masculinity suggest that she *is* a boy despite her biological sex, showing how easily gender can be thrown into doubt, and presenting a challenge to the gender dichotomy and thus to the gender identities of other children.

The conversation continued:

I: Do you think there's a good reason to want to be a boy, for a girl? {Zoe shakes her head} (.) no, how come?

Z: Because (.) *I* think girls are good enough

I: Yes

Z: They might like, girls are much more, like, if you're, if you don't beat up people you're more like girls, and, like if you *hurt*, if you hurt each other that's *not* more like, girls, and, like this girl called Sarah in my class-

I: Mm

Z: She says that, she's gonna do play fighting today, and I don't think *that's* very good *either*

Zoe's rejection of the validity of girls attempting to be boys raises a complex issue: rather than rejecting the aspiration to maleness because it is 'wrong' or 'unnatural', Zoe argues that "girls are good enough", implying that her girlfriends want to be boys because they see males as superior, and that she is defending girlhood against this sexist suggestion. From this perspective, Sarah and Rosanne are presented as traitors to girlhood, and Zoe's visual femininity as solidarity with girlhood. She supports her claim that "girls are good enough" with the example of the negativity of male violence, suggesting that girls do not "beat up people", and criticising Sarah for her engagement in "play fighting". However, this criticism of Sarah's behaviour could also be interpreted as gender category maintenance on Zoe's part.

Often gender-appropriate behaviour, or gender itself, appeared very much connected with visual signs in children's constructions. For example, in my study Yve (F, 8) explains that boys behave differently from girls because boys "spit on the ground". The difference in children's toys according to gender was often referred to (Barbie dolls being alluded to as a girls' item by boys so frequently that one could suggest a male yearning for this media-hyped toy). Henshaw *et al* (1992) and Lloyd and Duveen (1992) have demonstrated that children categorise toys by gender, and Dixon (1990) and Delamont (1980) have argued that gender-typed toys socialise children into traditional gender roles. I support Lloyd and Duveen's (1992) finding that children actively take up these gender-typed toys as signs of their gender identity, in the same way that Thorne (1993) observes

children taking up particular playground games to affirm gender distinction. Rather than passively being persuaded to take up such forms of play by the forces of socialisation, children use such toys to demonstrate their gender.

So far the examples of the achieved nature of gender identity have concerned girls: Buckingham (1993) and Middleton (1992) both argue that masculinity also has to be achieved. In his observation of primary school boys' discussion groups, Buckingham has shown they can mutually support one another's fragile constructs of masculinity. There are several instances in my data concerning such gender maintenance which support Reay (1990b) and Askew and Ross' (1988) findings concerning the immense pressure that conformity to masculine culture places on boys. Listening to the parents of some children gave me insights into aspects of their lives which the children themselves would probably not have presented to me. Shofic's (M, 7) mother told me that Shofic hates defeat, particularly by girls, and said that he had been too embarrassed to tell his mother about a serious incident when four girls over-powered him and tied him up in the playground (the incident had been relayed to her by teachers). Tim's (M, 11) mother told me that he had saved up for weight-training equipment himself and devised his own rigorous training programme because he is so self-conscious about his small size. Apparently lack of physical strength, or being overpowered by supposedly 'weaker' girls, can undermine the fragile masculine identity. Jordan (1995) argues boys construct masculinity by positioning themselves as 'Other' to 'wimpy' boys as well as girls: thus failure to achieve 'proper masculinity' bears the risk of being relegated to the status of 'girl'. This extract from my interview with Leke (M, 7), is illustrative:

I: Do you think in your class, um girls act differently to boys?

L: Uh, girls play with dolls and boys play with, toys, but I would like to be a girl

I: Would you?

L: Yeah, because girls have more toys and Barbies, what do boys have? those crush dummy things, stupid things {laughs}

I: Yes, why can't you play with Barbies when you're a boy?

L: (.) Cos the girls do

I: Mm, do you play with Barbies at all or not?

L: (.) Nah

I: No (.) just cos they're girl's things?

L: Well, you can get Barbie *men*

I: Yes (.) what do you think, I mean what [would people think =

L: [Like, with the Barbie Men Car innit, you have to have the *pink* one

I: Yeah (.) what do you think people would think if you *did* play with Barbies?

L: (.) They'd think I'm a gay

I: Yeah, why - why would that be though?

L: Cos girls' things are for girls and boys' things are for boys

I: Wh- do you think that's fair though? (.) what about girls playing football and things like that, should they be able to play football?

L: Yeah

I: Yeh

L: A lot of girls don't like playing basketball, because they think that basketball's only for girls

I: For boys, you mean

L: For boys, I mean

I: But it's not is it?

L: No

I: But the thing is, some girls *do* play football and basketball don't they, so wouldn't it be fair if boys were allowed to play with dolls and things as well?

L: *Yeah*

I: Mm (.) do you think that one day it'll be like that?

L: Yeah

Leke's interest in, and wish to play with, dolls, is quite clear; to the extent that he declares he would like to be a girl. However, he is adamant that being a boy and playing with dolls is not possible: the crossing of gender boundaries is prevented by a strong form of gender category maintenance involving the censuring fear of being called 'gay' - in other words, being defined as *not properly masculine.* Thus Leke, who presents himself in a very 'hard', masculine manner, is forced to repress his yearnings for feminine expression.

Many of the examples above demonstrate the inter-related nature of gendered visual signs and gendered behaviour: for example, a girl playing with a doll is taking up a visual sign of her gender identity, and engaging in gendered

behaviour. According to many of the children, boys behave in different ways to girls, and are interested in different things. They presented the genders as behaving distinctly in the classroom. Many primary classroom observational studies have reported differences in behaviour between girls and boys: Spender (1980; 1982) and Haworth *et al* (1992) describe boys as rowdy; Sarah (1980), Spender (1982) and Riddell (1989) describe them as disruptive, and Vicks (1990) and Haworth *et al* (1992) observe them to be preoccupied with violence. Conversely, girls are observed in similar research to be diligent (Spender, 1982; Belotti, 1975; Walkerdine, 1988), sensible (Walkerdine, 1990; Belotti, 1975) and quiet (Stanworth, 1981; Sealey and Knight, 1990). When I asked children whether they thought girls behaved differently to boys in school (and vice versa) the children universally generalised about 'the boys' and 'the girls', almost as though they were two separate species. Of course, this was encouraged by the nature of my question: I was asking whether there were any general differences, and evoking the gender dichotomy as I asked whether the behaviour of the two sexes was different in the classroom, and this may have produced a particularly generalising response. However, the differences in behaviour the children most often mentioned were those observed by feminist researchers in the past. Reports included: boys "muck about more" than girls (Mark, M, 11), boys in the class are naughtier than girls (Cathleen, F, 7), "boys shout a lot, and girls don't" (Lesley, F, 7), and boys "muck around" and fight more (Paulina, F, 10). Concerning the girls, children reported that: "the girls behave more properly than the boys" (Lucinda, F, 7), girls are "more sensible" (Marguerite, F, 7), and that girls work harder and talk less than boys (Robert, M, 7). Thus children's constructions of classroom behaviour during their discussions with me support the observations of researchers listed above concerning gendered behaviour in the classroom.

iii) Children's Construction of Genders as Oppositional

I argue further that many children actually constructed the genders as *oppositional* in their talk with me. This involved either presenting them as *in opposition*, or as *opposite* (see Chapter One for a further discussion of this issue). Thus while the children referred to above maintained that, for instance, the boys are rough*er* than the girls, or that the girls work hard*er* than the boys, some other children suggest that the two groups actually behave in opposite ways. For example, Salim (M, 10) says that, "boys behave a bit rough, and girls behave a

bit sensible", and Catia (F, 8) observes that males are competitive (like to "rush ahead"), whereas females prefer to do things collectively. Lucinda (F, 7) presents the two gender groups as opposite, declaring, "girls are good and the boys are bad". Other children depicted the genders as in opposition, evoking a 'battle of the sexes'. For example, Rebecca (F, 8) observes that, "the women think that *girls* are the best, and the men think that the boys are the best, like every time a baby's born they say I wish it's a boy (.) or I wish it's a girl", and Veronica (F, 7) claims that boys hate girls, and that she hates boys.

Thus my findings offer support for Davies' (1989) argument: that in a society where everyone is positioned as male or female and where one's gender is an integral part of one's social self, the taking up of gender signifiers, and the maintenance of these, is extremely important for children. My findings also suggest that children's construction of gender as relational may result in oppositional constructions amongst many children as they take up dichotomous forms of behaviour to signify their gender identity. However, the ways in which children constructed gender was in no way unitary, as Zoe's report of Sarah's behaviour demonstrates. I turn now to a discussion of children's understanding of the construction of a gender dichotomy.

iv) Children's Construction of Gendered Behaviour as "Just Acting Differently"

Despite the large number of children who opted for the response that girls and boys are different inside, a similar proportion (37% of girls and 31% of boys; see Table 3:1), stated that the genders are not different inside, and of these children many said differences in behaviour between genders at primary school are 'put on' for various reasons. Some argued that gendered differences in behaviour are due to constructions about acceptable modes of behaviour for girls and boys: Vanessa explains of boys, "Like if someone died they can't - when they wanna cry they keep it in cos they say Oh only women cry and babies". It was usually *boys'* behaviour that was used as an example of this by both girls and boys, suggesting that it is their modes of masculinity which are most noticed by children to be socially constructed. For example, Salim (M, 11) observes that boys often like and admire girls, but when boys talk to girls despite their best intentions, "they start messing about, they don't like her, they start swearing at them and stuff" because they are embarrassed in front of their friends. Paulina

(F, 10) argues that boys think girls are attracted by a show of masculinity, so try to act accordingly:

I: Why do you think boys do things like that, like tease girls?

P: Well, y'know just to show that they're big and tough

I: But they're not all bigger are they?

P: No

I: And why's it so good to be tough, for them?

P: I, I dunno really, y'know, makes everyone think Oh wow, he's so tough, an', y'know, really I think, that the only reason why boys act that way, yeah? Is cos they think girls like it (.) they think the girls will like them being big and strong, and -

I: Mm, and do you think the girls do like it?

P: Well, some do, but not all (.) I mean really, a girl would only like a boy, y'know like really, like my mum, she's known this guy for a long long time since she was a little girl, and she really likes him

I: Yep

P: So you know, if you've known someone for a very long time and you really love them and that, that's love (.) not if, y'know, someone beats someone up and then Ahhh, y'know, He's so *spectacular*

This 'macho' behaviour was pointed to by many children to demonstrate the way boys deliberately act in a certain way in order to impress, although the majority of these children identified the motive to be impressing male friends, rather than girls as Paulina suggests. Samantha (F, 11) argues this point in the following extract, claiming that the boys' competitiveness and silliness simply shows their efforts to impress their male friends:

S: I think they [boys] just want attention

I: Mm (.) why do they want attention when girls don't, though?

S: I don't know, quite a lot of boys are show-offs and want to be the best

I: (.) M, yeh

S: And show their friends that they can do everything

I: Why do you think girls don't need that so much though?

S: Cos if you've got proper friends you don't really have to do that

I: And boys don't?

S: Well, I think boys think that they have to like, pass a test to be with their

friends, or something like that

As well as noting boys' repression of their emotions as socially motivated, Vanessa (F, 11) also demonstrates an awareness of the social pressures and policing which children engage in concerning gender roles when she explains of boys, "they try not to cry because they're scared of what their friends might say, Oh you're a baby, and things". Hence Vanessa reports an instance of gender category maintenance, as did a number of other children. Thus many children, particularly in the older age group (see Table 3:1), presented gender differences as superficial, or 'put on' for various reasons.

Children's Construction of Genders as *Not* Different

As I observed earlier, only 5% of girls, and 25% of boys, said that boys and girls do not behave differently in the classroom. Of these, many went on to present the genders as different later in their interviews. However, seven boys (11%) and four girls (5%) consistently constructed the genders as the same throughout their interviews, maintaining there is no difference between girls and boys in behaviour or ability. In addition, a number of children question and resist the gender dichotomy, often pointing to its over-generalisation, observing that boys do not *all* behave one way, and girls another. Lynn (F, 7) suggests that girls ostracise boys because, "they probably think that all boys are the same as Andrew, cos he's really silly 'n' they probably think that they're all like that". She maintains that this generalisation is inaccurate. When asked whether girls are different from boys, Charity (F, 11) replies, "*some* of them are the same, *some* of them are, completely different". She goes on to explain that some girls and boys are keen to try the same activities. Catia (F, 8) observes that girls are different from one another, saying "some girls, they like to be like *girls*, but some girls, they want to be on their bikes" (the latter type includes Catia). I ask if these differences matter, and Catia replies that she does not think it matters, but, "It's just that the girls who don't want to be on their bikes and want to be *girls*, they say {whingey voice} Act like a girl, not like a boy (.) it's not fair on me because, my friends, they're like, *girls'* girls, and they hardly ever go out on their bikes". Catia is not like Sarah and Rosanne (discussed above) who are reported to want to be like boys: she simply appears to find the gender category maintenance of the '*girls'* girls' trying and restricting. Catia also explains how boys claim to be stronger than girls, but points out that she has seen a girl who is stronger than boys,

concluding that the generalisation is unfounded. Thus seven girls (9%) and two boys (3%) objected to over-generalisation concerning behavioural and physical differences between genders, and the expectation that people will conform to these stereotypes. The majority of children who either constructed gender as the same or protested at the over-generalisation of the gender dichotomy were from the older age group: only four of them were from Year Three. Again, this may be due to higher gender category maintenance amongst the younger children.

Contradictions Within Children's Constructions of a Gender Dichotomy

Children's constructions of gender were not unitary, but fluctuated and contained contradiction. For instance, Michael (M, 7) describes how his friendship with Samantha overrides gender boundaries:

M: Well, well sometimes, like my *friend*, right, Samantha, right, she , um she plays boy games, and if I want her to, boy games - if she's playing boy games (.) then other times, I play *girl* games

I: Right, so you can be with her=

M: *Yeah*

I: Your mate, yup, yup

M: So when I swap over, she swaps over as well, so then I swap over again

Michael appears to have no qualms about engaging in "girls' games", thus resisting gender boundaries. Yet he still refers to a clearly defined dichotomy of "girls' games" and "boys' games": the assumptions of gender difference still remain unchallenged in his discourse. Contradiction and resistance does not necessarily mean that the construction of difference is contested. It was sometimes surprising to see the extent to which the hegemonic construction of gender duality could contain contradiction without the construction being challenged: a further example is my interview with Leon (M, 7), who generalises about inferior female strength throughout our discussion of gender and adult work, yet later surprised me by his description of playground games. He claims that the girls are selfish because they do not let the boys join in at their games, and I ask him which games these are:

I: What do the girls play that's different from the boys?

L: They play, they play um um um *rough* games, that, um, y'know, some

games of tennis where you *bash* the ball {makes bashing noise}, 'could get in someone's eye -

I: Is this the boys now? or the girls?

L: Thass the girls

I: The girls, yeah (.) so they play rougher games than the boys? don't they let the boys play?

L: Yeh

I: Right (.) and what do the boys play?

L: They play kind of er, they play big games, sometimes they play football (.) it's hard, sometimes it's very hard tackling, but, but they're so tough they can take it, but Tenac's not tough, every time 'e gets knocked over, {I laugh} one little knock over, and 'e's crying

I: {laughs} So which is tougher then, playing football, or playing the girl's games like tennis and that?

L: (.) Tennis is tougher

Leon's assertion that women are weaker than men and thus might not be able to adequately perform manual work had led me to assume that he constructed girls as weaker and less robust than boys. My confusion shows when I ask whether it is the boys or the girls he is describing: I found it hard to equate the idea of male physical superiority with his construction of the girls' tennis games as rough ('tougher' than the boys' games). My resulting questions may have put words into Leon's mouth: however, he persists in stating that tennis is "tougher". This contradiction did not appear problematic to Leon. Hence the dominant construction of genders as different appeared to have the capacity to contain much contradiction and resistance.

This suggests that children tend to take up our societal construction of gender as different in their talk about gender in their own lives, and often apply this construction to their classmates. Supporting the findings of Davies (1989), Buckingham (1993), and Middleton (1992) I found that gender appears painstakingly *achieved*, and show how it is maintained through visual signs and behaviour which signify gender identity. I argue further that these behavioural differences manifest in the formation of two separate, albeit fluid and shifting (see Thorne, 1993), gender cultures. While I do not use the term 'gender cultures' to suggest essential entities, as Thorne (1993) argues social psychologists have done (see, for example, Maltz and Borker, 1983, Lever,

1978), it seems an apt description of the children's polarised constructions. Some children observed a separation into competing genders in their interview talk, presenting the genders as in opposition: for instance, Denzel (M, 7) states, "Girls *and* boys think they're better than each other". The cultures were also presented as opposite: I have shown how, when asked whether girls behaved differently to boys, many children's responses support a dichotomy where boys are silly and naughty, and girls are sensible and hard-working.

However, besides children's own constructions of the genders as oppositional, it is important to note two other possible reasons for the construction of gender cultures amongst school children. The first is the way that some aspects of school life mark gender: for instance, the allocation of separate facilities for girls and boys (Tanvier (M, 7) observes that girls and boys are not allowed to share the same changing rooms); and teacher's referral to, and categorisation of, children as 'the girls' or 'the boys' (see Lloyd and Duveen, 1992; Holland, 1981; Whyte, 1986; Clarricoates, 1980; Thorne, 1993). Thus the construction of gender cultures may be encouraged by the school environment. A second explanation for the segregation between genders so evident in schools, which was commonly observed by children of both genders, is the taboo of relations between opposite sexes. A girl or boy playing with, or forming a friendship with, a child of opposite gender is often accused of 'fancying' them, and is open to ridicule for this. Salim (M, 10) reports this to be a strong factor in children's reluctance or hesitancy to mix with the opposite sex, and this is supported by Thorne's study (1993) which found children giving similar explanations for their gender-segregation.

Despite finding that many children constructed gender as different and even oppositional, the gender dichotomy was by no means straight-forwardly accepted and taken up in children's interview discussions: constructions were not unitary, but shifted in discussion, and sometimes contained resistance and contradiction. However, the construction of genders as different and relational is the most common among the children I interviewed (mirroring society at large), and the capacity of the dominant construction to contain such contradiction appears a cause for feminist concern.

B) CHILDREN'S CONSTRUCTION OF SEXISM IN SCHOOL

This section examines children's discussions in interview of sexism in school. This constitutes an attempt to 'ground' discourse analysis in an investigation of the social implications of gender discourse: as I noted in Chapter One, writers such as Spretnak, (1993), Soper (1990, 1993b), Ramazanoglu (1993) and Maynard and Purvis (1994) have voiced concern at poststructuralist analyses' lack of engagement with 'social reality', and the power differences which exist within our society. In keeping with my 'postmodern-modern' approach I intend here to investigate the relatively unresearched question of whether children constructed gender as a source of unfair discrimination, or not. I discuss children's reported experiences and descriptions of sexism in school, and their reports of strategies they employ to cope with or resist it.

'Sexism' is described in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as,

> "The assumption that one sex is superior to the other and the resultant discrimination practised against the supposed inferior sex, especially by men against women; also conformity with the traditional stereotyping of social roles on the basis of sex". (1986)

While the second part of this definition appears rather generalised and sweeping, I use the first part of this definition here: by 'sexism' I refer to any verbal or physical manifestation of the assumption that one sex is superior to the other. This includes, then, assumptions that one gender is inadequate, the practice of unfair gender discrimination based on this assumption, and physical or verbal abuse on the basis of gender. 'Gender differentiation', discussed in the previous section, may also be sexist, but is not the main focus here.

The data I refer to is drawn from my interviews with children: some interview questions inquired specifically about sexism in children's lives. These were:

1) 'Do you know what the word "sexism" means?'
2) 'Do boys ever pick on girls just because they're girls, or girls pick on boys just because they're boys?' (if they had provided an appropriate definition of 'sexism' I simply asked them whether sexism occurs in school).

The first interview question was designed to discover how many children were able to give a definition of the word 'sexism' which specified gender-

discrimination, or the idea that one sex claims to be superior to the other. The extent of children's understanding of the word is discussed to provide a basis on which to investigate their observations and reports of sexism, as well as providing insight as to the extent of the permeation of discourses on sexism in the primary school. Short and Carrington (1989) examined six-year-old children's discussion of gender and work, and conclude that young children have little understanding of sexism, as they did not recognise the existence of sexism in the adult workplace: I examine whether this lack of understanding of sexism applied to the children in my study in talk about their own lives. The second question investigates children's accounts of sexism between pupils in school, and was designed so that those children who did not understand the word 'sexism' could still discuss the issue.

This analysis of children's talk about sexism in their own lives begins by discussing the number of children that defined sexism in terms of gender discrimination, explaining that where few of the 7-8 year old children could give such a definition, a majority of the 10-11 year old group were able to. The large number of children who claimed to have observed incidents of sexism in the primary school are then reported, and I demonstrate that a majority of girls maintained they had been victims of such sexism. I then consider the constructions of those who said sexism did not occur in school. Analysing children's discussion, it is explained that the types of sexism children reported to be practised by fellow pupils included:

a) verbal abuse
b) teasing
c) physical abuse
d) discrimination and sex-stereotyping of activities
e) exclusion from activities

Finally, I examine children's reports of a variety of strategies of resistance to sexism.

The Numbers of Children Who Understand the Word 'Sexism', And How Many Construct Gender as a Source of Discrimination in School

Children's understanding of the word 'sexism' varied greatly according to age: see Table 3.2. 'Relevant example' refers to children who provided an example of

sexist behaviour (e.g. 'It's like when boys don't let the girls play football'), rather than an appropriate definition of sexism.

Table 3.2: Children's responses to the question, 'do you know what the word 'sexism' means?'

AGE:	7-8		10-11	
	girls	boys	girls	boys
	%	%	%	%
Appropriate definition (possibly with example)	6	3	56	52
Relevant Example Only	3	6	3	12
Don't Know (or inappropriate definition)	83	82	31	28
No Answer Given (silence, or question not put)	8	9	10	8
N	*36*	*33*	*39*	*25*

These figures support Short and Carrington's (1989) finding that younger children appeared to have little understanding of the word sexism: only a small percentage of 7-8 year old girls and boys in my study gave definitions based on the idea of discrimination against persons because of their gender. A few children in this age group provided an example as an explanation; but the overwhelming majority did not give an appropriate answer. Most of these children claimed they did not know, while a small number confused 'sexism' with 'sex', and gave answers either concerning biological gender, or sexual activity. However, the responses of the 10-11 year old group showed a very different picture: 54% of girls and boys provided an appropriate definition of sexism, and a further 8% gave relevant examples instead of a definition. The figures depict a similar level of understanding of the word sexism between boys and girls in each age group. Thus the older children generally had a greater understanding of the meaning of the word than their younger counterparts, and there was little difference in proportions of girls and boys offering an appropriate definition.

Being able to provide a definition of sexism as gender discrimination indicates *some* understanding of the concept. I found that the majority of the younger

children could give examples of sexism when asked whether girls pick on boys simply because they are boys, and vice-versa, yet most said they did not know what the word sexism meant.

I had expected that the older children's greater understanding of sexism would lead to greater awareness of the issue, and therefore to higher numbers of 10-11 year olds claiming to observe sexism in school. However, this was hardly the case, as the figures concerning the observation of sexism are very similar for both age groups. About 80% of girls, and 60% of boys, in both age groups, maintained they observed incidents of discrimination or antagonism based on gender between children in schools: see Table 3:3.

Table 3.3: 'Do girls pick on boys just because they're boys, or boys pick on girls just because they're girls, in school?'

AGE:	7-8		10-11	
	Girls %	Boys %	Girls %	Boys %
Yes	81	58	79	60
No	6	30	13	20
Don't Know and No response	14	12	8	20
N	*36*	*33*	*39*	*25*

Thus the majority of children constructed gender as a source of discrimination in their schools. The large proportion of children claiming they observe instances of sexism in school, compared to the smaller number of those who could define the meaning of sexism, suggests that many children may not yet be able to label such experiences as sexist.

Of those children who specified that they observe instances of pupil sexism in school, 80% of girls gave examples of sexist incidents of which they were either specifically or collectively on the receiving end (e.g. 'Oh, the boys always make fun of the girls'). The remaining 20% gave examples of things which had happened to females other than themselves, whereas only one boy claimed that

girls in his class were sexist against him. This could arguably be due to 'macho' discourses which construct such complaints of victimisation as unacceptable for boys, yet there were several complaints from boys concerning racism and bullying. The children's accounts give a picture of primary school in which sexism between pupils occurs frequently, and where it is almost exclusively practised by boys, against girls.

Children Who Did *Not* Construct Gender as a Source of Discrimination in Their Lives at School

Table 3.3 shows that, while the majority did report having observed sexism in school, more boys than girls said that it did not occur, and thus did not construct gender as a source of discrimination in school. There are three possible explanations for this. Firstly, boys may be less aware of the issue, due to not being the target of gender-discrimination. Secondly, girls could have exaggerated the extent of sexist incident between pupils. Lastly, boys may attempt to portray society as non-gender-discriminatory due to a wish to disassociate themselves from sexism and patriarchal power. In his analysis of modern masculinity, Middleton (1992) observes people's tendency to avoid focusing on their power advantages, and in their study of rhetoric and dilemma in ideology Billig *et al* (1988) point out that people are embarrassed by power because of our culture's strong discourses of egality and democracy: hegemonic discourses of democracy mean that power advantage is felt to be totalitarian, and thus disguised or denied. Such denial of power advantage could explain the boys' lesser construction of gender as a source of discrimination.

Children's Accounts of the Different Types of Sexism Experienced in School

In this section the types of sexism reported by children are categorised and discussed.

Verbal Abuse

Male derision of things female is often portrayed in the verbal insults girls frequently reported experiencing from boys. Reema (F, 9) describes how boys often make fun of girls' hair and clothes, and Chantelle (F, 7) informs me that the

boys call the girls 'stupid names'. When I ask her what the girls' response to this is, Chantelle replies:

C: We argue back, but they always seem to win
I: Aww, why?
C: They've got more cusses

Her explanation echoes the findings of Lees (1993), who demonstrates that girls are severely restricted in their ability to chastise boys by the lack of vocabulary of insults relating to masculinity: the massive majority of such words denote femininity. In response to my question of whether she experiences sexism from the boys, Sharma (F, 11) explains how the boys call her names, and cannot accept similar action by a girl:

S: Well, I have to say, they [boys] do say that to me (.) they say Oh go away you big nose, or Go away, I don't wanna sit with a girl
I: Mm
S: Because when I'm speaking to Claudine, they butt in (.) so I say Oh why can't I do the same thing, I mean, they do it to me so I do it to them, and they say Oh go away, we don't wanna play with no girls, and stop ....
I: So they don't like it when you act the same way they do, is it?
S: Mm, yeh

Thus both Chantelle and Sharma illustrate the difficulty they have in retaliating in the face of the boys' verbal abuse.

Teasing

A major source of complaint from the girls (and often reported by boys, though none admitted to participating in such behaviour), was male teasing, based on claims of female inadequacy. For instance, Tracy (F, 7) claims that boys tease girls "because they think they're more tougher", and Matthew (M, 11) reports that one boy told girls that, "men have got real muscles and ladies have got paper muscles". Besides these claims of female inadequacy, a second type of sexist teasing commonly described by children involved open ridicule and disdain of things female, simply *because* of their being female/having female associations: Thorne (1993) observed a high instance of this in her study. Thus

Rebecca (F, 8) explains that she would like the boys to join in with the games she plays with her girlfriends, but that they won't: "they don't want to, say It's too girly-girly-girly". Similarly, during their role play Mike (M, 8) asserts that Tanvier (M, 7) should play the part of nurse "because he's a girl". Mike goes on to tell me in his interview that Tanvier is "a poofter" because, "he hits girls and girls hit him", suggesting that Tanvier's masculinity is revoked by participating in brawls with girls (whom Mike declares "wimps": obviously the words 'wimp' and 'poofter' themselves imply a lack of masculinity).

Physical Abuse

While the former types of sexism were verbal, the third type of sexist incident described by children was physical. Incidents of male violence against girls were reported frequently in all the schools except Lady Mary, and several girls claimed that they themselves had been on the receiving end. For example, Lesley (F, 7) describes:

L: Once I got beat by Johnnie Lipton cos, 'e had this yellow paper, I put it back, I took it from him, nearly, and 'e just punched me in the belly, an' I was crying on the floor, and then he grabbed a chair and nearly threw it at me, but I stopped it

I: Just because you stood up for yourself? that's awful isn't it? and does that sort of thing happen a lot? (.) {she nods} yeah?

L: He bullies a lot of girls

Claudine (F, 7) reports that when she refused to let a boy join in her game, he responded in the following way:

C: =And then he came and just banged my head on the wall, then I told Miss and then he *punched* me in front of them, and I had to go to Miss Locker, and then he said I punched him

I: Oh that's terrible

C: And I didn't

Annette (F, 7) describes:

A: (.) They [boys], sometimes they push me on the floor an' I tell them off,

some, ..., or someone, told, told them off and (.) we tell it to Miss Lewis

I: Right, why do they push you on the floor?

A: Because they don't like girls

Michael (M, 7) informs me:

M: Well, it's *mostly* boys that tease the girls, cos um (.) some of the boys, right, get into a group, make up a plan, and then start, start going up to the girls, throwing basketballs at them =

I: Do they?

M: Yeh, kick footballs at them, [and, going, coming up to them and like, you know when um, sometimes when =

I: [Oh *dear*

M: =they get into groups, put hands over s-, s- {gestures}

I: Mm (.) shoulders?

M: The boys, they put hands over shoulders, and put, make a line, and then they start *kicking* them in, kicking them in the back

Similarly, Vasilis (M, 7) explains with concern how the strongest boy in his class picks on one girl whom he dislikes for no apparent reason, and beats her up, and Jason (M, 7) reports that he has to stop other boys hitting girls in the playground, and that, "some boys go up to girls and get them by their hair, and pull 'em around like that". One would imagine that boys would not report to behaving in such violent ways towards girls themselves, but in the case of one particular incident (widely relayed to me in horror by female classmates of the girl concerned), Ryan (M, 8) appeared completely unabashed by his part in the incident, and relayed the events with bravado in his interview:

R: See cos erm me an' Sarah had a fight the other day, and I just *b- battered* her up, *mashed* her up, she needed to go and have some *bad injuries* fixed

I: Oh? that's not very nice

R: Not *bad* injuries just some plasters and =

I: Mm (.) what was that about?

R: Oh, she just threw a tennis ball in my face and I went up to 'er, got 'er in a headlock and started beating 'er up

Many of the girls were as large, or larger, than their male counterparts, and a few were confident of their physical strength: for example Ketchy (F, 9) and Alma (F, 7) observed that they could beat up any of the boys in their classes. Yet such self-confidence was very rare, and most girls appeared intimidated by male physical assertion. Davies (1989) observed that girls appeared to lack the relevant fantasies in order to envisage themselves as physically powerful, whereas the boys were very physical in their interactions as well as having access to fantasies of physical strength (e.g. superheros, sports personalities, etc., see Jordan, 1995). Certainly from their reports girls in my study appeared almost entirely at the boys' mercy when it came to physical confrontation, and there was some suggestion of boys using violence to censure female behaviour (see also Herbert, 1989; Lees, 1993). For example, Veronica (F, 7) relates how one boy, "says he hates girls (.) but of all the girls he does hate me", and that although he is naughty, if she is naughty he violently reprimands her.

It was not only girls that reportedly suffered violence and discrimination at school. Several instances of physical bullying at the hands of other boys were related to me by boys in their interviews. For example, Jason (M, 7) confides that:

J: I'm sometimes *really* naughty, and sometimes I tell mum I don't wanna come to school
I: Why?
J: Cos people hit me
I: Who does?
J: *Big* people (.) children upstairs in other classes
I: Oh no, you should tell Miss Cutter if people are picking on you
J: I have, a few times, but not much happens (.) she, I've told her about Deyo, who's upstairs, and she hasn't done anything about them (.) and there's been loads of complaints about them
I: Have you talked to the headteacher about it?
J: Yes (.) she just has a little conversation about it, and then they don't care, they still do it
I: Do they just bully you do they?
J: Yeh
I: What do you do back?
J: Nothing (.) but now I'm a bit bigger, so my dad tells me to hit back

Whitney and Smith (1993) and Cullingford and Brown (1995) have shown the huge extent of bullying in the primary school, and Whitney and Smith observe that physical bullying is mainly practised by boys against both girls and boys. Grabrucker (1988) has observed that when her young daughter was on the receiving end of violence from boys her age, the response of the boy's parents was that she should 'learn to stand up for herself against boys', as though this would provide gender equality. Grabrucker observes the solution should not be for girls to become more violent, but for boys to become *less* so.

Discrimination and Sex-stereotyping of Activities

Another point occasionally referred to by children reporting incidents of sexism concerned boys' gender-differentiation over activities or work. This often involved claims of female inadequacy, or that work is divided into 'men's jobs' and 'women's jobs'. For instance, Roxanne (F, 10) reports how, when water was spilt and the teacher told a boy to clear it up, the boy concerned replied "That's a *woman's* job". This type of sexism could apparently be applied to boys as well as girls: I have examined the pressures on boys to take up restrictive masculine constructs (see the previous section), whereby conformity to masculinity was apparently enforced by other children. For example, Vanessa (F, 11) relays how, besides girls being told that football is for boys, boys are told that skipping is for girls, and Baresh (M, 8) is told by girls that he cannot play the part of chef in a role play because men cannot be chefs.

Exclusion From Activities

Exclusion of children from activities due to their gender was frequently alluded to. The most commonly referred to example was of male refusal to allow girls to play football. This example is connected to sex-stereotyping of activities discussed in the previous section, in that the boys' reported refusal or reluctance to include girls in football games is based on the assumption that girls cannot play football, because they are *girls*. In all four schools in which I conducted research, I observed that the majority of playground space was dominated by boys playing football. Such male domination of the primary school playground has been widely reported (Whyte, 1986; Davies, 1989; Thorne, 1993). However, the girls in my study claim that besides simply 'hogging' this playground space, many

boys were determined to maintain it as an exclusively male one. As Vanessa (F, 11) explains, "Like, if we're playing, if they're playing football, and a girl comes up and says, Can I play, they say No you're a girl, only boys play football", and Tarlika (F, 11) observes that, "Li:ike, sometimes when they play football they just say that boys are good at it, girls are- they can't play properly (.) and they sometime don't let, when we just played football today, they just say that I'm not gonna choose you for *my* team". As Tarlika's words indicate, at each school a few girls were apparently sometimes 'allowed' to participate in the boys' football game. However, according to many girls and boys there is persistent conflict between genders, and anxiety on the part of the girls, as the girls on the periphery of the boys' football space demand to be included in the game. Occasionally the girls reported that individuals or groups of girls were accepted into the game, but they said that this was only with explicit permission from the boys, and was presented as a favour and privilege. Moreover, once allowed into the game the girls said that boys often focused on and belittled them: as Sally (F, 11) complains, "Well, the um, the boys, if they, the girls ask if they can play football, they play, but if they lose they blame it on the girls".

In their reports about male exclusion regarding football, girls occasionally complained about some of the very boys who had maintained an egalitarian stance on this issue in their interviews. Thus it seemed that there was a discrepancy, either caused by boys positioning themselves as egalitarian in interaction with a female interviewer, while drawing on gender-discriminatory discourse in the playground; or by girls gaining the sympathy of a female interviewer by bemoaning the supposed behaviour of specific boys. Short (1993) found that while many children in his study rejected sexist stereotypes during their interviews, they also participated in gender discriminatory behaviour: this leads him to conclude that these children, "lack the courage of their convictions" (p.84). However, I suggest that rather than children being necessarily hypocritical, they draw on different gender discourses depending on the interactive environment (see Buckingham, 1993). Sally (F, 11) is a member of the girls' football team; and her interview demonstrates these concerns about male sexism, as well as this latter point concerning discourse, in her interview. (Biko was one of the boys who said that girls could also play football in his interview).

I: (.) Um, in the class, in your class do you think boys and girls- like, do you think boys act differently from girls and girls act differently from

boys, or not?

S: Yeah, cos when we have a boys' and girls' match and they win, they boast about it, but when the girls win - cos we beat them one day - and they just, we just left it, like that (.) but they boast about it

I: Right, why, why do you reckon that is?

S: Cos, they just, like to show off

I: Right (.) are there other things, like things that happen *in* the classroom, that are different, or not?

S: (.) Mm (.) when we're playing football, outside though, and sometimes the team's losing and the boys go Oh it's the girl's fault, they're playing again

I: Oh right cos - d'you have a mixed team then, is it?

S: Yeah sometimes, if they let us play

I: Thing is, if you don't get enough practice, then you won't get better, will you?

S: No

I: It's not really fair (.) Hmm

S: And they expect us to be all good but they hardly let us play it

I: Right, right (.) and do you say that sort of thing to them?

S: No

I: No

S: Cos with Matthew you don't get a chance to say nothing

I: Who's Matthew?

