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Past Childhood Freedoms and Licences: their Contribution to Emerging Selfhood

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Abstract

During the 1990's an emerging preoccupation with risk and safety was understood to be having a disproportionate impact on parents and in particular how they were bringing up their children. Fear was leading to children and young people's independent movement and association being severely curtailed. It was believed that this trend was having a detrimental impact on children's learning and sociability: subsequent generations of adults were potentially going to have deficits in their independence and competency.

This research degree aims to establish what it was that past childhoods, ones that were more 'free', provided for the developing individual: what space they inhabited; what experiences occupying those spaces generated; what community relationships existed between children and adults; what expectations were place upon these children and how these factors drove the development of independent, autonomous, active adult subjects.

The initial tasks facing the project were to pull the problem into focus and establish what changes to modern society were occurring. Further to this, was to understand what childhood is and what the teleological journey to adulthood entails. Furedi and Vygotsky were deployed to accomplish these ends and to help make sense of 108 extended interviews with older people born between the years of 1903 and 1965.

The data reveals how freedoms and licence available to these children impacted on their learning and development. It shows, through a rich and textured archive, how a cultural script, at odds with the one at work today, shaped emerging individuals.

Conclusions should not be understood to be neo-traditionalist. Much in the past is best left there. There are somethings however that we would do well to rediscover and deploy in society's reproduction. Chiefly, I believe that the distinction between childhood and a confident adulthood, as a context for adults taking collective responsibility for future generations of capable grown ups, needs to be redrawn.

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A Prelude

> A sense of helplessness took hold of Winston. The old man's memory was nothing but a rubbish-heap of details. One could question him all day without getting any real information. The Party histories might still be true, after a fashion: they might be completely true. He made one last attempt. (Orwell 1984:82)

In 2001, while discussing my friend Stuart Waiton's new book, 'Scared of the Kids', with other directors of Generation Youth Issues (GYI), I suggested to him that his next project should be interviews with older people about what they got up to when they were children. The changes in childhood that we were discussing were becoming embedded in society and before long, I concluded, the childhoods we as a group were reminiscing about would be regarded as a fantasy invented for ideological reasons.

We, a small group of teachers, paediatricians and youth and community workers, had established GYI due to concerns over the potential impact of increasing controls on children and young people. These concerns were instinctive at first but later became more coherent through reading, discussions and conferences.

Being a good sportsman, as well as an academic, Stuart returned the ball with interest. Having absolutely no comprehension that before long I, like Orwell's anti-hero referred to above, would be tackling the arduous task of wading through heaps of detailed reminiscences (or data as I would latterly come to know it) I picked the ball up and ran.

Section 1: Framing the Question

Chapter 1 - Introduction, What's the problem?

This introductory chapter examines the basis for and evolution of this research project. It clarifies why an investigation which interprets the childhood experiences of mature adults, as they contributed to emerging selfhood, is ultimately useful to developing an understanding of what modern childhood might be losing at a time of radically altered perspectives and generational change.

Constructing the Research Problem: framing a question

Youth and the transition from childhood to adulthood is not a new realm of interest or contention. From Charles Dickens' 'Pip' in 1860 and RL Stevenson's 'Jim' in 1886 through Brando's 'Johnny Strabler' (1953) and Dean's 'Jim Stark' (1955) to the 1995 films 'Kids', 'Mystic River' (2003) or 'Neds' (2010) popular discourse on youth has mirrored the values and concerns of the time. More recently there seems to have been a shift from past perceptions of children.

> Though Tony Blair proclaims that 'our children are cherished and loved', there is a marked ambivalence in public attitudes towards young people. On the one hand they are depicted as precious and vulnerable -the infants abused in Little Ted's nursery in Plymouth, Baby Peter and Victoria Climbie killed by their carers in Haringey, the little girls murdered in Soham. On the other hand, they are dangerous and threatening – the hoodies on the sink estates, the ten-year old boys charged with rape in London, the killers of James Bulger in Liverpool. Children appear to be both victims and villains, though both categories are deemed to require more intensive surveillance and therapeutic input. (Fitzpatrick 2009)

This schizophrenic perception of victim or villain polarises our understanding and perhaps masks deeper disjunctures with past conceptions of children's place in society.

The Hamilton Curfew that Waiton (2001) has written about was one response of an outlook that claimed to be "Tough on crime. Tough on the causes of crime." (Tony Blair, BBC2, On The Record, 04/07/93). During the following decade though, new understandings of youth disorder became cohered through the concept of 'Anti-social behaviour' with all its ensuing legislation and regulation of children. This approach was formally embedded in local authority strategy with the coining of the term and development of 'Community Safety' as a key area of action from the mid-1990's. Since the turn of the century, and continuing till now in 2015, no local authority strategy is complete without core statements or over-arching themes on the matter (Waiton 2008a).

For GYI these trends represented attacks, real controls on the freedoms and licences of children. These attacks, superficially targeting 'villains' but legitimised by establishing them as really being about 'safety', were difficult to caricature as old style authoritarianism. For example in February 1993 Strathclyde Police launched an initiative aimed at clearing the streets of Glasgow of knives. This initiative was called Operation Blade and by April of the same year over 20,000 had been stopped and searched (Waiton 2001) with little or no opposition. Using 'safety' as a justification allowed new police powers to be more about 'care' than 'control' and in little more than a decade the police and various other state bodies had jettisoned much of their association with Orwell's big brother.

Controls in the form of new justifications for youth work and youth sports and leisure provision have been more subtle still. In my role as a Senior Community Learning and Development Worker, managing two locality youth work teams, Helene Guldberg asked me to reflect on the context of youth work for her book

Reclaiming Childhood (2009). I comment on the irony that almost all state-sponsored youth work today is about getting children off the streets. In the name of combating antisocial behaviour youth work and other similar disciplines are charged with acting like the Child Catcher in Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and tasked with clearing children off the streets – one of the places, I concluded, where they learn to be social in the first place.

The problems associated with this change in the 'raison d'être' of youth work are multifaceted and something that I grapple with on a daily basis. One outraged parent asked me if we (Youth Work services) were saying that, if his son didn't attend our Saturday programme, he would be outside being a criminal? Probably not, but revealing of how society now regards teenagers and their presence on the street as illegitimate- unless travelling to or from a particular supervised setting. There is perhaps a sense here that everyone, children, young people and the adult population, are simultaneously both victims and villains.
All of this change might just represent a change though. Youth work has historically been predicated on particular responses to perceived youth issues, problems or threats and is constantly being reinvented and newly justified (Cranwell 2001). Freedom is a contested area in any society, particularly so for children who have only relatively recently been discussed in the West as entitled to equal treatment with adults (Pupavac 2001).

Dramatic changes to the childhood experience are not limited to the arena of state policing and youth work provision however. Other startling limitations on children's movements have occurred and are well documented. In terms of children's independent movement while occupying public space, 'One False Move' (Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg, 1990), is a key text and a starting point for other studies. Hillman et al show that in 1970 unaccompanied journeys to school made up 94% of the total journeys to and from school and that this fell to 54% by 1990. Follow up research carried out by ESRC in 1998 found that the

total had fallen further to 47%, half of the original figure (ESRC, 2000). Living Streets (2001) report similar findings, confirming the trend, in that the proportion of children under ten allowed to walk to school on their own has halved in the 15 years to publication, from 20% in 1985/6 to under 10% in 1997-9.

'One False Move' was the prelude to many similar findings, (Hughes, 1994; Davis and Jones, 1996; Sissons, Joshi, MacLean and Carter, 1997; Cunningham and Jones, 1999; Moorcock, 2000). The 'safety' of children, beyond the more traditional social work child protection aspects, or ‘Child Safety’ as much of this diverse collection of actions is now bracketed, is certainly, at a superficial level at least, a more positive reason for controlling children’s movement around their community or the geography in which they live than old style authoritarianism, but is it a positive development? Since 2000 there has developed an emerging discourse on the risks presented to child development by rearing them in risk-free, safety obsessed environments (Brussoni et al 2012) .

It would seem to be that the imperative to deliver safety to children from the myriad of perceived threats facing the modern child is based on childhood’s newly discovered essential vulnerability (Furedi, 2004). Furedi identifies that the new ‘therapeutic culture’ cast serious doubts over the ability of individuals to cope with challenges that life throws up. The need for professional help to deal with what in the past would have been considered ordinary troubles, he claims, is becoming accepted and expanding to encompass more new ‘conditions’ all the time.

> The fact that 20 years ago 8-year-old children would not have understood the meaning of stress, but they do so today, is testimony to the impact of therapeutic ethos on the popular imagination. (Furedi 2004:112)

The perception that these same vulnerable children are a threat to the rest of us, making everyone, community, society, essentially vulnerable too, is just the logical extrapolation of the same social outlook.

> The Hamilton curfew was a ‘community safety initiative’- a policing initiative - but more than that it became the prism through which all relationships within the targeted area were understood and engaged with. Relationships between adults and young people, adults and children and between young people themselves were all addressed in relation to the issue of safety. (Waiton 2008a:17)

My initial interests that sparked this project were focussed on the developmental impacts and implications of this collapse in freedom or childhood licence for children growing up today. What did all this change matter for young people living now compared to past generations, my own included? Instinctively I understood, from my own youthful experiences and a career built on supporting children through difficult transitions, that the school of life from which the mature individual emerges teaches practical and ‘theoretical’ lessons. In part at least, these are learned away from adults, where mistakes have real consequences. So, curtailing the praxis of childhood by attenuating or disrupting the feedback loop through the omnipresence of adults would, my initial question proposed, have a detrimental impact on emerging adults.