S: Oh, this boy in our class

I: He's like, the best footballer, or something?

S: No:o, he's just, he won't let me play, and=

I: Is he one of the ones who says that girls can't=

S: Yeah, and Biko

I: Right

S: And they don't let Evanga play

I: Is she good, is she?

S: Yeah, she's not bad

Boys were also occasionally reported to be the victims of sexism in the form of exclusion from activities. One class in my study stood out regarding the issue of female sexist exclusion. The Year Six class at Lady Mary School contained more girls than boys, and this class was peculiar, in that the majority of examples of

sexism given by children involved female discrimination against boys. The single boy in my study who complained he experienced sexism also came from this class: unfortunately I was only able to interview two boys from this class, otherwise the figure might have been higher. This situation was reported to stem from a group of girls in the class, headed by Naomi (F, 11), who apparently maintained an exclusion towards the boys and things male. Thus Sandra's (F, 10) example of sexism is that:

S: Well, some girls in my class, they don't um, we have packed lunches boxes and they don't like putting their pack lunch boxes in the same boxes as boys
and things, I think it's silly
I: Why is that?
S: I don't know some people just hate boys

She continues,

S: Sometimes the girls won't touch the boys, they, if they touch them accidentally they have to go and wash their hands and things
I: Cos you've got a lot more girls in your class, haven't [you?
S: [Yeah:
I: So do you think it's more in your class, girls being horrible to boys, or is it the other way round as well, or not?
S: (.) Most of the boys are quite friendly, I think it's mostly the girls who are, who're doing that sort of stuff and things

Lucy (F, 10) defines sexism as, "It's well (.) being, um, (.) when um (.) for example if um a girl hates boys and always goes Ooh I hate boys". She explains that this happens in her class: "Well, there's a girl called Naomi, and um like quite a lot of the girls including me um don't like this boy and um, (.) we're always trying to avoid him and if he um, if he comes near us we go Euughh {laughs}". Naomi (F, 11) herself is the only person who uses her own actions as an example of sexism, when she explains, "Well like (.) most people have called *me* sexist before because I, I don't exactly go around touching boys and everything (.) and things like that". When I ask Mark (M, 11) if sexism occurs around the school he replies,

M: *Yeah, Naomi is* cos she doesn't like going next to the boys (.) she moves our bags to the back or something, or=

I: Why d'you think she does that?

M: Cos she doesn't like being next to boys

Mark appears aggrieved by Naomi and her friends' actions, demonstrating that such sexist exclusion by girls can be upsetting. However, despite the high profile of female sexism in this class, Charity (F, 11) observes in her interview that although Naomi is notoriously anti-male (which Charity claims to find stupid), the boys in her class also practice sexist exclusion in that they refuse to let the girls play football with them.

The children's descriptions of such incidents often suggest that forms of sexism may be used by children to aid gender category maintenance. For instance, exclusion, verbal abuse, or teasing, of the opposite gender, may reinforce gender identity by the positioning of the other gender as 'Other' (this point is discussed further Chapter Five). Similarly, discrimination and sex-stereotyping remind other children of their own gender categories, as well as positioning them as Other through ridicule. Many of the reports of male violence against girls were described as starting when a girl resisted or disputed a boy: developing Lees' (1993) and Herbert's (1989) theories that male harassment of girls may serve to police and regulate their behaviour, the reported physical violence against girls may serve as gender role policing to 'keep girls in their place'.

To recap, the majority of girls (64%) claimed to have experienced sexism at the hands of the boys in school, and reports of the different forms of sexism included verbal abuse, teasing, physical abuse, discrimination and sex-stereotyping of activities, and exclusion from activities. Some instances of female sexism were also reported. I suggest that sexism may be an excess of gender category maintenance processes: a further, observational study of children's interaction in the primary school would be required to examine this suggestion further.

How Children Claim to Respond to Sexism

All the children who reported to observe sexism in school presented it as unjust: this may have been due to the phraseology of my interview question (i.e. the phrase "picking on", which evokes a negative image). This section examines the

reports of some of these children concerning their different types of resistance to sexism. I found six different strategies of resistance in the data: 1) telling a teacher, 2) rebuking the sexist person 3) ignoring the sexist person, 4) arguing for equality, 5) collective resistance, and 6) demonstration of equality. The children's explanations regarding the effectiveness of these strategies in achieving their aims of challenging or avoiding sexism are now discussed.

Telling a teacher was frequently referred to as a means of defence or reproof. For instance, Lucinda (F, 7) informs me that when boys say girls are weak she retorts, "if you're going to say that I'm going to tell a teacher", and Catherine (F, 8) tells me that in such instances she would, "Tell Miss Karner (.) but I wouldn't, beat them up or anything". This latter answer suggests possible keenness to provide the 'right' answer, which I feel may have motivated more children to say that their response to sexism was to report the incidents to authorities: school ideology maintains that one should inform the teacher when victimised, rather than respond with violence or hostility (see Thorne, 1993). However, despite this possible source of exaggeration, complaining to an adult was reported as a resource often utilised by girls in response to the sexism of boys, and this suggestion is supported by the findings of Thorne (1993), who maintains that 'telling the teacher' is a strategy utilised commonly by children of both sexes, but most often by the girls. Thorne also observes that, though theoretically encouraged in educational environments, 'telling the teacher' often remains frowned-upon by individual teachers as 'telling tales'. She goes on to point out that such attitudes have particularly negative consequences for the girls, as the less physically assertive pupils often have few other forms of recourse. The success of this strategy was also thrown into doubt by some children: while Sorrel (F, 10) claims that complaining to a teacher works, the more common response was that telling a teacher worked 'sometimes'.

Two girls described using rebukes to silence sexist boys, but said that the boys persist in spite of this. Kate (F, 10) describes how some of the boys in her class, "go, Oh women are just, girls are just *so weak*". Her response is to tell them to be quiet, but she explains they simply retort, "You're so weak, you're so weak, you can't tell me what to do". Similarly Natasha (F, 10) explains that one boy in her class, "always goes that men are better than women": she tells him that it is not true, yet he persists. Ignoring sexism may be a successful strategy in terms of avoiding sexism or trouble: Salim (M, 10) claims that when he hears people

being sexist he 'just moves away from them', as he 'doesn't like getting involved in these things'. While this strategy may save him from becoming involved, it does not challenge sexism in any way. Likewise Vanessa declares that when boys claim that games should be gender-segregated she takes no notice of them as she believes their views wrong, yet this does not challenge the boys' assumptions.

Other forms of resistance to sexism appeared to be more successful in *challenging* it: one of these was argument and dispute of sexism, usually based on theories of gender equality. For instance, Emily (F, 10) says her response to boys' claims to male superiority is to argue, "we're all equal and we can erm, can all do things, cos we're all good at some things", and Ketchy (F, 9) explains that while she *could* respond to male ridicule of traditionally female roles (such as childcare) with violence, fighting "isn't allowed in The Bible", so instead she argues that 'feminine' roles like childcare are positive and beneficial. These examples suggest that their competence and familiarity with such egalitarian arguments can have social benefits for girls, in that they provide a resource of theory with which to justify their arguments. However, as I will argue in Chapter Seven, such equity arguments do not necessarily challenge the fundamental construction of the gender dichotomy.

According to the children's reports, the most effective method of challenging sexism seemed to be that of collective resistance: girls (and in some cases, boys too), uniting to confront sexism. Thus Sally (F, 11) describes an instance of successful challenge to a boy's sexist behaviour:

S: (.) Erm, there's *one* person in the class that's mainly sexist to girls
I: Mmm
S: But he *knows* that
I: Right
S: Sometimes girls tell him
I: Yeah, and what does he say about that?
S: Nothing happened
I: No, does he stand up for himself about it though, I mean or- you know, does he carry on, or does he stop because they've said he's sexist?
S: Well, he ain't been doing it as much
I: Hasn't he?

S: No

I: Right (.) why do you think that is?

S: Cos 'e knows he's wrong

I: And is that cos the girls tell him off, or teacher, or what?

S: Erm the girls (.) [and the boys

I: [the girls, oh that's good then

S: And the boys er, when he gets like that, some of the boys aren't his friend

Thus challenges by girls are given additional support by some boys, with their penalty of withdrawal of friendship; creating an effective strategy against sexism. And Matthew (M, 11) relates another incident of group resistance:

I: And do you ever see anything like that [sexism] happening in class?

M: Yeah, one of the boys in our class always does it

I: Oh right, really? like what?

M: Like, once he said that, men have got real muscles and ladies have got paper muscles

I: {laughs} Oh right, and what did they say?

M: Ehh?

I: What did the girls say to that?

M: They ran after 'im and 'e had to go in the toilets

Such female group resistance has been shown by Lees (1993) as a particularly effective strategy for overcoming male sexism, and this strategy may have the double benefit of providing feelings of group solidarity, strength and support amongst the girls and anti-sexist boys.

The final method of resistance to sexism that children reported was one of defiant demonstration on the part of girls that they are equal to boys. Referring to an incident I touched upon in the previous section, Rebecca (F, 8) explains how she proves the boys wrong about female ability at football:

R: I went to play with the boys, but they said No, go away, girls aren't allowed to play football, so I said Why not? they said Girls aren't allowed to be goalies, I said *Why*? (.) and they said Cos girls are prissy-prissy, an' I was wearing high platforms-

I: (.) Mm

R: {sighs} - that day, an' I said, I bet you I could score a goal, with high platforms on, *right* now, from *this* white line, with *all* you stopping me (.) and I did

Sharma (F, 11) describes how boys interrupt constantly and try to dominate conversations, and when I ask if there is a way she deals with such behaviour she replies, "Mm, yeah (.) I feel like, I say Ohhh, why shouldn't *I* do it? they do it all the time to me, so I do it to them (.) and inside I think- I, outside I say I'm sorry, but *inside* I'm saying *Yay*, I *done* it". And when asked how she responds to boys physically picking on girls, Lesley (F, 7) observes, "Tell teachers, but sometimes we *don't* (.) cos we can (.) really, boys that are older think they can *attention* us, just cos we're *younger*, but I take no notice of them (.) I don't take much notice of them, if 'e bullied *me* I'd bully 'im back, I don't care what Miss'd say, I'd just stand firm". Hence these children describe themselves assertively supporting their claims to equality with demonstration of their equal ability.

Thus my data illustrates the differing ways in which children report that they attempt to resist sexism, some of which were described as more successful than others. The strategies described as most effective in challenging sexism appeared to be those supported, either by equity arguments, or by demonstration of equal capability. However, such strategies required assertive challenges, and some girls may be too intimidated by sexism to attempt such methods. Moreover, such behaviour may be incongruous with the girls' construction of female identity. These findings regarding children's descriptions of resistance to sexism in school *suggest* that some sexism may be contested by children: observational research would need to be undertaken to explore this issue further.

To recap, I found that about 80% of girls and 60% of boys claimed that they had observed sexism in the primary school. Of the girls that maintained they observe sexism, 80% said that they had been victims of it. Hence, according to pupils, gender is commonly a source of discrimination, and this discrimination is mainly practised against girls. Analysing the children's reports it appears that their constructions of gender may have very real social consequences, resulting in sexism and discrimination. Not all children constructed gender as a source of discrimination in school, however: a minority of children, largely boys, did not report observing sexism in the primary school. Children described different forms of sexism, ranging from verbal abuse to physical attacks. Many different methods

of resistance to sexism were described by children, and these were reported to vary in success: according to the children's descriptions, the most effective forms of resistance were those that required assertion and confrontation, traits which many girls may prefer to avoid as they conflict with the dominant construction of femininity.

Summary

Thus in children's talk about gender in their lives at school the construction of genders as different prevailed. While there was some resistance to the generalisation involved in this hegemonic construction of gender dichotomy, very few children constructed the genders as the same. Visual signs and shows of gendered behaviour serve to maintain relational gender roles, and as such are intrinsically caught up with the perpetuation of the gender dichotomy: with no public demonstration of the difference of gender through gender category maintenance there might be no dichotomy. Such outward displays of gender difference often resulted in children constructing gender as oppositional. This construction was less prevalent than that of the genders as different, but remained common one. It most frequently entailed the construction of genders as behaviourally opposite; however, some children also constructed the genders as *in opposition*. This issue is discussed further in Chapter Five. The majority of children also constructed gender as a source of unfair discrimination, though fewer boys did so than girls. More children presented gender as a source of discrimination than as oppositional.

CHAPTER FOUR: CHILDREN'S TALK IN INTERVIEWS ABOUT GENDER AND ADULT OCCUPATION

This chapter examines children's constructions of adult occupation in relation to gender, investigating the numbers of children that constructed genders as different or the same in relation to adult work, and whether or not they constructed gender as a source of discrimination in the adult workplace. To do so I questioned children about their choices of future occupation, and then about hypothetical scenarios concerning gender and adult work. By analysing their responses I investigated which gendered constructions appeared to prevail, and the ways in which children explained their ideas.

Children's sex-typing of adult occupations has been the focus of previous research, as has their choices of future occupations. Nemerowicz (1979), Robb (1981), Rosenthal and Chapman (1982) and Tremaine (1982) have variously investigated primary school children's allocation of different jobs to different genders, and found a high degree of sex-stereotyping on the part of both sexes. These studies all involved children filling in questionnaires, in which they were asked to assign different occupations to one or other sex, or to both sexes (see Chapter Two for a discussion of this). A later study co-ordinated by Adams and Walkerdine (1986) used similar methods to examine primary school children's sex-typing of adult occupation, and drew conclusions regarding their overwhelming tendency to sex-stereotype. I observed in Chapter Two that the stereotypical responses provided by children in these studies could have been influenced by the questionnaire format. Where the studies above tended to ask children to assign jobs to different genders, my interview questions differed in their concern with men's and women's abilities in adult occupation.

When questioning primary school children about the appropriateness of men or women performing different jobs, Short and Carrington (1989) used qualitative interview techniques: while their findings still revealed a high level of gender stereotyping, the children's answers were less stereotyped than those given in studies using questionnaires. They showed children a sequence of pictures illustrating a woman fixing a car, and asking children to comment on them. If children did not allude to the 'role reversal', Short and Carrington asked them whether there was anything unusual about the pictures, which I argue may have been suggestive, and consequently elicited a particularly gender stereotypical

response. Gendered occupational differences have been found to be perceived as significant by children: Short and Carrington found that primary school boys listed better job choice as the second best thing about being male (following greater physical strength), and when asking children "what is a woman?", and "what is a man?", Nemerowicz (1979) found that nearly a third of the children in her study referred to occupational differences: this category was second only to physical differences.

The majority of the data discussed here is drawn from children's responses to my first set of interview questions: those concerning gender and adult occupation. These questions, in the order in which I asked them, were:

1) What job would you like to do when you leave school?
2) Do men and women have the ability to do all jobs?
3) Are men or women *better* at certain jobs? (If so, why?)
4) Would you use the service of a) a female builder, b) a female lorry driver, and c) a male childcarer?
5) How would male builders treat a new female builder?
6) How would male builders react to a woman boss?
7) Would a boss prefer men to do some jobs and women doing others, or would they have both sexes doing all jobs?

I first asked children about their own choices of future occupations, in order to see whether their choices were gendered. The ensuing questions concerning gender and occupation follow an original line of questioning: some are generalised, while others are very specific. By asking questions on the same theme in different ways, I expected to elicit differing responses from the children. Question Two aims to discover whether children assigned jobs to the different sexes: while this was a very general question, Question Three aims to elicit more subtle preferences. The intention was to discover whether their responses concerning gender and adult occupation differed depending on the type of question asked: thus while questions Two and Three are both theoretical, and possibly rather remote, Question Four is specific, asking children whether they would hypothetically employ non-gender-traditional workers. Moreover, this question alluded to highly gender-stereotyped areas of adult work: 'lorry driver' and 'builder' were chosen as occupations for the hypothetical female worker because of their manual, and masculine images, and 'childcarer' was chosen for

the hypothetical male worker because of its caring, feminine image. Questions Four, Five and Six are also specific. All the questions were designed to probe children's ideas about gender issues in the adult workplace.

My analysis of children's constructions concerning gender and adult occupation begins by reporting the range of jobs children gave as their choice of future occupations. Children's responses to the general interview questions are then discussed in the order above. Having discussed the children's responses from a quantitative perspective, I then turn to an examination of the constructions of gender and adult occupation evident in their answers. Children's explanations of the gender discrimination they talked about are investigated, as are their own constructions of gender and adult occupation.

Before moving to the children's responses to my interview questions, there follows a brief discussion of the extent (and limits) of children's understanding and ideas about adult occupation, as this issue should be borne in mind while examining their statements on the subject.

Children's Understanding of Adult Work

Children's understanding of the adult workplace is necessarily limited by lack of experience: thus their perceptions of it are often constructed from a combination of their own practices (e.g. conceptions of fairness, barter etc.), some experience of seeing people at work and interacting with them, and scraps of information gained from observation and adult talk. Hutchings (1990a, 1995) points out that children recognise that work, or lack of it, is an integral part of adult life: thus children seek to improvise and construct their own explanations to fill gaps in their knowledge. As they often have very limited information concerning power hierarchies (Ross, 1990) and the complexities of market economics and payment (Hutchings, 1995; Ross, 1992; Berti and Bombi, 1988), children's constructions involve imaginative theorising.

Such constructions were evident in some of the data I collected. For instance, a mixed group of 8-9 year olds at Crowborough school agree that hotel staff would continually swap and rotate jobs to prevent boredom: factors of power, status and specific job skills are overlooked.

It is important to acknowledge children's limited awareness of the social and economic dimensions in the adult workplace as a factor in the ideas and constructions presented by children in this chapter: we must remain aware that children's ideas about adult work are often of an imaginative nature due to lack of first hand experience.

Children's Choices of Future Occupation:

This section reports the job choices of the children in my study. I investigated what jobs children said they wanted to do when they left school for two reasons. Firstly, although the jobs children choose at primary school age are unlikely to be their actual future occupation (see Kelly, 1989), their choices provide an indication of which jobs they feel are open to them, and I wanted to investigate differences in choice according to gender. Secondly, previous findings concerning children's job choices have suggested these to be extremely gender-stereotypical: Holland and Skouras (1979), Spender (1982), and Sharpe (1976) examined the job choices of adolescent secondary school girls, and found them to be highly stereotypical. Spender (1982) and Sharpe (1976) found that nearly half the girls in their study thought that office work was a good job for a female, and Spender found that eight traditionally feminine jobs comprised three-quarters of the total jobs chosen by the girls in her study. The eight occupations dresser, and nanny. These findings were broadly supported by similar studies (e.g. Nemerowicz; 1979), including some in primary school (Robb, 1981; Adams and Walkerdine, 1986). This section explores whether a similar, or different, trend was found in this study.

I found the children's job choice to be extremely varied: 35 different jobs were chosen by 81 girls, and 30 out of 64 boys. (See Table 4:1 for full list, with numbers of girls and boys that chose each job)

Table 4:1 Children's Choices of Future Occupation

7 - 8 Yr. old GIRLS		7 - 8 Yr. old BOYS		10 - 11 Yr. old GIRLS		10 - 11 Yr. old BOYS	
Teacher	(8)	Policeman	(8)	Fashion Designer	(6)	Chef	(2)
Artist	(4)	Doctor	(4)	Doctor	(3)	Footballer	(2)
Nurse	(4)	Footballer	(4)	Lawyer	(3)	Sports Coach	(2)
Doctor	(3)	Fire-fighter	(3)	Teacher	(3)	Bank Manager	(1)
Barmaid	(2)	Headteacher	(3)	Performer	(2)	Business Person	(1)
Chef	(2)	Pilot	(2)	Actor	(1)	Comedian	(1)
Receptionist	(2)	Business Person	(1)	Artist	(1)	Cricketer	(1)
Shopowner	(2)	Engineer	(1)	Civil Servant	(1)	Doctor	(1)
Writer	(2)	Hairdresser	(1)	Film Director	(1)	Engineer	(1)
Archaeologist	(1)	Life Saver	(1)	Fire Fighter	(1)	Grand Prix Driver	(1)
Baker	(1)	Movie Star	(1)	Greenpeace Activist	(1)	Graphics Designer	(1)
Ballet dancer	(1)	Petshop Worker	(1)	Newscaster	(1)	Ice Hockey Player	(1)
Banker	(1)	Sprinter	(1)	School Keeper	(1)	Mechanic	(1)
Cafe Worker	(1)	Tennis Player	(1)	Shop Owner	(1)	Pilot	(1)
Headteacher	(1)	Traveller	(1)	Vet	(1)	Something w' maths	(1)
Manager	(1)	Unemployed	(1)	Work with Animals	(1)	Sprinter	(1)
Patient	(1)	World Traveller	(1)	T.V Star	(1)	Don't Know	(3)
Pizza Hut Worker	(1)	Don't Know	(5)	Don't Know	(6)		
Playground Supervisor	(1)						
Vet	(1)						
Don't Know	(4)						
TOTAL:	(44)		(40)		(35)		(22)

(There was also one nine year old girl who wanted to be a scientist and one who wanted to be a housewife, and two nine year old boys who wanted to be policemen.)

It should be observed that in the case of 134 of these children, this question was asked during the interviews immediately after their role play based on adult occupational scenarios: some children's choices appear to have been inspired by the work roles in their plays (e.g. patient, receptionist). However, their choices remain diverse, demonstrating a significant divergence from previous findings that girls' occupational choices were very narrow (Spender, 1982; Nemerowicz, 1979; Adams and Walkerdine, 1986). Moreover, three of the eight most listed

traditional jobs in Spender's study (air hostess, nanny, telephonist,) were absent from girls' choices in mine, and there is a reduction in the proportions choosing other traditionally 'feminine' jobs. While these studies are not directly comparable to mine because of their use of questionnaires, and Spender's work was with fifteen-year-old secondary school girls, my findings offer a suggestion that girls in my study may see more jobs as open to them. Generally I found the girls to be more realistic in their choices than the boys, who often listed sporting, super-star or very unusual jobs: thirteen boys stated they wanted to become sports stars, one boy wanted to be a movie star, one a T.V star, and one an astronaut. The girls' choices were usually more down-to-earth, with some exceptions (for instance, fashion designer, film director, TV star). However, their choices were not unambitious: they included scientist, headteacher, solicitor, and newscaster. The jobs chosen by most girls were also quite different from those in Spender's study.

However, the job choices were quite distinct according to gender, supporting Kelly's (1989) finding that girls and boys choose different jobs. These figures also show that many of the girls chose arts-based jobs (e.g. artist, writer, fashion designer, ballet dancer), or caring/public service jobs (e.g. teacher, nurse, doctor, vet). The boys more often chose sports-based occupations (e.g. footballer, sports coach, cricketer), or science and business-based jobs (e.g. engineer, bank manager, business person). This highlights an arts/caring trend in the female choices, compared to the sciences/sports trend in the male ones. Thus, although the choices were more diverse and less stereotypical than previous studies have suggested, a binary gender dichotomy of art - female / science - male (observed by Stanworth (1981) and Whitehead (1996) in sixth form pupils' subject and career choices), still appears to remain in the children's job choices. Moreover, few children chose jobs traditionally performed by the opposite sex: one girl chose scientist, one chose film director, one chose fire-fighter, and three chose solicitor. Of the boys, the only one to cross the gender barrier was the boy who chose hairdresser, suggesting that boys may be even more averse to crossing gender boundaries than girls (see Lloyd and Duveen, 1992).

More 7-8 year olds chose traditional occupations than their older counterparts (for example, eight 7-8 year old girls chose teacher, and four chose nurse; and eight 7-8 year old boys chose policeman). Possibly their lesser knowledge concerning the variety of jobs available in the adult work market made their

choice more restricted. I suggest their choices may also be more motivated by gender stereotyping than those of the older children: this view is supported by Damon (1977) and Lloyd and Duveen's (1992) argument that gender role identification tends to be strongest between the ages of 5 and 7, and then gradually lessens until adolescence. Certainly this interpretation was supported by the younger girls' choices: for instance, all four choices of nurse, eight of the nine choices of teacher, and all three choices of receptionist, were made by 7-8 year old girls. It is also supported by Damon (1977), who suggests that sex-stereotyping concerning occupation decreases as children reach the upper primary age-group.

Thus my findings show greater diversity and flexibility in female job choice than has been found in previous studies involving different age-groups, and a number of girls chose powerful, high-status jobs. Younger children chose gender stereotypical jobs more often than their older counterparts. However, a binary gender dichotomy appears to exist between the *type* or *attributes* of jobs chosen by girls and boys, and few children chose jobs which are traditionally performed by the opposite sex.

Children's Responses Concerning Gender and Adult Occupation

The Ability of the Sexes to Do All Jobs

Here my findings concerning the second question, which asked children whether men and women have the ability to perform all jobs, are discussed. Their responses were found to be more egalitarian than suggested by previous studies, as a majority maintained that women and men could do all jobs.

80% of the 81 girls claimed both sexes have the ability to do all jobs, as did 61% of the 64 boys. Thus the majority of girls gave an egalitarian response, and were supported by a smaller majority of the boys. I found that the older children provided the most egalitarian responses (see Table 4:2)

Table 4:2: Do men and women have the ability to perform all jobs?

AGE:	7-8		10-11	
	girls	boys	girls	boys
	%	%	%	%
Yes	67	45	90	76
No	19	42	0	8
Don't know and no response	14	12	10	16
N	*36*	*33*	*39*	*25*

The children's response to this question is in stark contrast to those given to teachers in Adams and Walkerdine's study (1986), Tremaine (1982) Cann and Haight (1983), and Rosenthal and Chapman (1982), when few children assigned occupations as 'could be done by either' (men and women). I suggest that a different methodological approach elicits a different response: when given the task of deciding whether different occupations were 'a man's job/ a woman's job/ could be done by either', the children in Adams and Walkerdine's study assigned nearly all jobs as 'male' (apart from extremely stereotypically feminine jobs such as 'cleaner', 'nurse' and 'Queen'), and virtually no children assigned jobs as 'men and women's'. My questionnaire pilot study certainly supports this suggestion: I modified the occupational assignment table so that 'men and women's job' was the first option, yet even with a revised format the questionnaire questions still elicited a far more stereotypical response from children than did the interview questions (which dealt with the same issue, but approached it in a different way). For example, in response to the questionnaire well over half the boys said that lorry driver is a man's job, whereas in response to the interview question 'would you use the service of a female lorry driver?', less than a quarter of boys said that it should not be performed by a woman. Only 11 out of 29 male questionnaire respondents said both men and women can be lorry drivers compared to two-thirds of male interview respondents claiming they would employ one. There was less difference in the female responses, but in response to the questionnaire nearly a third of girls said lorry driver is a man's

job, whereas less than a fifth of interview respondents said that they would not employ a female lorry driver. Although these figures are tentative, due to the small number of children completing the questionnaire (forty-five) compared to the large number participating in interviews, the difference in responses appear suggestive, particularly regarding the boys' answers. Moreover, while only eight children (four from the 7-8 year old group, and four from the 10-11 year old group) completed both a questionnaire *and* interview, three of the four boys concerned gave more egalitarian answers concerning a woman lorry driver in the interviews. Only one of the eight children (a seven year old girl) gave a less egalitarian answer regarding women lorry drivers in response to the interview than to the questionnaire.

Whether Men or Women are *Better* at Certain Jobs

The following question asked whether children thought women or men are better at certain jobs (See Table 4:3). Their response to this question was more ambiguous, as over a third of both girls and boys answered that men and women are better at certain jobs, and many other children said that they did not know .

Table 4:3: Are men or women better at certain jobs?

	Girls %	Boys %
Yes	41	38
No	31	20
Don't Know and no response	28	42
N	*81*	*64*

A similar proportion of girls and boys said that one sex is better at certain jobs. Thus we can assume from these responses that while the majority of children said that both sexes are *able* to do all jobs, many of the children still constructed one gender or the other as better at certain jobs. In order to examine their

constructions of gender differentiation in occupation further, I asked children whether they would employ a woman builder, and/or a woman lorry driver, and/or a male childcarer, if they were in the position to do so.

Children's Hypothetical Employment of Workers in Non-Gender-Stereotypical Jobs

The more specific questions asking whether children would employ workers in non-gender-traditional fields tended to elicit a less egalitarian response than did the generalised question about whether the genders have the ability to do all jobs (see Table 4:4).

Tables 4:4 Would children employ non-gender stereotypical workers?

i) *Female lorry driver*

	Girls %	Boys %
Yes	64	65
No	15	20
Don't Know and no response	21	15
N	*81*	*64*

ii) *Female builder*

	Girls %	Boys %
Yes	73	50
No	17	34
Don't know and no response	10	16
N	*81*	*64*

iii) *Male childcarer*

	Girls %	Boys %
Yes	43	42
No	41	34
Don't know and no response	16	24
N	*81*	*64*

We can see from these tables that the response to the females being employed in male-stereotyped jobs was fairly egalitarian, with a majority of girls and boys claiming that they would employ female builders and lorry drivers (with the exception of the boys responding to the idea of a female builder, where only half said they would employ her). A slightly higher percentage of boys than girls argue that they would *not* employ women in these male stereotyped jobs (supporting findings by Smithers, 1984; Lindholm, 1978; Furnham and Stacey, 1991; and Taylor, 1986, who found that boys tended to be less egalitarian than girls). However, as Table 4:4 shows, the response to the idea of a male childcarer was far more discriminatory: although slightly more girls and boys said they would employ a male childcarer as said they would not, the figures are much closer, and the figures for those who *would* employ one comprise under half the sample. This result suggests that while equal opportunities ideas may be motivating children's responses regarding female ability, they are directed at women's ability to be 'like men', and not on men's ability to be 'like women'. As the tables show, a fairly large proportion of children responded that they did not know whether they would employ a non-stereotypical worker, and thus did not commit themselves either way. Table 4:5 shows the children's responses to these questions according to age (N.B. the twelve children from other age-groups are not included in this analysis):

Table 4:5: Children who say they would employ non-gender stereotypical workers, analysed according to age:

AGE:	7-8		10-11	
	girls	boys	girls	boys
	%	%	%	%
Lorry driver	66	67	63	64
Builder	73	40	77	64
Childcarer	34	32	53	48
N	*36*	*33*	*39*	*25*

These figures indicate the percentage of girls and boys who were willing to employ female lorry drivers hardly varied according to age. There was little difference between the Year Three and Six girls regarding their willingness to employ a female builder, but there was a divergence between the two male age-groups on this point: the younger boys were less egalitarian, with 40% of Year Three boys saying they would employ female builders compared to 64% of Year Six boys. The Year Three girls were more discriminatory than the older girls, particularly concerning the employment of a male childcarer, and there was a similar age difference in the boys' response. Hence these figures suggest again that the 7-8 year old age group construct the genders more stereotypically, and thus as more different, concerning adult occupation, than the 10-11 year old group. This finding is supported by several other studies: as I noted above, Damon (1977) argues that children's sex-stereotyping regarding adult occupation decreases as children grow older, and that more boys than girls stereotype occupations by gender. Likewise Short and Carrington (1989) found older girls to express more egalitarian opinions than younger girls in their study.

Children's Speculations Over Scenarios Concerning Gender and Adult Work

This section examines children's responses concerning the fifth, sixth and seventh questions, which asked children to speculate over specific scenarios pertaining to issues of gender in the adult workplace. Their responses show that many children construct gender as a source of discrimination in terms of adult work, and portray this discrimination as practised both by fellow employees and employers.

Speculations Concerning the Response of Male Builders to a Female Builder

68% of the girls said the addition of a female builder would elicit a negative response from the male builders, (see Table 4:6). ('Positive response' includes children who argued the male builders would welcome a woman builder, 'negative response' includes children who said male builders would be hostile towards a woman builder, and 'neutral response' includes children who did not think the male builders would be concerned either way.)

Table 4:6: How would male builders treat a new female builder?

AGE:	7-8		10-11	
	girls	boys	girls	boys
	%	%	%	%
positive response	3	6	0	4
neutral response	8	9	10	12
negative response	67	46	69	48
don't know and no response	22	39	21	36
N	*36*	*33*	*39*	*25*

We can see from Table 4:6 that more girls than boys said that the builders would respond negatively. Obviously the fact that nearly half the boys predicted a negative response still shows a high expectation of gender discrimination on the part of the male builders; slightly more boys than girls maintained that the arrival of a woman builder would be met neutrally or positively on the part of the males. More boys also said that they did not know what the builders' response would be. There was little difference in response according to age.

Speculation Concerning Male Builder's Reaction to a Female Boss

Table 4:7: How would male builders react to a woman boss?

Age:	7-8		10-11	
	girls	boys	girls	boys
	%	%	%	%
positive response	3	6	3	0
neutral response	22	39	56	60
negative response	67	46	31	28
Don't know and no given response	8	9	10	12
N	*36*	*33*	*39*	*25*

Here the girls' imagined response on the part of the builders was less negative: 42% maintained the gender of the boss would not matter to the builders, as do slightly more (53%) of the boys. However, a larger proportion of girls (49%) thought that the builders' reaction would be negative. There was a clear split in response according to age concerning this question: only 22% of Year Three girls predicted a neutral response to a female boss, compared to 56% of Year Six girls. Their construction appeared to be shared by Year Six boys, more of whom predicted an egalitarian indifference to the gender of the boss on the part of the builders, (or at least an assumed that the status of the boss would overrule their sexist objections): 60% of the Year Six boys took this perspective, compared to only 39% of the Year Three boys.

Speculation as to Whether or Not an Employer Would Gender-Differentiate in Job Allocation

Thirdly I asked children whether an employer would prefer to employ men to do certain jobs and women to do others, or both sexes should do all jobs. (See Table 4:8)

Table 4:8: Would a boss prefer men to do some jobs and women doing others, or would they have both sexes doing all jobs?

AGE:	7-8		10-11	
	girls %	boys %	girls %	boys %
Separate jobs	25	12	33	12
The same jobs	36	33	23	40
Don't know and no response	39	55	44	48
N	*36*	*33*	*39*	*25*

This question was both general and abstract, and many children did not answer it. However, of those children who did answer, more girls argued that an employer would allocate jobs according to gender than did boys. 29% of girls and 36% of boys maintained employers would not allocate jobs according to gender. There was some difference in response between the girls of different age groups: while over a third of Year Six girls expected employers to gender differentiate, and under a quarter said gender would *not* affect job allocation, only a quarter of 7-8 year old girls said employers *would* gender differentiate, and over a third maintained gender would not be a factor in job appointment. These observations are supported by the findings of Short and Carrington (1989), whose sample of 6-7 year old children mainly failed to recognise that employment processes can be gender-discriminatory: although my sample of 7-8 year old children showed greater awareness concerning this issue than the children in their study, it may be significant that the younger group of children in my study were a year older than the younger group in theirs. Therefore it appears that more girls in the older group constructed gender as a source of discrimination in adult occupation; perhaps because the older girls had more access to relevant information, combined with a greater ability to theorise. Some of the Year Three girls who predicted a negative response from male builders regarding female workers or bosses appeared motivated by their construction of gender relations as a 'battle

of the sexes'. For example Tracy (F, 7) says of male worker's response to a woman boss,

T: They would, I think they would all have a go at her

I: Do you think? why would [that be?

T: [Because, sort of, of, say if there was twelve people, twelve men, and one lady, the twelve men could, could hurt, hurt the one girl

I: Mm

T: Because if, if there was twelve boys and twelve girls on the other side, and there was a girl that was boss, the girls could protect their boss from the men

Tracy portrays the situation as one of 'them and us' between males and females: she actually uses the word 'sides'. As I observed in the previous chapter, children often appear to construct genders as in opposition in the classroom at this age, and I suggest that some girls (and boys) may project their constructions of gender in their own lives when speculating on these adult situations. In the case of employer's job allocation, however, it may seem more logical to many of the Year Three children that the employer will take on whoever is the most appropriate for the job, regardless of gender. The Year Six girls, on the other hand, may utilise their understanding of gender discrimination as a theoretical issue in order to interpret the imagined scenario, and to recognise that the employer may not *only* be motivated by meritocratic discourses.

Discussion of Children's Responses to the Different Questions

Reviewing the responses to the interview questions, Table 4:9 shows the proportions of children who provided egalitarian answers to each of the questions, enabling a comparison between the different responses.

Table 4:9: Percentage of children whose response agreed with each statement

		GIRLS	BOYS
men and women have the ability to do all jobs		80	61
neither sex is better at any job		31	20
I would employ:	a female lorry driver	64	65
	a female builder	73	50
	a male childcarer	43	42
male builders response to a female builder would be neutral or positive		11	16
male builders response to a female boss would be nonchalant or positive		41	52
employers would not differentiate by gender		27	36
N		*81*	*64*

Thus the great majority of children in my study claimed that all jobs can be done by both sexes, not constructing the genders as different in this instance. Most children explicitly supported female ability to perform traditionally 'male' jobs (although as I have shown, they were less enthusiastic concerning male ability to perform a traditionally female job). Greater proportions of both girls and boys stated that there are some jobs which one sex tends to perform better than the other, than those who maintained there are no gender differences in ability to perform jobs: here more children constructed the genders as different, showing that gender remains a factor in their constructions of adult occupation. Yet in these findings children appeared to draw upon equal opportunities discourses in their responses more than in previous studies by Robb (1981), Nemerowicz (1979), Tremaine (1982), and Adams and Walkerdine (1986): these studies showed children assigning nearly all adult jobs to one gender or the other, where the majority of children in my study said that both genders can do all jobs, and many said they would employ non-stereotypical workers. I suggest that, as well as a possibly greater availability of equal opportunities discourses in school in recent times, this difference in findings may be due to my methods, and to the way my questions were presented. The context of an individual interview with an adult, female interviewer, in an educational environment, may have encouraged children to draw upon equity discourses; yet the majority of the studies discussed above were also conducted by women in an educational environment. Thus in my

view the format of the questions had the biggest impact in eliciting different constructions regarding gender and occupation.

I have already discussed the differences in responses depending on the way my questions were phrased: we can see from Table 4:9 that the specific questions elicited different responses to the generalised, theoretical question inquiring whether men and women are able to do the same jobs. Moreover, the difference in responses concerning children's own constructions (i.e. whether they would employ non-stereotypical workers), and those concerning the actions of others in the adult workplace, shows that children construct gender as a source of discrimination in adult work. The general trend of these responses suggests that the majority of children agreed that members of either gender can perform any job, but that generally one sex is better at certain jobs. A large proportion of children might employ females in non-stereotypical areas of work, but would be less happy about employing men in non-traditional roles. And in real life they apparently consider that a female builder would not be welcomed, and that many employers would differentiate in job allocation. Thus a generalised question regarding ability received the least discriminatory answers, followed by those regarding their own constructions; but children envisage discrimination both from employers and fellow employees in the adult workplace.

Children's Explanations of Their Construction of Gender as a Source of Discrimination in the Given Scenarios

The explanations children offered for their responses are now investigated. Noting a change in teachers' discourses regarding girls' future careers, Kenway *et al* (1994) argue that teachers have become more aware of equal opportunities issues. In my study, Pavlos (M, 9) reports that teachers in his school tell people off if they make sexist comments, and many children appear to recognise that sexist statements may be met with disapproval from adults in an educational environment. Therefore, rather than explain constructions of the genders as different as due to discrimination on their part, children may attempt to rationalise their constructions through other explanations. Billig *et al* (1988) and Billig (1992) have observed such processes of disguising reactionary discourse by arguing a reactionary view in a 'rational' manner. Billig *et al* (1988) argue that hegemonic discourses of democratic justice and liberalism position discriminatory discourse as reactionary and uncivilised: they show how this leads many whites

who espouse racist views to attempt to justify these through reasoning other than that of racial superiority. In the following sections I show that children often attempted to rationalise gender discrimination in a similar way; however, it should be remembered that I was *asking* children to explain their constructions, and thus may have elicited such responses where they would not otherwise have been provided. However, a minority of children did articulate discriminatory constructions without attempting to justify them: I suggest that these children may not yet be aware these often meet disapproval in an adult educationalist environment.

The Ability of Both Sexes To Do All Jobs

Only a small minority of children argued that both sexes did *not* have the ability to do all jobs, and of these most were from the younger age-group. Many of these children simply based their explanations on the principle that '"men's jobs" are for men and "women's jobs" are for women'. Thus Lesley (F, 7) responds to the question of whether men and women can do the same jobs in the following way: "(.) Not a doctor they can't; cos that's for boys - only nurses they can", and of men wanting to be nurses she says "Yeah (.) but they train as doctors first, they can't be nurses - thassa *woman's* job". She goes on to argue that women can do any jobs they wish, "Unless it's a men's job", and that although women can drive cars, they cannot be lorry drivers: "S'like it's a *men's* job, so they wouldn't". Similarly, Shamin (F, 7) explains that she would not employ a male childminder, "Because ladies, ladies have to keep the child, and mans have to do the building work", and Rafic (M, 9) asserts that women cannot be pilots "Because, it's not a, really job for a *girl* . Like, girls are, girls are not supposed to do what, er, *boys* do". He continues, "Like, they're better at doing jobs like, women are better at doing jobs like going out shopping and doing the housework, and men should go to *work*". This group of children were a small but vocal minority who did not appear to draw on equity discourses at all. Their open presentation of these rigid, traditionally discriminatory constructions was strikingly different to the rest of the children: most children appeared wary of vocalising discriminatory statements in my presence, and usually attempted to rationalise these through other arguments. Yet this small group of children were apparently unconcerned about any stigma attached to gender discriminatory discourse, openly asserting discriminatory assumptions before me, seemingly without expecting challenge or disapproval. None of these children came from the

oldest class (10 - 11 year old age group), and thus I suggest that gender category maintenance discourses may be more important for children in the 7-8 year old age-group, and outweigh equity discourses.

Of the children that said men and women *can* do the same jobs, some demonstrated aggrievement at the knowledge that others do not share their views. For example, Rebecca (F, 8) complains about discrimination when she explains to me that males can be professional ballet dancers as well as women, and argues that this is unfair as women cannot be professional football players:

R: I know sometimes it's not fair, because girls can't play football, but boys can do ballet (.) it's not *fair*

I: Mm

R: So, I think they should do a new law that girls can play football, because I'm good at football

I: Yeah, they can play football here can't they?

R: Yeah, but in real life they can't

I: [Yeah

R: [I can play football good, I can beat my friend, Leon, an' 'e's a *really* good one, 'e says 'e's a professional, but 'e's not really

Rebecca's frustration at what she perceives as an unjust situation is clearly portrayed; but besides this she offers a constructive suggestion ('a new law') to right the situation. Likewise, Emily (F, 10) describes how she challenges the boys' sexist assumptions on this subject:

E: Well like the boys, some of the boys in our class um, they're always saying 'oh when I grow up I'm gonna be a , stuff, when we're a bit younger we saying 'when I grow up I'm gonna be such and such, and we said 'oh I'd like to be that' they'd say {high and mighty voice} No, ladies can't be that, they're not strong enough

I: Really? how does that make you feel?

E: Well, well I feel (.) um I feel that everyone's equal and you should all, if even if you don't think you're good at it you should have a try and things like that

I: Yes (.) so what did you used to say to the boys when they said things like that?

E: I said we're all equal and we can erm, can do all things, cos we're all good at some things

Why Men Or Women Are *Better* At Certain Jobs

In their more frequent responses that men or women are better at particular jobs, children used many different arguments to justify their statements in the light of my questions. For instance, Naomi (F, 11) explains her reasons for feeling that men make superior chiropodists and doctors, and women better nurses:

I: Are there any that men are better at or that women are better at? (.) or do you think they're all the same generally?
N: Um, um (.) I mean some things I've never seen men, I mean *ladies* do
I: Mm like what?
N: Um, a chiropodist I've never seen a lady [chiropodist
I: [Oh really?
N: Cos I had to go to a man, and (.)
I: Mm (.) but do you think she could if she wanted to or not?
N: (.) Probably but, men seem to be nicer at that sort of thing
I: Oh really?
N: Yeh
I: Wh- in what way?
N: Well I, they're, they explain everything as they go along and they're really kind =
I: Oh right, right that's interesting yeh
N: But I think, that doctors are better as ladies (.) no I think *doctors* are better as men and *nurses* are better *as ladies*
I: Oh really? why's that?
N: {laughs} I don't know (.) I ...
I: W- what makes a man better as a doctor and a woman better as a nurse?
N: Well (.) um, men lose their tempers, um much easier, sometimes, and are more (.) because you lose your temper easily, more easily as a nurse
I: Oh how, why's that?
N: Well, cos if you're a nurse like, you have to do more things in the hospital and stuff
I: Right yeh
N: Than if you're a doctor

Naomi's claim that men make superior chiropodists is based upon her own experience (her chiropodist, whom she likes, is male, and she has never seen a female chiropodist); yet this explanation still gender differentiates, as she assumes that the sexes will perform the job differently. While Naomi appears to argue that women can keep their temper under stress better than men, and thus are more suitable in the very stressful role of nurse, Shamin (F, 7) maintains that women are more suited to the position of nurse (and men to doctor) because women are prone to error, and thus while they can manage with the easier role of nurse they cannot cope with the demanding position of doctor:

I: Why are men better at those jobs then, do you think?

S: Cos, you know doctors, they could do any (2) they could work really hard at - (.) ladies can't do too much, woman can't do too much

I: Why's that then, why do you think that is?

S: Umm, man could do like, someone had an operation, they could give injections or something, and, or do the heart problem; they could do that, and the ladies could do the erm- just injections

I: Right (.) why do you think the women wouldn't be so good at the complicated operations?

S: Cos, maybe they'd get it wrong

Thus Shamin presents an opposite argument to Naomi's, concerning the same occupation. In these cases I suggest that the children are simply attempting to justify their stereotypical statements regarding the gender of doctors and nurses (or other jobs) with any arguments they can think of.

Why Children Would or Would Not Employ Non-Stereotypical Workers

Children's explanations of their own gender discrimination in refusing to employ non-stereotypical workers often involved similar attempts at rationalisation. Such processes are evident when Diva (F, 10) is forced to change her argument in the face of my questions: when I ask her why she would prefer not to employ women builders she replies,

D: Because, you know, they haven't got the same kind of hands, they're not, they might, they probably might just go down {gestures down}

I: Do you think?

D: Yeah

I: So you think a man would be better at being a builder?

D: Yeah (.) because you've got to like, stick everything on, and, get all the pieces to do it

I: Mm, how come a woman wouldn't be able to do that then?

D: Because they haven't got, precious hands

I: Right, say a woman like, did have really big hands or whatever, and she really wanted to be a builder, do you think she could then?

D: No:o

I: No? How come?

D: Because, it's too- (.) I don't know (.) it's too, they won't be enough, careful enough

I: Mm

D: They wouldn't take care

Her initial claim is that women do not have the right hands needed for building work, but when I present her with the possibility of women with suitable hands, Diva reverts to a different argument that women are not careful enough to be builders. Hence as one argument is countered she abandons it and selects another to justify her rejection of female builders. Children often went to extraordinary lengths in attempts to justify their views with practical, rather than blatantly discriminatory, explanations: thus Andrew (M, 7) argues that his objection to employing women builders is due to the possibility of their making mistakes when flicking their long hair back, while Tracy (F, 7) claims to object to them because they would not buy the correct hard hats, and to oppose the idea of women lorry drivers because they might not be so good at jumping out of the lorry cab window in the event of a crash!

The majority of reasons given for not employing non-gender-stereotypical workers followed similar themes: children argued that women would not be strong enough to be proficient builders and lorry drivers, and that women are 'better' with children than men. Both these strains of argument are based upon essentialist foundations: the assumption that women and men are 'naturally' suited to different things. Illustrating this point, Joseph (M, 11) observes of building work, "I'm not being sexist or anything, but it can be very heavy", and likewise Kelly (F, 11) claims she would not employ female builders: "Um (.) no I'd get men cos like

they're sort - they're quite *strong*, m, a bit stronger than, women, and they'd do it a bit quicker". Charis (F, 7) argues she would not employ women lorry drivers, "Because erm they're too heavy for erm women to drive, and it, erm, all the steering's hard". Rafic (M, 9) explains he would prefer a female childcarer, "Um, because women know *more* about, um, they can take care because they know the *feeling* of the baby", and Annalea (F, 7) explains that she would not employ a male childcarer in the following way:

I: =would you employ a man childcarer to look after your [baby?
A: [No
I: No, why not?
A: Cos they can't look after babies
I: No why not though?
A: (.) Cos- (2)
I: Why is woman better?
A: (.) Cos they know about babies
I: Mm (.) why do they know more do you think?
A: Because they've *got* them
I: Right (.) what if a man had looked after a baby while his wife went to work, would he know enough or=
A: No
I: He still wouldn't
A: No

Many children appeared to feel that such essentialism is a legitimate and accepted discourse, and thus a valid explanation for gender discrimination. In their case study observing a class discussion of sex roles, Baker and Davies' (1989) found that the teacher used similar essentialist arguments to explain differences between gender roles. Essentialism was applied particularly to childcare: most children in the large group who claimed they would prefer a female childcarer alluded to female nurturing qualities, noted that men were not used to looking after children, and hinted that women are 'naturally' more able with children.

Moreover, in the face of my continued questioning of their arguments children usually abandoned their claims to rationality in favour of reactionary assertions. For example, as Andrew (M, 7) has argued that his reason for rejecting women

builders is that they would make mistakes while pushing back their hair, I ask him:

I: Oh I see what if they had short hair?

A: (.) {intake of breath} Like, then they'll *slip*

I: (.) Mm, why would they slip more than a man though?

A: No they'll slip and then their hands would go {gestures} an' then they push 'em down and=

I: Why, why would they do that more than a man though?

A: (.) Because men are *better* than girls when they do houses

I: Mm, why though?

A: *I* don't know

Likewise, Shofic (M, L, 7) argues that women are not tall enough to be lorry drivers:

I: So you'd only have tall men would it [be?

S: [Yeh

I: What if there were some really tall women, cos like, models are really tall, they're about six foot- what if they wanted a job, would you give them one?

S: *No*

I: How come?

S: (.) *Mad*

I: Mm? (,) bad? what, who's bad?

S: The lady, the people who want to come

I: Okay, you don't think they'd be good?

S: No

I: But I thought you said women and men can do all the same jobs?

S: Yeh

I: But not- but you wouldn't employ them

S: No

These extracts are alike in that the children involved both attempt to justify their gender-discriminatory stance through 'rational' argument, but on being forced to abandon these conclude by asserting discriminatory arguments. Of course, the 'rational' arguments they drew upon were gender-discriminatory ones concerning

female physical inferiority and stereotypical gender characteristics, which attempt to justify gender discrimination *through* sexism. However, these children did not capitulate to an equity view due to the logic of my questioning, but rather reasserted their sexist stance despite their forced abandonment of rationality discourse.

Thus some children attempted to justify their gender differentiation and discrimination through 'rational' argument. However, failure of these arguments did not necessarily lead to a rejection of the gender construction. Moreover, the justifications used to support children's gender-discriminatory constructions were often themselves based upon sexist discourse, such as gender essentialism.

The Female Builder

Turning to explanations regarding the employment of a female builder, more boys spoke of a neutral or even positive response from the male builders to a female workmate, than did the girls (see Table 4:6): Patrick (M, 7) goes so far as to claim of the male builders, "(.) I would think (.) they would be quite happy 'cos they (.) got a rare person on their building team". This view could be due to lesser awareness of gender discrimination compared to the girls (because females are more often on the receiving end of sexism, and thus may be more politicised regarding this issue), or possibly male sympathy prompts the boys to portray the male builders in a more egalitarian light. As I observed in the previous chapter, Billig *et al* (1988) have suggested that Western democratic discourses lead power advantages to be constructed as totalitarian: a consequent denial of power could explain the boys' lesser construction of gender as a source of discrimination (and thus male power), in adult occupation.

Of the children who suggested a negative response on the part of male builders to a female builder, more boys than girls claimed that the hostile response of the male builders would be justified due to the incompetence or inappropriateness of a female for the job (6 of the 28 boys that provided an explanation, compared to only one of the 44 girls that provided an explanation). Thus we see that a number of boys continue to construct gender as different concerning adult occupation. The majority of both girls and boys (22 of the 28 boys, and 37 of the 44 girls) maintained that the male builders' negative reaction would be due to male perceptions of women as weak, leading them to make fun of and ostracise the

woman, presuming her physically incompetent. Other explanations included those of two boys and two girls who claimed the male builders would be jealous of the woman because women 'make prettier buildings', and because of her muscles and appearance, and the claim of three girls that male builders would assume that women are too feminine for such work and should be doing the housework instead. A minority of the children (one boy and two girls) explained their expectations of the male builders' reactions in relation to wider issues of gender discrimination: for instance Angela (F, 7) demonstrates her realisation that the world of adult occupation can be discriminatory:

I: What do you think the men builders would say about the woman builder?
A: Um, well, I think they would just go into a fight with her say I don't know why we've got a woman builder cos they're not stronger than men
I: Mm (.) and would they be right or not?
A: (2) I don't really know
I: No:o, what would the woman have to do?
A: Nothing because, she wouldn't even know
I: Right right I see, so they'd just gossip behind her back would they?
A: Yeah and, mm, if there was a weak man, they would still be saying it when the lady would be stronger

From her final comment we can see that Angela has perceived the irrationality of gender discrimination. Likewise Rebecca (F, 8) explains that she would feel hesitant about allowing a female builder to build her house, because although she said that women and men should be allowed to do the same things she feels a woman might not be qualified; and her reply here draws on a view of the adult world as skewed against women:

I: Mm, do you think if the woman was qualified you'd let her do it?
R: Yeh
I: Yeah, okay (.) why do you think that women wouldn't be so qualified as men?
R: Cos people don't let 'em do it

Thus, of the children who envisaged the male builders responding negatively to the addition of a female builder, a substantial proportion constructed gender as a potential source of discrimination in adult occupation, and of these the majority

of girls, as well as a large group of boys, said that they disagreed with this situation. For example, Natasha (F, 10) argues that the male builders would think the woman builder incapable of the job, and I ask her why she imagines they would believe this:

N: I don't know, because I suppose, they all think men are stronger than women,
but *I* don't think that
I: What do you think women would have to do, I mean, to deal with it?
N: (.) Just show them she's any, she's as good as them
I: Right, right (.) do you think that sort of thing will change, or do you think it'll always be like that?
N: It'll always be like that

Natasha's talk suggests an acknowledgement that women face a constant struggle against gender discriminatory prejudices; and she does not envisage these prejudices lessening, but appears to accept them as a fact of life. Leke (M, 7), however, suggests a practical solution to sexism on the building site, proposing to sack sexist builders and employ women in their place to support the original female:

I: Yeah, say you had all men working there apart from one woman (.) what do you think the men would think of her?
L: (.) That she can't work properly
I: Mm, why would they think that?
L: And then, if *anyone* says that I would ki- chop them out and get a new lady
I: Right
L: So they could hang around together

The Female Boss

Of the children that envisaged a negative reaction to a female boss on the part of the male builders, regardless of her higher occupational status, a tiny minority of boys (two) explained this as a reasonable response due to their perception of women as incompetent in such a role. However, the rest of the children said rather that there would be a hostile response from the men either because of

male gender discrimination, or because of a general hostility between the sexes. Of those who argued hostility towards a woman boss would be due to male discrimination, children explained this as manifesting in the builders' perceptions of a female boss as 'soft', 'weak' and incompetent. For example, Richard (M, 10) maintains that the men would say "she doesn't have enough sense, to work"; Simone (M, 7) explains, "You know! (.) some boys think girls are softies"; and Patrick (M, 7) agrees that the men would think it "silly" having a woman boss.

However, Table 4:7 shows that, compared to their predictions of a negative response to a female builder, a greater number of older children predicted a neutral or positive response to a female boss on the part of the male builders: this suggests that they may construct power derived from status as able to override power derived from gender. For example, where Angela (F, 7) argued previously that a female builder would be victimised by her male fellows, she claims that a female boss would face no such difficulties; as the men would be forced to flatter her for fear of being "thrown out". Likewise Kasheef (M, 10) argues that male builders might not *like* the prospect of taking orders from a female, but that they "would have to put up with it"; because, he concludes, "a boss is a boss". This interpretation is voiced by the majority of children: although a substantial proportion anticipate no conflict at all, most envisage the men concealing their sexism for practical reasons, in view of the woman's higher occupational status. As Karen (F, 10) points out, "(.) Well, they probably, they might respect her in case they lose their jobs". Power was understood as the key issue, and these children appeared to recognise the conflict between two different power dichotomies at work in the scenario - male/female, and boss/workers. Status was not always interpreted as outweighing gender in the power balance: for example, Patrick (M, 7) maintains that a female fellow worker would simply be viewed as a novelty by the males; but that a female boss giving them orders would be unacceptable to them. The conflict in power dichotomy is nevertheless recognised both by children who envisaged gender as outweighing status in terms of power, and vice versa. This shows children's acknowledgement that status can be re-written depending on the environment and the power relationships within it.

Job Allocation

In response to the question 'would a boss prefer men to do some jobs and women to do others, or would they have both sexes doing all jobs?', far more girls than boys expected employers to discriminate according to gender. Again the boys (particularly the older ones) present themselves as believers that the adult work place is based on a meritocratic system, suggesting a denial of gender discrimination and the connotations of male advantage associated with it. Joseph (M, 11) illustrates this point:

I: Do you think that they'd { *employers*} want women to do certain jobs and men to do different jobs, or do you think they'd let them have a mixture?

J: I'd give 'em a chance on a mixture (.) I, I, I think they'd probably give 'em a chance on a mixture, but not many people do that

I: No (.) why do you think it is that in real life sort of, most secretaries and receptionists are women, and most builders and so on are men?

J: Ermm, I don't really think that's a *bad* thing, because um (.) well (.) builders have to lift very very heavy things

I: Mm

J: I'm not being sexist or anything, but it can be very heavy

I: Yes (.) so do you think that most women- some women would be strong enough but some wouldn't?

J: Mm, some wouldn't

I: Yeah, yes (.) so you think they're physically suited, men are physically suited to be builders?

J: (.) Yeah, some of 'em (.) but I've seen loads of women builders who're *really* big and strong

I: Yes, yes there are a lot of strong women aren't there?

J: Yeh

Joseph is eager to distance himself from any discrimination, but suggests the lack of women builders is due to practical reasons. However he then realises that this argument could be understood as sexist, and quickly qualifies that he has, "seen loads of women builders who're *really* big and strong", which I suggest aims to demonstrate his open-minded and non-generalising attitude. Of course, though his having seen 'loads' of women builders seems unlikely, this claim

contradicts his original argument that there are few women builders because it is such heavy work.

The children who argued that employers *do* differentiate by gender when allocating jobs fell into two distinct categories: those who assumed an employer would employ men in different jobs from women for practical reasons, and a larger group comprising those who maintained employers would differentiate by gender due to their gender discriminatory attitudes. Of the former children, the vast majority claimed themselves that gender-stereotypical job allocation is appropriate due to the different attributes of the sexes, and thus assumed that employers would perceive the issue in the same manner. A small number of Year Three children argued other practical reasons: for instance, that it would be impractical to have men and women working together; as husband and wife could then work together and would distract each other, or there might be conflict between genders.

A larger group of children argued that employers would gender differentiate due to their discriminatory attitudes: their responses ranged from those who said they thought an employer (often assumed to be male) would think men and women should do traditional jobs, but were unable to explain this phenomenon, to children (usually girls) who presented their response within a wider argument about gender discrimination. When Claudia (F, 10) claims that men and women can do all jobs and I ask whether they actually do, she answers:

C: No (.) *Yeah*, but mostly the men- like, the *managers* choose them to be like *maids* and stuff, and mostly chauffeurs, and things like that

I: Mm (.) why do you think that is?

C: Cos they think it's man's job to be chauffeurs

I: Right (.) but you disagree?

C: Yeh

Karen (F, 10) clarifies and concludes this perspective aptly in the following extract:

I: Would they want women to do certain jobs and men to do different jobs, or would they have a mixture?

K: *I'd* have a mixture

I: Mm, what do you think happens in real life?

K: They'd probably have women doing certain jobs and men doing different jobs

I: Mm, why do you reckon that is?

K: Sexist

Hence many children, particularly older girls, appear acutely aware of gender discrimination as potentially damaging to women's prospects in the adult workplace: their familiarity and understanding of the debate over gender discrimination is drawn on when discussing situations outside their own immediate experience (i.e. adult occupation).

Summary

To recap, my findings concerning children's choice of future occupation suggest that female job choice is quite diverse, and that many girls are chose powerful, high-status jobs. However, a binary gender dichotomy still appears to exist between the *type* or *attributes* of jobs chosen by girls and boys, and few children chose jobs which are traditionally performed by the opposite sex. When examining children's responses to my questions concerning gender and adult work, I found that the majority stated that men and women can do the same jobs, and most supported this view even when questioned concerning the most gender-stereotypical occupations. Thus many children constructed the genders as *not* different regarding adult occupation. However, the concept of equal opportunities appeared to be more often applied to women than to men (fewer children said that they would employ a male childcarer than women builders and lorry drivers). Moreover, gender-discriminatory constructs were evident in many children's responses, with a majority of children claiming that men or women are *better* at certain jobs. I found that more boys predicted egalitarian behaviour from employers and male fellow workers: girls more often predicted discrimination from both sources.

Turning to the constructions of gender and adult occupation underlying the children's responses, my figures confirm the findings of previous studies suggesting that girls express more egalitarian views than boys, and also show that the 10 - 11 year old children tend to gender-discriminate less than their 7 - 8 year old counterparts. Many children attempted to rationalise their discriminatory

constructions. There was great diversity in their explanations: however, particularly concerning the gender-stereotypical jobs, essentialist constructions (e.g. that men are naturally more suited to manual work, and women naturally suited to childcare), were often used to demonstrate the rationality of gender discrimination in adult occupation. Children of both genders, but particularly girls, constructed gender as a source of discrimination in the adult workplace. Certainly the majority of children could apply their knowledge of gender issues to scenarios beyond their immediate experience. Moreover, there appeared widespread awareness that gender discrimination is an issue of power: many children (again, particularly girls,) maintained that power derived from higher status would outweigh power derived from gender. There was a broad diversity of response concerning the acceptability or unacceptability of gender discrimination in the adult workplace, and similar diversity of ideas drawn on in children's discussion of the issue. However, the large majority of girls, and over half the boys, articulated concepts of equity and fairness to declare disapproval of gender discrimination in adult occupation.

CHAPTER FIVE: CHILDREN'S CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER IN ROLE PLAYS BASED ON ADULT OCCUPATION

This chapter focuses on the role plays about adult work. The contexts, scenarios and characters for these are described in Chapter Two. Children's choice of work roles in the plays are investigated to see whether they were gender-stereotypical, and their acting of these roles examined to discover whether children's presentation of occupational roles appeared gendered. This chapter also examines how they construct gender in their group interaction.

The drama background of the role play groups allowed children to adopt different positions and constructions to those which they took up in the interviews, thus enabling me to investigate a wider range of these. That children take up different positions demonstrates they are aware of, and can draw on, varied constructions of gender. Chapter Eight investigates where such different ideas about gender might come from: here I will focus on the ways in which children constructed gender during their role play interaction. The nature of the evidence from the role plays is of a different kind to that of children's interview discussions of gender in their own lives: children are *acting* in the role plays, and therefore had the opportunity to present constructions which they might reject in their own lives. Children took up their role play parts in different ways: while some children were enthusiastic about acting and remained 'in role' throughout the plays, many of the children did not maintain a character throughout, and indeed some children did not *appear* to be acting roles at all but rather approached the role play scenario as though it was a school-work task involving a problem to be solved.

Each group of children was asked to select a scenario for their play, and their second task was to share out the roles amongst themselves. They then had to solve a work problem in their chosen occupational roles. Thus discussion of the data begins with an examination of who gained first choice of the role play scenario and role, and whether children took up traditional gender-stereotypical occupational roles. Following from this analysis of the children's role plays, I go on to examine the ways in which some of the occupational roles appeared to be taken up according to gender. I compare children's constructions of gender and occupation in their role plays with those in talk about their school lives, in order to see whether gender stereotypes about adult work would be drawn on in

children's roles plays more than their interviews: it is argued that children's constructions of gender and adult work appeared more stereotypical than those of gender in their own lives. The constructions of gender evident in the role play interaction are then examined, and it is argued that gender category maintenance leads to the construction of gender cultures in the plays, via the presentation of genders as oppositional (in opposition and opposite), which I noted in Chapter Three. Having explored these different constructions, I turn to an investigation of the children's *resistance* to the gender cultures, observing that their constructions are fluid, and can be challenged and ignored.

Choice of Scenarios and Roles in the Plays

In the mixed sex role plays it was very often boys, or one boy in particular, who chose the role play scenario: out of 15 mixed-sex groups, boys chose the scenario in 11. Boys also gained first choice of role in 11.5 of these 15 plays (in one group a boy and a girl chose the same job at the same time, and both refused to accept any other, which accounts for the 0.5). The most powerful role was not always chosen first: the taking up of powerful roles is discussed in the next chapter. Concerning the choice of scenario and role, girls were sometimes unassertive, simply accepting the last role, or even explicitly leaving the choice up to the boys (again, see the following chapter). Yet more often the boys got their way simply by adamantly insisting on their choice, (for instance repeating it over and over again), rather than compromising or reaching a group agreement. Although this tactic was occasionally utilised by girls, the boys practised it far more frequently. It led to some problems in the boys-only role play groups: in the mixed groups girls would often accommodate the boys' demands, whereas in the boys-only groups a situation occasionally developed when two or more boys were equally determined to have the same role, and absolutely unwilling to compromise.

Table 5:1 shows the number of times each scenario was chosen: the hospital scenario was chosen only by Year Three groups, whereas *ten* out of fifteen Year Six groups chose the hotel scenario.

Table 5:1: Choices of role play scenario in all role play groups

	SCHOOL	HOTEL	HOSPITAL
Year Three children	6	6	4
Year Four children	0	1	0
Year Five children	2	0	0
Year Six children	5	10	0
Total	13	17	4

(N.B. in one group there were three girls and one boy).

Examining whether or not children took up gender-stereotypical roles in the plays, Table 5:2 shows the numbers of girls and boys that chose the various roles in the mixed sex groups. Some of the occupational roles are difficult to stereotype: for instance, the broad term 'room service attendant' could have been understood as a traditionally male bell-hop, or a traditionally female maid, or simply not recognised by children at all and thus not stereotyped. Others may have been interpreted in different ways by children: for example, though 'chef' is a traditionally male role, this obviously had not always been understood, particularly by many of the younger children. Many girls took on the role and called themselves 'cook', and there was one incident when a boy was told by girls in his group that chef is a women's job.

Table 5:2: Mixed sex group's choice of roles:

ROLE	Played by Girl	Played by Boy
Hospital		
Doctor	0	2
Hospital Receptionist	2	0
Nurse	2	0
Patient	0	2
Hotel		
Chef	4	5
Hotel Receptionist	7	3
Manager	4	5
Room Service Attendant	4	4
School		
Caretaker	0	4
Head teacher	2	2
Playground Supervisor	3	1
Teacher	3	1
TOTAL:	31	29

Children took up gender-stereotypical roles when playing 'hospital' on both occasions, with boys playing doctor, and girls playing nurse and receptionist. I suggest that 'patient' was only played by boys because of the gender-stereotyped nature of the other roles in the hospital scenario: if doctor was chosen by a boy, and nurse and receptionist by the girls, patient is left to be taken up by the second boy. The choice of roles and the gender dichotomies they present (for instance, doctor/nurse), may have had an impact on children's choices due to the gender dynamic in the mixed groups. The 'school' scenario offered one stereotypically male role (caretaker), while the others are stereotypically female (playground supervisor and teacher), or neutral (headteacher): thus gender-casting was not so easy, leading to more variety in children's choices. Choices of role in the hotel scenario showed by far the most variety according to gender. As I discuss above, gender-typing the roles in this scenario may have been problematic: however, the majority of children conducting this play were from the older age-groups, most of whom were familiar

with the occupational roles involved. Thus it seems that of all three scenarios, 'hotel' involved occupational roles children gender-stereotyped the least often.

I turn now to an examination of the ways in which children constructed gender in different ways during their role plays to those in their interviews.

Children's Constructions of Gender and Occupation in the Role Plays, Compared to Those in Their Own Lives

Children's constructions of gender change depending on the interactive environment. According to Billig (1987), for each argument we make we necessarily have some idea of a counter-argument. We utilise different arguments depending on our respondent: thus, he argues, arguments and attitudes should be placed in their 'rhetorical context'. Similarly, Shotter (1989) observes that an addresser always considers what the receiver's response might be: as one is attempting to 'mean' something to someone else, an assessment of the way in which they might respond is part of our construction of who they are for us. Thus we draw upon different arguments depending on our respondent, or, in poststructuralist terms, different discourses depending on discursive environment. Buckingham (1993) provides an example which supports this argument in his study, when he suggests that black children in an inner city school were far keener to draw attention to their racial identity than those in a suburban school: in the latter school the black children comprised a fragile minority, and thus attempted to discursively position themselves as similar to the white children, rather than risk calling attention to their difference. Similarly, Troyna and Hatcher (1992) found that children alluded to race differently depending on the social context. Thus children's constructions of gender and adult occupation when acting were often different to those of gender in their own lives.

Many children constructed gender as more different from each other in the role plays than in the individual interviews. For instance, Simon (M, 11), playing hotel manager, makes an allegation of sexual misconduct against a girl in the play in order to humiliate her (this incident is discussed further in Chapter Six): he used his high-status position of manager to exercise power by drawing attention to Sabina's (F, 10) low-status position and femininity. Yet during his individual interview Simon argues for equal opportunities, positioning himself as egalitarian. Likewise, while Peter (M, 8) shunned the role of nurse in a hospital role play, he

says in his following interview that if the boy that accepted it had played another part, he (Peter) would have willingly played it. Other stereotypes of adult work appeared in role plays where they did not in interviews: in an all-female role play (Year Three girls), Jade (F, 8), who is playing room service attendant, repeatedly addresses the girl playing the hotel manager as 'Sir', demonstrating her construction of manager as a male role. In her interview, however, Jade says that women and men can do the same jobs, and supports equal opportunities. A gender-stereotypical expectation that 'two roles are for girls, two roles are for boys' in the mixed-sex role plays is reflected by Angela (F, 10) in her role choice during a hospital play: "I'll be, the nurse (.) or receptionist or whatever", whereas in her interview discussion she maintains that women can do the same jobs as men.

Other children drew upon gender-discriminatory ideas more in the interviews than the role plays: in some role plays gender was not alluded to verbally at all, whereas in the subsequent interviews many of the questions were specifically concerned with gender. Thus the interviews elicited comments on gender in a way that the role plays did not, and consequently many children articulated gender-discriminatory ideas (see previous chapters) which did not appear in the role plays. On one occasion, however, Chantelle (F, 11) appears to construct genders as more different from each other in her interview when discussing the play than she did in the play itself:

I: Right, you chose the manager didn't you, why was that?

C: (.) He'd be leader

I: (.) Right (.) and you think it'd be a 'he'?

C: (.) Nah, or a 'she'

Thus children drew upon gender-discriminatory ideas in some social contexts, and equity arguments in others. These apparently contrary positions are examples of the multiple, and often contradictory, discursive positions available to us in different interactive environments. Moreover, children were *acting* in the role plays: they could draw on different constructions because of the plays' fantasy quality. Of Simon's accusation of Sabina's (F, 10) sexual misconduct, Nima (M, 10) observes that although Simon should not have made the claim, he probably felt it was acceptable because they were doing a play, and, "when you're acting you can say all sorts of things". Ironically Nima goes on to say that although

Sabina probably felt angry and "wanted to slap" Simon, she could not because, "they were acting so she had to put up with it". This suggests that while the play environment lessens Simon's inhibitions, allowing him to make a sexist accusation against Sabina, Sabina's subordinate role in the play restricts and inhibits her, thus reducing her ability to retaliate. However, children generally appeared to gender-stereotype adult occupations more in the plays than in their interview talk, and the first part of Nima's account, that you can "say all sorts of things" in plays, suggests an explanation for this: children may have drawn on a wider variety of gender constructions in their acting than in their talk with me. For example, there was some evidence of children drawing on media ideas and evidence in the role play data: Baresh (M, 8) supports his claim to the role of chef by noting that he has seen male chefs in films; and Cally (F, 10) appears to draw on melodramatic screen narratives as manager in her hotel play, declaring to her usurpers, "How dare you? the hotel is my *life*... I will *not* leave, I demand it!... By a woman's right to decide it, I will *not leave!*". Children's use of evidence and information in their constructions of gender is further discussed in Chapter Eight.

Having argued that some children drew on different constructions of gender in the role plays, I now discuss the way in which the taking up of certain roles in the plays was presented as contradictory to children's constructions of gender.

The Constructions of Children in 'Non-gender-appropriate' Roles

This section examines the taking up of the role 'nurse' in a male role play group, and the role of 'caretaker' in a female group. Only one all-male group chose the hospital scenario, and I was interested to see how the 'doctors and nurses' dichotomy was handled by the boys. This was the *only* instance where a boy had to play nurse: as I observed above, in both mixed hospital role plays a girl took up the role. In the all-male group no-one wanted to play nurse, and there was much giggling and embarrassment about this, although the reason for their unwillingness was never explicitly verbalised by the boys. Possibly this was because of my presence as a female adult. Denzel (M, 7) was left with the role as all the others had been taken, but he did not want it. At this point Johnnie (M, 7) noted tentatively that men can be nurses too, and I supported this point by referring to the television programme *Casualty*, which portrays male, as well as female, nurses. There was general hesitant agreement, and at this point Ryan (M, 8) generously volunteered to play nurse. I use the word 'generously' without

irony, as this is how his gesture appeared to be interpreted by the rest of the group: he had been the martyr and thus saved them from having to play the gender-stigmatised role. In fact Ryan was spared from any derision or ridicule for playing the role. This may have been because his generosity earned him the gratitude and respect of the rest of the group, or possibly because of his social position in the group (he may have been popular). This illustrates the complex, fluctuating and multiple nature of power positionings in interaction. The reaction of this group to the role of 'nurse' suggests they constructed the role as stereotypically feminine and thus stigmatised, consequently fearing to be associated with such a role in front of the other males in the group. As Buckingham (1993) observes of boys' group interaction, boys' sense of their masculinity appears very fragile in their discussions, but seems extremely important to them, and depends on mutual support and policing. Middleton (1992), Hearn and Morgan (1995), and Connell (1995) present a similar picture of fragile, mutually constructed masculinity. Hence the interaction described above appears to depict an incident of collective support against a potentially humiliating challenge to masculinity.