Focussing the Retrospective

An immediate question to be resolved, prior to establishing a credible baseline for the study proposed initially, is what exactly should 'childhood' be understood as, in the past, now or in the future. This presents itself as a problem when attempts are made to utilise child developmental theory to compare the nature and benefits of different aspects of children’s lives. Social Constructionism provides a contextual touch stone but brings with it uncomfortable relativistic consequences

to which I will return. These too require resolution in terms of my strong demand for some universal, cross cultural or ‘pan’ notion of childhood with which to address the initial problem of what 'childhood' is in various contexts. The work of Postman (1994) was very helpful in guiding this quest in that it presented childhood in a historical logical way, showing how epochal drivers make the modern concept of childhood very particular. Ultimately though it will be shown that revisiting key Enlightenment concepts and thinkers (Rousseau, 1979 and Smith, 1976) provided the essential separation between childhood and adulthood.

Understanding the processes of childhood to be teleological in nature, that is having an end point to be found in adulthood but not idealised, led the project to conclusions that are significantly out of step with much that is currently held as 'common sense'. Current established thinking, much of which is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, would have children as competent rights bearing individuals. Much of my problematic emanates from this current ‘common sense’ which in my view has resulted in many of the child-centred world / victim / villain contradictions that circulate as good coin today.

The social and individual content of what it is to be child, to experience childhood and what the ‘end points’ in adulthood actually are, is developed as a key aspect of the theory developed for this enquiry. Anthony Burgess provides an eloquent insight into the competing understandings of what drives the individual,

> But, brothers, this biting of their toe-nails over what is the cause of badness is what turns me into a fine laughing malchick. They don’t go into the cause of goodness, so why the other shop? If lewdies are good that’s because they like it, and I wouldn’t ever interfere with their pleasures, and so of the other shop. And I was patronizing the other shop. More, badness is of the self, the one, the you or me on our oddy knockies, and that self is made by old Bog or God and is his great pride and radosty.

> But the not-self cannot have the bad, meaning they of government and the judges and the schools cannot allow the bad because they cannot allow the self. And is not our modern history, my brothers, the story of brave malenky selves fighting these big machines? I am serious with you, brothers, over this. But what I do I do because I like to do. (Burgess 1972:34)

So what of the 'old Bog or God'? Is there something social, not natural and not supernatural, that binds all children of all backgrounds, ages and geographies? Developing a theoretical prism through which to view and understand the childhood experiences related in the data set of interviews became a significant task but the project focus also matured. What became the project focus was the logically prior task of developing an understanding of exactly what the experiences of licence and freedom of past childhoods provided children with. In other words, before any examination of the impact of changing child rearing culture on emerging adults *now* could be carried out there had to be an understanding of what the childhoods being lost gave children *then*. This endeavour is the creation of a robust datum for further study of, founded on retrospective accounts by adults of their childhoods.

The data set consists of 108 recorded interviews with older people born between 1903 and 1965. These interviews were guided conversations lasting anywhere between 15 minutes and an hour. The 'rubbish heaps of detail', so concerning to Orwell's hero, provided rich pickings for me. Those seemingly insignificant happenings or interactions, on the way to school or at the Saturday morning 'pictures', between children, young people and their parents, strangers or acquaintances from the close or more removed community, are windows on a now distant, many would contend 'better', world (Gill 2007). Inferences are drawn from reminiscences which, while it is accepted are of variable quality and reliability, are of such a substantial volume and range that they generate a reliable

window on the truth. There consequently flows a qualitative emphasis on the data, where the meaning is extracted by way of a generalising the sense or tone of the times conveyed through the stories rather than a claim to exact fact in each instance.

My approach to data collection and analysis is discussed in detail during the Method chapter (Chapter 5). The comparisons made in the analysis between the past and present childhood however, were made possible by way of comparing the recorded stories with an understanding of current childhood generated through extensive reading and by synthesising a novel theoretical prism through which the data is understood.

The recorded stories form an archive of personal histories from which the answers to key questions on emerging selfhood are synthesised. Forming a baseline for future study, which would seek to identify the impacts of altered childcare practices on emerging adults today, this thesis demonstrates the contributions that past child care practices and community approaches to children made to how those children developed their emerging independence and agency. In so doing it illuminates the social attitudes to children, their rearing and what supports or impediments to this process the wider community posed. As such it eventually develops an understanding of the differences between the narratives that acted as drivers in the past and what has replaced them today during modern times.

Capturing and interpreting the past was no straightforward feat. For the original goal of producing a book, (as indicated in the Prelude) verbatim recordings of life stories were required but, for academic study, historical comparisons might have been achieved through analysis of emerging literature, both fictional and current affairs; other archives might have been mined such as diaries or domestic film records; or use could have been made of the variety of photographic records maintained locally and nationally. I decided to create a new set somewhat

unconsciously, as the task was a different one at outset. However, creating a new archive allowed for better focus in its production and possessing people's own words produced a richer texture as well.

There are potential weaknesses inherent in most forms of data set. Particular to a collection of older people's reminiscences, being analysis qualitatively, are the risks of 'fuzzy' memories and the impact of the social trends being investigated on the recollection process. Again, these issues are dissected in detail in Chapter 5, but it is claimed that through 108 extended interviews a reliable consistency of narrative shines through.

In terms of the analytical approach, a social constructionist stand point is taken but with strong reservations. These reservations lead to significant challenges to perceived *unsatisfactory* aspects of social constructionism. Attempts are made in Chapters 3 and 4 through use of Furedi and Vygotsky, to synthesis a novel aspect by having social constructionism yield to its own approaches, as biologically maturing humans 'interiorise' culture. This approach understands a universal 'problem solving' element to humanity, introduces the historically specific prism of cultural scripts and eventually places categories such as 'risk', 'fear' and 'safety' under a practical microscope.

The project evolved through a number of reorientations or transitions. As indicated previously, the initial goal of the data collection was to provide illustrative examples of changes to childcare practice for a polemical book. To turn these stories into data for an academic endeavour required retrospective ethical clearance and the development robust analytical perspectives amongst other things. This took time during which there was an, albeit superficial, development to the script of risk which also needed to be accounted for in Chapter 4. Post publication there are hopes to accomplish the follow on task of examining what, if anything, modern adulthood is losing due to changes in how society

brings up children. Gathering new data on current childhood freedoms and licences remains another project though, this enquiry is focussed on the past.

Listening ‘through’ the detail, into what the story represents is key to this project. The impact of particular experiences on the individual emerging person and on the community in general can be inferred from theoretical understanding. The developmental roles and significance of supervised time or unsupervised space and time, of friends and enemies and, as the framework developed, of the informal support and prestige as well as control and discipline, of adults in general, all contribute and require application to each interview. Results are more often than not ‘implications’. What is said can be less interesting than what is not said. The profile of 20th century childhood freedoms and licences actually tell a richer story of the profile of 20th century life and community relations and solidarity. Furedi and Bristow reflect that,

> The evidence of history indicates that one of the ways that communities are forged has been through this joint commitment of adults to the socialisation of children. (2008:xiii).

And what of Burgess' “the self, the one, the you or me”? The changing nature of the individual in society is clearly significant to the question. What are children travelling towards? Of course they are human beings in their own right but children are also human ‘becomings’ (Holloway and Valentine 2000). Is there still a place for an active reasoning and rational self, capable of being held accountable for ones own actions as the end product of the process of childhood? More a social process central to ‘self’, as Friedenberg (1964) puts it, than the culmination of a physical (sexual) process of maturing.

> Adolescence is the period during which a young person learns who he is, and what he really feels. It is the time during which he differentiates

> himself from his culture, though on the culture's terms. It is the age at which, by becoming a person in his own right, he becomes capable of deeply felt relationships to other individuals perceived as such. (Friedenberg 1964:29)

In an age when vulnerability and passivity seem to have become the essence of individuals, past constructions of how the 'self' is constituted seem outmoded. It is hoped that these formulations of a 'process' (above) can still be considered relevant and legitimate for viewing the past in the modern era. Smith's blueprint for the emerging individual (below) might fare poorly in current time when 'stress' is a ubiquitous and often considered a defining malady. Adam Smith hoped for the following when considering the emerging individual,

> To act according to the dictates of prudence, of justice, and proper beneficence, seems to have no great merit where there is no temptation to do otherwise. But to act with cool deliberation in the midst of the greatest dangers and difficulties; to observe religiously the sacred rules of justice in spite both of the greatest interests which might tempt, and the greatest injuries which might provoke us to violate them; never to "suffer" the benevolence of our temper to be damped or discouraged by the malignity and ingratitude of the individuals towards whom it may have been exercised; is the character of the most exalted wisdom and virtue. Self-command is not only itself a great virtue, but from it all the other virtues seem to derive their principle lustre. (Smith 1976:241)

The period under investigation, the beginning to mid 20th century, can perhaps be understood as a period of precipitous change or a bridge back to another age. Kipling echoed Smith in his poem 'If' (1895) (written just 8 years before the birth of the first interviewed participant) but during subsequent years a fissure with this sentiment occurred. Certainly many of the childhood experiences and community

values understood to be common-a-day for much of the 20th Century seem alien now. This project aims to show what these past experiences and attitudes brought about for individuals, what the expectations of those individual were and how this was a reflection of that particular society?

From this limited literature review, there are clear indications that the category 'childhood' has experienced significant change. How these changes have impacted on emerging adults and what they mean for the transitions of today's children remains to be explored but inferences can be made from the data analysis. While much of the focus of the conclusion will be on the negative impacts of these changes, what will be argued for should not be viewed as a neo-traditionalist plea. I agree with D. H. Lawrence, in his poem 'Hummingbird', that in many ways it is from the safety of the present that the past is best viewed, "We look at him through the wrong end of the long telescope of time, luckily for us." (Lawrence 1933:473). The dynamic of the Enlightenment was its human centred orientation to the future. If anything, after an initial breeze through it, the data shows a need for a new relaxed approach to how we bring up our children while maintaining the gains that have been made.