Another role which was taken up as particularly gendered was caretaker. This was almost universally accepted as a male role: in mixed-sex groups it was always taken up by boys, and even in the female role plays the acceptance of the role was usually reluctant, leaving the player open to ridicule from the other girls. The girls in single-sex groups who took up, (or were left with), this role nearly always attempted to turn the role and their acceptance of it into a joke, the more self-confident girls acting in a comically exaggerated masculine manner, and referring to themselves as 'Mr So-and-so'. The school scenario may well have been influenced by the real-life staff that children saw around them at their own schools every day. Each school had a female headteacher, and a relatively high number of girls took up this role: the girls may have drawn on their school headteachers as evidence that the role was open to them. In the same way, all the schools had male caretakers, and it may be no coincidence that this was the school role children retained as exclusively male. In a Year Three girls groups at St. Luke's school, everyone has chosen roles apart from Emmi (F, 7); caretaker is all that's left:

K: {murmurs to Emmi who smiles, cringes, and covers mouth with hands. Kelly turns to look at me with anticipation}

C: {smiling, to me} What's *she* {Emmi} gonna have to be?

I: Mm?

C: What's she gonna have to be?

I: The caretaker's the other one (.) {the three with parts burst into loud giggles, and Emmi pulls a 'gobsmacked' face} Why's that funny?

K: I dunno

C: Dunno

S: No (.) go on Emmi {they are all still grinning. Emmi is playing with a card}

C: Go on, you've *got* to, it's all that's left {all looking at Emmi who fiddles with card}

K: Caretaker would be good, {gestures brightly} like, polishing and everything

C: *Yeah*

K: And er =

E: {sighing and raising eyes to heavens} O*kay*

K: =telling people to get out of my floor, and things like that

I: 'Kay, can you say what you all are?

S: {to me} Playground supervisor

C: {to me} Teacher

E: (.) {looks at me, smiles} Caretaker {looks into her lap. Kelly giggles again}

I: Caretaker, okay {Kelly goes on sniggering and looking at Emmi}

Clearly the masculine role of caretaker is depicted as ridiculous within this all-female group, suggesting the girls constructed the role as Other and inferior. Possibly the girls could also have been put off by the menial, manual nature of a caretaker's work, but this arguably also holds gendered connotations, and moreover in this case Emmi is finally persuaded (reluctantly) to take up the role of caretaker when Kelly embellishes it with feminine qualities ("polishing and everything"). This does not prevent Kelly from continuing to laugh at Emmi's role, suggesting that Kelly's presentation of caretaker in a more positive light is simply a ploy to persuade Emmi to take up the role, while simultaneously presenting herself in the sensible, conciliatory, almost motherly way so favoured by girls (I shall discuss this point more fully later on in this chapter). When, in interview, I ask Sonia (F, 7) why they were laughing at Emmi in the play, she replies, "Well, cos caretakers are normally *men*, and Emmi's a wo- er, Emmi's a *girl* {laughs}". Being left with the role constructed as masculine, and being pressured to take it up by her sneering contemporaries, appears painful to Emmi: while she attempts to make the best of it by portraying her humorous dislike of her position in order

to distance herself from it in front of the other girls (rolling her eyes, groaning, etc.), her real anxiety and embarrassment can be seen by her fidgeting with the card, and lowered eyes. Thus association with things masculine and menial may have been as humiliating in this all-female group as was association with things feminine in the all-male group.

Processes of gender category maintenance are evident in both these groups. The taking up of a non-gender-appropriate role is presented as a cause for anxiety and potential ridicule in both cases, and where the boys collectively and supportively uphold their masculinity, the girls *not* playing caretaker appear to bond in femininity in their ridicule of Emmi's masculine position.

Children's Construction of Gender Cultures in the Role Plays

The preference for taking up roles which are associated with the child's own gender may be part of the wider pattern of gender category maintenance. The extent to which they presented gender as oppositional in their discussions with me (see Chapter Three), was matched in their role play interaction with one another, and this had the effect of constructing gender cultures which were opposite and in opposition in the role play groups. In this section the different ways in which gender cultures were constructed and maintained in children's role play interaction are listed and discussed.

Portraying Genders as In Opposition

In Chapter Three I argued that forms of sexism are used by children for gender category maintenance, in that they help to delineate gender identity. Reactionary comments concerning gender were sometimes used by children, particularly boys, during mixed-sex group interaction, in order to clearly define the opposition of the genders: a reactionary comment may provoke an outraged or hurt reaction from the targeted party, consequently positioning the speaker as clearly separate from the other gender and thus bonded with their own gender group. An example of this occurred during a Year Six mixed-sex role play when Carlie asks the chef (Nima) how he cooks at home: he replies, "My wife does the cooking, innit?", provoking an outraged gasp from Sabina who reacts, "I think the woman *and* man should cook". Through such means boys can highlight their maleness before the rest of the group, consequently aiding male bonding. Thus reactionary

comments can be used to evoke gender differences, consequently strengthening gender identities and helping to construct the separate gender cultures.

Many of the girls portrayed the boys as being completely different, and even inferior to themselves. This was particularly common and strongly worded in the all-female role play groups: girls frequently derided boys for being silly, rough, and/or show-offs. When, finding they have too much work to do in their female-only group, Sharma (F, 11) suggests they recruit some boys, Sandra (F, 10) reacts by yelling an emphatic "No *Way!*", and is supported by nods from the other girls. This female-bonding is illustrated by another all-girl group (a Year Three group at St. Luke's), who construct a collective fantasy of power over 'the boys' during their role play. They are playing a school scenario, and are trying to tackle the litter problem:

I: So tell me your plan all together then, you're gonna warn them in assembly=

K: And like, if they don't, do as they're told, we can like ban the people from their playtime, ban, [if it's boys, ban them from basketball, make them write poetry=

E: [Yeah, from the *school*

K: =write poetry, cos our class absolutely *hates* poetry

C: (.) And there'll [be, no playtime

S: [Yeah and (.) {to Charis} [*no*=

E: [Or if it was *boys* I'd, I'd kill them {laughs}

K: We'd ban football

I: Right

K: [From them=

S: [And they um, could get detention

C: Yeah

E: [Or we could get=

I: [How would you tell if it was boys or girls?

C: [Well

K: [Umm

S: Cos boys are more [naughtier

K: [Boys are mischievous

C: {leaning forward} Yeh boys are more, like, naughtier, y'know?

E: Or we could even ban them from basketball

K: Or foot [ball

C: [And football

K: Cos they're normally playing basketball=

S: No, football

K: Or give them detention

C: And, yeah, ban them from their playtime

The attitude of 'them and us' can be strongly felt in this extract, as well as the mutual enjoyment in envisaging ways to make the boys suffer. Thus children's presentations of the genders as in opposition appeared in these instances to aid in-gender bonding, and to construct separate gender cultures.

Portraying the Genders As Opposite: the Construction of a Sensible-Selfless/ Silly-Selfish Dichotomy

The construction of gender as opposite leads children to take up different types of behaviour in role play: drawing on the findings of Belotti and Walkerdine as well as my own concerning the polarised, gendered behaviour of many children, I have named these dichotomous constructions the 'sensible selfless' (feminine) and 'silly selfish' (masculine) positions. As I discuss in Chapter One, such gendered behaviour has been observed by many researchers in the primary school classroom (e.g. Belotti, 1976; Lloyd and Duveen, 1992; Reay, 1990a; Whyte, 1986; Sealey and Knight, 1990). This construction of female as sensible and selfless, and male as silly and selfish, forms the basis of the two gender cultures. Of the feminine construction, maturity, obedience and neatness are the 'sensible' qualities, and these lead to 'selflessness' - giving, facilitating, compromising, and placing others first (martyrdom) in an attempt to appear mature and sensible. The masculine construction involves 'silly' qualities of immaturity, messiness and naughtiness, leading to 'selfishness' - taking, demanding, and refusal to compromise. Obviously the majority of children do not take up these gendered qualities all the time, or in any consistent way, but the two cultures are constructed as opposite to one another due to the exaggeration of feminine and masculine behaviour by children through their gender category maintenance. Thus masculine behaviour comes to be reviled by many girls, and their feminine culture constructed as superior to that of the boys, and vice versa.

The previously-discussed scorn of things male on the part of individual girls, and particularly all-girl groups, illustrates this point: Sonia (F, 7), Kelly (F, 8) and Charis' (F, 7) claims that boys are "naughtier" and "more mischievous" than girls are typical of girls' statements about boys. There were many instances where girls positioned themselves as sensible and/or selfless in contrast to the boys' constructions in the mixed-sex group interaction. Shamim (F, 7) takes up a sensible position when she tells me that girls are "more sensible than boys". Likewise when Junior (M, 10) cheekily asks if we have finished the role play yet, Karen (F, 10) says "no" in shocked outrage, and reprimands Junior by pretending to whack him with the back of her hand, and when I ask a Year Three mixed-sex group whether they have found a solution to the role play problem, Maddie (F, 7) looks at Cathleen (F, 7) for support and declares, "I think we should try better". *Selfless* positions were also much in evidence among the girls in mixed-sex groups: when I ask which role play scenario a Year Three mixed-sex group would like, Angela (F, 7) volunteers, "I don't really mind". In another role play, Lucy (F, 10) suggests in response to the same question, "Let the boys decide". Karen (F, 10) originally says she wants the role of manager as I list the role choices, but immediately turns to the two boys in her group and asks, "can I be manager?", and then allows a boy to choose manager instead. And when in her interview I congratulate Emily (F, 10) on her creative ideas in the role play, she modestly replies, "Well I don't really think so but I thought, I thought Nancy's ideas were very good". Many girls presented boys as sillier, naughtier, and ruder than girls, indicating not just a feeling of difference from boys, but also a feeling of disapproval and distaste at their masculine culture. However, their sensible-selfless positions had ramifications on girl's power positions in the mixed-sex interaction, as I shall discuss in Chapter Six.

These sensible-selfless positions were by no means consistent, as the above discussion of the Year Three girl's 'school' role play demonstrates: the three girls *not* playing the role of caretaker hardly evoke 'sensible-selflessness' as they sneer at their fellow. Yet throughout the role play the four girls refer to 'the boys' with disapproval, and position themselves as sensible compared to those children they describe as badly behaved and whom Charis (F, 7) brands "those sorts of people". Hence this particular group of girls apparently constructed themselves as sensible, despite their sometimes contrary behaviour. Similarly, the boys did not always take up the opposite silly, selfish position; and again the role plays discussed earlier provide an example of this. In the Year Three boys' hospital role

play, Ryan (M, 8) selflessly takes up the unwanted role of nurse, and the other boys' response is tactful, not silly. Yet there was much other evidence that boys constructed a male gender-cultural position of 'silly selfishness' in opposition to the female gender-cultural position of 'sensible selflessness'. For instance, in a Year Three mixed-sex role play, the boys' behaviour becomes sillier and more immature the more the girls self-righteously complain about this. It was noticeable that the boys were not in the least abashed by the reproaches and scorn of their female counterparts: rather they appeared to expect and relish the female disapproval, suggesting that these two positions have become ritualised in children's mixed-sex interaction. This also applies to boys' 'silly' talk about violence: like Buckingham (1993), Jordan (1995) and Vicks (1990), I found that boys often allude to, or fantasise about violence, particularly in mixed-sex groups. For example, in a Year Three mixed-sex group acting a school scenario, Noel (M, 7) plays headteacher, and his contributions focus on possible punishments or deterrents for children dropping litter:

"And when they're putting rubbish in the bin, I can hide in the bin, and I can jump out and go {leans towards mike} *Boo*"
"=And then the children come over here, and I *shout* at them"
"And I can smash 'em [children] up", "Yeah, ooh, and then I could, do karate on them"
"Yeah and then we could smash = {speaking louder to be heard} we could smash their heads through the windows".

As Buckingham (1993) argues, talking about violence (or emotions), or refusing to, should be perceived as a social act rather than an indication of a violent 'nature'. Boys' 'liking for violence' can be seen as another 'masculine' sign used by boys to construct their masculinity. This interpretation is supported by Jordan's (1995) finding that boys construct themselves as masculine by positioning themselves as 'Other' to girls (and 'wimpy' boys) through violent fantasy play.

Boys' 'silly selfish' position also allowed boys to take their first choices of role (often the most powerful ones) in the plays, and to adamantly insist on keeping them. Boys who chose the role with greatest occupational status, and thus potential power, in the mixed-gender role play groups sometimes constructed their occupational role in a specifically masculine manner: the combination of

possession of the most authoritative occupational role and their maleness created an extremely strong discursive power position (I discuss this point further in Chapter Six).

To recap, my findings here develop ideas from Chapter Three, suggesting that in positioning their genders as relational and oppositional to one another, children construct two symbolic gender cultures. This was achieved in the role plays by presenting the genders as in opposition, and opposite. Reactionary expression concerning gender appeared to be used by some children to assert their opposition to the other gender and thus to aid bonding with their own gender group. The construction of the genders as opposite behavioural groups also played a part in the formation of gender cultures. However, just as such oppositional constructions did not occur all the time, or in any rigid way, not *all* the children appeared to perceive two clearly delineated gender cultures, and not all of the children who *did* see two separate cultures were happy with the constructions or supported gender category maintenance. Resistance and contradiction to the constructed gender cultures is the next subject of discussion.

Resistance and Contradiction to the Gender Boundaries

Despite the opposition of the two gender cultures, and the rigorous gender category maintenance processes enforcing these gender boundaries, much border-crossing *did* take place, as observed by Thorne (1993) in her study of children's construction of gender roles in primary schools. Some girls and boys took up non-gender-stereotypical roles: Baresh (M, 8) even argues with the girls in his group who claim that he should not play the role he wants because "men can't cook". Likewise, as I noted above, by no means all children adhered to the dichotomy in which the female is sensible and selfless, and the male is silly and selfish. These gendered constructions were taken up by *some* children, at certain times, and often contained contradiction.

Moreover, it must also be remembered that gender constructions exist alongside a multitude of other power factors which can combine with, or outweigh these. During the Year Three girl's group role play where caretaker is positioned as Other, we find that not all girls automatically win approval simply by being female. When I ask the group whether its fantasy of punishing the boys is a fair one, Kelly points out that girls could be dropping litter as well:

K: Cos like, some people like, some girls and boys act, like um, [like um act cool and like, do naughty things

C: [*Yeah* (.) [Yeah

S: [Like Sophina

K: Yeah, [Sophina

C: [Sophina

K: She, she like plays with =

S: And Tyrone and Stallone, and [Leke

K: [Leke

Here a school-orientated, 'sensible selfless' construction positions *naughtiness* as outweighing the gender-cultural construction of female gender unity in opposition to things masculine which previously motivated the group. The girls in the group self-righteously position themselves as separate from 'naughty' boys *and* girls. (We can also see the disapproval Sophina receives from this female group for crossing gender-boundaries, another form of gender category maintenance.) Many other factors may also impact upon children's constructions: race, social class, and whether a child is popular, may be but a few (see Thorne, 1993, Davies, 1989). Thus gender appeared to be constructed as opposite by children in some circumstances and not in others.

Summary

To conclude, I have shown that the taking up of roles in the plays did appear gendered: although many children did *not* take up gender-stereotypical roles in the mixed-sex groups, the majority did. I argue that the choice of gender-traditional roles in the plays is due to gender category maintenance on the part of children, who take up gender as integral to their social identity, and who rely on symbolic demonstration to prove their gender. Examining children's constructions of gender in the role plays about adult work, I found that they often differed from children's constructions of gender and occupation in their interview talk. Their presentation of gender and occupation was often more stereotypical in the role plays, suggesting that in their acting children drew on a wider, or different, range of ideas about gender. Turning to their own gender constructions in the plays, I suggest that gendered differences in behaviour are due to the symbolic gender

cultures which are constructed in children's interaction via gender category maintenance and, consequently, identification with a particular gender culture. The cultures are constructed through in-gender bonding where children position the genders as opposite and in opposition in order to reinforce their own sense of gender identity. However, these cultures are not fixed, being simply the manifestation of children's different constructions: gender boundaries were frequently crossed, and gender was only one aspect of children's social constructions.

CHAPTER SIX: CHILDREN'S CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER AND POWER IN THE ROLE PLAYS

In the previous chapter I established that children often constructed gender differently in the role plays than in interviews. The chapters concerning children's interview discussions about gender showed that many children presented gender as a source of discrimination, and thus a source of power, while others did not. This chapter examines children's constructions of gender as a source of power in their role play interaction. The impact of children's constructions of gender on their positions of power is investigated. It is argued that children constructed gender as a source of power, or *not* as a source of power, but that the construction of gender as oppositional provided boys with greater resources of discursive power, and often eventuated in girls' abdication of power to the boys.

As I observed in Chapter One, poststructuralist approaches have been criticised by Soper (1990, 1993a), Davis (1988) and Lloyd and Duveen (1992) for failing to address the way that certain social groups can exercise power over others. 'Power' is used here in its Foucauldian sense (1980, Middleton, 1992) to describe the fluid positionings of selves through discourse (see Chapter One), but this section is concerned to examine the social outcomes of these positionings in terms of gender: the production of reality through gender discourse, and its consequences. In his investigation of different kinds of nature discourse, Macnaghten (1993) argues that there were four objectives to his approach to the text: to analyse the variety of constructions of nature; to discover how these were used as "argumentative strategies" (p.55); to relate the constructions of nature to the realities they produce; and lastly to examine the connection between the constructions and their "material outcome" (p.56). Applying this framework to my investigation of gender, this chapter deals with the last two objectives in relation to the outcome of children's use of gender discourses, aiming to link discourses to the realities they produce, and the material consequence of discourse. In the next chapter, which examines the *mechanisms* behind children's constructions, I return to Macnaghten's former points regarding the identification of discourses, and the examination of these constructions in children's arguments.

Several researchers have examined the issue of children's positioning in discourse. Buckingham (1993) and Middleton (1992) mainly discuss this issue concerning children's positioning of *themselves* in certain ways during social interaction: Buckingham (1993) shows how children used talk about television to position themselves powerfully in interaction. Others have examined the ways in which children are *positioned* in discourse: Walkerdine (1988, 1989, 1990), Walkerdine and Lucey (1989), Jordan (1995) and Davies (1989) catalogue the ways in which girls are produced as inadequate through male centred or sexist narratives. As I observed in Chapter One, Davies (1989) argues that the dominant discursive practice which positions all people as male or female also positions power as *male* power: female power is legitimate only in the domestic realm or as helpers of males. This chapter investigates whether girls took up powerful positions in the role play groups, and how children were positioned through gender discourses during their interaction.

The power positions created for subjects are often multiple and contradictory (see Cohen, 1993). Moreover, as I noted in the previous chapter, gender discourses are by no means the only ones drawn on by children in the production of power positions: they exist and compete alongside a myriad of other discourses, which can sometimes outweigh those of gender. I have reported instances of this in other chapters: for example, in Chapter Four I observed that a large proportion of children, particularly girls, implied that the power of a woman boss derived from her occupational status would outweigh the power derived from gender of her male subordinates. However, for the purposes of this investigation I intend to focus mainly on power positioning regarding *gender* discourse.

This investigation begins with an analysis of the ways in which children were positioned, and positioned themselves and others during the role plays. This issue is examined in relation to the single-sex, and then the mixed-sex, groups; and I return to the issue of the sensible-selfless/silly-selfish constructions which I discussed in the previous chapter, maintaining that these constructions lead many girls and boys to position themselves in particular ways within the plays. It is argued that in the mixed-sex groups the boys' higher status roles, gained because of the girls' sensible-selfless constructions, can be combined with gender discourse to position the other group members as subordinate, and thus to dominate the play. Instances were also found when children did not appear to

construct gender as a source of power in the role plays, and this point is discussed. However, I conclude that children's gendered constructions often impacted upon their power positions in the role plays.

Children's Constructions of Power in Single-Sex Groups

My first concern was to examine the ways in which children attempt to position and are positioned in interaction in the single-sex groups, and whether this differed according to gender.

The Sensible-selfless / Silly-selfish dichotomy in the Single-Sex Groups

There was some evidence that the 'sensible-selfless' positions, which many girls were reported in the previous chapter to take up in their construction of oppositional gender cultures, could be used powerfully by girls in single-sex role play groups. For instance, because of a shortage of children in their class, Nancy (F, 11) and Charity (F, 11) took part in two role plays, and in the latter one (a girls' group), took up positions of facilitating quasi-teachers. They explained the role play process and asked the other girls which roles they would like, thus appearing sensible and selfless. Yet due to the respect these positions elicited from the other girls, Nancy and Charity used their mediative position to manipulate the other girls and the course of the play: they chose the role play scenario, and directed events.

The boys' positions of silly-selfishness became difficult to maintain in single-sex boys' groups. It was observed in the previous chapter that in many mixed-sex groups girls facilitated boys' demands, allowing the boys first choice of scenario or role, or resignedly accepting the last role (this issue is explored more fully later in this chapter). In the all-boy groups the lack of compromise in boys' silly-selfish positions lead to occasional problems: there were more arguments over choice of role in the boys' plays than the girls' single-sex plays. The following transcript extract is a rather extreme example of a struggle over roles in a Year Three boys' role play. First there was domination rather than co-operation in the group's choice of scenario:

I: Hotel is one of the choices, or you could choose school, or you could choose hospital

C: Hospital [hospital

M: [Hospital

K: [Hotel, hotel [hotel

S: [Hotel

M: Hotel

C: *Hospital*

M: Three against one

K: Yeh, hotel, yeh yeh [hotel, hotel

S: [Hotel, hotel, I wanna be the =

C: Okay, hotel

Then there was further conflict over the choice of roles, as Kalpesh (M, 7), Chris (M, 7) and Mike (M, 7) reached deadlock over who will take the role of manager:

K: Manager, [manager

M: Manager

I: It's not up to me

C: Manager

M: [Manager, manager {Kalpesh and Mike both have their hands up and get up from their seats to stand while chanting}

K: [Manager, manager

M: {pulling fist back at Kalpesh} *I'm* the manager

K: {raising fist} *I'm* manager, manager , [manager

M: {waving fist threateningly} [*I'm* manager, you wanna = ?

I: *Shhhh*, and [keep sitting down =

M: {to Kalpesh} [Don't make me, *I'm* [manager

K: [*I'm man-e-ger* {he sits, and Mike follows suit

M: Manager

Chris eventually decided to be chef, but Kalpesh and Mike continued in the same vein, despite the increasing impatience of the other two boys:

M: {to Kalpesh} Be receptionist, cos you can tell *anyone* to get out now =

K: {turns his back and folds his arms} No *I* ain't gonna be that, [I wanna be the manager

M: [*I'm* the

manager, I'm the manager

K: *Manager*

M: I'm the manager

C: {gestures in annoyance} Oh, [just get *started*

K: [Manager manager, I'm the [manager and that's final

M: [*I'm* the manager, *I'm* the manager

K: [I'm the manager, and that's final

S: [..... {says something to me}

M: *I'm* manager, and that's, *full*stop

S: (.) {to Kalpesh} Yeah, what will you [be?

K: {whipping around} [I'm manager, an' thass *final*

M: {gestures for emphasis} Double full stop, full full stop, thass *final* (.) no, *I'm* final that *I'm* the manager {noise off camera} (.) who's doing that, a ghost?

C: {laughs} Hurry *up*

M: *I'm* the manager man, look, I said it last, I'm manager I'm manager I'm manager, I'm manager I'm manager I'm manager

S: Duhhh {sighs}

Eventually I had to suggest that we toss a coin for the role, as they refused to reach agreement co-operatively. In this case it could be argued that the boys' silly, selfish constructions actually disadvantaged them, in that it prevented them and the other group members from progressing with the play, and they gained my disapproval. However, perhaps they did not *want* to progress with the play.

The Use of Comedy and Violence to Gain Status in Single-Sex Groups

In the single-sex role plays girls frequently used comedy to make the other girls laugh, thus gaining status in the group. This was usually achieved by playing the clown and exaggerating known roles. For instance, in a Year Six girl's role play at Lady Mary school, Charity (F, 11) takes up exaggerated masculine, reactionary adult discourse when playing the role of caretaker to make the part comical: in response to the role play problem of children dropping litter she suggests, "Why don't you make them *eat* the paper {the others laugh} if they've thrown it around". She goes on gruffly, "Well I think my idea was quite good actually {all giggle} (3) they disobey everything you say (.) and you should see wh- what *else*

they do, they even graffiti on the walls", and her suggestion to remedy this latter problem is to make children "lick it off" them. This causes the other girls much amusement. There were also occasional fantasies of violence in the female role plays, which appeared to function in a similar way to comedy in gaining the enthusiasm of the other girls. In a Year Three girls' group, Rebecca (F, 8) repeatedly brings up the theme of murder in their hospital play, and a Year Three girls' group discussed in the previous chapter talk vivaciously about "killing" the boys. Vicks (1990) found in her study that boys appeared to fantasise about violence during drama: my study suggests that girls were equally ready to explore violent themes. The girls' comic play and allusions to violence hardly summon the submissive, conformist, diligent image of primary school girls as suggested by researchers such as Belotti (1975) Walkerdine, (1990) and Walkerdine and Lucey (1989). However, such positions were taken up by girls in *all-female* groups, where the discursive gender dichotomy was not so highly evoked. Girls may also feel more at ease in small, single-sex groups (Sealey and Knight, 1990; Reay, 1990a). I found no instances of girls engaging in violent fantasies in the *mixed-sex* role plays, raising the possibility that such fantasies may be incongruous with discursive constructions of feminine behaviour, which are taken up in opposition to masculinity in the mixed-sex groups but which may be less salient in the all-female groups. Similarly the girls clowned far more in the single-sex groups than the mixed: possibly the girls' positionings as sensible and selfless in the mixed-sex plays meant that fooling would be incongruous with their 'sensible' positions.

Like the female role plays, many of the male role plays were very comical. Boys utilised comedy in both mixed and single-sex role plays in order to gain status within the group. Like the girls, boys occasionally combined comedy with fantasies of violence. For example, in a Year Three mixed-sex group at Lady Mary School, Noel (M, 7) fantasises continually about violent punishment of child litter-droppers, and in a Year Six role play Nima (M, 10), as chef, claims he will chop up any intruding members of the police force and put them in his soup. However, whereas the girls appeared to restrict violent fantasies to single-sex groups, boys articulated them in the mixed-sex groups as well as single-sex: this suggests the articulation of such fantasies may be more compatible with constructions of masculinity than femininity, where the genders are positioned as oppositional during the mixed sex interaction.

The Wielding of Power Derived From High-Status Roles in Single-Sex Groups

By 'high status roles' I refer to the positions of doctor, headteacher, and hotel manager. Many girls took up these positions in domineering, totalitarian ways in the single-sex plays, either humorously or seriously. For instance, Zoe (F, 7) becomes tearful with frustration because the other girls in her group do not appear to accept her total power as headteacher. She bewails their lack of compliance, reminding them, "*I* am the headteacher, you know" (a phrase she often repeats). More humorously, Cally (F, 10, as hotel manager,) yells at her rebelling hotel staff that if they do not comply with her wishes she will chop off their heads. Such comic dictatorship appeared to be a response to the rebelliousness of staff, which was also usually humorous. Comedy was frequently used by girls in single-sex groups to diffuse power in the group by undermining the position of the girl with the highest status role. She in turn sometimes used similar methods to resist such repositioning, resulting in the comical despotism exemplified by Cally's comment. In this there was a sharp contrast with the mixed-sex groups, where the authority of the child with the highest status role was rarely questioned. Although this point is impossible to quantify, there were suggestions in the female role plays that power due to possession of the highest status role was unacceptable to the other girls, or at least a contested issue. This is indicated by the number of comic female role plays: three of the 11 female plays were totally comical, and four more involved a great deal of humour, many of which involved girls with low status roles either specifically challenging, or more subtly undermining, the authority of the girl holding the high status role. It is also suggested by comments in the role plays: for example, in a Year Three role play Lea (F, 7) complains to me of Zoe, "she, she thinks because she's head teacher she can boss everybody about", and when I suggest that as head teacher Zoe does have some power over decision making, Lea replies, "You wouldn't like it if *you* were the teacher and she kept = on bossing you about and going Gnn gnnnn".

In the single-sex boys' groups children did not attempt to undermine and rebel against high-status, powerful positions as did their female counterparts in single-sex groups. For instance, in a Year Three boys' group Mike (M, 7), in the position of hotel manager, fired his staff one after the other with no resistance from them. Likewise, when hearing of the litter problem Wesley (M, 7), playing headteacher, thumps his fist on the table and cries, "This will *not* be tolerated",

while the rest of the group sit quietly. This raises the possibility that the power of the high status role was discursively more acceptable when held by a boy than when held by a girl in the single-sex groups, due to the construction of power itself as male (Davies, 1989). Therefore, constructions of gender appeared to affect power positions in the single sex groups.

Children's Constructions of Power in the Mixed-Sex Groups

The Sensible-selfless / Silly-selfish Dichotomy in the Mixed-Sex Groups

Chapter Five discussed the ways in which girls took up 'sensible selfless' positions during processes of gender-bonding and maintenance which construct their female school culture: it was these qualities which separated their culture from the male one. Hence this position is taken up as one of power by girls: such a position often benefits from the shared approval of other girls, it serves to identify one with a female culture and aids female bonding, and it theoretically pleases the female teacher as it conforms to her declared wishes (i.e. obedience, conscientiousness, etc.) (see Belotti, 1975; Walkerdine, 1990). As I observed in Chapter One, this latter assumption has been shown to be in vain: researchers such as Walkerdine (1990), Stanworth (1981), and Clarricoates (1980) have demonstrated that in reality teachers not only take these qualities for granted in girls, but also find them unattractive and indicating a repressive lack of individuality.

Moreover, I argue that while the sensible selfless position was highly regarded, and consequently powerful in female interaction, in mixed-sex interaction the taking up of this position often eventuated in the abandonment of power to boys. Boys chose 11 of the 15 scenarios, and also gained first choice of role in 11.5 (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Children's choices of role

Role Play	role chosen 1st by	role chosen 2nd by	role chosen 3rd by	role chosen last by
1)	boy - chef	girl - manager	boy - rm. service	girl - receptionist
2)	girl - chef	boy - rm. service	boy - manager	girl - receptionist
3)	boy- receptionist	girl - rm. service	girl - chef	boy - manager
4)	boy - chef	girl - receptionist	girl - rm. service	girl - manager
5)	boy - doctor	girl - nurse	girl - receptionist	boy - patient
6)	girl - teacher	girl - playground S	boy - caretaker	boy - headteacher
7)	boy - doctor	girl - nurse	boy - patient	girl - receptionist
8)	girl - headteacher	boy - teacher	boy - caretaker	girl - playground S
9)	boy - receptionist	boy - manager	girl - chef	girl - rm. service
10)	girl - receptionist	boy - chef	girl - manager	boy - receptionist
11)	boy - manager	boy - chef	girl - receptionist	girl - rm. service
12)	boy - rm. service	boy - manager	girl - chef	girl - receptionist
13)	boy - headteacher	boy - caretaker	girl - teacher	girl - playground S
14)	boy - chef	girl - receptionist	girl - manager	boy - rm. service
15)	boy - caretaker	girl - headteacher	boy - playground S	girl - teacher

(N.B. the role of receptionist was played by two children in one play).

The most powerful role was played only slightly more often by boys, with boys gaining the most powerful occupational role (doctor, manager, and headteacher) in 9 of the 15 role play groups. Yet where only one girl who gained the most powerful role got first choice in the group, four boys took the most powerful role as the first choice in the group. Moreover, more than twice as many girls as boys ended up with last choice, and the last choice role was rarely a powerful one. Two of the three most powerful roles (doctor and manager) are traditionally male occupational positions: thus it is impossible to tell whether the boys chose these because they seemed traditionally gender-appropriate, or because they were the most powerful. Yet certainly they occasionally used their strong positions as though the two were synonymous, taking on particularly masculine or sexist attitudes and dominating or intimidating the other players. The least male dominated of the three positions was headteacher: the schools' female headteachers were identified as role models by several children, and obviously presented a strong proof that this job was available to females. The position of headteacher was taken up by the same number of girls as boys. While Year

Three boys took the most powerful role in five out of six role plays, the Year Six role plays were split evenly, with three boys and three girls taking the most powerful roles. While my study is not large enough to draw conclusions from this result, it nevertheless suggests a possibility that the older group draw more upon egalitarian ideas and are less willing to conform to gender stereotyping: this point was borne out by other contrasts between the two age groups (see for example Chapter Four).

This male-domination of scenario and role choice in the mixed-sex groups appeared at least partially to be a result of the girls' feminine constructions. Their position as sensible and selfless often meant that they facilitated and accommodated male (silly, selfish) demands, or even voluntarily offered control to the boys: as a result boys often 'got their own way' at the expense of the girls, and dominated the play. Girls' sensible selflessness gained little appreciation in mixed-sex interaction. Thus in the mixed-sex role plays, in nine of the thirteen times when a role was left which nobody wanted, a girl accepted the last role. Moreover, most of these girls explained their acceptance of the left-over role in sensible-selfless terms: they wanted to save argument, often so that they could get on with their 'work'. For example, Sorrel (F, 10) says that she accepted a role she did not want, even though she did not feel it was fair, "Because my teacher always says that it's not right to argue with other people", and Nicole (F, 9) explains she accepted the remaining role because, "Well if I'd said I wanted to be teacher then there'd be more arguing". These girls maintained that boys in their place would have argued about the role, and thus caused trouble: Carlie (F, 10) says she accepted the last role rather than argue with Nima (M, 10) over the one she wanted, and says that had it been the other way around, Nima *would* have argued. Sandra (F, 9) explains that she did not *want* the last role of playground supervisor, but accepted it to save argument. I question her further:

I: ...Do you think that if the *boys* had been left with the last role, just been left with, um, playground supervisor, do you think they would have accepted it, or do you think they would've argued?

S: *Argued*

I: They would've? (.) yeah, why do you think that is?

S: Cos boys argue a lot

I: Yeah (.) why don't *you* argue then?

S: (.) Dunno

Sandra's testimony about the boys' tendency to argue was actually supported by a number of boys. Nima (M, 11) acknowledges that in his group Carlie had to accept the last role of room service attendant, but says that in her place he would have refused outright to accept the role, as he would "never in my dreams be a room attendant". Likewise, Yain (M, 9) argues that the girl who accepted the last role should have swapped with someone else; but when I ask if he would have been willing to swap with her he replies "Naahh!" Many children recognised the self-sacrifice of these girls in their interviews, but said that they had done the right thing by selflessly averting argument: for example, Ahmed (M, 9) says that although it was unfair that Nicole got left with the remaining role, she was right not to argue as that would have caused trouble, and Shamin (F, 7) says that Marguerite was right to give up her chosen role to a boy because, "she wanted to be sensible". While Davies (1989) maintains that gender discourse only recognises female power in the domestic field or as helpers of males, in the mixed-sex role play groups in this study girls' sensible selfless position as 'helpers of men' (or boys) is shown to become a position of powerlessness. Davies admits that the feminine positions girls take up may render them less powerful, but points out that failure to take up 'properly female' positions may relegate girls to the status of 'not a proper person', and socially incompetent. Thus by drawing on discourses which position females as caring, selfless and supportive to the male, many girls position themselves as 'properly female', and yet effectively abdicate power in the mixed-sex role play interaction.

Therefore the self-sacrifice of these girls in the mixed-sex role play groups does not position them powerfully: their powerlessness resulting from their acceptance of the low-status roles, and their facilitating positions, is more salient. However, these constructions were not fixed: having unanimously chosen a hospital scenario, a Year Three mixed-sex group went on to choose their roles, and Marguerite (F, 8) immediately chose 'doctor'. A brief argument followed, as one of the boys (Tanvier, M, 7) claimed *he* wanted to be doctor, and Marguerite asserted, "I wanna be the doctor because I'm the boss". However, Tanvier persisted, and also behaved disruptively, messing about with the other boy in the group. Marguerite eventually capitulated to his petulant demands and resigned to playing receptionist in order to get the play started. But the boys continued to fight and mess about, and after telling me I should replace the boys with girls because girls are more sensible, Marguerite lost patience and reclaimed her

original role choice of doctor, and assertively took up the part, guiding the remainder of the play. Thus although her sensible-selfless construction lost Marguerite her powerful role initially, when she saw that this construction had not achieved its aims (i.e. to make the play more successful), she combined 'sensible' with 'assertive', and repositioned herself to a powerful role within the play.