What this project now requires is a robust exploration of the current context, narrative and its impact on child rearing. The literature on this will provide a reference point from which the data set retrospectively diverges.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review, Childhood and Risk

> The life of a community self-consciously concerned with risk and safety is different from one focused on discovery and exploration. (Landry 2005:3)

In their best selling book The Dangerous Book for Boys, Conn and Hal Iggulden include the following advice in the chapter ‘Making a Bow and Arrow’,

> Don't spoil such moments by doing something stupid with yours. The bow and arrow here could be used for hunting or for target practice in the garden. Remember at all times that it is a weapon. Weapons are never pointed at other children. (Iggulden 2006:37)

This seems more than slightly ironic but sums up much of the current approach to childhood in the early 21st century with all that is bound up with it in terms of consciousness of ‘Risk’. That the book exists and has such a resonance that it can become a best seller indicates that, there is a growing perception of a problem with our children or with childhood in general. That a book which claims to be ‘dangerous’, implying a kind of ‘out there’ or edginess to its content, feels that it must add a rider of such common sense proportions perhaps reveals how far the problems that it purports to address have become embedded.

Neil Oliver’s 2008 book, Amazing Tales for Making Men out of Boys, echoes the shared sense of loss that both these and other books in the genre have,

> There was a time not so very long ago when boys were taught to be men. Efforts were made in those just forgotten days to ensure that if you were born male you learned skills and acquired a clear understanding of what

> being a man was all about. It was straight forward, unquestioned and it worked. (Oliver 2008:xi)

While the Igguldens' wish to restore practical skills, debatably understood to have once been the common property of youth, Oliver aims to resurrect a moral compass he suggests was once universally followed.

Both offer nostalgic solutions to the modern problems thrown up by 'risk society' (Beck 2004) or the 'culture of fear' (Furedi 1997) and their impact on children and young people. That they understand this problem to be susceptible to intervention or reconstruction at all indicates the new, and fundamentally different, way that society is commonly understood compared with the past-times that these authors look to for solutions.

The necessity to profile past childhood licences and freedoms stems from changes to society occurring at the late 20th and early 21st centuries (see Barrett and Greenaway 1995; Blatchford and Sumpner 1998; Cunningham 2006; Davis and Jones 1996; ERSC 2000; Furedi 2001b; Guldberg 2009; Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg 1990; Hughes 1994; Jenkins 1992; Knight 2000; Moorcock 29/12/2000; Rhodes 1994; Scottish Executive 2002/1; The Scotsman 05/07/09). These changes are leading to a widespread discussion about what the possible impacts of such changes are on children,

> Activities and experiences that previous generations of children enjoyed without a second thought have been relabelled as troubling or dangerous, while adults who still permit them are branded as irresponsible. (Gill 2007: 10)

This chapter will try to explain the basis of these concerns and flesh out their consequences for children. It will act as a kind of post dated baseline study, where

current literature on childhood and community will provide a standard aspect from which the participant's historical stories can be viewed and will be thrown into relief. The need for understanding past childhood and what may be being lost for today's children will be demonstrated. Present and Past, two communities, occupying the same space, during close but different chronologies and seemingly light years apart in fundamental ways.

Be careful out there

The above quote by Charles Landry, taken from a Cabe Space report, may well be self-evident but when the common understanding of risk avoidance and safety is one of a positive nature (Furedi 1997), it is worth exploring what community life becomes under such conditions. And more pertinently, what this means for subsequent generations growing up in such a world.

In his book 'Culture of Fear: risk-taking and the morality of low expectations' (1997), Furedi considers various attempts to understand these developments. He moves beyond regarding risk as a literal threat, towards understanding it at a perceptual or emotional level whereby what society becomes obsessed with floats independently of 'reality' and begins to increase exponentially. "During the first five years of this period (1967 to 1991), the number of 'risk' articles published was around 1000 – but for the last five years there were over 80,000." (Furedi 1997:6). When such changes occur, the objects of concern must be of less significance than the trend itself.

Furedi also attempts to deal with more substantial alternative views. Looking back, comparing past events and how they would be responded to today (for example, 12,000 smog deaths in London during 1952) he draws out the scepticism towards science that fuels modern, potentially disproportionate responses. Ulrich Beck (1992) and Anthony Giddens (1994) both argue that there is a close association between the sense of risk and the increase in knowledge. This they

claim leads to uncertainty, creating new hazards and awareness of risk. Furedi sees this approach as one sided. Scientific progress has afforded the West the luxury of not having to worry about famine and other pre-modern threats. Pesticide residue in food kills far fewer people than lack of food does. He poses an alternative question:

> Of course, the issue at stake is not whether perceptions of risk are real or not, but what is the basis for such responses. It is not particularly fruitful to counterpose the real to the unreal. A 'real' hazard like industrial waste can be seen as acceptable in one situation but interpreted as a deadly threat in another. The question worth investigating is how society goes about selecting its 'problems'. (Furedi 1997:59)

Furedi looks at the growth of individuation and proposes that it is behind the sense of social isolation that drives us to panic. In the past the processes of social change were accompanied by counter processes that developed new solidarities, e.g. the break up of communities, that went hand in hand with the forced urbanisation of the working class, was countered by the development of collective organisations such as co-operatives and trades unions. There seems to be little emergence of new collectivities to counter today's fragmentation. The process of individuation leads to an increased sense of vulnerability.

> The all-pervasive sense of victimhood is the corollary of the sentiment that we are all at risk. The elevation of the victim has to be seen as an expression of the same process that leads to the diminishing of the subject…The process of individuation discussed in Chapter 2 along with the diminished sense of human potential has helped to weaken confidence in the relationship between people. The problematization of so many relationships has strengthened the sense of vulnerability. (Furedi 1997:101)

Here Furedi draws a map to show how two different phenomena are underpinned by the same processes and can reinforce each other.

This culture of fear gains its significance to the project in hand when its interaction with the world of children is explored. Children often become a microcosm of adult preoccupations. Children are the future and their failures and threats to them are reflections of our own concerns and vulnerabilities. At a time when vulnerability and safety have become preoccupations, the way adults run their lives disproportionately effects children.

> But probably the greatest casualty of this totalitarian regime of safety is the development of children's potential. Playing, imagining and even getting into trouble contribute to that unique sense of adventure that has helped society forge ahead. A society that loses that sense of adventure and ambition does so at its peril, and yet that is precisely a possible outcome of a state of affairs where socializing children consists, above all, of inculcating fears in them. (Furedi 1997:117)

Mitterauer (1992) develops this theme by exploring past temporal settings where children could be exposed to alternative cultural mores. These facilitated the development of personal independence and the processes of individualisation by bringing children into contact with aspects of society which they would miss otherwise. He explains that these were always more available in cities than the country, a situation possibly reversed but with a diminished spectrum today.

If we are to understand that the current obsession with safety attenuates the environment that children inhabit, socially and physically, by becoming a constant theme in every way existing adult culture relates to children from education to urban planning and development, then community will cease to be a site on which culture can be successfully transmitted. There is the additional problem that this

situation may form a vicious circle with diminishing opportunities for escape. Furedi brings his own perspective to this,

> Whether or not children learn to behave as responsible citizens is decided by their everyday experiences of life. Children pick up their ideas about personal responsibility and what it means to be a citizen from the signals transmitted through their family and community. (Furedi, 2005).

It is anticipated but still to be shown that the impact of this preoccupation with safety and avoidance of risk on community and its reciprocal impact on developing adults is leading to a stark disjuncture with the past. The impact of these trends on the freedoms and licenses of children growing up in modern Britain will now be explored.

Games without frontiers?

The modern day context of ‘Safety’ however should be understood as completely different from past practice. It is a truism to say that parents have always been concerned to keep their offspring safe and protect them from danger (Furedi 2001a; Cunningham 2006). For example, there were places in the past which were forbidden to children based on these particular places not being safe or desirable places for children to play and parents making a judgement about this. For children today, with an undeveloped consciousness of this social change, the experience will be one limitation and constraint on their mobility but the understanding may well be one of normality. How children understand or negotiate these attempts to control their movements today may be better understood by revealing how children managed it in the past. Examination of the participant's stories will hopefully illuminate these changes and thus indicate changes in parental social relationships, attitudes and approaches to the relationship between family and community.

Public parks and playgrounds should in some way be considered as the number one venue for permitted play outside of the family home. They are designed for purpose. When asked to write a short essay on the broad subject of 'The Importance of Play to Me', with no other prompting, only 20% of children in 1999 mentioned playgrounds and equipment provided by the council (Cunningham and Jones 1999:13). A number of interpretations can be drawn from this. Firstly, that for the vast majority of children in 1999, playgrounds, areas set aside and specifically designed for play, do not spring to mind when thinking about play. This is quite amazing to consider. It might be due to them not being allowed to go to parks on their own. Only 1% of 7 yr. olds, 1% of 8 yr. olds, 2% of 9 yr. olds and 2% of 10 and 11 yr. olds were found to be allowed to the park on their own in data published in World Transport Policy and Practice (Sissons Joshi, MacLean and Carter, 1997:21).

For the 20% of children in the Cunningham and Jones study who did think of playgrounds when considering their play, half (10% of the original total) thought that the provision was boring. These children, presumably ones who are allowed to venture out to parks, find that when they get there they wish they hadn't bothered.

> U.S. childcare providers in one study expressed concerns that overly strict standards had rendered outdoor play areas unchallenging and uninteresting to children, thus hampering their physical activity. (Brussoni, 2012:3140)

Kate Moorcock documented and referenced the emerging trend for playground equipment becoming more conservative. She linked this development to a number of 'drivers' but chiefly to the 'compensation culture' which is in turn closely linked to safety (Moorcock, 1998).

Of course there will be a disjuncture between how parents and children interpret restrictions. Places may well be forbidden but children may disobey their parents. O'Brien, Rustin and Greenfield (2000:11) found that parents tend to report much lower levels of autonomy than their children do. Again this parental response could be for the benefit of the research, as poor parenting is considered a cardinal sin today. More likely though it will be true that while children are less free, they also take part in certain activities without parental knowledge. It is increasingly unlikely though that children will be able to take part in covert activities today as easily as they did in the past due to the amount of surveillance they are subjected to.

Today there are more restrictions on where children are permitted to play, fewer places that children are allowed to travel to unaccompanied and less excitement at these venues to draw them there in the first place. In addition, as will be explored later, there is a tighter control of children's movement that results in less room to manoeuvre and find excitement elsewhere.

As far as children are concerned, they typically do not differentiate between 'play areas' and areas where they play (Wheway and Millwood, 1997:13). Spontaneity seems to still be a prime factor governing where children play with preference being hard to determine from one group of children to another. Living Streets (formally the Pedestrians Association) found that despite 'play' increasingly becoming the focus of official policy and increases in certain types of provision, impromptu play on pavements still remains a firm favourite amongst children (Living Streets 2001:6). Ward (1978) in his classic The Child in the City characterised the historical approach to play and to their play environment that children took,

> Children colonise every last inch of left-over urban space for their own purposes, how ingeniously they seize every opportunity for pleasure. (Ward 1978:210)

Other, non-play, social agendas seem to be driving the development of play spaces and consequently much time, effort and resources are being expended on facilities which don't meet need and perhaps further exacerbate this situation. Glasgow City reassessed their play performance targets and changed their priorities away from localised provision to centralised high profile venues in 2000. This is due to concerns over 'litigation' and resulted in a plan to close 400 small local play parks (Glasgow City Council 2000:46).

While it seems to accept that concerns over safety by the public are unwarranted, Glasgow City Council has responded defensively and would seem to be ill-equipped to challenge these concerns. The conjunction of 'Best Practice' (something that should herald massive improvements) and a hypersensitivity to litigation has resulted in a further corrosion of trust in communities. Accommodating to these concerns by branding local parks as unsafe and earmarking them for closure compounds trends. The situation is further exacerbated by highlighting a small danger of accidents and adding it to the lengthening list of risks that already includes strangers and traffic.

The Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (2002:5) ranked the five main concerns given by people for not using urban green spaces. Lack of or poor condition of facilities came first, followed by other users, dogs, safety and other psychological issues and environmental quality issues such as litter, graffiti and vandalism. While the first reason may have an element of truth to it, as discussed earlier in terms of boring public parks, the other four reasons all amount to the same thing- 'other users' and reflects some of what is being investigated. Comparing past preferences (when poop-a-scoops and impact

absorbing surfaces had not yet been invented) to today should be revealing about how the 'other' in society was considered in the past.

Parental Perception of Danger

> Just because you're paranoid, don't mean they're not after you. (Kurt Cobain 1991)

Cobain might have only been playing on a cultural motif but there clearly has been an expansion in what is considered 'dangerous' to children. This stretches beyond playgrounds and now seems to inform all areas of a parent's assessment about where to allow their children to go. If being allowed to do things and go places on their own is an indication of childhood freedoms, then it increasingly seems that children's lives are becoming more restricted compared to the past (Sissons Joshi, MacLean and Carter, 1997:20).

When assessing risk, parental considerations seem to be based more on their estimation of others not of their children's competencies. As Davis and Jones report there has been an effective loss of safe green spaces for children to play in. They quote a 10-yr. old to explain why, "My mum and dad trust me but they don't trust the people that are around." (Davis and Jones 1996:234).

There seems to be a disjuncture between the reality of danger, the fear of danger and the actions that parents take. The reality in the UK, as explained by Barnardo's, is as follows: average child fatalities per year and cause, 5 homicides by strangers, 80 in own family and 4910 as either 'street user' / pedestrian or cyclists (McNeish and Roberts 1995:4). However, the Barnardo's report goes on to say that when ranking their concerns, parents nearly always place abduction and murder of their child by a stranger as their number one fear.

As the 10 yr old quoted by Davis and Jones demonstrates, parents can see their children becoming more competent but perhaps consider their child's competence as almost irrelevant if having to deal with a determined malevolent adult or careless driver.

How all of the above impacts on the licenses that parents grant their children varies again. While the ESRC report a decrease in the use of public space by 10 and 11 year olds since 1970, they also show that only a tiny minority are 'highly restricted' (ESRC, 2000:1). The question of gaining competencies or 'worldliness' while of a common-sense nature can be questioned and regarded as a kind of Catch 22. Experience feeds worldliness but a child can only gain experiences of being independent and having to make decisions if they are allowed into social situations that would facilitate this.

Pragmatism, it seems, may disrupt this proposed vicious circle. Though 77% of children were aware of their parents concern when they were out at play (McNeish and Roberts, 1995:4) that they were 'out' at all indicates a contradiction. This can perhaps be understood by considering some of the other pressures that influence parents. There is a high degree of pressure to conform when reporting on parental practice. Not to do so would be to expose ones self as a 'poor parent' in today's terms. At the same time though, parents still need to go to work and carry on with life in general e.g. more children are taken to school in the mornings than are picked in the afternoon (Derek Halden Consultancy 2002:5).

Range Finder- Girls and Boys come out to play?

Sociologically there have been differences between the way parents treat their male and female children for many years (Cunningham and Jones 1999). In the past much of this practice was linked to the relative domestic duties that each sex

had to perform and socially ascribed gender roles. Today however, when equality of opportunity is much closer as a reality, differences persist but for other reasons.

Play ranges in the UK (the distance from the home that children are allowed to travel independently) have been dramatically reducing over the last quarter century (Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg 1990). After school play ranges are now such that only 60% of primary school age boys play outside at all after school. In terms of the difference between boys and girls, the range of boys was recorded at 800m in 1999, while that of girls was a mere 150m (Cunningham and Jones 1999:14). Further to this Davis and Jones (1996:234) found that for parents' decision making gender was the most significant factor affecting independent mobility, with boys getting much more freedom than girls. Happily, Davis and Jones (1996:234) also report that girls still find ways to break loose of the shackles their parent's impose- usually by lying about where they are going or have been!

Girls do seem to bear the brunt of 'stranger danger' as the danger itself is perceived to be in the main from men and mainly sexual in nature. However, while girls are disproportionately represented as victims of sexual attack, the perpetrator in the overwhelming majority of cases is known to them (Sissons Joshi, MacLean and Cater, 1997:18). Thus there is a double irrationality to the greater controls that girls face.

It would seem to be wrong to blame parents as irrational though. On one level they are, in that the reality of the overall danger is exaggerated. But, in that one assumes that ones own family and friends are trustworthy and not a predatory concern, the response of parents to a widespread social phenomenon can be understood. While abduction is rare, parents must assume that all children of the same age are at equal risk. There is an inverse relationship between age and licence (Sissons Joshi, MacLean and Cater, 1997:18) and, bearing in mimd the

chief worry, this must be based on parents judging that their children can distinguish between strangers better as they get older and this will be equal for both sexes. So, while all children are being controlled more, but girls more than boys, the gradual increases in freedom that all children are granted as they get older progress at the same rate. Girls follow the same parabola as boys just with a level of delay due to the sexual nature of the perceived threat.

When examining parental concern about the threat of traffic to their children, the 'school run' provides a microcosm of what the concerns are and represent. The change in government policy (1981 Education (Scotland) Act) that brought in 'Parental Choice' for selecting schools dramatically increased the distance necessary for some children to travel and this will have contributed to a trend of increased supervision during school journeys. A review of the actual figures for this trend however, is startling and shows that there must indeed be some other processes at work.

The key text in this discussion is 'One False Move' (Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg 1990). It has been the starting point for many other studies and provides figures covering almost all the angles. The Economic and Social Research Council (2000:2) cite Mayor Hillman's figures showing that in the UK in 1970 unaccompanied journeys to school made up 94% of the total and that this total fell to 54% in 1990. The follow up research carried out by ESRC in 1998 found that the total had fallen further to 47% (ESRC 2000).

Living Streets (2001:6) reports similar findings confirming the trend, in that the proportion of children under ten allowed to walk to school on their own halved in the 15 years from 1985 to 1999, from 20% in 1985/6 to under 10% in 1997-9.

This trend might represent the increase in car ownership over the same period and reflect parental ability to transport their children to school on their own way to

work. However, it has also been found that parents without cars are no less likely to accompany their children to school than parents with cars (Sissons Joshi, MacLean and Carter 1997:20). The authors went on to find that distance plays no part in the decision making process either and that parental attitude was the main factor. If traffic were the main concern then, one would expect accompaniment to increase with distance, as the likely danger posed by traffic would increase with the number and size of roads that needed to be crossed.

In a sense the world is becoming a larger place for children who are not allowed out on their own. The distances travelled are increasing but these are by car or other forms of supervised transport. On the other hand the world is getting smaller, as despite the increased distances being travelled as the journeys are of a 'nodal' nature. By this I mean that where as in the past children would have moved about by themselves, experiencing all the wealth of life on the way to and from destinations, now that travel is organised by parents in cars or other, children are moved from one place of supervision to another with only fleeting glimpses of the world in between.