As I have observed in Chapter Five, the female sensible-selfless positions were constructed in opposition to the boys' constructions of their masculinity as silly and selfish (and vice-versa), according to discourses of gender duality. Thus, as girls position themselves as sensible, patient facilitators, boys conversely present themselves as silly (disruptive), impatient demanders. (Such behaviour in primary school boys has been observed by Spender, 1982; Jordan, 1995: Stanworth, 1981; Adams and Walkerdine, 1986; and Riddell, 1989). That boys used humour more than girls in mixed-sex role play groups could be explained by their construction of male as silly, compared to the construction of females as sensible. I suggest this may also contribute to boys' more frequent choice of role play scenarios, and explain why far fewer boys ended up with the last role in the mixed-sex plays: the silly selfish construction allowed boys to be demanding and assertive, while the sensible selfless position led girls to be facilitating and submissive. For example, returning to the Year Three role play group described above, Marguerite (F, 7) explained in her subsequent interview that she gave up her role of doctor to placate Tanvier, who would otherwise have ruined the play by being disruptive and "silly". Another girl in the play (Shamin, F, 7) comments in her interview that Marguerite did the right thing by giving up her original role choice so that they could continue with the play, but claims that Tanvier only wanted to be a doctor, "because he wanted to be better than Marguerite". Thus we can see how the female sensible position accommodates the male selfish position, and thus the girls may give up any potential power to the boys. Hence, children of both sexes portrayed girls' acceptance of roles which boys refused as normal: the binary opposition of gender positions leads to many girls (albeit in exasperation) facilitating boys' demanding positions.

Thus it appeared that the children's oppositional gender constructions meant that by accommodating the boys' assertive, demanding behaviour, many girls ended up with the lowest status, least powerful roles. I now argue that this sometimes resulted in the girls' subsequent belittlement in the role plays.

The Impact of Gendered Positions on the Taking Up of Positions of Power

Not only did boys take up the highest status role slightly more often than girls in the mixed-sex plays, but the boys taking up the highest status role appeared far more ready to use this role in a domineering way and position themselves as controllers of the mixed-sex plays, exercising power over the girls and other boy in the role play group. This was not *always* the case: later in this chapter I discuss the way in which a girl took up a powerful role in a domineering manner, and how some boys had power exercised over them. However, of the nine times a boy took up the most powerful role, in four they used this position in a domineering way (by which I mean, giving orders and reprimands to the others in the group, and behaving in an authoritarian manner), and three more boys used their high-status position as one of power (by which I mean, taking a guiding, organisational role). Two girls also used their highest-status roles in this latter way, and only one girl took up the highest-status role in a domineering manner. The girls and boys who did not take up their high-status roles in powerful or domineering ways simply did not attempt either to guide or exert authority over the rest of the group.

A Year Three hospital play provides an example of a boy using his high-status role in a domineering manner: Patrick (M, 7), playing doctor, wields his power with confidence and authority, successfully intimidating and quashing all opposition to his views in the play. On the one occasion that the receptionist (Angela, F, 7) challenges him, he is swift to remind her of her lesser status with a cutting 'put-down':

A: {threateningly} Doctor, what medicine did you give him?

P: {still looking at Luke} I gave him, antibiotics (.) {dismissive gesture in Angela's direction} now *be* quiet

Thus Patrick uses his powerful position to position Angela as an insignificant subordinate. His final ultimatum to the patient (Luke, M, 7) is: "now, either you *stay* here, until you get better, *or* {he drums finger on table for emphasis} you can go to another hospital {he leans back from table} it's *your* choice". Luke humbly murmurs "stay here, get better", and Patrick triumphs. Thus it seems that Patrick's strength in his position as having the most respected occupational

role in the group cannot be matched, and he wields his power advantage to dominate the rest of the group. However, this power was not obviously related to gender; Luke, positioned as powerless, was also a boy.

It appeared that one boy in particular constructed gender as a source of power, drawing upon gender discourses and combining them with discourses of occupational status to create an unassailable position for himself, and to dominate others in the group. Simon (M, 11), playing hotel manager, uses his position to intimidate and humiliate the female receptionist (Sabina, F, 10): he claims that she left her bra on the bed in one of the hotel rooms. Recovering from a state of shock and humiliation, Sabina attempts to deny the assertion and retaliate, but Simon is supported by the male chef (Nima, M, 10), who states that if Sabina complained to the police about this accusation he would chop up any visiting police officers and put them in his soup. Simon elaborates enthusiastically that he saw Sabina disappear to the bedroom with one of the Chippendales, and that he has the incident on film - further mortifying Sabina, and rendering her completely unable to retaliate. Thus Simon uses his powerful position to produce Sabina (F, 10) as a sexualised object of ridicule: he uses his gender position and sexist discourse in a similar manner to those boys who Walkerdine (1981, 1990) observed resisting the power of their teacher (see Chapter One). A position which unashamedly wields power may be more available to boys than girls: boys are able to draw upon male power discourses as well as occupational status discourse in order to create such positions, and also such positions do not clash with constructions of masculinity. As femininity is constructed as sensible and selfless in opposition to masculinity, brandishing power over other members of the group (a self*ish*, rather than self*less* position) may be fundamentally incongruous with this construction of femininity, and as such bears the risk of rendering the girl concerned *not properly female* (see Davies, 1989).

These examples illustrate how, by positioning others as discursively non-powerful or marginalised, one can increase one's own power position. Thus in the afore-mentioned Year Three mixed-sex, hospital role play, despite having effectively utilised his position as male with the highest status role to dominate the play and its outcome, Patrick (M, 7) is unwilling to accept my suggestion that we conclude the play:

P: {leaning forward and looking down at the table} There's a *bit* more {looks

at Luke} cos, you've got to pay your bill for the bed (.) {Angela grins} and electricity {Angela grins and looks at me} (.) now (.) so:o, what floor do you want to go on?

A: {whispers to Luke} Five

L: Err, five

P: Fifth floor (.) ermm, that means you wanna go in the children's department, right?

{Angela and Christine giggle}

L: {laughing} Ye:ah

P: (2) Okay (.) so that's where you'll be staying, until you get better {looks at Luke challengingly}

Patrick positions Luke as childish and ridiculous by informing him he will be staying in the children's ward, and in doing so Patrick gains appreciation from the girls (because of the trick he played on Luke), as well as demonstrating further his total power. Such positioning of others in discourse in order to increase one's own power position is an inevitable consequence of the struggle for discursive power in interaction. This example also illustrates how maleness did not guarantee a powerful position in the group: Patrick uses his high status position to dominate Luke, as well as the girls.

Most of these instances where children positioned others in order to increase their own power were extremely subtle, and thus it was difficult to tell how those positioned by others as non-powerful or an object of ridicule experienced this. However, Sabina (F, 10) spoke at length about her reaction to being accused of sexual misconduct in her Year Six mixed-sex role play. She explained that she felt shy in the play anyway, and that Simon (M, 11) should not have accused her of leaving her bra on a hotel bed, "because I was a bit, like er-feeling embarrassed", and that when he did say it she, "felt really embarrassed in front of them and you (.) I thought he might never ever say that". When I ask her whether she thinks Simon would have accused the other boy in the group of sexual misconduct, Sabina replies in the negative and explains, "because he's his friend, and he's a male, probably". When I ask whether she thinks Simon knew it was embarrassing for her, she replies, "yeah, probably he did think it was embarrassing", and she thinks males do such things to females because, "they think women aren't so tough as men". Even in retrospect, when discussing the incident in our interview, she cannot think of any effective ways in which she

could have countered or dealt with Simon's accusation. His powerful position allowed him to develop his accusations, whereas Sabina's powerless one appeared to undermine any attempts at retaliation. Clearly she found the incident humiliating, and was apparently made to feel more powerless because of her lack of resources with which to retaliate.

However, only a minority of children asserted power in this way, and both boys and girls were positioned as powerless in some plays (as Luke and Sabina were). This is the focus of the next section.

Resistance to Positionings, and Children *Not* Constructing Gender as a Source of Power

<u>The Construction of Other Social Issues Outweighing Gender in Terms of Power</u>

There were many discourses utilised to position others apart from gender discourse, and these often outweighed gender in children's constructions of power in the role play groups. For instance, in a Year Three mixed-sex role play at Lady Mary school, social class discourse was drawn on by Annalea (F,7) in order to belittle the boy playing the role of caretaker, and undermine his contributions to the play. She gave him two orders, and made disparaging remarks about the menial nature of a caretaker's role, such as, "And then there'll only be leaves left, and, {laughing} Eddie [caretaker] can sweep them up (.) {the others giggle} cos I'm sure he's used to that". And in the previous chapter I reported how school-orientated concerns with 'bad behaviour' outweighed gender solidarity in a Year Three girls' group. A further example is that, where in the mixed-sex groups the role of caretaker was always chosen by a boy, in an all-boys' group male identification was no longer a concern and social class discourses became more salient, positioning the role of caretaker as menial and distasteful.

<u>Resistance to Positionings</u>

According to Foucault (1972, 1980), wherever there is power there is resistance in reaction, and Davis (1988) observes that power is a process through which asymmetrical power relations can be not only constructed, but also undermined. Certainly there were instances of resistance to positionings by other children during the role plays: for example, when told by the rest of his role play group he

is to play receptionist, Kalpesh (M, 7) gasps, "Who me?", and when the rest of the group utter a resounding "Yes you", Kalpesh responds by declaring, "Then I'm sending everybody out", and the play comes to a standstill again. In a Year Three girls' group, Lea (F, 7) refuses to acknowledge her position of lesser status than the headteacher, and is outraged by the headteacher's assertion of power; and in another Year Three girl's group, Tracy (F, 7) vigorously and adamantly refutes Rebecca's (F, 8, playing doctor) attempts to blame her for hospital error. Thus my findings support Foucault's argument concerning the existence of resistance: however, the overall compliance of the majority of girls in the mixed-sex groups suggests that in these girls may have less resources of resistance than boys. Davis (1988) argues that,

"Members do not have equal access for affecting the outcome of their interaction. Resources are asymmetrically distributed in accordance with structures of domination". (p.89)

Substituting the idea of a hegemonic discourse of gender as oppositional for Davis' "structures of domination", my findings suggest that children's constructions of femininity, based on the hegemonic discourse of gender dichotomy, may mean that to assertively resist positionings by boys would render girls *non-female*, and thus rob them of social competence. (To be positioned as socially inept could also position them as marginalised and powerless in the interaction). Moreover, by drawing on combinations of gender and other hegemonic discourses, boys can position themselves so powerfully that they deprive other girls and boys of means of resistance. Hence gender and gender discourse appear to impact on the resources of power positionings available to children in interaction.

Not Constructing Gender as a Source of Power

In 6 out of 15 mixed-sex group role plays, a girl chose the most powerful (highest status) role. While two of these were actually the last choice, that these six girls took up the positions shows a number of girls in my sample willing to take the highest status role. However, as a noted above, there was a difference between the girls and boys in the way they played these: while the boys frequently used their high status position to dominate the play, there was only one instance of a girl doing this in a mixed-sex group. It may be no coincidence that this particular

girl (Ketchy, F, 9) was much larger than the other children in her class, and was very assertive (she informed me that she could beat up all the boys in her class). Ketchy chose the role of headteacher, and explained in her interview that her choice was due to the power the role afforded: "you can tell people to do this and you can tell people to do that". She used her position of authority to dominate the talk and decision making in the group. I argue that Ketchy did not construct gender as a source of power, but rather drew upon social status discourses to position herself powerfully. However, it could be suggested that, as her school headteacher was female, Ketchy may have drawn on her gender as well as social status to construct her position as powerful. Although she was the only girl in a mixed-sex group to use her high-status role in this domineering way, her actions demonstrate the possibility of such positioning being open to other girls.

Moreover, as I have observed, some boys did not appear able to use their gender to construct themselves powerfully in the plays, and indeed were marginalised in the group despite their gender.

Summary

To recap, these findings suggest that children's oppositional constructions of gender led to differences in constructions of power between the male and female single-sex groups. Supporting Davies' (1989) hypothesis that children construct power itself as male, it appeared that hierarchical power positions were more frequently resisted and contested in the female groups than the male groups, where power appeared more accepted. Taking up a high-status position in an authoritarian way may be incongruous with children's constructions of femininity. This was more marked in the mixed-sex groups, where there was evidence of girls' sensible-selfless constructions leading to girls' acceptance of more low-status, and consequently less powerful, positions. Boys' constructions, on the other hand, apparently enabled many of them to use their high-status roles to dominate the plays. Thus boys' constructions of masculinity became a source of potential power in mixed sex interaction, whereas girls' oppositional constructions appeared to become a source of potential powerlessness. Moreover, gender itself was constructed as a source of power on one occasion, with a boy combining gender and status to create a powerful position and position others as powerless. Other factors were sometimes found to outweigh

gender in their impact on children's interactive power positionings, and I show that some children did not construct gender as a source of power. However, the lack of resistance by girls in the mixed-sex role plays raises the possibility that children's oppositional constructions of gender may potentially disadvantage the girls concerning resistance to positionings. Thus my findings suggest that where they are drawn on in mixed-sex interaction, these gender constructions potentially empower the boys, and disempower the girls.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCOURSES CHILDREN DREW ON IN THEIR CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER

This chapter is concerned with the mechanisms behind children's constructions of gender. The different types of discourse evident in children's discussion of gender are identified and analysed. Having shown the range of these, I explore the ways they were used in children's arguments. The discursive contradictions in children's speech, and their apparent awareness of these, are discussed, and finally discursive resistance to the construction of gender dichotomy is examined.

A discourse is a textual system that constitutes objects and subjects (see Parker, 1990a, 1992; Foucault, 1980). In previous chapters I have engaged in discourse analysis, exploring children's verbal constructions of gender: this chapter is concerned with the identification of *types* of discourse, and as such is an *analysis of discourses* (see Potter *et al*, 1990; Burr, 1995). In taking this approach I am following poststructuralists Parker (1990a, 1992) and Macnaghten (1993) (see Chapter One for a full discussion). In the previous chapter I used the latter two of Macnaghten's (1993) approaches to textual analysis, regarding the discursive production of social reality. This chapter is concerned with his two other objectives: to analyse the variety of constructions of a subject (gender, in my case); and to discover how discourses were used as "argumentative strategies" (p.55). Hence this section deals with the identification of gender discourses, and the examination of these constructions in children's arguments.

In categorising the various discourses I attempted to use the criteria devised by Parker (1990a, 1992, see Chapter One). However, while useful as a general outline, I found this criteria too generalised to be very helpful in sorting out different types of discourse. Thus my methods of analysing the varieties of discourse follow those of Macnaghten (1993), who offers examples of his categorisation (see Chapters One and Two for further discussion). The titles I use to describe those identified in children's speech are simply descriptive, as there has been no other attempt to identify all gender discourses: they have usually been referred to in a more general way; for example, Walkerdine (1990) refers to 'sexist discourse'. However, where possible I explain a title's theoretical precedents. Each is described, and provided with the grammatical constructions and metaphors by which it was located (see Macnaghten, 1993). Further, I

include an example of the text in which it can be identified. As Macnaghten observes, the subject of the narrative (in this case, gender), is more explicit at some times than others, which is one of the limitations of this approach. Therefore, like Macnaghten, I include a consideration of the way in which discourses produce social relationships: for example, the way that they depict the genders, with or without alluding to them specifically. However, this did not often present problems in my case; the children were asked to discuss gender in their interviews, leaving little room for confusion on this point. The words 'narrative' and 'discourse' have sometimes been used in different ways (see for instance, Sarbin, 1986; Kehily, 1995), or interchangeably. Here I make a distinction between the two, using the word 'discourse' to describe the themes which position and describe subjects and objects, and the word 'narrative' to describe all the ideas and argumentsconstituting the various discourses in their production of subjects and objects.

The second section examines children's use of these discourses in their arguments during the interviews and role play. There are three areas of investigation:

1) Their application of discourses to different issues concerning gender. Here the ways in which children drew on them in their discussion of gender issues are explored, and I discuss the numbers and gender of children utilising them.
2) Discursive contradictions evident in children's arguments. These contradictions are explored to demonstrate the fluid, complex nature of narratives in our speech.
3) Attempts to resist the hegemonic construction of gender dichotomy. Leading from the previous examination of discursive contradiction, this final section examines the narratives children used to challenge this dominant gender construction.

Therefore, this chapter begins with an analysis of the different types of discourse concerning gender which were found in the children's talk. These are split into three groups: those supporting gender inequality and discrimination, those against it, and those not specifically concerning gender, but which could be drawn on to support those in the former groups. The investigation then turns to the ways in which those identified were drawn on in children's arguments.

Identification of Different Gender Discourses

There follows a categorisation and description of the various discourses concerning gender identified within my data analysis, and the various narratives supporting the discourses. The general term 'gender discourse' is used by Davies and Banks (1992) to describe all those concerning gender. I have divided these into two groups: 'inequity discourses', which include all those that present genders as unequal or discriminate unfairly according to gender; and 'equity discourses' (the heading used by Davies and Banks, 1992), including all those which oppose gender discrimination. Other discourses which could overlap with those of gender are also listed: Parker (1990a) observes that such overlaps occur, and Ball (1990) and Macnaghten (1993) note that words and concepts change their meanings as they are utilised by different discourses. For example, 'rationality' can be used in feminist discourse to show the logic of equal opportunities, or in sexist constructions to argue the inevitable differences between men and women. Thus I discuss each discourse identified, and the connections and differences between them.

Inequity Discourses

I found two types of gender inequity discourse: that of *innate inequality between genders,* and an *opportunities should not be equal* discourse. The former discourse could be used to construct the genders as different, or oppositional, and the latter discourse presented these differences as a source of discrimination.

Innate inequality between genders

Several different narratives were found supporting the discourse of innate inequality between genders in the children's speech. These were:

i) *Male superiority and female inferiority.*
Description: grammatical constructions which involved unfavourable comparisons of women compared to men, or girls compared to boys, and produced women as inferior. These included three types which interrelated, but were often used in different ways:

ia) Female mental inadequacy.

Description: all arguments that girls are mentally incompetent.

Examples: women would not be able to be motor racers because, "they haven't got a really long, big brain" (Tyrone, M, 8) .

ib) Female physical inadequacy, and male physical power and ability.

Description: claims that women are physically inadequate, and elevation of male physical superiority.

Example: women could not build cars or "heavy machines", because the work is too heavy and they might get hurt (Wesley, M, 7), and women cannot play football in mixed teams because men are too "rough" (Simon M, 10). Thus Short and Carrington (1989) observe that boys in their study claimed that superior physical strength is the best thing about being a boy. This narrative is observed by Jordan (1995) to be vital to boys' constructions of superior masculinity.

ic) Male superiority.

Description: This is born of the former two which depict females as inadequate. It elevates masculinity over femininity, and consequently ridicules female items.

Example: Mike (M, 8) says Tanvier (M, 7) should play the part of nurse because "he's a girl". Jordan (1995) observed such constructs as evident when boys positioned girls and 'wimpy' boys as Other in school.

ii) *Female superiority.*

Description: This was similarly based on comparisons between the sexes, but produced males as inferior. The narrative tends to present females as mature and sensible, and males as immature and badly behaved.

Example: Marguerite (F, 7) claims I should exchange the boys in their role play group for girls, as "girls are more sensible than boys", and Obie (F, 10) says women are "more suited" to childcare.

iii) *Stereotypically gendered characteristics and behaviour.*

Description: presents a gender-stereotypical picture of the world, and drew upon conventional stereotypes to explain differences in behaviour between the genders, both in adult work and in the classroom. Thus it constructed the genders as different. Grammar included generalised comparisons between girls and boys, and generalisations concerning either gender. This narrative over-laps

with many of those noted formerly, but does not necessarily present the differences in gendered behaviour as inherent.
Examples: boys and girls are different because, "girls play with dolls and boys play with, toys" (Leke M, 7).

v) *'Battle of the sexes'*,
Description: presents the genders as in conflict or competition; thus constructing the genders as in opposition. It is located grammatically when 'the girls' and 'the boys' are presented in antagonism. This included articulations of gender solidarity and strength in numbers.
Example: there is sexism in the classroom because, "Boys think they're better than girls and girls think they're better than boys" (Lynn F, 7) .

vi) *Female fear*.
Description: fear of 'strange men', and possible harm of women and children at their hands. While this fear is born out of the cultural materiality of violence against women (see Soper, 1990), this narrative has the effect of discriminating against men and perpetuating the gender dichotomy as it positions all strange men as potentially harmful, and thus constructs the genders as different and in opposition. It was located where children presented men as potentially violent.
Example: Naomi (F, 11) argues that she would employ women to do something other than drive lorries, and when I ask her why she explains;

N: Well, it's just a long way for a lady to go on her own and stuff and it might just (.) it wouldn't be as good for a lady to go on her own
I: Right, what might happen?
N: Well (.) it's easier for something to *happen* to a *lady* than a man I think
I: Mmm
N: Cos there are more horrible men in the world

These narratives all present the genders as different, and the examples of male superiority, female superiority, and 'battle of the sexes' narratives illustrate how innate inequality between genders discourse can also be used to construct the genders as oppositional: the children compare differences between the genders, positioning one gender over the other. Thus all these narratives support the hegemonic discursive practice which constructs a gender dichotomy: Davies

(1989), and Davies and Banks (1992), refer to this as the 'dominant gender discourse'.

Opportunities should not be equal discourse

This discourse can be seen in many of the examples of narrative supporting the discourse of innate inequality listed above. For example, when Wesley (M, 7) claims that women should not do heavy work, and Tyrone (M, 8) says that women cannot be motor-racers. It is linked to the discourse of innate inequality, in that claims that opportunities should not be equal between genders were usually based of the supposition that the genders are innately unequal. However, this version does not necessarily state that there are innate gender differences.

Equity Discourses:

There were two main equity discourses: that of *innate equality between the genders*, and that claiming that *the genders should have equal opportunity*.

Innate equality between genders

Description: positions the genders as the same, and equally able. It was often used by children to protest at the error and injustice of gender discrimination, and children drawing on it frequently used the key-words 'equal', and 'the same': Examples: Matthew (M, 11) explains, "I don't reckon you should be sexist, cos girls, girls can have as many muscles as men", and Emily (F, 10) argues that "We're all equal".

Genders should have equal opportunity

Description: argues gender discrimination is unfair, and that people should be given a chance to prove themselves, or to experiment. It is based on Liberal humanist concepts (see Davies, 1989) suggesting that individuals should be allowed to do as they wish, and on the concept of 'fairness' so important to children (see Piaget, 1964). Unlike the discourse of 'innate equality between genders', that of equal opportunity does not necessarily argue that women and men *can* do the same things, but is concerned with the rights of the individual to

'try if they want to'. The words 'fair', 'right' and concepts of 'the right to try' often located this narrative.

Example: Sally (F, 10) says of discriminatory male builders, "I think they should give the women a go".

Other Discourses Which Over-lapped With Those of Gender:

'Adult'/adult-pleasing.

Description: children drew on this in interaction with other children to reiterate recognised adult or school values, or in interaction with me (an adult), apparently to impress me or position themselves with me. Examples of this discourse alluded to correct ways to behave, usually in terms of the child's own good behaviour, or another child's improper actions.

Example: Tyrone (M, 8) discusses the behaviour of the other boys in his group in the preceding role play:

T: I think Michael's being very grown up about it

I: Yeah, yeh

T: Leke was being a *child*

Thus by drawing on adult narratives of maturity, Tyrone explicitly positions himself with me as an adult, speculating that Michael is also grown up, but relegating Leke to the position of child (and Other to himself). This discourse has been observed by Davies (1989) and Buckingham (1993) during their research with children. It sometimes over-lapped with discourses of gender, as when Alma (F, 7) expresses disapproval concerning boys' fighting.

Popular social science.

Description: popularised fragments of social science concepts such as those of role modelling and peer-pressure (although children did not use these specific terms). Grammatical tropes included explanations of behaviour in terms of imitation of ones elders, or attempting to impress friends. It could be applied to gender.

Example: people's sexism is due to "the way they were brought up" (Emily F, 10).

'Right' or usual ways of doing things.

Description: presentation of proper and correct ways of behaving, apparently produced by discourses of morality or conformity. Conformity narratives presented adherence to social norms (including gender-stereotypical behaviour) as proper and correct, and morality narratives presented a moral or ethical order which could applied to gender. However, it was usually impossible to distinguish between, and categorise, the two discourses in the children's talk.

Examples: employment of a male childcarer would not work because there would be disapproval of the situation from family and peers, as "that's not what people do": such a role reversal of traditional roles would be "breaking rules" (Ahmed M, 9). Ryan (M, 11) uses this discourse to support discrimination, arguing that it 'isn't right' for women to be bosses; yet Michael (M, 7) uses it to oppose discrimination, explaining that "under God's eye we are *all* brothers and sisters *all* around".

Thus I have counted four different discourses children used in their constructions of gender as different or not different, and several other discourses and narratives (some directly concerning gender and others which could be applied to it), which were used to support or oppose the gender dichotomy. Following the identification of these discourses, my next concern was to examine the ways in which children used them in their gender constructions and arguments.

The Ways in Which Discourses are Drawn on in Children's Discussion of Gender

The Different Issues They Were Applied To

In this section I demonstrate the way in which the different discourses could be seen operating in children's arguments, and the different aspects of gender that they were related to. Table 7.1 sets out the numbers of children that used each discourse concerning gender at least once during the research. Some of the children's statements drew on overlapping discourses, or two or more discourses in the same response: these have been categorised under each heading. For example, a statement such as "girls are better than boys at childcare, so men shouldn't be allowed to do it" would be categorised under innate inequality and genders should not have equal opportunity discourses. (N.B. Discourses are titled in capital letters, and narratives are tiltled in small letters).

Table 7.1: Percentage of children using the different narratives to construct gender discourses:

	Gender and Age						
	Girls			*Boys*			
Type of Discourse	Yr 3 %	Yr 6 %	Total Girls %	Yr 3 %	Yr 6 %	Total Boys %	Total girls & boys %
INEQUITY							
INNATE INEQUALITY BETWEEN GENDERS:							
i) Male superiority and female inferiority	33	13	22	58	12	36	29
ii) Female superiority	41	31	35	6	24	13	25
iii) Stereotypically gendered characteristics	92	64	72	91	64	72	72
vi) Battle of the sexes	28	5	15	12	0	6	11
v) Female Fear	6	5	5	0	0	0	3
GENDERS SHOULD NOT HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY	47	23	32	36	20	27	30
EQUITY							
INNATE EQUALITY BETWEEN GENDERS	22	31	25	6	36	17	22
GENDERS SHOULD HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	33	23	25	24	32	25	25
OTHERS IMPACTING UPON THOSE OF GENDER							
ADULT/ADULT PLEASING	8	3	5	3	0	2	3
'RIGHT' WAY TO DO THINGS	0	0	0	9	0	5	2
SOCIAL SCIENCE	3	3	3	0	8	3	3
FEMALE FEAR	6	3	4	0	0	0	2
N	*81*	*39*	*36*	*64*	*33*	*25*	*145*

Table 7.1 does not show the number of times each discourse was used by children, and of course each child drew on several different discourses in their responses. However, Table 7.1 suggests that a greater number of children drew on inequity discourses at least once than they did equity ones. It also indicates a difference in children's use of gender discourse according to age: generally fewer children from the older age-groups drew on gender inequity discourses at least once, and more of the older children drew on that which produces the genders as equal once or more. This supports earlier findings in this study which suggest Year Six children tend to provide more egalitarian responses than their Year Three counterparts. Table 7.2 shows the total percentages of children using equity, inequity, and other discourses:

Table 7.2: Percentages of children drawing on different discourses

	girls	boys
	%	%
Inequity discourses	95	89
Equity discourses	42	31
Other discourses	7	9
N	81	64

Table 7.2 confirms that more children drew on inequity than equity discourses, although this included the large proportion of children drawing on the narrative of stereotypically gendered characteristics: I have noted that this narrative may have been elicited particularly frequently due to the nature of the interview questions.

Examining the way in which these narratives were used in children's arguments, the discourse of innate inequality was frequently drawn on as a narrative of *male superiority and female inferiority* in children's explanations of gender discrimination in adult work, particularly on the part of the boys. The construct of female physical inadequacy was most often utilised here, and almost all of the girls using this narrative did so in this way. This narrative was then used to

support the *genders should not have equal opportunities* discourse: as I noted in Chapter Four, many children claimed women should not be builders because they are not strong enough, or become tired quickly. Women's inferior mentality was used as an explanation for gender-differentiation in adult work by a tiny minority of children, but apparently still exists as a narrative children may have recourse to. These male superiority narratives were also reportedly used in child interaction: for example, Tracy (F, 7) says boys tease girls because "they think they're more tougher". My findings in Chapter Five suggest that these are drawn on by boys to aid gender category maintenance and male bonding, and support Jordan's (1995) arguments that such discourses are drawn on by boys to construct girls and non-'macho' boys as Other.

Narratives of *female superiority* were sometimes used by girls in the context of the symbolic gender cultures in the role plays, apparently aiding female bonding (see Chapter Five). They were also used when complaining about male behaviour: some boys also used them in this context, to describe girls as better behaved, or better at schoolwork. Moreover, this narrative also supported the *genders should not have equal opportunities* discourse when applied to adult work: Sandra (F, 10) says that women make better teachers, and a number of girls and boys argued that women are better at childcare. This narrative was used by more girls than boys (35% of girls used it, compared to 9% of the boys), and girls' use of this accounted for more than half of the times they are listed drawing on the discourse of innate inequality between genders. Fewer boys utilised this account compared to girls who drew on that of male superiority.

The narrative of *stereotypically gendered characteristics and behaviour* was widely drawn on to present a stereotypical picture of males and females in school and adult work. However, this is hardly surprising considering the nature of my interview questions, which asked children to consider whether boys and girls behaved differently in school; thus evoking generalised answers. Hence this narrative was evident in many explanations of differences between the genders: for instance, Denzel (M, 7) informs me that girls want to play hopscotch, where boys want to play football and tennis, and when I ask him why boys would not want to play hopscotch he replies, "Because that's - th, they think it's more of a *girl's* game, really". He uses it to explain differences in behaviour between girls and boys as being due to a wish or need to perpetuate traditionally gender-appropriate behaviour. An equal number of girls and boys used this narrative in

their constructions, and it was the most often used of all those found in children's discriminatory responses. Fewer children from the oldest age-group drew on this account, however: of those that used it, only 39% were 10-11 year old children, compared to the 61% from the younger age-group. This narrative was applied most often to explanations of differences in gendered behaviour.

When discussing gender issues in adult work, a number of girls, and fewer boys, drew on a *battle of the sexes* narrative to construct the genders as in opposition. This included claims that male workers would antagonise a woman boss, and that she would need to employ women workers to support her. This narrative was mainly utilised by the younger children: it was located in the talk of only two Year Six girls, and no Year Six boys. Battle of the sexes narratives often overlapped with that of female fear: for instance, Tracy (F, 7) suggests that a woman boss might be harmed by male workers, and would need female workers to protect her. The narrative of female fear was itself applied to adult occupation: Somina (F, 11) explains why she would not employ a male childcarer in the following way:

S: (.) We:ell, cos, I know a girl, I know a *woman*, who had a baby, and she sent her baby to a *man* one=

I: Mm

S: =a man childcarer, and you know what happened?

I: What?

S: The baby nearly got *killed* by his son

I: {gasps} By his son? what happened?

S : Well, the *son* just, just *looked* at her like *this*, and she grabbed her baby by the neck and *squeezed*

I: The baby? {gasp} good grief (.) so that was the man's *son*, do you think it was the man's fault?

S: (2) Well, the man was, you know, *kind* of a bit bad

I: Right (.) cos he didn't look after the baby properly and make sure it didn't happen?

S: No, and the baby started crying, he just used to say Shush, he didn't even give her the *bottle*

I: Ohh, really?

S: And the baby used to go *home*, with little *bruises* over her *face*

Thus inequity discourse could be found in a wide range of narratives in children's arguments concerning their own lives and adult work: those of stereotypically gendered characteristics and behaviour, and anti-equal opportunity, being drawn on by the greatest number. The former was used equally by girls and boys, and was mainly drawn on in children's explanations and descriptions of gendered behaviour. The latter discourse was used most often in discussion of gender and adult occupation.

Turning to equity constructions, a number of children drew heavily on the discourse of *innate equality between the sexes*: this was drawn on particularly in talk about gender and adult work, with children expressing frustration and cynicism at male sexism which they perceive to permeate the adult occupational environment. For instance, Johnnie (M, 7) argues, "I know people just be sexist, I've, I've never been sexist before (.) cos women and men can do exactly the same things", and Kate (F, 10) argues that employers would employ men and women to do different jobs because they are "sexist", and complains about this. This discourse of *innate equality between genders* was used by very few Year Three boys: Table 7:1 shows a dramatic difference between the numbers of Year Three and Six boys using it.

The *genders should have equal opportunities* discourse resonated in the statements of a large proportion of children, and often appeared motivated by ideas of *fairness* which have been found by many researchers to be one of the strongest values for primary school children (see, for example, Piaget, 1964; Damon, 1977; Hutchings, 1990b). Lloyd and Duveen (1992) and Damon (1977), argue that sex role identification generally lessens in children from the age of seven onwards and Damon maintains that from this age values of 'fairness' and justice begin to outweigh those of the necessity of conformity. I found similar numbers of children from *both* age groups appealing to fairness regarding equal opportunities in their discussion of gender. This pro-equal opportunities discourse is deeply rooted in concepts of individual rights and democracy, which permeate Western culture (Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989). Billig (1987, 1988) and Shotter and Gergen (1989) claim that Liberalism, with its subsequent values of personal freedom of choice, pervades Western consciousness. Hence this hegemonic discourse was frequently applied to gender issues by children, particularly concerning adult occupation. Emily (F, 10) draws on it to argue that everyone should be allowed to "have a try". Likewise Sally (F, 10) comments of men, "Erm

well they, most of them just think women should do the housework (.) n', I don't think it's fair", and Vichal (M, 10) claims that employers should, "like um make, make *fair* (.) like, men sometimes do childcaring, and women be lorry drivers (.) or anything they like". Spiros (M, 10) draws on this discourse to argue for freedom of choice concerning behaviour: when asked whether he thinks it acceptable for boys to play with dolls, he replies, "Err, yeah, yeh it's their life, do what they want". Many boys were keen to position themselves as egalitarian via equal opportunities narratives when referring to the sexism of other males: for example, Johnnie (M, 7) comments on the male builders' attitudes to a female builder, "They'd start laughing at her and, start being sexist and stuff like that, like if she does something wrong they start saying, Oh you're stupid and all that (.) but, *I* wouldn't mind if I was a builder", and Patrick (M, 7) explains, "Ermm (.) I think (.) it, I think they would think, it's silly but I don't think it's silly". Both boys appear to feel awkward discussing gender discrimination due to their fear of being associated with it: hence their disclaimers.

Thus discourses drawn on in children's egalitarian constructions of gender in their own lives and adult work were as diverse as those drawn on in their discriminatory arguments. Those of equity were clearly available to children as an alternative to gender inequity narratives, and were supported by liberal discourses of justice and 'fairness' which children often drew upon. However, that more children drew on inequity discourses than those of equity raises the possibility that processes of gender category maintenance and identification with the gender dichotomy may lead children to pick inequity discourses over alternatives. Gender category maintenance has been found to be strongest in the younger primary years (see Davies, 1989, Lloyd and Duveen, 1992), which may explain the greater numbers of Year Three children who drew on gender inequity discourses compared to their Year Six counterparts.

The Relationship Between Contradictory Discourses:

In Chapter Five I showed how children constructed gender differently depending on the interactive environments. However, besides this, many children drew on different discourses in the same context - even the same sentence - leading to contradictions in their constructions. It is this issue which I examine next.

Discourses are not static, according to Foucault (1972; 1980), but rather jostle and compete in language: many can be drawn on simultaneously, and these may conflict with one another (see Parker, 1990a). For example, Walkerdine (1990) and Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) observe that child-centred discourses, which focus on creativity and play, conflict with those of obedience and diligence in the primary school, and when reading children feminist fairy tales, Davies (1989) notes a "clash" (p.68) between feminist and romantic sub-texts. Thus the use of discourse is not straight-forward, and often in drawing on a variety our talk contains implicit or explicit contradiction (Billig *et al*, 1988; Shotter, 1993). Sometimes these incongruities become obvious to us, and at other times they go unnoticed (see Billig *et al*, 1988; Billig, 1992, 1995)

Children have recourse to a multitude of different discourses. I have identified several specifically concerning gender in my data transcripts alone, and I have argued that other discourses often impact on those of gender. However, these are not passive tools which people draw on in any straight-forward way: they conflict and form contradictions in texts (see Billig *et al*, 1988, Billig, 1987; 1992; 1995, Shotter, 1993). The discursive struggle in children's use of gender discourse was sometimes recognised by children, sometimes unrecognised. Sandra (F, 10) does not appear aware of the contradictory nature of her speech: she argues that a woman builder, "might do it wrong", and when I ask her why, she pauses, and provides a piece of equality discourse; "(2) some, um, *some* men are stronger than women, some women are stronger than men". But when I go on to ask her whether in that case she would employ a strong woman as a builder, she replies in the negative.