The autobiographical novel 'An American Childhood' by Annie Dillard (1987) provides a colourful example of the significance of the change,

> I walked. My mother had given me the freedom of the streets as soon as I could say our telephone number. I walked and memorized the neighbourhood. I made a mental map and located myself upon it. At night in bed I rehearsed the small world's scheme and set challenges: Find the store using backyards only. Imagine a route from the school to my friend's house. I mastered chunks of town in one direction only; I ignored the other direction, toward the Catholic Church.

> On a bicycle I travelled over the known world's edge, and the ground held. I was seven. I had fallen in love with a red-haired fourth grade boy named Walter Milligan. He was tough, Catholic, from the iffy neighbour hood. Two blocks beyond our school was a field- Miss Frick's field, behind Henry Clay Frick's mansion- where boys played football. I parked my bike on the sidelines and watched Walter Milligan play. As he ran up and down the length of the field, following the football, I ran up and down the sidelines, following him. It was the closest we had ever been, and the farthest I had travelled from home. (Dillard 1987:42)

In 1994 90% of children in Britain owned a bike but only 2% actually cycled to school (Policy Studies Institute, as cited by Hughes 1994:4).

In discussions around the independent range of children and young people many factors are advanced as contributing to changes, primarily decreases over time, in children's free movement. Karsten (2005) discusses how smaller domestic dwellings in the past defined play as outdoor play for most children. That children also had a relatively large territory in which to roam and that this began to shrink between the 1960's and 2003 with the growth in car ownership and increases in size of home. Farmer (2005) bolsters this finding with more data from 2003 which indicates that over a third of 8 to 10 yr olds do not feel safe when outside and view abduction by strangers as their main fear (stated by 59% of those who do not feel safe). Farmer also found that children were more likely than not to be accompanied by an adult when outside.

Despite the variety of reasons for this overall curtailment of children's range and independent use of outdoor space however, Valentine and McKendrick (1997) found that parental restrictions were the largest determinant and that even if there were enough adequate play facilities, many parents would still not allow their children to use them based on their concerns about safety related to traffic and

strangers. Veitch, J, Bagley, S, Ball, K, and Salmon, J (2006) concur with their findings that the most important influence on a child's mobility was safety, with 94% of parents stating that safety was their biggest concern. Parents' safety concerns centred around strangers, teenagers and gangs, and road traffic.

Parental constraints have always been present, but in this generation they seem to exert much greater control. Tandy (1999) found that parents themselves recognised this difference and a number indicated that society had changed from one in which it was safe for children to play freely, to one where it is not safe and thus there was a greater need for supervision. While children may well have a more relaxed attitude to the risk posed by the world beyond their front door (Timperio, A, Crawford, D, Telford, A, and Salmon, J 2004), parental perceptions were found to still be the biggest driver of children behaviour in terms of independent movement and distance travelled.

Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg (1990) mount a convincing argument that cars are the primary source for the change in parenting practice and the root cause for the demise of community. Chronologically they show that cars do fit the bill, with the increases in car ownership and use since the 1970's mirroring the demise in intra-community trust. Putnam and Postman make similar cases for television individualising leisure time in the USA (Putnam 2000:284 and Postman 1994:113). All seem to assume guilt by circumstantial coincidence, an unfortunate conclusion shared by many who don't have access to funded research, and one which undermines their over all credibility.

The demise of trust within communities, reflected in the increased restrictions of children's movements, or an expanded category or sense of 'otherness' towards adults in general today, does seem to match traffic as a precipitating factor as chronologically cars fit the bill. However, despite much evidence to back this up (Hillman, 1998; Living Streets, 2001; Moorcock, 2000; Palmer, 2007; Sissons,

Joshi, McLean and Carter, 1997; Wheway and Millwood, 1997) many points can be interpreted differently. For example in 1990, by the age of eleven, 95% of children were allowed to cross roads on their own but only 42% were allowed to use buses independently (Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg 1990:28). While buses do occasionally crash and older children will be able to negotiate bus journeys more successfully, there is clearly a difference in the perception of the threat that the outside world poses to children. For example, during the mid 1980's media reporting of 'stranger danger' rose dramatically (Glasgow Media Group 1999/2000:9). There was however no increase in the number of child deaths to justify this (Glasgow Media Group 1999/2000:9). This indicates an increased level of concern being attached to an area of life where little or no actual change had taken place.

Taking a look at the traffic casualty figures for the UK reveals that they in fact started a downward spiral during the decades immediately preceding the period when child safety increased in significance. They dropped from 15,000 pedestrians and cyclists under 19 killed or seriously injured in 1973 to 5000 by 1999 (Moorcock, 2000). This trend seems not to have received the same level of coverage as the reports of 'stranger danger' which is indicative that while 'bad news sells papers' the cultural sensitivity to the narrative of safety also has an impact.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA 2012) provides a review of road casualties for the period 1949 to 2011. It reveals a gradual decline in fatalities of all ages between 1973 and 2011 which coincides with a number of factors but significantly a fresh strategic approach following a peak in deaths during 1966. In terms of how children feature within this change, one would logically assume that if concern is dramatically restricting the free and unsupervised movement of children, then there would be a corresponding

decrease in accidents to this group- if children are out less, they are less at risk of accident and consequently the number of accidents should decline.

There is corroboration of this significant general decline in the number of road casualties in Scotland from Transport Scotland (Transport Scotland 2014). They confirm that the decline starts from a high point in 1966 and continues to date. It occurs for all ages, accident types and severity of injury. In 2011 the total number of casualties, the number of fatal, seriously injured and slightly injured, were all the lowest since records began. In 2011 the number of people killed on Scotland's roads, of all ages and from all causes, was little over 25% of the same figure in 1972.

Focussing on child road causalities, during the period 1979 to 2012 there was a significant decrease in the number of fatalities resulting from transport accidents in the 0-4, 5-9 and 10-14 age groups (General Register Office for Scotland, 2012) (GROfS). The 5-year moving annual average total for the three age groups in 1979 was 152 while the corresponding figure in 2012 was 17. This shows a similar trend as that for the population as a whole but exacerbated for children. The GROfS data further shows that the 0-4 age group consistently runs at a higher number of deaths than the 5-14 age group from 1979 until they converge in the early 1990's. This convergence continues until all groups reach single figures ten years later. In that you would expect the 0-4 age group to almost completely unaffected by changes to childhood licence, as these children have normally been relatively tightly controlled anyway, it is interesting and potentially significant to note that the other age group (5-14) comes to have the same accidental death rates as the younger children. Perhaps while accidental deaths (no reason specified by GROfS) are declining, perhaps caused by generalised safety improving for a variety of reasons (not discussed by GROfS), that the accidental death profile for older, traditionally more independent children and young people, converges with that of much younger and more dependent children is significant for this study.

Older children would now seem to be under similar levels of supervision as the lower age group. This could be understood as a social benefit of the safety culture.

Kate Moorcock (2000) anticipates and rebuts this point by showing that the decline in road casualties is not entirely due to children not being allowed out. Moorcock explains that the number of minor injuries to children is not declining as rapidly, which shows that they are in fact still out and about. Also despite a 40% increase in the distance travelled by children as passengers since 1989, there was a 42% decrease in deaths per mile from 1989 to 1995 (Moorcock, 2000). So, cars seem to be getting safer both inside and out (as home and other environments may also be) and this, at least in part, is also contributing to reductions in death and serious injury, thus indicating that progress in technology as well as reductions in childhood freedom are contributing to reduced road casualties sometimes attributed to safety culture.

Again, it is important to stick up for parents to a certain extent here. Parents do cite both strangers and cars as concerns and reasons for taking their children to school but when asked for the main reason 48% said strangers while only 15% said traffic (Sissons Joshi, MacLean and Carter 1997:17). Parents may reason (accepting both dangers at face value) that improving competency by children may help reduce accidents but that a predatory adult is still no accident and more difficult for children to avoid.

Reinforcing this interpretation of parental reasoning, the same report also shows other licences gradually increasing by age. By the age of ten 78% of children were allowed to the park with friends but almost none were allowed to go on their own (Sissons Joshi, MacLean and Carter 1997:78). Children are more likely to become a traffic casualty while with others and over 50% of male casualties on the road had ‘running’ as a major contributory factor (Miller 1998:7). Parents logically

assume that groups of children are less vulnerable than lone children to predatory adults. The free floating nature of concern interestingly leads to the contradiction of children being allowed out with friends as an attempt to deal with 'stranger danger' but then that running, presumably with friends, places them at increased risk of becoming a road traffic casualty.

How these two threats were ranked in the past by the participants will hopefully demonstrate the change in perceptions of danger and safety from the research data to the current day. A further question that should also be resolved counterposes the welcome reductions in death and serious injury to children with the impact on childhood in general of the changes to children's lives that the obsession with safety has brought about. In effect, is the severe curtailment of freedom and its impact on the experience of childhood worth the lives that are being saved by it? Discussions around the data and conclusions will attempt to move towards resolving this dilemma.

Conclusion- Damaged Goods

The whole world, not just children, seems today to be viewed through the prism of vulnerability (Furedi, 1997). While for anyone, a bomb falling on their street in 1940 or a car speeding down what's left of the same street 70 years later are both a danger, the social responses of the different inhabitants seem to be separated by a lot more than just time. Risk seems to be the flip side of safety and should perhaps not be interpreted as a practical problem but as an emotional state, floating freely and attaching itself to a variety of aspects of life independent of verifiable changes to realities of danger.

For children and parents, the risk posed by everyday life perhaps needs to be contextualised as 'everyday' or common-or-garden, not exceptional. Facing up to reality may be uncomfortable but is actually for the most part unavoidable when dealing with the exigencies of family life.

To consider again the danger posed by crossing the road it seems that while casualty rates for children are decreasing, down 28% in 1995 on a baseline of 1981- 85 (Miller 1998), with serious and fatal accidents down even further, parents will find a cloud for every silver lining. There are differences occurring in age bandings that better define the danger. Studies indicate that road casualty rates for 12 –15 yrs are higher than 5 – 11 yrs (Miller 1998:1). It might be stated that at some point children need to learn how to cross the road and that experience places them at a level of risk whatever their age when they start the learning curve. Delayed competence due to not being allowed out at an earlier age may well be behind statistics showing that, as children get older and are allowed out more and they are increasingly vulnerable on Friday and Saturday nights (Miller 1998:29). Free floating as it may be, parents do have to conquer fear at some point and trust their offspring to become competent and independent individuals. To what level there is a delay in this now compared to the past will be explored through the data.

When emotion (private and subjective) is the root cause of this fear rather than objective risk (public and verifiable), it is debatable if any amount of 'fact' will change behaviour. Safety is the main reason why parents drive their children to school (Scottish Executive, 2002/1). The same research also found that the bus was the safest way to school followed by walking. The car came second last, preceded by all other modes of transport apart from cycling. Other figures show that a child travelling by car is almost twice as likely to be a casualty than a pedestrian is (Scottish Executive 2002/2).

Risk avoidance behaviour does not seem to be susceptible to rational considerations. In fact it persists despite the evidence above that such behaviour actually places children at greater risk. Of course road accidents involving children will cluster around periods when they are out and about, just as domestic accidents can only happen in the home. How did parents interpret and respond to

risks before ‘Risk’ emerged? The data should provide interesting insights to this question.

The challenge of this project is to develop an understanding of what, if anything, has been lost through these changes to society, community and parental child rearing practice. The participant's stories explore a time before the ‘culture of fear’ or ‘risk society’ had come about and therefore a time when children’s experience of the world around them would have been significantly different to now, as Landry (2005) alludes. What these differences brought in the way of the developing child has yet to be established. To achieve this requires some more foundational discussion around approaches to the concept of ‘childhood’ itself which is the basis of the next chapter.

Section 2: Methodology

Chapter 3 - Epistemology (What kind of thing is childhood?)

This chapter aims to develop an understanding of what 'childhood' means for this project by finding some reconciliation between natural and socially constructed models. The outcome hoped for is that within a human centred paradigm there is also some room for cross cutting constants that makes comparison and understanding between the childhoods related within the participant's stories possible and pertinent to the maturation processes today. What kind of thing is childhood?

> A hundred years ago, characteristics like sex, race, nationality, generation and social class would have been seen as natural characteristics. Now, just as unassailably, these self-same characteristics are no longer seen as natural, but rather attributed to a social process of the construction of identity. In some cases the characteristics are renamed to signify their social origins: race becomes ethnicity, sex becomes gender. (Heartfield 1996:7)

That the world we inhabit is one created by humans seems straight forward today. There is little serious questioning of the understanding that we live in a socially constructed world. Thinking of the multiplicity of categories on 'equalities monitoring forms', we all have to complete when applying for a job, it is scarcely possible to imagine a time when you couldn't choose who you were or at least separate your identity from anything biologically ascribed.

The seeds to an understanding of society's foundations based on human actions, rather than one ordained by God or nature, were sown during the Enlightenment but as Heartfield indicates above, these ideas came to fruition during the 19th

century. While the Enlightenment was predominantly an intellectual explosion underpinning the development of a rationalist approach to progress, the 19th century developments such as population / health mapping in London or factory working legislation (Platt 2005) began to politicise this social understanding of History,

> Another fortnight of the strike and he would be bankrupt. And in the knowledge of this certain disaster he no longer felt any hatred for the Montsou hooligans, but rather was conscious of universal complicity, sins shared by all for generations past. Brutes they might be, but they were brutes who could not read and were dying of starvation. (Zola (1885) 1954:314)

During this time many frameworks were established that wrestled with the causes of social problems such as poor living conditions for working adults and their families,

> The awareness of trade cycles and the presence of severe recessions, particularly towards the end of the 19th century, made it hard to sustain the principle of the 1834 Poor Law that genuine unemployment did not exist. Instead the problem became that of distinguishing between the genuinely unemployed and the ‘idler’. (Platt 2005:72)

Platt also details much of the trend towards social survey work that provided the evidence base for social understanding and implicitly human control of the world. The consequent dramatic increases in government interventions during this time, exemplified by the numerous Acts regulating child labour (Health and Morals of Apprentices Act 1802; Cotton Mills and Factories Act 1819; Labour of Children, etc, in Factories Act 1833; Factories Act (Graham's factory act) 1844; Factories (Ten Hour) Act 1847; Factories (Ten Hour) Act 1850; Factory Act 1867; Factory

and Workshop Act 1878 and Factory Act 1891) (National Archive 2014), indicate that human action was now established as the generally accepted method of alleviating distress. That adults were being protected as well as children is further detailed by Platt (2005:39) and indicates there was a generalised nature of this trend but that there was still some way to go in the creation of childhood as a separate and specific entity requiring special protection.

A more political view of the developing social outlook during the late 19th century is taken by Hendrick (2003) where concerns about immiseration and maintaining social order were investigated,

> These fears were identified, ordered and explained by the developing social sciences- sociology, anthropology, statistics and eventually, social psychology- and made important contributions to debates as to the nature and significance of 'character' and citizenship as social and political values and the more pervasive 'search for order' throughout the increasingly unionised and politicised industrial world. (Hendrick 2003:13)

This can be understood to be a progressive process whereby problems facing society were becoming understood as having social rather than natural causes and were thus susceptible to human action for their solution. For this project though there was an additional inextricable development taking place where, in addition to social problems, individuals within society were beginning to be understood as social constructions too.

By the end of the Second World War we were living in a world that had reached the end of an era where natural understandings, typified through the politically diverse but communally rooted views of Hitler, Kipling, Conrad and Churchill were accepted. Most of these ideas and the individual proponents of such had

been discredited by association with eugenics and the Holocaust and consequently were intellectually brushed aside. Social Constructionism became and to a large extent still is the orthodox position. So much so that continuing proponents of naturalist and eugenicist views such as Charles Murray are vilified and chased off campus.

Socially Constructed Humans

If we turn our attention from the dynamics behind poverty and politics to understandings of children and childhood we can see the 'social' retaining centre stage. Hugh Cunningham (2006) exemplifies this by using the term 'invention' in the title of his book- serialised on Radio Four. Uncontentiously, he assumes (and is right) that viewing the biologically immature state of humankind as produced socially will be understood and accepted by a popular readership. Unfortunately though, despite presenting as a social constructionist with a huge reservoir of valuable source material, Cunningham quickly sets about projecting current orthodoxies back in time, thus idealising processes. Parenting, youth crime and risk are quickly established as universal or cross-cultural constants. Even fortitude in the face of grief is given a modern make-over. After relating a conversation between parents, both grieving a late term miscarriage but the wife being stoic, Cunningham concludes that,

> Grace, seven months pregnant, may have had to force herself to look to the future, but her apparent coolness may look to us like denial. (Cunningham, 2006:73)

More significantly, Philippe Aries (1996) radically adopted the social approach in *Centuries of Childhood*. He understood 'childhood' as a very modern understanding of the biologically immature human's experience, particularly for lower class children for whom infancy ended abruptly as they started wage labour (often without the 'wage'), it was perhaps only those children of upper class

families who had the space and resources to experience a ‘childhood’ in modern terms. Much has been made of evidence seemingly contradictory to Aries’ thesis in recent times. Hendrick (1992:1) describes four ways in which scholars have attempted to discredit him: unreliable or unrepresentative data; that he took his evidence out of context; that he denies the ‘special’ needs of children; and that he places too much emphasis on moralists and educationalists over economics and politics.

Complaints like this seem to miss the point somewhat. It is the logical conclusion of a human centred understanding of society, not just empirical fact, that leads us to see ‘childhood’ as a modern concept. With preceding scientific and social developments during the Renaissance and the democratic impulse of the Enlightenment, ‘adulthood’ with its controlled entry criteria became the basis of social activity and thus, in contradistinction, ‘childhood’ was born.

Postman (1994) explains this historical dynamic well, and has become somewhat of a reference point (Prout 2011), in his classic text, *The Disappearance of Childhood*. He constructs childhood through the construction of adulthood or the separation of adulthood from children that took place from the mid 15th century. Prior to this point the social etiquette of age demarcation was almost non-existent. Postman recalls fete or holiday festival images from medieval tapestries depicting scenes of drunkenness and debauchery where adults engage in sexual acts in public,

> Indeed, it was common enough in the Middle Ages for adults to take liberties with the sexual organs of children. To the medieval mind such practices where merely ribald amusements. (Postman 1994:17).

In the past children and childhood may well have been socially referenced and documented in a variety of ways e.g. from the King James Bible, “And the streets

of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." Zechariah, 8:5, but the social conceptualisation of children during biblical times, or at least during the 17th Century when the 'King James' translation was carried out, must have been very different to that of more modern times. While it is clearly difficult to envisage any society 'forgetting' its biological need to reproduce, it can probably carry out this 'natural' process without a concept of childhood. The cultural reflection and legal distinction drawn between children and all adults, who in modern times participate on a legally equal basis in economic and increasingly democratic activity, is only possible when that dichotomy has developed in reality.

Postman identifies the end of the Middle Ages and the concurrent invention of the printing press as the key historical point of departure though. This he claims was the way that adulthood and adult culture became separated from that of the rest of society. The ability to read had to be mastered and therefore required time and dedication to accomplish- something that children could aspire to but not spontaneously do. In books adults could convey increasingly complex instructions required as labouring became more specialised and also 'forbidden' knowledge. The classic novel by Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose* (1983) explores this theme well. Despite seeing himself as a postmodernist, Eco constructs a plot with a hero (a conscious decision making actor) who uses logic to solve a murder, but more poignantly where the murderer is using the poisoned pages of a book of cartoons (or comedy) to embargo the frivolous use of books to convey human centred knowledge.