Other children did appear to notice such incongruities: it is likely that clashes in discourse were apparent to children more often than usual in the individual interviews, because of the probing nature of the questions. For example, Denzel (M, 7), explains the boys' lack of interest in hopscotch as being, "Because that's-th, they think it's more of a *girls'* game, really": he appears to be about to say 'because that's a girls' game' (or similar), when he pauses, and refers this perception to 'they' - other boys. I suggest that Denzel may have recognised the clash between this narrative of stereotypically gendered characteristics, and that in favour of equal opportunities. Thus what Ball (1990) terms the 'not said' (in this case, Denzel's deferral of sexism to 'they'- 'others', rather than himself), suggests that Denzel may recognise that gender-inequity discourse is

inappropriate in an interview with a female adult in an educationalist environment (see Chapter Four). Other children who recognised clashes between gender-discriminatory and anti-discriminatory discourses dealt with this contradiction by pre-empting their apparently discriminatory statements with denial. For instance, Sandra (F, 10) precedes her claim that female teachers are better than male because of their greater sympathy, which draws on the discourse of innate inequality between genders, with a denial of sexism: "We:ell, I'm not being sexist, but (.) I think women are like, more sympathetic". Thus she aligns herself with an equity position, while drawing on inequity discourse to make her suggestion. Likewise, Tim (M, 11) pre-empts his argument that women are not strong enough to be builders with a similar disclaimer: "I'm not being sexist or anything, but it can be very heavy". And when comparing boys to girls, Karen (F, 10) utilises the discourse of innate inequality between genders; but asserts,

K: Well, *I'm* not being sexist=

I: No

K: =But they're a bit rowdier and, they don't really understand about anything

Billig *et al* (1988) have shown how the enlightenment, liberal hegemonic narratives which permeate Western society often cause people to feel uneasy about articulating reactionary ideas in public, due to their irrational, non-democratic bases and subsequent clash with those of enlightenment (which are based on rationality and liberality). Thus these children attempt to hide the contradiction by claiming allegiance to anti-gender discriminatory discourse, while utilising gender discriminatory ones.

Sonia (F, 7) recognises the contradiction implicit in her thinking, appearing to humorously accept it, rather than deny or disguise it:

I: What about Emmi, getting um caretaker, cos everyone laughed, didn't they?

S: Yeah, she was quite funny

I: Why do you think people laughed at that?

S: Well, cos caretakers are normally *men*, and Emmi's a wo- Emmi's a *girl* {laughs}

I: Right, do you think that a caretaker could be a woman?

S: (.) Mmm (.) only *some*times (.) if the caretaker's off

I: Right, and if it was a woman would you think that was funny, I [mean,
would you laugh at her?
S: [Yes {she nods}
I: And would that be fair?
S: (.) No
I: No, but you'd still do it? {laughs}
S: {laughing} Me, Kelly and Charis would {laughs} Emmi wouldn't

She openly acknowledges that her gender discriminatory statement conflicts with narratives of democratic fairness, and uses humour as a way of dealing with this contradiction.

Thus a variety of different gender discourses are drawn on by children (and adults) in their interactive constructions, some of which are conflicting and contradictory. Occasionally children are aware of these discursive clashes, and either acknowledge, deny, or attempt to disguise their incongruity: occasionally they appear unaware that a contradiction has occurred. I turn now to the issue of deliberate resistance to discriminatory constructs.

Discursive Resistance to the Gender Dichotomy

As I observed in Chapter One, Davies (1989) argues that by creating new discursive possibilities we may be able to challenge, or provide new alternatives to, the hegemonic practice of gender dichotomy. Poststructuralist researchers such as Nilan (1995), Davies and Banks (1992) and Jordan (1995) have reiterated this intention. Thus I investigate the discourses children appeared to draw on in resistance, and assess their success in presenting a challenge to the construction of gender dichotomy. Innate equality and equal opportunities discourses were drawn on to resist those of inequity, but they were not always successful as they did not adequately challenge the dominant construction of gender dichotomy upon which such inequity narratives are founded.

Some children drew on equity discourses to dispute inequity constructions. Emily (F, 10) describes how boys in her class are always claiming that men are stronger than women, and that women cannot do the same jobs as men, but Emily responds to this by stating that the genders are equal, and that everyone should

be allowed to do the same thing. Baresh (M, 8) argues that, "boys and girls can do the same things", and Sabina (F, 10) and Tarlika (F, 11) agree that men and women are "just the same". However, their success in challenging the discursive gender dichotomy via these narratives is debatable.

Equity discourses can never effectively combat gender discriminatory discourse according to Davies (1989), Davies and Banks (1992) and Jordan (1995), because of their failure to challenge the assumption of gender dichotomy. 'Genders should have equal opportunities' discourse simply argues that men and women should have equality of opportunity *despite* the differences between them, rather than suggesting that the discourse which presents 'men' and 'women' as dichotomous is in error. Consequently, because pro-equal opportunities discourses do not challenge the fundamental construction of gender as relational, they can only moderate, rather than challenge, discriminatory constructions (see Davies and Banks, 1992; Jordan, 1995). I found that although 'genders should have equal opportunities' discourses were frequently drawn upon by children in their discussion of gender in relation to their own lives, causing discursive clashes with those of gender inequity, these clashes were apparently contained by the hegemonic construction of gender dichotomy, and failed to challenge it. For instance, Johnnie (M, 7) articulates equal opportunities discourses throughout his interview; but when I ask him whether an employer would gender differentiate in job allocation he responds, "Really all the jobs should be for *men*, cos who's gonna look after the children?", his 'genders should not have equal opportunities' discourse thus contradicting his earlier egalitarian stance. Thus although 'genders should have equal opportunities' discourses causes discursive clashes with those of gender inequity, it appears able to coexist with them in children's constructions. Equal opportunities discourse cannot effectively combat those of inequity and discrimination, because of its lack of engagement with the deconstruction of the hegemonic discourse of gender dichotomy upon which such inequity narratives are founded.

There were also contradictions to 'innate equality between genders' discourses. For example, Lea (F, 7) asserts, "girls *can* be what boys do and boys *can* do what girls do, but some jobs you're not allowed". Davies and Banks (1992) argue that discourses presenting the genders as equal still fail to challenge the hegemonic discourse of gender dichotomy because children take up oppositional constructions of gender as part of themselves: this explanations accounts for

contradictions such as that evident in Lea's statement. However, I also found evidence of some children using 'innate equality between genders' discourse fairly consistently during the research: four girls and seven boys did not use inequity discourses at all, and a further seven girls and two boys used the discourse of innate equality repeatedly to oppose the construction of genders as relational and oppositional. This suggests that innate equality discourse may be a useful resource with which to oppose the gender dichotomy.

Summary

Thus I have demonstrated the variety of discourses which are actively utilised by children in their constructions of gender and adult occupation, and I hope to have provided some insight into the various natures of these. That children have access to those of innate equality and equal opportunities, besides use of the various gender inequity discourses, suggests the need for a re-evaluation of our expectations concerning children's understanding of such issues. In her argument for anti-sexist teaching programmes in the primary school, Skelton (1988) observes that teachers frequently avoid tackling issues such as gender discrimination with primary school children, due to their perception of the children as 'innocent' and untouched by politics, supporting the arguments of Aries (1962), and Burman (1994), concerning Western constructions of the child as pure and innocent. However, my findings support Carrington and Troyna's (1988) assertions that primary school children are already fully aware of, and practising or experiencing race and gender discrimination, and Short's (1988) claim that children have a far better understanding of these issues than educationalists have previously assumed.

That more children drew on inequity discourses than equity alternatives may be due to children's identification with the discursive gender dichotomy. However, that more of the Year Six children drew on equity discourses suggests that such alternative discourses may become more accessible to children in later primary years, and that as gender category maintenance lessens (see Davies, 1989, Lloyd and Duveen, 1992), children are more willing to draw on these. Many contradictions were evident in children's constructions of gender, and were sometimes recognised by the children themselves: I have illustrated the different ways in which they dealt with these. Equity discourses were used to resist those of gender inequity and discrimination, but did not necessarily challenge the

hegemonic narrative which perpetuates such discriminatory constructions, and were consequently often limited to causing discursive contradictions in children's talk about gender. However, there was some evidence of children successfully drawing on the discourse of innate equality between genders to position the genders as the same.

CHAPTER EIGHT: EVIDENCE CHILDREN DREW ON IN THEIR CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER

In this chapter I examine resources other than discourse which children drew upon in their discussion of gender. While discourse itself is a resource, the *evidence* children drew upon in their discourses is the subject of this investigation. Thus in this chapter the relationship between social resources and gender discourse is examined. Foucault (for example, 1977, 1981) has shown how discourses are constructed socially, with some discourses becoming dominant at particular times in history due to social and economic factors: these then position people in particular ways. Thus we can see the inter-twined nature of social materiality and discourses: they impact on one another. Vygotsky (1962; 1978) has observed that the individual is not separate from the social world: drawing on this idea, Sampson (1989) argues that society actually constitutes what 'personhood' might be, and that the self and society interpret one another. Society acts upon the self and the self acts upon society in the same way that the self is positioned and positions in discourse. Thus Phoenix (1987) argues that racist discourse has led to black people experiencing different material circumstances than whites, and that this in turn has altered black peoples' constructions of gender: social materiality impacts upon the discourses people have recourse to. Likewise, Dahlberg (1985) (see also Dahlberg, Holland and Varnava-Skouras, 1987) conducted studies of children's constructs of economics and adult work in three different European countries, and as well as certain differences in response depending on culture, they found that in all three countries middle-class children referred more to hierarchy, and working-class children to the work ethic: it would seem that children drew upon different discourses depending on their material social class or cultural circumstance.

In this chapter I list the different types of evidence that children drew on, and explore the ways in which these were used in their responses. I argue that resources such as parental behaviour and the media did not appear to directly influence children's responses: counter-stereotyping and stereotypical evidence could be disregarded by children. Instead, they simply drew on these resources to support their different arguments.

It is shown that children used evidence from four different sources in their discussion of gender. These were:

1) Family
2) Wider Community
3) Anecdotal evidence
4) Media

The ways in which these resources were used is explored. A consideration of the *impact* of social resources on children's gender discourse leads me to discuss parents' reports of their approaches to gender issues with their children: children's gender constructions were examined to see whether children appeared to use their parents' stated approaches as a resource in their discussion of gender. It is argued that such resources do not directly *influence* children in ways suggested by socialisation theories: it is demonstrated that children do not necessarily take up resources that present counter-stereotypical, or stereotypical evidence. Instead, it is argued that children draw upon these resources in the context of the discourses they use.

Children's Use of Resources In Their Discussions of Gender:

Children use evidence from the media and their own lives to support and justify their assertions (Furnham and Stacey, 1991). During my research, examples from family and the wider community, examples from the media, and anecdotes, were used continually in the children's explanations (both to me, and to one another). I found four different types of resource being drawn on in children's discussion of gender: the ways in which these were used by children are now discussed.

1) Family

When discussing gender issues, children frequently used their parents as examples in their statements, *either* to demonstrate that men and women are different from each other or do separate jobs, *or* to show the opposite, that is that men and women are not different, or can do jobs traditionally performed by the opposite sex. The former use was most common, possibly because children felt they needed to provide justification for their gender-discriminatory constructs. For example, Claudine (F, 7) explains that men would not be able to look after old people because they cannot cook:

I: Ah (.) what if he *could* cook? cos some men [can, can't they?

C: [*My* dad can't cook

I: Some men can though, [can't they?

C: [He only cooks, um, sausage and bacon, and um, puts some toast- he does all them things, for breakfast =

I: Right

C: = And my mum has to do *all* the cooking

I: Right (.) but some men are good cooks, aren't they? (.) {she nods} and can they look after old people?

C: (.) It wouldn't be right

I: It would just look *strange*

Similarly, Maddie (F, 7) argues that women are better than men at cleaning, explaining her father's inadequacy in this department: "Wh- when my dad comes in he, he does the hoovering and he thinks that's it, the whole house is clean but my mum does the dusting, and the washing up". Sonia (F, 7) says that women cannot drive well enough to be lorry drivers because her mother has not yet learnt to drive, and goes on to say that men cannot be childcarers:

S: Because, well my daddy, um well when I was little, he, he couldn't hold me, whenever my mum asked him to hold me he kept dropping me, [he couldn't do it

I: [Really? oh *dear*

S: So that's why I wouldn't ask a man to do it

Alma (F, 7) argues that men are stupider than women, explaining,

A: Well, um (2) boys can, like be, really (.) they can be really stupid and, things like that, and (.)

I: Mm

A: And um, secondly (.) *girls* have got bigger brains than boys

I: Do you think that's true, girls are cleverer? [why, why do you think that?

A: [Mm (2) cos girls have got bigger heads

I: {laughs} Is that true?

A: Mm-hmm {she laughs}

I: Is that *always* true?

A: Yes

I: Oh, I didn't know that {Alma laughs} (.) we'll have to have a look round and see what we see =

A: Cos I measured my dad's head, then I measured my mum's head, and my mum's head's bigger than my dad's head

I: So you think women are cleverer then?

A: And my dad's older than my mum, he's forty, and she's only thirty seven

Reema (F, 9) appears to have her argument revoked by her own example: having argued that she does not think men can do housework because her father cannot, she goes on to claim that men cannot cook either:

R: Like, my mum can cook, my dad can't

I: Mm (.) right (.) but do you think that men *can't* cook, or if they want to they can?

R: Um, men can't cook, but *my* dad can cook

I: Your dad can cook? so some men can cook? {she nods} yeah

R: Mmm

Other children used their parents as evidence that men and women can perform the same jobs and tasks, for instance Rebecca (F, 8) decries traditional gender roles: "Because they say women are too feminine an' all this stuff an' women have to stay at home an' do the housework = and men, men are the best so they 'ave to go out and do loads of things, lots of work, and they're not allowed to stay at home and do the housework- what's the matter with *that*? a man could stay home and do the housework, an' do the dinner, an' look after the baby, *my* dad does". Johnnie (M, 7) argues that traditional gender roles can be reversed in the home: "Well, yeh- my mum used to go out to work, and my dad used to pick me up from school, and my dad has to take me to school when my mum's ill". In this case it appears that his father's unemployment may have affected gender roles at home, and consequently supplied Johnnie with evidence of the possibility of non-traditional gender roles. Likewise, Baresh (M, 8) maintains that it is acceptable for a woman to go out to work while her husband cares for the children: "Yes, y'know my mum, she had to go to work before- when she used to go to work my dad used to look after me and my sisters when

we were small, cos he didn't have no work then". Thus children used parents as evidence both in constructions of genders as different, and as not different.

Some children chose future occupations in line with those of their parents: for example, Johnnie (M, 7) wanted to play the chef in the role play because his father 'was a chef in G.M.T.V', and Sarah (F, 8) says she wants to work in Safeways and 'be a mum', which is what her mother does. Of course, as I observed in Chapter Four, it remains unlikely that children will follow the career paths chosen at primary school in the long run. Kelly (1989), found that children's job preferences at the age of eleven bore little resemblance to those they chose at seventeen. However, children's suggestions of work in the same employment as their parents demonstrates the ways in which children draw on their social context to refer to their own lives and thoughts.

Parents, then, are sources of information for children, particularly concerning adult life, of which the children themselves have no first-hand experience. I suggest this explains why parents were so often referred to as examples or justifications when children discussed gender and adult occupation (eighteen children used parents as examples in this manner). Hence parents can provide children with evidence which they *may* draw upon in discussion of gender issues.

2) Wider Community

There were also instances where children used examples from their own lives other than families in their discussions of gender: these could be other people that children know, or people that they have observed. For example, when I ask Richard (M, 10) whether he would employ a male childcarer he replies, "Ye:eah, I've got, I'm using a childcarer who's a man". Real life examples from school were frequently alluded to, for instance Rafic (M, 9) explains that he chose the role of caretaker, "cos, I like the way the caretaker, like, has got a lot of jobs to do, I like the jobs he does, and I, when he does the jobs, he like, not too hard, and he's got a lot of friends, and everyone wants to help". Similarly Yain (M, 10) says that he wanted to be headteacher because he likes the one at their school: "I like being the headmaster (.) head*mistress*, cos she, when you get into trouble, she doesn't really *shout* (.) she just says Don't do it again, and things"; and Reema (F, 9) uses the example of the male teacher in her school when she says

men make as good teachers as women. Likewise Sandra's (F, 10) talk about teachers appears based on her own experience:

S: (.) I know some really good men teachers, but (.) I think women are better teachers, but men still make good teachers, sometimes (.) I mean, they can control a rowdy class better cos they're sort of, bigger and, they've got, deeper voices =

I: Mm

S: Sometimes women have a bit of trouble doing that, but they're sort of (.) *kinder* and, well I'm not saying that men aren't like that as well, but -

I: (.) Generally, yes [I see

S: [Generally

Having *seen* something appeared to carry considerable importance for children when using evidence or evaluating issues: Shofic (M, 7) argues that women cannot be builders because he has never seen a woman builder, although they can be decorators because, "I've seen a lady *paint*". Catia (F, 8) observes that boys claim to be stronger than girls, but argues, "I 'ave seen a girl who's stronger than a boy, so I think it's not true". Likewise, Michael (M, 7) claims that women can be builders, "Cos I've *seen* um many women do building ... sometimes, I see more women than men work on building sites". This emphasis on visual observation could also be due to their relative lack of experience in the world: having *observed* or witnessed something changes a child's assertion or theory to a substantial reality. Moreover, *not* having observed something means that its non-existence remains a possibility, whereas having observed something substantiates its existence for children (and adults).

3) Anecdotal Evidence

So far the data has shown children using real life examples gained first-hand in their discussions, but occasionally children used anecdotal evidence as a resource in their explanations. By 'anecdotal' evidence, I mean information reportedly gathered or given by someone other to the children. For example. Somina (F, 11) argues against employing male childcarers, reporting how a woman she knows hired a male childcarer, and he mistreated the baby, and Graham (M, 10) argues that a women builder would be incompetent in the following way:

G: *Useless*

I: Women, or-? woman builders?

G: Yep (.) there was one lady she was building, helping the men over at Six Acres, she was just trying to, help 'em pick up bricks and she kept dropping 'em, and breaking 'em, they just 'ad to keep paying out more and more money (.) for more bricks

I: Who, who told you this then?

G: (.) Oh loads of children standing there *watching*

4) Media

Besides first-hand and anecdotal information, another commonly used resource concerning gender issues was the media. This was drawn on as evidence frequently by children, in their discussion of many issues including gender. Kasheef (M, 10) explains his assertion that some women are better than men at designing computer games:

I: Do you think that a woman can be a games designer or a graphic designer?

K: A woman can be

I: Yeah

K: Sometimes they're *better*

I: Do you think?

K: Sometimes they are, I've got a graphics magazine at home and they say women make most of the games

I: Do they?

K: Most of the good games

I: That's interesting, I didn't know that

K: Well yeah, thass, women make most of the good games

While Kasheef's reported source of evidence is a graphics magazine, the most frequently drawn upon media source was television. Moran (1992) has interviewed children concerning their experiences of beauty, and found television being named as a massive resource of positive experience. Television has been cited as a major agent of sex-role socialisation (Frueh and McGhee, 1975; Furnham and Stacey, 1991), but researchers such as Durkin (1985) and Gunter and McAleer (1990) argue that there is little evidence to suggest that television directly 'socialises' children: Durkin maintains, rather, that children use television

as a resource of information concerning sex-roles, and that as programme material is often sexist, it may in some cases reinforce stereotypes which children have already taken up. Buckingham (1993) shows how children use talk about television in their interactive constructions, and refer to the contents of television programmes in different ways depending on the discursive environment. I found that children used television as a source of information when discussing gender issues, but seemed to use this information to justify their own assertions. Information drawn on from the media sometimes concerned gender issues directly, and at other times was of a more general nature, but was alluded to in their discussions of the issue. Kasheef (M, 10) provides an example of the latter type of allusion, when he explains that he would not employ a male childcarer because he had watched an Esther Ranzen programme on a man who abused children. Likewise, Charity (F, 11) explains that she knows there are women lorry drivers because she has seen "lots" of them on television game shows; Leke (M, 7) uses the example of the female 'gladiators' to demonstrate that women are strong; and similarly Ryan (M, 8) maintains that some strong women can be builders, because, "there's this really big muscley girl in the newspaper". Vichal (M, 10) claims that boys are more violent than girls because of the violence on television, and when I ask him why such screen violence should affect boys more than girls, he replies that there are more boys on television than girls.

Other children referred to incidents where films or television programmes had directly addressed gender issues: Sorrel (F, 10) explains that she would employ a male childcarer, as it would be funny, "cos on this programme, this film *Look Who's Talking* there's a very funny man in it" (the *Look Who's Talking* films involve John Travolta taking a share in childcare). And Sally (F, 10) informs me that she wishes to become a fire-fighter, inspired by the female fire-fighter on the television series *London's Burning*. Discussing gender and adult work, Patrick (M, 7) explains his expectation of gender discrimination on the part of male builders in response to a woman boss in the following way:

P: Um, cos (.) y'know, in, um television comedies, er girls, and er boys are saying that we can beat them we can beat them, when actually the girls do

I: Right, so you think there's a bit of competition between the two (.) between men and women?

P: Yeh

I: What sort of TV shows are those?

P: Erm, Saved by the Bell (.) The Cosby Show (.)

Patrick can justify his claim that men would not want a female boss by drawing on a similar theme in comedy television shows in order to support his argument. He may or may not believe that the comedy shows accurately represent real life (although obviously this could be suggested); the fact remains that Patrick can recognise 'battle of the sexes' discourse, and can draw on and apply the theme to a different situation outside his personal experience.

Buckingham (1993) reports in his study that children follow the Australian soap operas avidly, and this is confirmed in my study (particularly regarding *Neighbours*): children appear to become highly involved in these scripts of social relations, perhaps using them for information concerning adult relationships, perhaps using them as fantasies (as Walkerdine, 1990, suggests girls use comic and 'school story' scripts). I was researching in schools at a time when the *Neighbours* storyline was exploring an issue concerning gender and adult work: the female character 'Beth' had just begun work on a building site, and had consequently become a victim of sexist ridicule from the male builders around her (whom Beth proves wrong, by remaining undaunted, and demonstrating her ability). This story-line was often referred to in the children's interviews concerning the employment of a woman builder, and the possible reactions of her male fellows. For example, I asked Jade (F, 7) what male builders would think of a female builder:

J: (2) Think she- (.) oh, on Neighbours *Beth* was working on a building and um all these men were all *jealous* of her

I: Mmm, do you think that would happen in real life?

J: Yeah

I: Yeah, and what would she do about it?

J: She would have to tell the boss about it

I: Yes, and do you think the boss would listen?

J: (.) Well (2) I think he would listen to *both*

Replying to the same question, Chantelle (F, 7) observes, "It's like in Neighbours when Beth was trying to (.) Beth's one they didn't like her, but they, they 'ad to

get used to the idea". Junior (M, 10) says that he thinks men and women can do all the same jobs, "cos in Neighbours, erm, Beth does what-do-you-call-it? (.) erm, house thing". Tracy (F, 7) alludes to another *Neighbours* storyline (in which the female character Annaleas, asked by a couple to look after their baby, leaves it alone while she goes out to see someone - to the consternation of the couple, who of course arrive back to discover the baby alone), when asked whether she would employ a male childcarer:

I: Would you pay a man to look after it [the child]?

T: Of *course*

I: You would, you think men are good at childcare?

T: Be*cause*, in Neighbours, err, anyway, this girl (.) erm, her boyfriend was, was gonna go out, and er the girl that knew, the mum, yeah? she had the baby, and she asked some other girls to look after it (.) and, she's wanted to see someone, yeah? She *hasn't* took the baby, [she's left it in =

I: [Oh I see, yeah

T: =the cot, an' she's gone, an' then the two people have to come back an' they've seen, the baby there, *screaming* (.) an' the girl ain't there

I: So you think a man would be just as [good?

T: [Yeah, a man

Thus the media provided a resource for children concerning gender categories and issues; and the storylines of television programmes seemed to engage children's imagination regarding these issues. Again, examples from the media were used to construct genders as different, and as *not* different. I turn now to a full discussion of the impact of these resources on children's constructions of gender.

The Apparent Impact of Evidence on Children's Constructions of Gender:

Sometimes children did portray real life examples as affecting their statements or behaviour concerning gender issues. For example, Ahmed (M, 9) explains that if his future wife were to go out to work while he looked after the baby there would be disapproval from his family and other people because, "that's not what people do", and concludes that he would not allow such a situation. Because of my investigation of children's use of social resources in discourse I investigated the approaches reported by parents to gender issues with their children: the

intention was to discover whether children appeared to draw on these in their responses to the research. Durkin (1985) notes that while short exposure to counter-stereotyping material has been found to make little impact on children's responses concerning gender, there is some evidence that long-term exposure to such material makes more of an impact on children's responses. He concludes that counter-stereotyping material does not 're-shape' a child's perception, but may cause children to 're-think'. Of the fourteen parents I interviewed, five mothers and one father said they discussed gender issues with their children from an anti-sexist perspective, and did not allow sexist comments or assumptions on the part of their children to go unchallenged. Another mother said that she discussed racial discrimination with her child from an anti-racist perspective, and explained that her son applied this anti-discriminatory stance to gender also. It was certainly the case that the children concerned expressed generally egalitarian views, although not necessarily in a total or non-contradictory manner. This therefore suggests that the explicit discussion of these issues at home had impacted on the children concerned, if only to provide a resource of equity discourse which the children could draw on. However, the data also held much evidence of children ignoring counter-stereotypical evidence concerning gender, as I now discuss.

Children's Rejection of Evidence Concerning Gender:

We can see from the data presented in this chapter that resources of observed, reported, and media examples were frequently drawn on in the children's discussions of gender issues; yet were used discursively (i.e. as evidence to support a particular discourse). Although the parents discussed above appear to have provided, or added to, a resource concerning gender which was drawn on by their children in their interviews, other children actively contested real life and media examples. Lesley (F, 7) claims that men cannot be nurses, as, "Thassa *woman's* job", so I present her with a counter-stereotype:

I: Have you seen Casualty?

L: Yeah, about a thousand times

I: You get men nurses on there look (.) there *are* men nurses and women doctors, {Leslie laughs} there *are*

L: Men nurses! {laughs again}

Lesley refuses to accept both the counter-stereotype and my own information. Thus it would appear that media examples may only be effective if supported by discourse: in this case, the counter-stereotyping example of the male nurses on *Casualty* is passed off, as it is not strong enough to challenge the dominant inequity discourse of male inability at such work. Similarly, as I noted above, Durkin (1985) found that short-term exposure to counter-stereotyping on television did not necessarily make an impact on children's opinions unless it was supported by discussion, as it was unsupported by the hegemonic perspective of society (and television) at large, and Drabman *et al* (1981) agree that counter-stereotyping on television made little impact on children's perceptions. In the same way, Whyte (1986) cites the example of a child who asserts that women cannot be doctors, only nurses, despite the fact that her mother is a GP. Davies (1989, 1992) observes that simple counter-stereotyping role models and equal opportunities schemes cannot be enough to undo gender discourses which children have taken up *as part of themselves*. Thus besides Lesley's rejection of male nurses, there were other incidents in my research where children explicitly rejected media counter-stereotypes. Characters representing media counter-stereotypes are fictional, and where many children *did* use such fictional characters as evidence in egalitarian arguments, it was easy for children to reject these as 'make-believe' in absence of real-life examples to support them. Johnnie (M, 7) actively rejects the character *Mrs. Plug the Plumber* as a legitimate example of anti-gender stereotyping:

I: Would you employ women to build your house?

J: Nah

I: No, why not?

J: Cos you can't get women plumbers, only Mrs. Plug the Plumber

I: {laughs} Only Mrs. Plug the Plumber?

J: Yes

I: But do you think if she exists that some women might in real life?

J: Mm (.) nah

I: No? How come?

J: Because um, Mrs. Plug the Plumber is only a book.

Amrish (M, 10) brings up the 'Beth off *Neighbours*' incident again, but to demonstrate his view that women *cannot* be builders:

I: What about umm, building, could women be builders in your company?

A: Mmm, *no*

I: No? why not?

A: Well, I saw, Neighbours, yeah? [err, when err, when the man told that lady to do the building, but=

I: [Mmm (2) that was Beth, wasn't it?

A: Yeah

I: Mm

A: But err, and then er, all the crowd, they said that women can't be err, be builders

I: But she still did it, didn't she?

A: Mm

I: So do you think she could- if she managed to do it, do you think other women could?

A: (.) Little bit

Thus Amrish appears to use the male crowd's dissension to Beth to affirm his view that women should not be builders, but gets stuck because I use the example in the way intended by the programme makers: hence he ends up unwillingly conceding the possibility of women conducting building work. Noel (M, 7), however, is more decided still in his refutal of this incident. When he claims that women cannot be builders I bring up the *Neighbours* story-line:

I: What about Beth in Neighbours, cos Beth is a builder isn't she, in Neighbours, do [you think=

N: [Mmm

I: =that's not real, or=

N: No, it's not real

I: You think in real life she couldn't be?

N: Dunno.. [how?] she could be

I: She couldn't?

N: No

These examples appear to indicate that some attempts at education through counter-stereotyping maybe ineffective, because they fail to disrupt hegemonic

inequity discourses. However, other evidence presented here also shows how different children drew on these counter-stereotypes to support egalitarian statements. Moreover, Troyna and Hatcher (1992) have shown how children can choose to take up discourses which their parents do not use. They show examples of children with racist parents who refute their parent's constructions, and children with egalitarian parents who still articulate racist discourse. In my study I found that as well as the children mentioned above who rejected anti-sexist example, there were also a number of children who discounted *sexist* example. For instance, Sorrel (F, 10) notes,

S: {laughing} My dad says that women are stupid drivers

I: {laughs} Did he?

S: Cos sometimes, when he's driving, like, say he's behind this woman driver, he'll shout at them 'n' beep his horn at them

I: Does he? Do you think that's right or not?

S: No, because he doesn't give the person a *chance*

Thus she recognises her father's construction, but dismisses it. Likewise Vivek (M, 10) explains that his father thinks women, "muck up work", but he himself thinks this unfair because, "some women have got skills"; and in reply to my question as to whether men and women are better at certain jobs, Natasha (F, 10) observes that her mother is a better cook than her father, but then rejects this saying, "I suppose they're all the same really... If they've had prac- practice at it, yeah, they can do anything". Thus where counter-stereotyping resources are not always taken up by children, stereotypical resources can be discounted too.

Summary

To recap, I have shown that family and wider community, anecdotal, and media resources are commonly drawn upon by children in their discussions, and are used as evidence in their arguments both to construct the genders as different, or as not different. That children were provided with evidence which they applied to gender issues via their access to the media, and different examples from family and the wider community, suggests that social resources affected the discourses children had access to: yet conversely children selected particular social resources as evidence depending on the gender discourse they were drawing on.

That resources are used discursively by children (rather than information being uncontestedly consumed), is demonstrated by the way they often discounted counter-stereotyping and traditional information. These findings suggest that real life, anecdotal and media examples do not determine social roles: rather, they present a flexible picture where children draw on different resources of outside information, in different ways, to support whichever discourse they are drawing upon.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter summarises the findings concerning children's constructions of gender, power and adult occupation, and examines their implications.

SUMMARY

This section begins with some comments on the methodological approach of the study, and then reviews the findings of the data chapters.

Approach to the Research

The development of a methodology combining role play and individual interview enabled me to analyse discursive positionings and constructions of gender in different interactive environments: the role play involved interaction between a group of children and myself, and the following individual interviews involved interaction between myself and a single child. This approach was justified by the different constructions and positionings of children in the differing environments: children frequently drew on gender-discriminatory discourse, and participated in stereotypical gender constructions during the role plays, and yet drew on equity discourses in the individual interviews, and vice versa. As I noted in Chapter Five, Short (1993) has interpreted such contradictions between what children say about gender in individual interviews and in their own interaction as 'double standards' on their part. However, from a social constructionist perspective such differences in construction are inevitable reflections of the way in which children (and adults) draw on different discourses, consciously or subconsciously, depending on context and interactive environment. This method of conducting individual interviews with children following the group role plays also proved useful in enabling me to discuss and analyse the previous role play interaction with each child concerned. Questioning them directly and specifically about gender issues appeared an effective way of gaining insight into their constructions of gender: the depth of children's responses suggests that they relish such 'adult' discussion of this topic, and the majority appeared to have a detailed understanding of the issues concerned.

The method of listing the different gender discourses which children utilised demonstrated the wide range they have at their disposal. Analysing and categorising the discourses in this manner could be seen as problematic by poststructuralist discourse analysts, as it suggests a 'pinning down' of discourse and textual closure (see Stenner, 1993; Marks, 1993). Yet I argue that such identification and categorisation is necessary for political researchers in order to enable further scrutiny of discourses' suppositions or propositions. Within this study, the identification of the different gender discourses children drew on enabled further examination of their basis, the ways in which they were used, and the discursive clashes involved in their use. However, due to the quantity of data I collected, the analysis of children's use of discourse was limited to the types of discourse they used: I did not analyse the frequency with which children used each discourse. Moreover, I do not claim to have identified the full range used by children (either within this study or more generally), and possibly further research could be undertaken concerning the analysis of the variety and different forms of these discourses, and the number of times they are drawn on by children.

Children's Constructions of Gender in Their Own Lives:

I now turn to a discussion of the data findings. The argument that children draw on gender discourse to construct the genders as different and relational (Davies, 1989; Davies and Banks, 1992; Jordan, 1995), is supported by the findings of this study. This explanation provides an answer to one of my original research questions: gender continues to be a determining factor in our lives despite social changes such as greater female educational success, and participation in the work market, because we take up gender identity by drawing upon hegemonic discourses which constitute a gender dichotomy. Thus I found that children drew on these to construct the genders as different from each other. Examining the impact of this construction upon children's interaction, I found that it polarises the genders in the classroom because of gender's *achieved* nature: gender identity must be publicly delineated through the use of visual symbols. Such participation in certain types of behaviour to signify one's gender resulted in some children constructing the genders as oppositional, by presenting them as *in opposition* and *opposite*. This more extreme construction of gender difference occurred less frequently in the data: examples from my data suggest that some children who constructed the genders as different did not go so far as to

construct them as oppositional. During the role plays there was evidence that the behavioural construction of genders as oppositional often manifested in the construction of symbolic gender cultures in children's interaction. The female culture was based upon values of maturity and diligence, which resulted in a construction of girlhood as 'sensible and selfless'; while the male culture was based upon values of irreverence and mischief, resulting in a construction of boyhood as 'silly and selfish'. This construction of opposite gendered behaviour goes some way towards explaining the polarity of behaviour between primary school boys and girls reported by previous studies: as I noted in Chapter Five, boys are described as disruptive and demanding by researchers such as Arnot (1984), Spender (1982), Riddell (1989), and Jordan (1985); and girls are described as diligent and facilitating by Walkerdine (1990), Belotti (1975), Spender (1982), and Walkerdine and Lucey (1989).

The construction of the genders as different or oppositional is not straight-forwardly taken up: many children did not construct genders as oppositional, and a number of children constructed the genders as the same (these latter children are discussed later). Some children appeared aware of the social nature of some aspects of gendered behaviour. Moreover, the construction of genders as different or oppositional was sometimes ignored or resisted, either because other factors outweighed gender in the children's constructions, or because they constructed the genders as not oppositional, or the same. However, I found that the hegemonic gender construction could contain much contradiction and resistance without disruption or fragmentation.

The findings concerning children's reports of their experiences of sexism in school demonstrate the numbers of children constructing gender as a source of discrimination in their own lives. This also touches on the issue of children's constructions of gender as a source of power, as those who presented it as a source of discrimination by implication also depict gender as a source of power. A large majority of children reported that they had observed incidents of sexism in school, and a majority of girls claimed to experience it. These findings suggests that a social impact and consequence of the use of gender discourse between children may be the practice of sexism: there was some indication that sexism was used as a tool to aid children's constructions of genders as different and oppositional (see Chapter Five). Further observational work would need to be carried out in order to draw more conclusions about the practice of sexism

amongst children. However, while some children constructed discrimination as legitimate due to gender difference, the majority of children in this study agreed that sexism is wrong and unjust: they appear aware that discrimination conflicts with the hegemonic democratic ideals in Western society (see Billig *et al*, 1988; Billig, 1992). Sexism was reportedly resisted, sometimes successfully, but effective methods apparently required assertion; and my findings suggest that assertiveness is incongruous with the prevailing classroom construction of femininity as sensible and selfless.