Mitterauer (1992) agrees with Aries and Postman suggesting again that it was only in Modern times that youth as a category between infancy and adulthood fully emerged, replacing and extending physical strength as the transition point. In the past for example infancy ended when the emerging individual was able to carry a suit of armour. In this case an understanding of any developmental process can

only be at physical and the gradual or incremental accumulation of experience levels and not a transformational one, where the individual undergoes a qualitative change in nature.

We can now agree with Solberg (1997) when she states that childhood is constructed and socially specific,

> The starting point for the new paradigm of the sociology of childhood is that childhood is a social construction. This suggests that conceptions of childhood- what it is like or should be like to be a child- is part of culture and, as such, transforms through time and space. (Solberg 1997:126)

Or when Hendrick (1997) concurs,

> …there is always a relationship between conceptual thought, social action and the process of category construction and, therefore, definitions of childhood must to some extent be dependent upon the society from which they emerge. (Hendrick 1997:35),

They are both observing, using academic formulations, what is accepted in general by society at large and best selling popular texts previously referred to, that childhood is a socially specific category, subject to the influence of human action for good or bad. It should be added in agreement with other writers though that the particular social formation of ‘childhood’ is specific to the Modern era.

Humans as Persons

So then, what is the specific content of childhood that is constructed socially and differentiates children from adults?

> If, after all, we pursue the idea of social construction far enough, we can arrive at a position where, in any particular context of research, any culture, any period, the concept of childhood is so different from anything and anywhere else that such a common concept cannot exist. (Hannabuss, 2000:429)

Hannabuss identifies the problem of relativism here but Social Constructionism brings about a requirement for a prior clarification when discussing childhood. What does it mean to be a child?

As we have seen above Postman (1994) approaches the question from the other side: Not, what does is mean to be a child but what does it mean to be an adult? His method resembles that of Fredrick Engels in 'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State' (1884). That is, Postman adopts a kind of historical logical method that attempts to analyse the significant historical departure points from which notions of adulthood and consequently childhood develop and , "… the main contribution of this book, such as it is, does not reside in the claim that childhood is disappearing but in a theory as to why such a thing should be happening." (Postman, 1994:xiii). This method results not in a descriptive/ predictive model but an illuminative one, i.e. not one that pictures history as it definitely was but one that shows how it should have been, taken from key emergent processes that have been documented.

In the long list of benefits developed as an answer to John Cleese's question in the (1979) film *Monty Python's Life of Brian*, "What have the Romans ever done for us?" Postman would argue that the key benefit is missed out- shame. The Romans, he argues, began to make the link, latterly taken for granted in modern times, between the developing child and the idea of shame. "…without a well-developed idea of shame, childhood cannot exist." (Postman's italics) (Postman 1994:9). He draws a parallel between the end of the Roman Empire with the transition to the

Dark Ages and today by highlighting four points that history books neglect to mention,

> The first is that literacy disappears. The second is that education disappears. The third is that shame disappears. And the fourth, as a consequence of the other three, is that childhood disappears. (Postman 1994:10)

In this Postman latches on to the separation of public and private lives as a key component of what differentiates the generations socially. He argues that the convention of certain aspects to personal life not being appropriate for public airing is embodied within the learning of social norms children acquire. If these conventions wane then, logically, so too must the differentiation between children and adults. Christopher Lasch (1991) explores this more thoroughly when critiquing Richard Sennet on 'privatism',

> The best things in the Western cultural tradition, in Sennet's view, derive from conventions that once regulated interpersonal relations in public. These conventions, now condemned as constricting, artificial and deadening to emotional spontaneity, formally established civilised boundaries between people, set limits on the public display of feeling, and promoted cosmopolitanism and civility. (Lasch 1991:27)

Other human centred dynamics raging during the Dark Ages (and at other times) notwithstanding, the initial stages of the creation of adulthood were of a technical nature and demanded effort to master, thus creating a time / experience barrier. Developing a consciousness that certain ideas, actions or behaviours are not useful for children to be party to however, is adulthood's initial 'moral content'.

Whether past societies had any conception of childhood is actually beside the point. What Aries and others do is establish a Modern concept of childhood where, in relation to adults, there are specifically different aspects to children's existence and that these warrant varying degrees of separation from the 'adult world'.

This moves the understanding of children on as somehow lacking in relation to adults: a deficit model of childhood if you like, as not being able to comprehend or assimilate certain information or be able to act on it in a responsible manner. In her paper 'The Legal Construction of Childhood (2000), Elizabeth Scott nicely sums up the Modern approach,

> American law makers have had relatively clear images of childhood and adulthood, images that fit with our conventional notions. Children are innocent beings, who are dependent, vulnerable, and incapable of making competent decisions. Several aspects of the legal regulation of childhood are based on this account. Children are assumed not to be accountable for their choices or for their behaviour, an assumption that is reflected in legal policy towards their criminal conduct. They are also assumed to be unable to exercise the rights and privileges that adults enjoy, and thus are not permitted to vote, drive, or make their own medical decisions. Finally, children are assumed to need care, support and education in order to develop into healthy productive adults. The obligation to provide the services critical to children's welfare rests first with parents and ultimately with the state. When children cross the line to legal adulthood, they are assumed to be autonomous persons who are responsible for their conduct, entitled as citizens to legal rights and privileges, and no longer entitled to support of special protections. (Scott 2000:2)

So for Scott childhood is a social construction but for technical reasons associated with specific legal necessities, clarification around 'capacity' is required. Care and protection are still the key drivers but, in their construction, notions about child capabilities are formed.

As children grow older, and move towards the separation with their past already discussed, they will clearly cover certain terrain and attain specific milestones. During this process legislators make attempts to reflect the gradual development towards adult capacity. For example the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland is 8 years (10yrs in the rest of the UK) while the age of consent (sexual intercourse) is 16yrs. The current age for purchasing alcohol is 18yrs, but the failed attempts by the SNP led Scottish Government to increase this to 21 (The Herald, 04-10-08) shows that perceptions have a dynamic and contradictory nature.

Much of the dynamic element has a moral basis, with fluctuations to particular age laws based on public perception or outrage (usually when high profile 'failures' in public policy or state body action occur) and political expediency. Due to this, a historical study of laws affecting children that commit crime, or indeed an international one, would reveal variations on many planes. The inherent contradiction in withholding rights based on assumed legal incapacity but holding those same age mates 'responsible' in other circumstances is either conceptually too complex or conveniently ignored by politicians and other law makers. The notion of *doli incapax* exemplifies this.

In a modern democracy laws need to be generally applicable as they require clear demarcation as to when they apply and when they do not. In the case of children, generally assumed to be incompetent, there needs to be point at which they can be treated as adults. To be generally applied, this point is taken as a particular age cut-off, or the 'age of criminal responsibility' as it is easily quantifiable compared

to other possible ways of constructing childhood such as the accumulation of 'experience'. Before this age children are deemed not to be responsible for their actions, incapable of wrong or *doli incapax* and cannot be held to account for their actions.

While it can be readily accepted that children from different backgrounds, having varying abilities and maturity will inevitably have slightly differing competency, that the standard age for responsibility can vary by crime or permission is inconsistent if we approach this issue from the binary child / adult capacity perspective. The question has to be addressed by legislators as to why a child can be deemed at the age of 8 yrs (in Scotland) to be responsible for their criminal actions but not responsible enough to have sex till 16 yrs or buy alcohol till 18 yrs. If an age is to be taken as the cut off for legal capacity then surely it should apply across the board of contingencies?

The consequences for individual children of this change are tragic to say the least. The trial of Jon Venables and Robert Thompson, both aged ten, for the killing of the toddler Jamie Bulger, is a case in point. One of the boys is reported to have been asked if he understood what being 'dead' means, which he said that he did but that, "you could make him (Bulger) better again couldn't you?" They were both tried for murder and sentenced to prison at the end of a trial where they had to be given 'colouring in' materials to stop them being bored.

The British response to this tragedy stands in contrast to a similar event in Norway in 1994. Five year old Silje Redergard was beaten and left to freeze to death by two older children. The killers received very different treatment from that dealt out to Venables and Thompson though,

> The police, the local community and even Silje's mother were united in believing that they shouldn't be punished. "Yes, I feel sympathy for

> them," she says. "They need compassion. They must be treated as children and shown kindness and concern rather than vengeance." (Smith and Lee 2000).

On his release from prison, having served a sentence for murder, Thompson was only just old enough to legally buy alcohol. There are clearly paradoxes in the social construction of what it means to be a child or an adult.

If society has inconsistencies in terms of how it relates to the relative competency of children and adults, examining how children perceive themselves during their transitional phase provides another angle to discussions around 'personhood'.

Rights today are often counterposed, in a play on words, to responsibilities (UNICEF 1991). To have rights, children are told, they have to act responsibly and take their 'responsibilities' seriously,

> Children's rights are a special case because many of the rights laid down in the Convention on the Rights of the Child have to be provided by adults or the state. However, the Convention also refers to the responsibilities of children, in particular to respect the rights of others, especially their parents (Article 29) (UNICEF 1991:22).

While there is some sense to this and it is often said with honest intent, the source of the connection is lost in this formulation of the counterposition. Rights are indeed linked to responsibility but only in the sense that rights are based on 'responsibility'. That is, to have certain (democratic) rights you must first be deemed responsible.