Children's Constructions of Gender and Adult Occupation:

Female job choice was found to be more diverse in this study than in previous studies involving children in other age groups (see Sharpe, 1976; Spender, 1982; Kelly, 1989), yet a dichotomy remains between the *types* of job children chose, and few children chose jobs traditionally performed by the opposite sex. Children generally provided more egalitarian responses to my interview questions concerning gender and adult occupation than to previous studies asking them different questions about this issue (see Short and Carrington, 1989; Walkerdine and Lucey, 1986, Nemerowicz, 1979). However, their responses were found to vary depending on the way in which questions were phrased. Ideas of equal opportunity appeared to be more often applied to female ability at traditionally male jobs, than vice-versa. The 7-8 year olds consistently constructed the genders as more different (stereotyped) concerning adult occupation than did their 10-11 year old counterparts, providing more gender discriminatory responses. This finding is supported by previous studies (see Damon, 1977; Tremaine, 1982; Short and Carrington, 1989). The more stereotyped constructions of the younger group may be due to greater gender category maintenance within this age group, and could also be due to a lack of understanding concerning discursive clashes: the younger children may not yet have realised that discriminatory statements conflict with adult educationalist discourses, and therefore articulate discriminatory narratives freely, whereas the older children may be more aware that these may be frowned upon in an adult educationalist environment. Certainly many children attempted to justify and rationalise discriminatory statements (ironically, they often did this by drawing on other discriminatory ideas to support their arguments). However, any awareness that discriminatory statements may not be well-received in an adult-educational environment did not appear to prevent children from asserting them, even when I

had undermined their rationalisations. The boys in my study generally provided less egalitarian answers than did the girls, again supporting the findings of previous studies (see Furnham and Stacey, 1991; Nemerowicz, 1979; Short and Carrington, 1989; Tremaine, 1982). However, though their responses were less egalitarian than those of the girls, boys' responses were far less gender discriminatory concerning gender and adult occupation than suggested in these previous studies. Older boys particularly presented a world where equal opportunities are implemented: while this could be due to lesser experience of sexism than the girls, I suggest that this optimism may be due to a disavowal of male advantage or gender discrimination, caused by an embarrassment at the inferred possession of power advantage (see Billig *et al*, 1988). When discussing the adult workplace many children of both genders, but particularly girls, constructed gender as a source of discrimination in adult occupation, and thus as a source of power.

During their role plays, the majority of children chose gender-stereotypical work roles, and generally their constructions of gender and adult work in the role plays were more stereotypical in this role play interaction than in interviews with me. This illustrates again the way in which the social environment impacts upon children's constructions. However, many did *not* choose gender-stereotypical roles, or act in gender-stereotypical ways during the plays. Moreover, while some roles were very stereotyped, others (which might have been expected to be stereotyped) were less so.

Children's Constructions of Gender and Power:

While gender is just one of the types of discourse used to position oneself and others in interaction, in mixed sex groups many boys appeared to use gender constructions to position themselves powerfully, whereas only one girl in this study could be said to have done this. Some boys did not succeed in using gender to position themselves powerfully, showing that this resource may have been more available to some boys than others. However, there were suggestions that power is intrinsically constructed as male: the data shows that in female groups girls often contested or undermined the power of the highest status role, raising the possibility that female dominant power was constructed as unacceptable. Moreover, while Davies (1989) maintains that female power is constructed as legitimate only in the domestic realm or as helpers of males, my

findings suggest that becoming helpers of males involves giving up power to them: while both genders use their symbolic cultures for gender bonding through shared identification, the constructions of gendered behaviour endorsed by the cultures potentially empowers the boys and disempowers the girls in mixed sex interaction, as girls often become facilitators to the boys' demands. During the fifteen mixed-sex role plays, four boys were able to dominate the plays, apparently doing so by combining power derived from the highest-status roles with their silly-selfish constructions of masculinity, and three more boys used their high status role as one of power; whereas only one girl used her position to dominate the play, and two used their roles powerfully. Thus I argue that children's constructions of gender as oppositional led to gendered differences in the construction of power. That one girl took a domineering role in a mixed-sex play, and that two boys with the highest-status role did not take up powerful positions in the interaction, shows that in some instances gender was *not* constructed as a source of power. Yet the lack of female resistance in mixed-sex groups raises the possibility that such resistance is incongruous with their oppositional gender construction. These findings support Davies' (1989) claim that girls lack fantasies through which to envisage themselves as powerful (although some girls *did* position themselves as physically powerful); yet they also suggest that constructions of femininity as assertive or powerful may be fundamentally at odds with the dominant construction of femininity in the primary school. While Jordan (1995) recommends teacher intervention to deconstruct boys' 'warrior discourse' (which constructs masculinity as dominating and powerful), my findings show that boys' constructions constitute only half the problem: many girls also construct themselves as opposite to boys, and this also requires deconstruction.

The Mechanisms In Children's Constructions of Gender:

Analysis of the children's responses revealed that a variety of gender discourses were drawn on in their constructions of gender. More children were found to use inequity discourses than equity ones: possibly identification with one gender and the construction of genders as different involved in gender category maintenance leads more children to draw on these, as discriminatory discourses all support the hegemonic discourse of gender dichotomy. However, equity discourses were also widely drawn on, with that of innate equality being used to construct the genders as the same. The other equity discourse drawn on by children was that of equal

opportunities: this discourse has only become salient during the last twenty years, and children's use of it demonstrates that discursive resources are not fixed, but develop and change over time (see Burman and Parker, 1993). More of the older children drew on these equity discourses: possibly these are more available to older children, or their use may be due to a slackening of gender category maintenance in this age-group (see Damon, 1977; Lloyd and Duveen, 1992; Davies, 1989).

Contradictions were sometimes evident in children's discursive constructions, and, when recognised, these were dealt with in a variety of ways. Equity discourses were used to resist discriminatory constructions; but because they did not necessarily challenge the hegemonic discourse which perpetuates discriminatory narratives they were often limited to causing discursive contradiction. However, there was some indication that 'innate equality between genders' discourse could be used to resist discriminatory constructions more effectively than equal opportunities discourse: this point is explored more fully later in this chapter.

Turning to the evidence children drew on in their discourse on gender, different types of resource were found to be used in their constructions of gender. Access to social resources, then, apparently impacted on their gender discourse, but children also used evidence to support the various discourses they drew on. That children use such resources discursively is shown by their frequent dismissal of counter-stereotypical and stereotypical information.

IMPLICATIONS:

This section begins with a comment on the theoretical approach of the study, and discusses the implications of its findings.

Theoretical Approach:

The combination of feminist and poststructuralist theory, which grounds discourse analysis in social experience in a 'postmodern modern' attempt to analyse power inequalities, has demonstrated that these can result from the use of gender discourse. This contribution enables us to see that while power is discursively produced, and the minutiae of different factors contributing to power

positioning cannot be analysed independently, broader structural inequalities can. In this way this theoretical approach can also overcome one of the main problems the use of discourse analysis had posed for feminists: that of relativism. Gill (1993) notes that generalisations cannot be made from discourse analysis: such analysis can only describe responses in particular discursive environments, and hence findings cannot be applied or transferred to other discursive environments (and are thus arguably unable to contribute to generalised feminist theory concerning the distribution of power between men and women). This research suggests that children's constructions of gender and use of gender discourse often impacted on their interactive power positions, and that as gender discourse may not differ greatly between schools, one *could* expect to find similar results in other schools. Further research is needed to examine this hypothesis.

Implications of Findings:

If, then, the discursive practice of gender dichotomy is what leads children to construct genders as different, and gendered behaviour as oppositional, resulting in unequal power positions between genders, it is this discursive dichotomy which must be deconstructed. This conclusion necessitates a consideration of possible methods by which to challenge this gender dichotomy.

Discussion of the Potential of Educational Resources to Deconstruct the Gender Dichotomy

Davies (1989) argues that children should be free to take up positions normally associated with the other sex, and maintains that literature and information can provide children with new possibilities with which to do so. Davies and Banks (1992) suggest further that teaching children about discursive resources and poststructuralist theory would allow children to understand the nature of gender discourse and its restrictions on their lives. However, my analysis of the symbolic gender culture illustrates how difficult such change is for children, as it involves a break with hegemonic constructions of gender, and the subsequent possibility that one could be rendered a 'non-person' and social outsider. (Even when admitting they would like to experiment with items traditionally assigned to the other gender, children participating in my study were often unequivocal in their insistence that they could not indulge in such experimentation). Moreover, as I

observed above, my findings show that children simply used evidence to support the particular gender discourse they drew upon, and frequently rejected counter-stereotypes. Consequently I argue that providing children with counter-stereotypical literature and information may not be enough to break down the gender dichotomy. Further, teaching children discourse analysis may not be an adequate method of challenge, because it would not necessarily make any difference: having revealed gender discourse and its use, a-political poststructuralism can provide no motives for abandonment of these discourses, and cannot construct possible egalitarian replacements.

However, there was also evidence that children *do* draw on resources as evidence in their constructions of gender. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that a large number of children had an understanding of gender-discrimination and equity issues. The majority of children constructed school as a place of gender discrimination and the adult workplace as one of potential gender-discrimination. Some might find such cynicism in primary school children disturbing, particularly in light of Gaskell's (1992) study, which suggests that secondary school girls may opt for secondary careers compared to their male partners due to the realist acknowledgement that the workplace is skewed against them: the awareness of gender discrimination in the adult workplace could be seen as having the potential to discourage girls from high career expectations at this early age. On the other hand, I suggest that girls' knowledge of this issue and resentment at its implications could potentially empower them. Awareness of the existence of gender-discrimination as a possible influence on their lives may enable girls to recognise and potentially to challenge it (see Skelton, 1988). Moreover, boys' understanding of sexism may encourage them to take a more sympathetic, egalitarian approach to gender issues. From these perspectives children's acquisition of this knowledge at an early age appears beneficial.

Thus I suggest that gender issues should be discussed in the primary school classroom. According to Skelton (1988), teachers are often unwilling to discuss sexism with children because of their presumed 'innocence', and Short (1988) maintains that teachers avoid discussion of 'controversial issues' with children due to unfounded, Piagetian-based notions that young children have not yet reached the stage of 'formal operations'. My findings suggest that many children are fully aware of sexism as an issue and its possible implications for their own lives and future work experiences, and demonstrate that a large proportion of

girls claim to experience sexism at the hands of other children, suggesting that Short (1988) is correct when he argues that teachers often underestimate their pupils' degree of political understanding .

According to children's reports, girls can effectively resist sexism through group solidarity and action. Teaching children more about sexism, and discussing the means of resistance to it, might provide children with greater awareness of the issue and resources of possible resistance as girls share understanding and disapproval of sexist practices. Such classroom discussion could benefit boys too: I found that in children's talk about adult occupation the concept of equal opportunities appeared to be more frequently applied to female ability than to male. More children argued that women can perform traditionally male jobs than vice-versa. This suggests that equal opportunities programmes may have focused on women's ability to be 'like men' at the expense of an adequate insistence that men can also take up caring, traditionally female roles. Thus greater attention to this aspect of equal opportunities may be needed in schools: practical suggestions regarding the exploration of the concept of equal opportunities for males *and* females in the primary classroom are discussed by Haycock (1987), and Chisholm and Holland (1987). The argument that teachers should discuss sexism with children is supported by Carrington and Troyna's (1988a, 1988b) claim that there is no reason why children should not address 'controversial issues' at an early age, and Short and Carrington's (1989) argument that children should be taught about the evils of 'sex roles'. Winkley (1995) observes that moral behaviour needs practice and guidance, and Troyna and Hatcher (1988) support egalitarian teaching of 'controversial issues', arguing that it is justified in its encouragement of children to become responsible, thoughtful citizens. While my findings suggest that children would not *necessarily* draw on such educational resources, they indicate that these would provide an extra resource of information concerning gender matters which children would have the opportunity to draw on.

Thus educational resources could potentially be drawn on by children to resist gender discrimination, and to construct new gender possibilities. However, the findings of this study also demonstrate that while possibly reducing the occurrence of sexist practice in the classroom, anti-sexist teaching is not enough to fundamentally alter children's constructions of gender: children take up the gender dichotomy as part of their social identity, and construct symbolic,

oppositional gender cultures in school as a consequence. The construction of gender as oppositional actually appeared to prevent some girls effectively resisting sexism, as the assertiveness required for successful resistance was incongruous with the construction of femininity as sensible and selfless. Thus a more radical challenge to the discursive gender dichotomy is needed if children's constructions of gender as different (and oppositional) are to change. As children draw on social resources to support their various gender discourses, it is these discourses and their potential to challenge the gender dichotomy which I examine now.

Discussion of Discourses as Potentially Able to Deconstruct the Gender Dichotomy

The extent to which children utilised equity discourses in response to my questions initially appears encouraging from a feminist perspective, demonstrating that such discourses and ideas are understood and drawn upon by children, often in order to challenge or refute inequity discourse. However, my data shows many instances where such discourse was reported to fail in challenging gender discriminatory constructions. I found suggestions that some children may have recognised the clash between gender-discriminatory and equity discourses, and were apparently aware that equity discourse is favoured and discriminatory discourse rejected by adults in educational environments: consequently they attempted to justify and rationalise sexist statements. However, as I observed earlier, their awareness of this discursive clash did not prevent children from articulating gender-discriminatory narratives, even when I undermined their justifications. This suggests that, though aware of equity discourses, some children continued to draw upon discriminatory ones to construct the genders as different. In Chapter Seven I argue that the greater number of children drawing on discriminatory discourse may be a result of children's wish to construct the genders as different from each other in order to identify with a particular gender. However, the implication of this finding is that, as Davies and Banks (1992) maintain, equity discourses cannot effectively challenge the discursive practice of gender dichotomy.

Analysing children's use of equity discourses, I found that equal opportunities discourses were the least successful in challenging discriminatory constructions. Kenway *et al* (1994) note a recent change in teacher's discourses to incorporate

equal opportunities, and they suggest that this could be built on to challenge sexist discourse. However, my findings show that equal opportunities discourse did not appear to pose a challenge to the construct of a gender dichotomy (see Davies, 1989; Davies and Banks, 1992; Jordan, 1995), upon which sexist discourses are founded. On analysing the different types of gender-discriminatory discourse I found that all were based upon the hegemonic discourse of gender dichotomy, which children take up in their constructions of gender identity. As Davies (1989), Davies and Banks (1992), and Jordan (1995) argue, equal opportunities discourses are still based on the idea of fixed selves of different genders being given the chance to perform the same activities: the concept of equal opportunities is founded on the supposition of difference. Because of this, equal opportunities discourses cannot pose any real challenge to the discourse of gender dichotomy which gender-discriminatory discourses, and children's gender constructions, are based upon.

While there was some evidence of 'innate equality between genders' discourse being similarly contained by the hegemonic discourse of gender duality, I found some children using innate equality narratives consistently in their interviews and role plays, to oppose the construction of genders as different and oppositional. Davies and Banks (1992) argue that discourses which present the genders as equal still fail to challenge the gender dichotomy because children take up their gender identities as part of themselves. Yet I would argue that a discourse which presents the genders as equal in ability at least breaks down the construction of genders as different, and thus appears to have some potential. The discourse of innate equality between genders appeared to be offering *some* resource of resistance to constructions of gender inequality and discrimination. Moreover, children's responses were generally more egalitarian than have been found in previous studies (see Chapter Four), and many older children appeared wary of drawing on blatantly discriminatory discourse in front of me: these factors indicate that equity discourses were making some impact in the schools, even though they may not be attacking the gender dichotomy.

Perhaps a practical contribution to the deconstruction of the discursive gender dichotomy amongst children would be to develop and extend the discussion of innate equality between genders in school. Rather than rejecting classroom discussion of equality in favour of lessons on poststructuralist thought, as Davies and Banks (1992) suggest, teachers could focus on the lack of significant

difference between men and women, and examine the constructions of masculinity and femininity in class, showing children how they are restrictive and nonsensical. Although this might not lead to immediate, dramatic change, it might provide children with extra information, fantasies, and discursive resources which they can take up if they wish. Such discussion could offer a *pro-equality* perspective to children, which could actively attack discrimination, and construct the genders as *not different*: to actively deconstruct the existing gender dichotomy an alternative construction must be posed in its place. Educating children about the discursive gender dichotomy from an a-political and a-moral poststructuralist perspective could leave children with no incentive to deconstruct their gender constructions or risk their gender identities. Further research is needed to discover whether children who have engaged in classroom discussion of the innate equality between genders construct the gender as less different than those who have not.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abram, J., (1996) 'Postitivism, Prejudice and Progress in the Sociology of Education: Who's Afraid of Values?', in *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 81-86.

Abrams, D., and Hogg, M., (1990) 'The Context of Discourse: let's not throw out the baby with the bath water', in *Philosophical Psychology*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 219-225.

Adams, C., and Walkerdine, V., (1986) *Investigating Gender in the Primary School*, London: ILEA.

Althusser, L., (1971) *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, London: New Left Books.

Antaki, C., (ed.) (1988) *Analysing Everyday Explanations: A Casebook of Methods*, London: Sage.

Anyon, J., (1983) 'Intersections of Gender and Class', in Walker, S., and Barton, L., (eds.) *Gender, Class and Education*, London: Falmer.

Arber, S., Ginn, J., (1995) 'The Mirage of Gender Equality: occupational success in the labour market and within marriage', in *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 46, No.1, pp. 21-43.

Archer, J., and Lloyd, B., (1982) *Sex and Gender*, London: Penguin.

Aries, P., (1962) *Centuries of Childhood*, New York: Vintage.

Arnot, M., (1984) 'How Should We Educate Our Sons?', in Deem, R., *Education Reconsidered*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Arnot, M. (ed.), (1985) *Race and Gender: Equal Opportunities Policies in Education*, Pergamon Press.

Arnot, M., (1996) 'The Return of the egalitarian Agenda? The Paradoxical Effects of Recent Educational Reforms', forthcoming in *NUT Education Review*.

Askew, S., and Ross, C., (1988) *Boys Don't Cry*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Assiter, A., (1995) *The Real Body: A Modernist Feminist Revival*, unpublished PhD, London: University of North London.

Attridge, D., Bennington, G., and Young, R. (eds.), (1987) *Post-structuralism and the Question of History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bailey, M., (1993) 'Foucauldian Feminism: Contesting Bodies, Sexuality and Identity', in Ramazanoglu, C., *Up Against Foucault*, London:

Routledge.

Baker, C., (1982) 'Adolescent-adult talk as a practical interpretative problem', in Payne, G., and Cuffs, E., (eds.) *Doing Teaching: The Practical Management of Classrooms*, London: Batsford.

Baker, C., (1984) 'The search for adultness: membership work in adolescent-adult talk', in *Human Studies*, Vol. 7, pp. 301-323.

Baker, C., and Davies, B., (1989) 'A Lesson on Sex Roles', in *Gender and Education*, Vol. 1, No.1, pp. 59-75.

Balbus, I., (1987) 'Disciplining Women: Michel Foucault and the Power of Feminist Discourse', in Benhabib, S., and Cornell, D., (eds.) *Feminism as Critique*, London: Polity Press.

Ball, S., (ed.) (1990) *Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge*, London: Routledge.

Bardwick, J., (1971) *Psychology of Women: A Study of Bio-Cultural Conflicts*, New York: Harper and Row.

Barthes, R., (1973) *S/Z*, Paris: Editions du Seuil.

Barthes, R., (1990) *The Pleasure of the Text*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

Baruch, G., (1982) 'Moral Tales: Interviewing Parents of Congenitally Ill Children', unpublished PhD Thesis, London: University of London.

Becker, H., Greer, B., and Hughes, E., (1968) *Making the Grade: the Academic Side of College Life*, New York: John Wiley.

Belotti, E.G., (1975) *Little Girls*, London: Writers and Readers Publishing Co-op.

Bem, S., (1981) 'Gender Schema Theory; A Cognitive Account of Sex Typing', in *Psychological Review*, No. 42, pp. 354-64.

Benhabib, S., and Cornell, D. (eds.), (1987) *Feminism as Critique*, Oxford: Polity Press.

Bennett, B., (1991) *The Promotion of Dance in Secondary Schools*, unpublished MPhil, Leicester: Leicester Polytechnic.

Bennett, M., (1987) 'Texts in History: The Determinations of Readings and Their Texts', in Attridge, D., Bennington, G., and Young, R., (eds.) *Post Structuralism and the Question of History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Berger, P., and Luckman, T., (1966) *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, New York: Doubleday.

Berti, A., and Bombi, A., (1988) *The Child's Construction of Economics,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Billig, M., (1987) *Arguing and Thinking*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Billig, M., *et al,* (1988) *Ideological Dilemmas*, London: Sage.

Billig, M., (1992) *Talking of the Royal Family*, London: Routledge.

Billig, M., (1995) *Banal Nationalism*, London: Sage.

Blair, M., Holland, J., and Sheldon, S., (eds.) (1995) *Identity and Diversity: Gender and the Experience of Education*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bogdan, R., and Biklin, S., (1982)*Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* , Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Bordo, S., (1990) 'Feminism, Postmodernism and Gender Scepticism', in Nicholson, L., (ed.) *Feminism/Postmodernism*, London: Routledge.

Bourdieu, P., and Passeron, J., (1977) *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, London: Sage.

Bowles, S., and Gintis, H., (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America*, London: AKP.

Bowles, G., and Klein, R. (eds.) (1983) *Theories of Women's Studies*, London: Routledge and Keegan Paul.

Brewster, P., (1980) 'School Days, School Days' in Spender, D., and Sarah, E., (eds.) *Learning to Lose: Sexism and Education*, London: The Women's Press.

Bryant, M., (1979) *The Unexpected Revolution*, London: University of London Institute of Education.

Bryman, A., (1988) *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*, London: Unwin Hyman.

Buckingham, D., (1993) *Children Talking Television*, London: Falmer Press.

Burman, E., (1992) 'Feminism and Discourse in Developmental Psychology: power, subjectivity and interpretation', in *Feminism and Psychology*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 45-59.

Burman, E., (1994) *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology*, London: Routledge.

Burman, E., and Parker, I., (eds.) (1993) *Discourse Analytical Research*, London: Routledge.

Burman, E., and Parker, I., (1993) 'Introduction - Discourse Analysis: the turn to the Text', in Burman, E., and Parker, I., (eds.) *Discourse Analytical Research*, London: Routledge.

Burr, V., (1995) *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*, London: Routledge.

Cann, A., and Haight, J., (1983) 'Children's Perceptions of Relative Competence in Sex-Typed Occupations', in *Sex Roles*, Vol. 9, No. 7, pp. 767-774.

Carrington, B., and Troyna, B., (eds.) (1988) *Children and Controversial Issues*, London: The Falmer Press.

Carrington, B., and Troyna, B., (1988a) 'Children and Controversial Issues', in Carrington, B., and Troyna, B., (eds.) *Children and Controversial Issues*, London: The Falmer Press.

Carrington, B., and Troyna, B., (1988b) 'Combating Racism Through Political Education', in Carrington, B., and Troyna, B., *Children and Controversial Issues*, London: The Falmer Press.

Central Statistical Office, (1995) *Social Focus on Women*.

Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, (1982) *The Empire Strikes Back*, London, Hutchinson.

Chisholm, L., and Holland, J., (1987) 'Anti-Sexist Research in School: The Girls and Occupational Choice Project', in Weiner, G., and Arnot, M., *Gender Under Scrutiny*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Cixous, H., (1976) 'The Laugh of the Medusa', Trans. Cohen, K., and Cohen, P., in *Signs*, No. 1, pp.875-899.

Cixous, H., (1990) *The Body and the Text*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Clarricoates, K., (1980) 'The Importance of Being Ernest.. Emma.. Tom..Jane', in Deem, R. (ed.) *Schooling for Women's Work*, London: Routledge and Keegan Paul.

Cockburn, C., (1987) *Two Track Training*, London: Macmillan Education Ltd.

Cockburn, C., (1991) *In the Way of Women*, London: Macmillan.

Cohen, M., (1993) *A Genealogy of Conversation: Gender Subjectivation and Learning French in England*, unpublished Ph.D, London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Cole, M., and Hill, D., (1995) 'Games of Despair and Rhetorics of Resistance: postmodernism, education and reaction', in *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* Vol. 16, No. 2, pp.165-182.

Collins, P., (1991) *Black Feminist Thought* , London: Routledge.

Connell, R., (1987) *Gender and Power*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Connell, R., (1995) *Masculinities*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Connor, S., (1993) 'The Necessity of Value', in Squires, J., (ed.) *Principled Positions: Postmodernism and the Rediscovery of Value*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Cullingford, C., and Brown, G., (1995) 'Children's Perceptions of Victims and Bullies', in *Education 3 - 13*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp.11-16.

Dahlberg, G., (1985) *Context and the Child's Orientation to Meaning*, Stockholm: Stockholm Institute of Education.

Dahlberg, G., Holland, J., and Varnava-Skouras, G., (1987) *Children, Work and Ideology*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International.

Damon, W., (1977) *The Social World of the Child*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Davies, B., (1989) *Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

Davies, B., and Banks, C., (1992) 'The Gender Trap: A Feminist-Poststructuralist Analysis of Primary School Children's Talk About Gender', in *Junior Curriculum Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 1-25.

Davis, K., (1988) *Power Under the Microscope*, Dordrecht: Foris Publications.

Deem, R. (ed.), (1980) *Schooling for Women's Work*, London: Routledge and Keegan Paul Ltd.

Delamont, S., (1980) *Sex Roles and the School*, London: Methuen.

Delphy, C., and Leonard, D., (1992) *Familiar Exploitation*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Denscombe, M., (1995) 'Explorations in Group Interviews: An Evaluation of a Reflexive and Partisan Approach', in *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp.131- 138.

Denzin, N., (1970) *The Research Act in Sociology*, London: Butterworth.

Derrida, J., (1966) *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences*, in Derrida (ed.) *Writing and Difference*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Derrida, J., (1976) *Of Grammatology*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Di Stefano, C., (1990) 'Dilemmas of Difference: Feminism, Modernity and Postmodernism', in Nicholson, L., (ed.) *Feminism/Postmodernism*, London: Routledge.

Dixon, B., (1990) *Playing Them False*, Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Duelli Klein, R., (1983) 'How to Do What We Want to Do: Thoughts About Feminist Methodology', in Bowles, G., and Duelli Klein, R., (eds.) *Theories of Women's Studies*, London: Routledge and Keegan Paul.

Durkin, K., (1985) *Television, Sex Roles, and Children*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Edwards, A., and Westgate, D., (1987) *Investigating Classroom Talk*, Falmer Press.

Edwards, D., and Potter, J., (1992) *Discursive Psychology*, London: Sage.

Edwards, R., (1990) 'Connecting Method and Epistemology: A White Woman Interviewing Black Women', in *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 13, No. 5, pp. 477-489.

Eichler, M., (1988) *Nonsexist Research Methods: A Practical Guide*, London: Unwin Hyman.

Enloe, C., (1988) *Does Khaki Become You?*, London: Pandora Press.

Equal Opportunities Commission Report, (1996) *Educational Reforms and Gender Equality in Schools*, Equal Opportunities Commission.

Fielding, N., and Fielding, J., (1986) *Linking Data* (Qualitative Research Methods Series No. 4), Sage: London.

Figueroa, H., and Lopez, M., (1991) 'Commentary on Discourse Analysis Workshop/Conference', Paper for Second Discourse Analysis Workshop/Conference, Manchester Polytechnic, July.

Foucault, M., (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Trans. Sheridan, A. London: Tavistock Publications.

Foucault, M., (1977) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Trans. Sheridan, A., London: Tavistock Publications.

Foucault, M., (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972 - 1977*, New York: Pantheon.

Foucault, M., (1981) *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*, London: Pelican.

Foucault, M., (1991) *The Care of the Self: The History of Sexuality Volume Three*, London: Penguin.

Fraser, N., and Nicholson, L., (1990) 'Social Criticism Without Philosophy: An Encounter Between Feminism and Postmodernism', in Nicholson, L., (ed.) *Feminism/Postmodernism*, London: Routledge.

Frueh, T., and McGhee, P., (1975) 'Traditional Sex-Role Development, and Amount of Time Spent Watching Television', in *Developmental Psychology*, No. 11, pp. 109- 110.

Furnham, A., and Stacey, B., (1991)*Young People's Understanding of Society*, London: Routledge.

Game, A., (1991) *Undoing the Social; Towards a Deconstructive Society*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Gaskell, J., (1992) *Gender Matters From School to Work*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Gergen, M., (1994) 'The Social Construction of Personal Histories: Gendered Lives in Popular Autobiographies', in Sarbin, T., and Kituse, J., (eds.) *Constructing the Social*, London: Sage.

Gill, R., (1993) 'Justifying Injustice: Broadcasters Accounts of Inequality in Radio', in Burman, E., and Parker, I., (eds.) *Discourse Analytical Research*, London: Routledge.

Gilligan, C., (1982) *In a Different Voice*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gluksmann, M., (1994) 'The Work of Knowledge and the Knowledge of Women's Work', in Maynard, M., and Purvis, J., (eds.) *Researching Women's Lives From a Feminist Perspective*, London: Taylor and Francis.

Goffman, I., (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Gould, C., (1984) *Beyond Domination*, London: Rowman and Allanheld.

Grabrucker, M., (1988) *There's a Good Girl*, London: The Women's Press.

Gramsci, A., (1971) *Selections From Prison Notebooks*, Trans. Hoare, Q., and Nowell-Smith, G., London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Griffiths, M., (1995a) '(Auto)Biography and Epistemology', in *Educational Review*, Vol. 47, No. 1, pp.75-88.

Griffiths, M., (1995b) 'Making a Difference: feminism, post-modernism and the methodology of educational research', *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp.219-236.

Grimshaw, C., (1993) 'Practices of Freedom' in Ramazanoglu, C., (ed.) *Up Against Foucault*, London: Routledge.

Gumperz, J., (ed.) (1982) *Language and Social Identity*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gunter, B., and McAleer, J., (1990) *Children and Television: The One Eyed Monster*, London: Routledge.

Hansard Society Commission, (1990) *Women at the Top*, London: The Hansard Society.

Hall, S., (1992) 'New Ethnicities', in Donald, J., and Rattansi, A., (eds.) *'Race, Culture and Difference*, London: Sage Publications.

Harding, S., (1984) 'Is Gender a Variable in Conceptions of Rationality?' in Gould, C. (ed.) *Beyond Domination*, London: Rowman and Allenheld.

Harding, S., (1990) 'Feminism, Science, and the Anti-Enlightenment Critiques', in Nicholson (ed.) *Feminism/Postmodernism*, London: Routledge.

Harding, S., (1991) *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Hartsock, N., (1990) 'Foucault on Power: a Theory for Women' in Nicholson, L., (ed.) *Feminism/Postmodernism*, London: Routledge.

Haworth, J., *et al*, (1992) 'Home Sweet Home Corner', in *Education 3 - 13*, Vol. 20, No.1, pp. 37-42.

Haycock, C., (1987) 'Equal Opportunities: A Child's View', in *Primary Teaching Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp.77-83.

Hearn, J., and Morgan, D., (1995) 'Contested Discourses on Men and Masculinities', in Blair, M., Holland, J., and Sheldon, S., (eds.) *Identity and Diversity: Gender and the Experience of Education*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Henshaw, A., Kelly, J., and Gratton, C., (1992) 'Skipping's For Girls: Children's Perceptions of Gender Roles and Gender Preferences', in *Educational Research*, Vol. 34, No. 3, pp.229- 236.

Herbert, C., (1989) *Talking of Silence - The Sexual Harassment of Schoolgirls*, London: Falmer.

Heward, C., (1994) 'Acadmic Snakes and Merit Ladders: Reconceptualising the 'Glass Ceiling'', in *Gender and Education*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 249-262.

Holland, J., (1981) *Work and Women*, London: University of London Institute of Education

Holland, J., *et al* (1995) 'Pleasure, Pressure and Power: Some Contradictions of Gendered Sexuality', in Blair, M., Holland, J., and Sheldon, S., (eds.) *Identity and Diversity: Gender and the Experience of Education*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Holland, J., and Skouras, G., (1979) 'Study of Adolescent's Views of Aspects of the Social Division of Labour', *Sociological research Unit/ Social Science Research Council Report,* No. 6.

hooks, b., (1982) *Ain't I a Woman?*, London: Pluto.

hooks, b., (1989) *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, London: Sheba Feminist Publications.

hooks, b., (1995) 'Writing Autobiography', in Blair, M., Holland, J., and Sheldon, S., (eds.) *Identity and Diversity: Gender and the Experience of Education*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Hutchings, M., (1990a) 'Children's Thinking About Work', in Ross, A., (ed.) *Economic and Industrial Awareness in the Primary School*, London: P.N.L Press

Hutchings, M., (1990b) *Children's Ideas About the World of Work*, London: P.N.L Press.

Hutchings, M., (1992) 'Economic and Industrial Understanding and Curriculum Permeation: Achieving the Potential in Mathematics', in Hutchings, M., and Wade, W., (eds.) *Developing Economic and Industrial Understanding in the Primary School,* London: P.N.L Press.

Hutchings, M., (1995) 'Children's Ideas About Payment for Work' in *Economic Awareness*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 28-34.

Hutchings, M., and Wade, W., (eds.) *Developing Economic and Industrial Understanding in the Primary School,* London: P.N.L Press.

Hutt, C., (1978) 'Sex-role Differentiation in Social Development', in McGurk, H., (ed.) *Issues in Child Social Development*, London: Methuen.

Hutton, W., (1995) *The State We're In*, London: Vintage.

Irigary, L., (1985a) *Speculum of the Other Woman*, New York: Cornell University Press.

Irigary, L., (1985b) *This Sex Which Is Not One*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Jones, A., (1993) 'Becoming a "Girl": Post-structuralist Suggestions for Educational Research', in *Gender and Education*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 157-166.

Jordan, E., (1995) 'Fighting Boys and Fantasy Play: the construction of masculinity in the early years of school', in *Gender and Education*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 69-86.

Kehily, M., (1995) 'Self-narration, Autobiography and Identity Construction', in *Gender and Education*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 23-31.

Kelly, A., (1989) '"When I Grow Up I Want to Be...": A Longitudinal Study of the Development of Career Preferences', in *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 179-200.

Kelly, L., Burton, S., and Regan, L., (1994) 'Researching Women's Lives or Studying Women's Oppression? Reflections on What Constitutes Feminist Research', in Maynard, M., and Purvis, J., (eds.) *Researching Women's Lives From a Feminist Perspective*, London: Taylor and Francis.

Kenway, J., *et al*, (1994) 'Making 'Hope Practical' Rather Than 'Despair Convincing': Feminist Poststructuralism, Gender Reform and Educational Change', in *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp.187-210.

Kessler, S., and McKenna, W., (1978) *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach*, Chicago: University of Chicago.

Kleiber, N., and Light, L., (1978) *Caring For Ourselves* , British Colombia: University of British Columbia.

Kniveton, B., (1995) 'Giving Girls and Boys Equality of Opportunity: is the teacher's task impossible?', in *Education 3 - 13,* Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 54-57.

Kohlburg, L., (1966) 'A Cognitive Developmental Analysis of Children's Sex-role Concepts and Attitudes', in Maccoby, E., (ed.) *Development of Sex Differences*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Kvale, S., (1995) 'The Social Construction of Validity', in *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 19-40.

Larkin, J., (1994) 'Walking Through Walls: the Sexual Harassment of Highschool Girls', in *Gender and Education*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 263-280.

Lave, J., and Wenger, E., (1991) *Situated Learning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lees, S., (1986) *Losing Out: Sexuality and Adolescent Girls,* London: Hutchinson.

Lees, S., (1987) 'Girls' Adolescence: Contradictory Identities', paper for Conference on Youth Research, Free University of Amsterdam.

Lees, S., (1993) *Sugar and Spice*, London: Penguin.

Lever, J., (1978) 'Sex Differences in the Complexity of Children's Play and Games', in *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 43, pp. 471-487.

Lindholm, L., (1978) *Pupils' Attitudes to Equality Between the Sexes*, Malmo: CWK Gleerup.

Lloyd, B., and Duveen, G., (1992) *Gender Identities and Education*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Lobban, G., (1974) 'Data Report on British Reading Schemes', in *The Times Educational Supplement*, 1/3/74.

Maccoby, E., (ed.) (1966) *The Development of Sex Differences*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Macnaghten, P., (1993) 'Discourses of Nature: Argumentation and Power', in Burman, E., and Parker, I., (eds.) *Discourse Analytical Research*, London: Routledge.

Maltz, D., and Borker, R., (1983) 'A Cultural Approach to Male-Female Miscommunication', in Gumperz, J., (ed.) *Language and Social Identity*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Marks, D., (1993) 'Case Conference Analysis and Action Research', in Burman, E., and Parker, I., (eds.) *Discourse Analytical Research*, London: Sage.

Marshall, A., (1994) 'Sensuous Sapphires: A Study of the Social Construction of Black Female Sexuality', in Maynard, M., and Purvis, P., (eds.) *Researching Women's Lives From a Feminist Perspective*, London: Taylor and Francis.

Marshall, H., and Raabe, B., (1993) 'Political Discourse: Talking About Nationalisation and Privatisation', in Burman, E., and Parker, I., (eds.) *Discourse Analytical Research*, London: Routledge.

Maynard, M., (1994) 'Methods, Practice and Epistemology: The Debate About Feminism and Research', in Maynard, M., and Purvis, J., (eds.) *Researching Women's Lives From a Feminist Perspective*, London: Taylor and Francis.

Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. (eds.), (1994) *Researching Women's Lives From a Feminist Perspective*, London: Taylor and Francis.

McGurk, H., (ed.) (1978) *Issues In Child Social Development*, London: Methuen.

Meehan, A., and Janik, L., (1990) 'Illusory Correlation and the Maintenance of Sex Role Stereotypes in Children', in *Sex Roles*, Vol. 22, Nos.

1-2, pp.83-96.

Merttens, R., (1993) 'The Rhetoric of Documentation for Parents', in Merttens, R., *et al, Ruling the Margins: Problematising Parental Involvement*, London: University of North London Press.

Merttens, R., *et al*, (eds.) (1993) *Ruling the Margins: Problematising Parental Involvement*, London: University of North London Press.

Middleton, P., (1992) *The Inward Gaze: Masculinity and Subjectivity in Modern Culture*, London: Routledge.

Mitchell, E., (1971) *Women's Estate*, London: Penguin.

Moir, J., (1993) 'Occupational Career Choice: Accounts and Contradictions', in Burman, E., and Parker, I., (eds.) *Discourse Analytical Research*, London: Routledge.

Moran, P., (1992) 'Television is Beautiful', in *Education 3 - 13*, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp.45-46.

Morgan, E., (1972) *The Descent of Woman*, London: Souvenir Press Ltd.

Nemerowicz, G., (1979) *Children's Perceptions of Gender and Work Roles*, New York: Praegar Publishers.

Nicholson, L. (ed.), (1990) *Feminism/Postmodernism*, London: Routledge.

Nicholson, L., (1995) 'Interpreting Gender', in Nicholson, L., and Seidman, S., (eds.) *Social Postmodernism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nicholson, L., and Seidman, S., (1995) *Social Postmodernism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nilan, P., (1995) 'Negotiating Gendered Identity in Classroom Disputes and Collaboration', in *Discourse and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 27-47.

Nuquist, M., (1987) 'Fallen Differences, Phallogocentric discourses: Losing "Paradise Lost" to History", in Attridge, D., Bennington, G., and Young, R., (eds.) *Poststructuralism and the Question of History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Opie, A., (1992) 'Qualitative Research, Appropriation of the 'Other' and Empowerment', in *Feminist Review*, No. 40, pp.52-69.

Oxford English Dictionary (1986), Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Parker, I., (1988) 'Deconstructing Accounts', in Antaki, C., (ed.) *Analysing Everyday Explanation: A Casebook of Methods*, London: Sage.

Parker, I., (1990a) 'Discourse: Definitions and Contradictions', in *Philosophical Psychology*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 192-204

Parker, I., (1990b) 'Real Things: discourse, context and practice', in *Philosophical Psychology*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 226- 233.

Parker, I., (1992) *Discourse Dynamics: Critical Analysis for Social and Individual Psychology*, London: Routledge.

Parker, I., and Burman, E., (1993) 'Against Discursive Imperialism, Empiricism and Constructionism: Thirty-two Problems With Discourse Analysis', in Burman, E., and Parker, I., (eds.) *Discourse Analytical Research*, London: Routledge.

Pattinson, T., (1991) *Sexual Harassment: The Hidden Facts*, London: Futura.

Phoenix, A., (1987) 'Theories of Gender and Black Families', in Weiner, G., and Arnot, M., (eds.) *Gender Under Scrutiny*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Phoenix, A., (1994) 'Practicing Research: The Intersection of Gender and 'Race' in the Research Process', in Maynard, M., and Purvis, J., (eds.) *Researching Women's Lives From a Feminist Perspective*, London: Taylor and Francis.

Phillips, D., (1971) *Knowledge From What?* Chicago: Rand McNally

Piaget, J., (1964) *Six Psychological Studies*, (ed. Elkind, D.), Geneve: Editions Gonthier, SA.

Piaget, J., (1972) *The Child and Reality*, Paris: Editions Denoel.

Potter, J., and Wetherell, M., (1987) *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*, London: Sage.

Potter, J., and Wetherell, M., (1988) 'Accomplishing Attitudes: Fact and Evaluation in Racist Discourse', in *Text*, No. 8, pp.51-68.

Potter, J., Wetherell, M., Gill, R., and Edwards, D., (1990) 'Discourse: Noun, Verb, or Social Practice?', in *Philosophical Psychology*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 205-217.

Ramazanoglu, C. (ed.), (1993) *Up Against Foucault*, London: Routledge.

Reay, D., (1990a) 'Girls' Groups as a Component of Anti-sexist Practice; One Primary School's Experience', in *Gender and Education*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 37-47.

Reay, D., (1990b) 'Working With Boys', in *Gender and Education*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 269-281.

Rich, A., (1981) 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence', in

Signs, No. 5, pp.631-660. Onlywoman Press.

Riddell, S., (1989) 'Pupils, Resistance and Gender Codes', in *Gender and Education*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 183-196.

Riley, D., (1988) *Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Robb, B., (1981) 'Maternal Employment and Children's Sex Role Perceptions', in *Educational Research*, Vol. 23, No. 3, pp. 223-225.

Rose, N., (1989) 'Individualising Psychology', in Shotter, J., and Gergen, K., (eds.) *Texts of Identity*, London: Sage.

Rosenthal, D., and Chapman, D., (1982) 'The Lady Spaceman: Children's Perceptions of Sex-Stereotyped Occupations', in *Sex Roles,* Vol. 8, No. 9, pp.959-965.

Ross, A., (1990) 'Children's Perceptions of Industrial Hierarchies', in Ross, A., (ed.) *Economic and Industrial Awareness in the Primary School,* London: P.N.L Press.

Ross, A., (ed.) (1990)*Economic and Industrial Awareness in the Primary School*, London: P.N.L Press.

Ross, A., (1992) 'Children's Perceptions of Capital', in Hutchings, M. and Wade, W. (eds.), *Developing Economic and Industrial Understanding in the Primary School*, London: P.N.L Press.

Ruddick, S., (1989) *Maternal Thinking*, London: The Women's Press.

Said, E., (1984) *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, London: Faber and Faber Ltd.

Sampson, E., (1989) 'The Deconstruction of the Self' in Shotter, J., and Gergen, K., (eds.) *Texts of Identity*, London: Sage.

Sarah, E., (1980) 'Teachers and Students in the classroom: an examination of classroom interaction', in Spender, D., and Sarah, E., (eds.) *Learning to Lose: Sexism and Education*, London: The Women's Press.

Sarbin, T., (1986) (ed.) *Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct*, New York: Praegar.

Sarbin, T., and Kituse, J., (eds.) (1994) *Constructing the Social*, London: Sage.

Schutz, A., (1972) *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, London: Heinemann.

Sealey, A., and Knight, C., (1990) '"We Don't Like Talking in Front of the Boys": Talk and Inequality', in *Education 3-13*, Vol. 18, No. 3,

pp. 55-59.

Sharpe, S., (1976) *Just Like a Girl*, London: Penguin/Pelican.

Short, G., (1988) 'Children's Grasp of Controversial Issues', in Carrington, B., and Troyna, B., (eds.) *Children and Controversial Issues*, London: Falmer.

Short, G., (1993) 'Sex-typed Behaviour in the Primary School: the Significance of Contrasting Expectations', in *Educational Research*, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp.77-87.

Short, G., and Carrington, B., (1989) 'Discourse on Gender: The Perceptions of Children Aged Between Six and Eleven', in Skelton, C., (ed.) *Whatever Happens to Little Women? Gender and Primary Schooling*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Shotter, J., (1989) 'Social Accountability and the Social Construction of 'You'', in Shotter, J., and Gergen, K., (eds.) *Texts of Identity*, London: Sage Publications.

Shotter, J., (1993) *Cultural Politics of Everyday Life*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Shotter, J., and Gergen, K. (eds.) (1989) *Texts of Identity*, London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Signorella, M., (1987) 'Gender Schemata: Individual Differences and Context Effects', in *New Directions For Child Development*, No. 38, pp.23-37.

Silverman, D., (1993) *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, London: Sage.

Skeggs, B., (1991) 'Postmodernism: what is all the fuss about?', in *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 12, pp.255-268.

Skeggs, B., (1994) 'Situating the Production of Feminist Methodology', in Maynard, M., and Purvis, J., (eds.) *Researching Women's Lives From a Feminist Perspective*, London: Taylor and Francis.

Skelton, C., (1988) 'Demolishing 'The House That Jack Built': Anti-Sexist Initiatives in the Primary School Classroom', in Carrington, B., and Troyna, B., (eds.) *Children and Controversial Issues*, London: Falmer.

Skelton, C., (ed.) (1989) *Whatever Happens to Little Women? Gender and Primary Schooling*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Skitka, L., and Maslach, C., (1990) 'Gender Roles and the Categorisation of Gender-Relevant Behavior', in *Sex Roles*, Vol. 22, Nos. 3-4, pp.133-150.

Smaling, A., (1993) 'Open-Mindedness and Open-heartedness: the dialectics of openings and closures', paper presented at the Congress of Openess in Research', at the University of Utrecht, Netherlands

Smithers, A., (1984) 'An Exploratory Study of Sex Role Differentiation Among Young Children', in *Educational Review*, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp.87-99.

Soper, K., (1990) *Troubled Pleasures*, London: Verso.

Soper, K., (1993a) 'Productive Contradictions' in Ramazanoglu, C., (ed.) *Up Against Foucault*, London: Routledge.

Soper, K., (1993b) 'Postmodernism, Subjectivity and the Question of Value' in Squires, J., (ed.) *Principled Positions: Postmodernism and the Rediscovery of Value*, London: Routledge.

Spence, J., and Helmreich, R., (1978) *Masculinity and Femininity: The Psychological Dimensions, Correlates, and Antecedents,* Texas: University of Texas.

Spender, D., (1980) 'Education or Indoctrination?', in Spender, D., and Sarah, E., (eds.) *Learning to Lose: Sexism and Education*, London: The Women's Press.

Spender, D., (1982) *Invisible Women: The Schooling Scandal*, London: Writers and Readers.

Spender, D., and Sarah, E., (eds.) (1980) *Learning to Lose: Sexism and Education*, London: The Women's Press.

Spretnak, C., (1993) *States of Grace*, Harper Collins.

Squires, J., (ed.) (1993) *Principled Positions: Postmodernism and the Rediscovery of Value*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Squires, J., (1993) 'Introduction', in Squires, (ed.) *Principled Positions: Postmodernism and the Rediscovery of Value*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Stacey, J., (1988) 'Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?', in *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 21-27.

Stafford, A., (1991)*Trying Work: Gender, Youth and Work Experience*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Stanley, L., (ed.) (1990) *Feminist Praxis: Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology*, London: Routledge.

Stanley, L., and Wise, S., (1993) *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology*, London: Routledge.

Stanworth, M., (1981) *Gender and Schooling*, London: Hutchinson.

Steedman, C., (1982) *The Tidy House*, London: Virago.

Steedman, C., Urwin, C., and Walkerdine, V. (eds.) (1985) *Language, Gender and Childhood*, London: Routledge & Keegan Paul.

Stenner, P., (1993) 'Discoursing Jealousy', in Burman, E., and Parker, I., (eds.) *Discourse Analytical Research*, London: Routledge.

Stubbs, M., (1983a) *Language, Schools and Classrooms*, London: Methuen.

Stubbs, M., (1983b) *Discourse Analysis: the Sociolinguistic Analysis of Natural Language*, London: Blackwell.

Taylor, M., (1986) 'Pupils' Attitudes Towards Gender Roles', in *Educational Research*, Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 202-209.

Tesch, R., (1990) *Qualitative Research*, London: The Falmer Press.

The Times Educational Supplement, (1/3/74)

The Times Newspaper (25/11/95)

The Times Educational Supplement, (29/11/95)

Thorne, B., (1993) *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*, Buckingham: Open University Press,

Tremaine, L., (1982) 'Children's Occupational Sex-Typing', in *Sex Roles*, Vol. 8, No. 7, pp. 691-710.

Troyna, B., (1993) *Racism and Education*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Troyna, B., and Carrington, B., (1990) *Education, Racism and Reform,* London: Routledge.

Troyna, B., and Hatcher, R., (1992) *Racism in Children's Lives*, London: Routledge.

Tutchell, E., (ed.) (1990) *Dolls and Dungarees*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Vicks, H., (1990) 'The Use of Drama in an Anti-Sexist Classroom', in Tutchell, E., (ed.) *Dolls and Dungarees*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Vygotsky, L., (1962) *Thought and Language*, New York: Wiley.

Vygotsky, L., (1978) (eds. Cole, M., John-Steiner, V., and Scribner, S.,) *Mind in Society*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Walker, S., and Barton, L., (eds.), (1983) *Class, Gender and Education*, Basingstoke: Falmer.

Walkerdine, V., (1981) 'Sex, Power and Pedagogy', in *Screen Education*, No. 38, pp. 14-21.

Walkerdine, V., (1985) 'On the Regulation of Speaking and Silence', in Steedman, C., Urwin, C., and Walkerdine, V. (eds.) *Language, Gender and Childhood*, London: Routledge & Keegan Paul.

Walkerdine, V., (1988) *The Mastery of Reason*, London: Routledge.

Walkerdine, V., *et al*, (1989) *Counting Girls Out*, London: Virago.

Walkerdine, V., (1990) *Schoolgirl Fictions*, London: Verso.

Walkerdine, V., and Lucey, H., (1989) *Democracy in the Kitchen*, London: Virago.

Weedon, C., (1987) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.

Weiner, G., (1994) *Feminisms in Education*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Weiner, G., and Arnot, M., (eds.) (1987) *Gender Under Scrutiny* , Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Wetherell, M., and Potter, J., (1988) 'Discourse Analysis and the Identification of Interpretative Repertoires', in Antaki, C., (ed.) *Analysing Every-day Explanation: A Casebook of Methods*, London: Sage.

Wetherell, M., and Potter, J., (1992) *Mapping the Language of Racism*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Wex, M., (1979) *Let's Take Back Our Space. Female and Male Body Language as a Result of Patriarchal Structures*, Berlin: Frauenliteraturverlag Hermine Fees.

Whitehead, J., (1996) 'Sex Stereotypes, Gender Identity and Subject Choice at A-Level', in *Educational Research*, Vol. 38, No. 2, pp.147-160.

Whitney, I., and Smith, P., (1993) 'A Survey of the Nature and Extent of Bullying in Junior/Middle and Secondary Schools', in *Educational Research*, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp.3-25.

Whyte, J., (1986) *Beyond the Wendy House: Sex Role Stereotyping in Primary Schools*, York: Longman.

Willis, P., (1977) *Learning to Labour*, London: Saxon House.

Wilson, M. (ed.), (1978) *Social and Educational Research in Action*, New York: Longman.

Wilson, E., (1978) *On Human Nature*, Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Winkley, D., (1995) 'Teaching Morality: A Response to OFSTED', in *Education 3-13*, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp.3-10.

APPENDIX 1: MY 'STANDPOINT': A BRIEF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I am a white, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual woman, aged 25 at the time of writing. I come from a family hosting several strong women, (such as my grandmothers and mother), yet these women have all been housewives, and as such have spoken from a traditional female position in society and the family. My own parents have greatly influenced my political perspective. My parents met at Quaker Meeting, which indicates their pacifism and commitment to the peace movement. Although this was a major issue while my mother was at university in the mid-Sixties, and much time was spent campaigning and demonstrating against the Arms Trade, 'women's issues' were not yet a focus, and my mother recalls the traditional attitudes of herself and her friends, who used to do their boyfriends' washing for them at university! It is not surprising, then, that while my father worked to set up a successful business running a waste-paper re-cycling company, my mother gave up her teaching job two years after graduating, in order to give birth to me (the first of three children), and continued to stay at home as a house wife until the three of us were in our 'teens. (She later became president of a peace organisation, and is now a self-employed conflict-resolution trainer, working at both local and international levels). By the time I was at secondary school my mother was already secretary for the local C.N.D. group, and the peace movement continued to play a substantial part in our lives: I was brought up as a Quaker, and the whole family regularly turned out for C.N.D marches throughout my childhood.

My parents are Green-Liberals, whereas I have considered myself a socialist for as long as I have been politically aware. My first political memory is that of my mother howling with despair as Thatcher won the 1979 General Election (I was nine years old), and so I am a child of Thatcher's Britain, and have consciously known only Conservative government. We lived in a small village outside Bath, and when the time came to choose a secondary school I chose the one my friends were going to; a notoriously rough, working-class school on the other side of town. This school was the only one in Bath to provide free transport for students attending it, and this meant that its population was very working-class, taken from all the villages on the outskirts of Bath. Apart from 'slag' (investigated as a term of female regulation by Lees, 1993), the most common term of abuse at this school was the word 'snob': this could be applied to the minority of middle-class students because of their social background, but could also be used against anyone who performed better than average academically, or even to people who were quiet in

class. It certainly had a regulatory impact in my school (for instance, no one wanted to get outstanding marks or report cards for fear of being implicated in 'snobbery', and I very quickly lost my BBC English in favour of a hard West-Country accent). When I think back, the term 'snob' was applied to girls far more often than boys, and may have functioned as the other side of the coin to 'slag' at my school, giving girls an even narrower socially acceptable margin within which to operate. For instance, you were a 'snob' if you did not muck around in class, date boys, swear, or wear 'trendy clothes' (then meaning a skin-tight split skirt, white stilettos, and a cement of blue mascara - school uniform did not count for much at our school), yet you were a potential 'slag' if you did too much of any of these things. The school was not academically renowned at the best of times, but my Year had the added disadvantage that our 'O' level years coincided with the two years of the teachers' strikes. Teacher morale was non-existent, and as there was no supervision we often left school at lunch time and did not come back. At the end of this I left school with four 'O' levels and one 'CSE' grade 1. This was just enough to get me into the local Technical college to do 'A' levels. Out of my large group of top-band girl friends, I was the only one to get to university, and I fully realise that my achievement was, to a large part, due to the support and involvement of my parents (though of course it was not appreciated at the time), who forced me to do *some* revision for my exams, and paid for me to have Maths tuition (resulting in my CSE grade 1). My (working-class) friends were not so privileged. Thus I acknowledge the social class advantage of my life very strongly, and this recognition continues as I draw comparisons with the lives of my closest friends (most of whom come from working-class backgrounds).

Middleton (1992) has described a conference where each speaker identified themselves in terms of their oppression: they were women rather than white, they were black rather than first world, they were working-class rather than men, etc. Middleton notes that none of these speakers identified themselves as oppressors: "The speakers clearly felt that there was no other position from which to speak an emancipatory discourse than from one of their determinate oppression" (1992, p. 145). If I had felt this myself I would not have begun my emancipatory project, as the only determined position of oppression I can relate to myself is my womanhood: besides this aspect I am in all senses a privileged and advantaged person, probably benefiting in subtle ways from the oppression of other groups. Thus my sympathy (I say sympathy for want of a better word, rather than to sound patronising) with other groups has come from my political upbringing and

my direct experience of aspects of life amongst those other groups, and consequent observation of my comparative privilege, rather than from my own personal experience. Hence as I explained above, my friends, and my schooling experience, have provided me with some understanding of working-class life, and the advantages of my social class position. In the same way, having friendships and relationships with people from ethnic minority groups, particularly my partner of six years (who is of Chinese origin) and his family, have provided much insight into racial discrimination and clashes of culture. While experiencing second hand the racism against ethnic minority friends, I have also been the 'victim' of racism from an older generation of my partner's family: while this experience of racism is by no means the same as the experience of ethnic minority groups at the hands of whites, because of my power advantage as a white person in a white (and racist) society, it hurt and shocked me. However, this relationship has also given me an insight into some of my own prejudices: until recently I had always imagined myself as a subverter of dominant culture, disapproving of Western society and its enlightenment discourses ('masculine enlightenment discourses', as I had thought them). It is only when confronted with the reactionary and romantic discourses of traditional Chinese culture that I realise (in my scoffing rejection of ideas concerning witch doctors, duty, ghosts of ancestors, family loyalty, curses, etc.) how very embedded these enlightenment discourses concerning individual freedom and science are, in my construction of self.

The other 'oppressed group' to which I have had second hand access is that of lesbian women, as my sister, and some other friends we grew up with, turned out to be. Though my family are genuinely liberal, enabling my sister to be 'out' to all of us (including my grandparents), I have witnessed the abuse and 'queer-bashing' that she and her friends have been subject to, as well as the more subtle prejudice of people on an every-day basis. Close contact with the gay scene has been a learning process for me concerning my advantage as a heterosexual. My sister's 'coming out' leads me to my path to feminism, where I intend to leave this narrative. Our family's involvement in the peace movement meant that we were all regulars at Greenham Women's Peace Camp (the menfolk supporting when invited); and at the age of sixteen my sister dropped out of college and became an 'officially resident' Greenham Woman. She 'came out' while living at Greenham. The 'Greenham Common Experience' was not felt as such a liberating force by me: I (along with my mother and sister) had been exploring feminist ideas and identifying myself as a feminist for some time before this. Although I relished the

celebratory and supportive atmosphere of the first few (largest) demonstrations at Greenham, by the time we were visiting my sister there in the late 1980's I felt that the atmosphere had distinctly changed. I was seventeen by then, and my feminism was of a liberal nature: I felt that men too ought to be convinced and converted to feminism, and that feminism was potentially emancipatory for both sexes. At Greenham I felt excluded: there appeared to be a pecking order, with residents (the most 'committed') at the top of the hierarchy, and visitors or supporters made to feel like 'part timers', or somehow privileged to be included. No one was very friendly or welcoming. Moreover, I felt I was viewed as a 'sell-out' because of my heterosexuality. Although I avidly defended the Women's Peace camp (particularly to critical men), the Greenham Experience gradually made me more aware of the differences between women than of women's unity.

Thus the liberal tendencies of my feminism were reinforced by my rejection of essentialism in the recognition that 'womanhood' incorporates a vast diversity of experience, and that the category 'woman' is by no means always enough to outweigh these differences, or to eliminate power inequalities and oppression of women by women (see Phoenix, 1994; hooks, 1982; Rich, 1981; Walkerdine and Lucey, 1989; Ramazanoglu, 1993). I was also concerned with equality of opportunity, rather than a celebration of an essential 'womanhood'. However, I also see my interpretation of feminism as radical, in that I also aim to work for a fundamental change in male behaviour and hegemonic patriarchal values, and a deconstruction of 'masculine' and 'feminine' categories. This is the basis of my feminism, and this is the standpoint from which I conducted my research. I wanted my research to contribute to feminist knowledge, and specifically to an understanding of the ways in which children construct gender positions. As such, my research is explicitly political, and has emancipatory aims (by which I mean my research aims to provide knowledge which can help to erode hegemonic patriarchy).

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1) Why did you chose that role in the play?

2) How did you think you acted?

3) Did you think everyone chose the right parts, and acted them well?

4) What about the work problem? Was it solved realistically?

5) Is the job you took in the play something you would like to do in real life?

6) What job would you like to do when you leave school?

7) Do your parents know you want to do that job? If so, do they approve?

8) Is the job you've chosen the same as your parents'?

9) Can a woman/man do the job you have chosen?

10) Do men and women have the ability to do all jobs? (and if not, why not?)

11) Are men or women *better* at certain jobs? (and if so, why?)

12) Would you use the service of a female builder/ female lorry driver/ male childcarer?

13) How would male builders treat a new female builder?

14) How would the same male builders react to a woman boss?

15) Would a boss prefer men to do some jobs and women doing others, or would they have both sexes doing all jobs?

16) Do girls and boys behave differently in class or not? (if so, in what way?)

17) Are girls and boys just acting differently, or are they really different inside?

18) Do you know what the word 'sexism' means?

19) In class, do boys ever pick on girls just because they're girls, or girls pick on boys just because they're boys?

APPENDIX 3: LETTER SENT TO CHILDREN'S PARENTS

Rm. 416
Marlborough Buildings
University of North London

UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH LONDON

-/1/94

Dear parent/guardian,

I am a researcher from the University of North London, and am currently working on a study examining the ways in which children learn about and take on social roles. The headteacher and staff have agreed to allow me to research in ------------------------------School, and I would like your permission to interview and video your child.

The research will involve filming children doing role plays, and an informal interview with each child involved. Some of the audio-recorded interview transcripts may be published; in this event the names of the children will obviously be changed in order to ensure confidentiality. The videos are only watched by myself. Nothing that I write or say will in any way identify individual children, their parents or the school. Please could you indicate on the slip beneath whether or not you agree to your child taking part.

I would also like to interview some parents/guardians about the children's play and leisure activities. These will be short, informal interviews and can be arranged at a time to suit you. If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate on the reply slip.

If you have any queries about any of this, please feel free to phone me at work, on 071 607 2789 extention 6334.

Yours sincerely,

Becky Francis

University of North London Research

I give permission / I do not give permission for my child .... to take part in this research project.

I would / would not like to take part in an interview myself.
The following times of day would be convenient: ....
Daytime phone number: ....

Signed .... (Parent/Guardian) Date ....

Primary Schools and Industry Centre
Faculty of Humanities and Teacher Education
Marlborough Building 383 Holloway Road London N7 0RN Telephone 071 753 5104 Fax 071 753 5112

APPENDIX 4: ROLE PLAY TRANSCRIPT

(Year Three mixed-sex group, at Lady Mary School).

Children's names and characters:

Annalea = Teacher
Jennifer = Playground Supervisor
Noel = Headteacher
James = Caretaker

Transcript:

I:	What I'm going to give you is a choice of three situations, okay, which I want you to choose from, in which we're going to do our play, okay? There's school, hospital, or hotel (.) which one [would you like?		
Annalea:	[Hot=	[el	
Noel:	{loudly}	[Hospit=	[al
James:			[School
Annalea:	Hotel		
Jennifer:	[School		
James:	[School		
Noel:	Hospital		
James:	[School		
Annalea:	[School		
Jennifer:	[School		
Noel:	Hospital		
I:	{to Noel} Why do you want hospital so much?		
Noel:	Cos I want to be the *doctor* {Jennifer laughs, the other two giggle}		
I:	{laughing} There's nothing to say you'd	[get=	
Annalea:	{she, James and Jennifer all raise their hands}	[School	
Noel:	School		
Annalea:	I wanna	[be *teacher*	
James:		[I wanna be headmistress {Jennifer is also waving her hand}	

Annalea:	I wanna be *teacher*
Noel:	{to James} Head*master*
James:	{to Noel} Headmaster
I:	{to Noel} Do you mind doing school?
Noel:	(.) Mm nah
I:	{to Noel} Is that [alright?
Annalea:	[Can I be the teacher?
I:	Hang on, hang on (.) *in* this school we've got a playground supervisor, {Jennifer does actions for all the roles as I speak} a caretaker, a teacher, and a headteacher (.) now, it's not up to me, {I move away from the table} you discuss amongst yourselves who's [gonna be what {they huddle quickly together}
Annalea:	[*I'm* the teacher
Noel:	[I'm [the
James:	[I'm [the
Jennifer:	[I'm the, playground [person
Noel:	[I'm [the
James:	[I'm the, cleaner
Noel:	{to Jennifer} *I'll* be the playground supervisor
Jennifer:	No, I am
Annalea:	I'll be the teacher
James:	I'll be the cleaner
I:	{to James} Caretaker, [is it?
Jennifer:	{to me, arm raised} [I'm the, playground person
Noel:	'Kay, I'll be the headmaster {Annalea laughs}
I:	Is that alright?
Annalea:	Yeh {the others nod}
Noel:	Yeah and then I can, shout at [them {the others laugh and look at me}
I:	[Right, just for the camera, can you all go round and say what your name is and what part you're going to play?

Noel: Okay (.) {he points to James, who sits at the end}

James: {murmurs} Right, {looking at the camera} hello, my name's James, and I'm going to play (.) a bit when I am a, caretaker {the others look at me, smiling}

I: Great, thank you {I look at Noel, who looks at the camera}

Noel: Hello, my name is Noel, and I'm going to be the headteacher

I: Brilliant

Jennifer: {speaking to the camera} Hello my name's Jennifer, and I'm gonna be the, playground supervisor

Annalea: {leans slightly toward camera} Hello my name's Annalea and I'm gonna be the teacher {they all look at me, and Jennifer claps her hands together}

I: Right, great, well, that was easy enough, now what's happened *in* school is that the caretaker has come into school one day and there's litter *everywhere* in the playground, it's *disgusting* (.) so he's *really* annoyed, alright, so he's gone to the headteacher to complain, {to Noel} alright headteacher? {to all} and the headteacher's called a staff meeting to discuss what you're going to do about the problem, alright? (.) {they all nod} Off you go (.) {James starts to get up to act as I move away from the table} you have to stay sitting down just about, cos otherwise you go off the camera=

James: {sitting back down} Oh I see

I: Do you see what I mean, so say you're just at the staffroom table discussing it

James: (.) Um do we do it now?

I: Yes

James: (.) {to others} Um, out in the playground there is, a lot of , litter on the ground {indicates to Noel that it is his turn}

Noel: (.) Okay, we'll have a staffroom meeting {they all lean forward grinning over the microphone, and Noel moves it towards himself}

I: (.) Try not to touch it {I am referring to the microphone. Jennifer whispers inaudibly to Noel}

Noel: {to Jennifer} *You* have to clear it up, and he {points to James} will help you {Jennifer looks gleeful and then looks at me}

James: (.) No, *I'll* do the playground and they {gestures to Annalea and Jennifer} do their classrooms

Noel: {to Annalea} And [you

I: [Do you think you ought - (.) what do you think would happen if there was lots of litter in this school?

Jennifer: {to me} All the birds would um get, stuck in all the litter [wouldn't they?

Annalea: {she and Noel are both looking at the camera. Annalea turns around to speak to me} [Is this filming us *now?*

Jennifer: {pulls/pats Annalea's arm in laughing reprimand} Shut up {the boys giggle}

I: It's alright, it's okay

Noel: {raising index finger} And you must, we are going to ban the playtimes, so no children put litter in the playground {the others have huddled around Noel}

Annalea: Okay

Jennifer: Okay

James: {nods decisively} *Done* {Annalea squeals with laughter}

I: Do you think that the children would [mind that?

Jennifer: {to the boys} [*Settled* {she giggles}

James: {to me} Um, *no*

I: What [would happen in *this* school?

Annalea: [Right, I'm going to

Noel: Um = {looks at me}

James: Right that's =

Noel: = But they *could* have a karate match =

Jennifer: {looks at me, laughing incredulously} Wh:at? {the others giggle. Jennifer starts doing karate actions with her hands at Annalea}

Noel: = *Inside* (.) and I can smash 'em [up

Annalea: [Right {pointing at James and laughing} I'm going to get the children out of the [playground

James: [No, no, *I'll* get all the [children out of the playground and, read them a *story* each, time

Jennifer: {to Annalea} [I'll get the children out.... instead

Noel: Yeah, [ooh, and then I could, do karate on them

Jennifer: [..... {murmurs to Annalea, gesturing about what each will do}

James: [{to Noel} No, I don't think that's a good idea {Noel laughs}

I: Do you think that's okay then, what, do you think that's okay then that you just ban playtime?

Jennifer: {shaking her head} *No:o* =

Noel: {laughing} Ye:es

Jennifer: {laughing, to me} I don't think it's *fa̍ir*

I: Why don't you think it's fair?

Jennifer: Because, you'd be *working* all the time, you'd never get any fresh [air, or some, [something

I: [Mm, that's right

Noel: [Yeah, and then [we could smash =

James: [Yeah but, we could open the windows {laughs}

Noel: {speaking louder to be heard} = We could smash their heads through the windows and [......

Annalea: {banging hand on table for emphasis} Aw:w, *I* want to do *hospital*

I: No no, we're doing school now, we've just got to think of some good [ideas {Jennifer laughs}

Noel: [Not fair (.) can we do hospital as well {Jennifer and James laugh}

I: No (.) I think banning playtime was an interesting *idea* (.) it's just that I think there might be rules about children having to have [playtime

Jennifer: [{shoots hand in the air} I've got an idea

Annalea: {shoots hand up too} [*I've* got an idea

James: [Just a minute {Jennifer and Annalea are leaning out towards me

I: Keep it in, remember you're acting

Jennifer: {they all huddle together} Well *I* think, we should, have a big rubbish bin in the middle of the playground, and then anyone who has any litter, can put the rubbish *in* {she gestures depositing rubbish}

Noel: {others shift, slight murmur} (.) That's a good idea

Jennifer: And then there'll be only leaves left, and, {laughing} Eddie can sweep them up {she's referring to, and looking at, James as the caretaker. The others giggle} cos I'm sure he's used to [that

James: [*Thanks* (.) thass my job {chews his sleeve, and then leans back from table and turns to camera, waving at it briefly. Annalea laughs}

Noel: {speaking into microphone} And when it's raining he can um= {James murmurs something to him} =put on his granny hat {Annalea and Jennifer laugh} (.) and sweep up the water {he giggles}

Annalea: Right, now I don't {she laughs, and the others giggle too. James, who is not so overcome with laughter, pats the convulsed Noel on the head}

I: Giggles (.) is that it then, do you think that's a better idea then, the litter [bin?

Annalea: {to me} Can we [start again {Noel and James giggle}

Jennifer: [{nodding to me} Yes

I: No, I think it's fine (.) you've got lots of ideas [it's just...

Annalea: [Right, let's do our ideas

Noel: {they huddle together looking serious} *Ideas*

Jennifer: {raising her hand} My idea (.) my idea *is* , to put a rubbish bin=

Annalea: My idea is to get all the children *out* of the playground 'do their work {she speaks loudly with chin resting on hand}

Noel: {speaks into microphone} (.) That would be *boring* {the others laugh}

Jennifer: *My* idea=

James: Give each class a litter bin, and then [they should=

Annalea: {turning to me} [Are you s'posed to speak through *that*? {points to microphone}

I: No, it doesn't matter

Jennifer: *My* idea is to:o=

I: Wh- {to Jennifer} sorry, what was this one about a litter bin for each class?

James: Put it in *each* class and then, they'll have to put their litter there, and it will be a nicer place in the, playtime

Noel: Yeah and then =

Annalea: {speaking loudly and pointing at James} Right, Eddie go and sleep-sweep the floor {James looks sheepish and makes sweeping movements}

Noel: And when, um =

Annalea: They're [all

Noel: [= And when they're putting rubbish in the bin, I can hide in the bin, and I can jump out and go {leans toward microphone} *boo* {he giggles, covering his mouth with his hand}

Jennifer: Me and the teacher =

Annalea: .... =

Jennifer: = Me and the teacher will go and get [the children out of the playground

Annalea: [*No:o* (.) *I'm* the teacher, *you* don't get the [children

Jennifer: {indignant} [Yes but I'm the playground supervisor (.) so we'll both go {mimes walking. James and Noel laugh}

Annalea: No (.) no

I: [So what do you think about that?

Jennifer: [{still miming walking} Let's go walkies {laughs}

Noel: Oh, we should have a chil =

Jennifer: {still miming, and now stamping feet too} We're walking off

Noel: = And children, and then we can see children, chucking litter in the bin

Annalea: {to Jennifer} Right that's all {Jennifer stops miming}

Noel: {gesticulating} = And then the children come over here, and I *shout* at them

I: Mm, that's an idea actually, that *might* happen in real life

Jennifer: {raising hand} *I've* got a good idea, I think *that*, everyone =

Noel: Can we =

Jennifer: = By, we, when you go into the playground, there should be a box, with someone in it, and, {laughs} everyone will give them a

ticket, to say, I promise not to put any litter (.)

I: Do you think that would work?

Jennifer: =In the *playground*

Annalea: {to me} Yeah

Jennifer: Else I'll go [to *jail*

James: {raising hand} [I've got a better idea, [let's....

Noel: {loudly} [No, otherwise I'll go to the, can I have *two* parts?

I: No you can't

Noel: Aww {he and James snigger. Annalea has been looking at James since he last spoke}

Annalea: {to me} Right, I'm going to get, I'm going to get the children {Jennifer mimes walking again}

I: Hang on, hang on, I think um, we had an idea about *one* litter bin in the play [ground

Annalea: [{speaking to me} Are we going to *look* at it? {she indicates to the camera}

I: No (.) one, one {Jennifer shoots hand up to interrupt} hang on, one litter bin in the playground, or we've had {I look at James} your idea of a litter bin in each class, which do you think [are better?

Annalea: [A litter bin for each class {she has still been looking at James, but turns to speak to me}

Noel: Yeah (.) yeah, and then I can [jump out of them

Jennifer: [Yeah, {nodding} a litter bin in each class

I: So do you think that would work?

Annalea: {pointing to James and speaking loudly} A- and, [Eddie=

Noel: {speaking to me} [*Yes*

Annalea: =Go and put a bin in each class

Jennifer: {mimes giving something to James} Here's one

James: {mimes taking it} Thank you