In this way the transition to adulthood is constructed; children acquire rights by showing that they can 'handle' them. Of course for practical reasons abilities have

to be averaged out and applied at an age gateway (as in the law discussed above) but what is commonly the shared understanding of the internal experience of this for the emerging adult?

Developing responsibility is similar and parallel to forming a conscience or having the ability to hold in check spontaneous self-interested responses. By attaining and wielding rights, a child develops the responsibility to their 'self' to be true and accountable for their actions. While developing 'competency', as related above, could be said to be the way that society views the emerging adult, 'responsibility' can be said to be the way the emerging adult views himself.

In what way then do the traits of competency and responsibility contribute to somebody's emerging personhood?

Mitterauer (1992) offers a thorough examination of the religious antecedents of modern construction of youth as a transitory period between childhood and adulthood. He charts how 'protest movements' within the Protestant and Catholic churches during the Reformation changed religious emphases away from authoritarianism,

> Of the various reforming confessions, the idea of adulthood as a precondition for responsible action was most strongly developed among the Anabaptists. Following their lead, the independent churches made it a basic tenet that membership of a community of faith must result from a personal decision – in contrast to the national Churches, to which one belonged from birth. (Mitterauer 1992:26)

This change to a subjective orientation, one based on free will, he claims, encouraged individualistic tendencies best exemplified by the birth of the diary and autobiography as cultural forms, charting the development of 'self-identity',

> Childhood and youth are seen as the dynamic age of life. The adult, on the other hand, is the individual who has found himself. (Mitterauer 1992:27).

This seeming contradiction, where the developing individual actually completes their social teleology by joining others in adulthood, brings us back to the analysis offered by Postman (1994) where his idea of 'shame' can be seen in parallel with the notion of individual, reflective responsibility.

But where does the, up to this point useful, doctrine of Social Constructionism leave reality?

Manufactured Childhood, Lost Children

To revisit the quote from Hannabuss (2000) above, "If, after all, we pursue the idea of social construction far enough… such a common concept cannot exist." (2000:429), exploring what he considered to be the tendency and flaw of Social Constructionism to infinite fragmentation, an embedded problem for this project emerges where the discourse is based on no tangible substance or essence.

If a social constructionist approach has been adopted, what can 'childhood' mean for this study if, being understood through the plethora of cultures existing today, childhood is reduced through the infinite specificity of relativism to meaning no more than *an experience* of *a child*?

For 'childhood' to be a category, even at the level of an abstraction, a set of ideas or concepts, there requires to be some degree of common understanding of shared attribute. While it can be readily accepted that the experiences of children in shanty towns of the developing world are very different from the life experiences and chances of children growing up in western cities, or that childhood experiences of London during the Blitz are very different from those in London today, these children share traits other than being studied by researchers. If

children across towns and cities, countries and continents are completely socially constructed then they would seem to share little, other than constructed similarities expressed through a discourse, and it has to be asked if there can be a singular connecting reality that can be termed ‘a child’ let alone ‘childhood’.

To pose the problem in another way, is childhood merely a phenomenon experienced by those considering it that has to be accepted for study to proceed but to which there can be no objective referencing, confirmation or existence?

In the emerging, much discussed, cross disciplinary Social Studies of Childhood (James, Jenks and Prout 1997; Wyness 2006) the relativistic logic seems to be embraced as they advance their counter-paradigm to those of child development and family studies (Tisdall 2012),

> Such an expressed interest in a person’s ‘age’ during adulthood would be considered at best rude and at worst intrusive. The insistent demand of children that their age be made public rests, we suggest on a set of implicit constructions of the position of children in the life course. (James, Jenks and Prout 1997:235)

James, Jenks and Prout want to concentrate their examinations on the “time present” of childhood but in attempting to justify their interest in challenging the deficiencies of past understandings, they decontextualise what it is that is specific and important to understand about childhood. They attack the ritual of reflecting age with candles on a birthday cake as it concentrates on a child’s past and the determination of his future. Age however is perhaps disproportionately significant to children who are subject to fast developing natural processes rather than an “… effect(s) produced within discursive acts.” (Prout 2011:7).

Prout (2011) understands the emphasis on the dichotomy of nature and culture as a failing of modernity's reliance on discourse which resulted in understanding children as 'in need' of socialisation, from nature to culture. The natural state that children were understood to occupy cannot, in Prout's view, account for the many childhoods that exist, and presumably even less for the many adulthoods they become. His solution to the identified sociological reductionism of modernity, while maintaining a social constructionist approach, is to promote greater interdisciplinary understandings and create a hybrid space in the middle ground. This leads him back to the problem of common language through which to conduct discourse thus limiting the distinct existence of childhood as a category.

In a similar vein, Morss summarises Berry Mayall's approach in this way,

> (Mayall) suggests that children are different in different settings (e.g. school/home) just as adults are different in different settings (e.g. as school-teacher, parent), and implies quite radically, that children are no different from adults except as the consequence of treatment and their own (interlinked) activity. That is to say, children are people who are treated, by themselves and/or by others, as "children". (Morss 2002:52)

Holloway and Valentine (2000) echo the James, Jenks and Prout approach by rallying against the "dominance of socialisation theory" and how children are seen as "human becomings rather than human beings" (2000:763). They view both socialisation and developmental psychology as denying childhood any ontology and focussing what they will become rather than what they are (Wyness 2006).

These comparisons of children with adults above directly move towards the relativisation of childhood with adulthood as just different phases in the human life course. Childhood studies has thus promoted a rethinking of children's status and childhood. Children are now to be understood as agents and not passive

objects of concern nor empty vessels waiting to be filled with adult wisdom as they progress towards the 'gold standard' of adulthood (Tisdall 2012). While the biological immaturity of children is not necessarily denied, it is reinterpreted and given meaning culturally.

While identifying with the socially constructed roots of this approach, it is unsatisfactory and problematic for this project as it both rejects the specificity of childhood and childhood's demarcation from adulthood- a separation which can be understood as a progressive development in the protection of children, previously explored above and understood as necessary due to the literal incompetence of children. Tisdall (2012) wishes children to be understood as active builders and determinators of their social lives, culture and context. Holloway and Valentine (2000) draw this out in a pejorative sense,

> This relative absence of children from the sociological research agenda has increasingly been challenged, not, as for many other minority groups by the group themselves, but by researchers interested in children as competent beings in their own right and in the ways in which childhood is socially constructed by adult society in different ways in different times and places. (Holloway and Valentine 2000:764)

While superficially adopting this type of approach can be viewed as liberal and pro-children, a disservice is being performed and a problem created. Within their own site children may be able to be considered as competent "social actors." (James et al 2007: 207) and in many cases as more able than adults but this is only achieved through sleight of tongue. Children can be powerful 'actors' but generally within a minor culture or specific setting (Solberg 1997). That a child can act on a computer game console better than an adult may indeed make him relatively more competent than that adult. That this games playing 'competency' is considered alongside the responsibility, for example, of serving

on a jury or of political office diminishes adulthood. It blurs the necessity for transition from childhood to adulthood and thus disrupts the the social reproductive process. Checkoway et al (2003) describe in positive terms a campaign organised by school children against school rules,

> For example, one young person questioned a school policy on tardiness and suspension, organized her fellow students to come late for school, and caused the whole school to receive suspension. When school officials revoked the policy young people learned lessons about collective power, strengthened their civic leadership and went on to other issues, such as state policies which would increase the number of prisons rather than invest in education. (Checkoway et al 2003:302)

There is an element of positive learning about democracy and leadership being demonstrated here.When ‘competencies’ are elevated to ‘competence’ though, or political action is embraced without notice of the campaign aims, difficulties can arise for children. Their abilities can become exaggerated beyond being responsive and they are flattered. After all, in large part, education is the generational transmission of culturally acquired knowledge and requires levels of understanding, discipline and leadership on the part of adults (Furedi 2009). In this endeavour it is better for students not be late and accept their teachers as ‘knowing’, at least more than they as learners do.

Children benefit from a deferential approach in a range of situations that they are found in. Whether it be self generated political activism or a child in the developing world being forced into a main caring role for younger siblings due to the death of a parent, the demarkation between children and adults requires to be preserved in order for children to be able to progress towards their potential. Campaigning approaches or tragic circumstances which place children in adult roles expect too much and can ultimately inhibit, “The development of the child’s

personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential" (UNICEF 1989)

Moreover, Social Constructionism, initially progressive in placing humans at the centre of the understanding of society and giving them power over the future, eventually seems to reject the possibility of understanding society at anything more than a descriptive level. Thus is would seem that children are only subordinate to adults due to a common understanding by themselves and others as being such. This project understands children, unlike other oppressed minorities, not to be oppressed as such but to be literally incompetent in the social arena. Unlike other oppressed minorities, such as Rosa Parks and fellow blacks in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955 who fought for and won equal rights, researchers and other campaigners like Holloway and Valentine (above) have to take up the challenge on children's behalf.

Conclusion- Synthesising 'Everychild'

So the current social constructionist portals through which childhood is considered and understood, while initially advancing our grasp on the subject matter, seem to me to be flawed when taken to their logical conclusion as they continually 'bow' to the rejoiner of cultural specificity. To proceed with this project new understandings of the world require to be formulated. These will have to be able to remain consistent in the face of questioning.

The key difficulty with Social Constructionism lies in its fundamental relativistic approach and consequent and ultimate rejection of notions that can be considered as non-culturally generated and expressed. James (2013) goes further than blurring the lines between childhood and adulthood by advancing that by having many childhood cultures, ultimately the term 'childhood' loses much of its meaning,

> Though sharing certain biological and psychological features that are indeed age-related, as active members of society children's differences from one another, born out of different social conditions and the varied social experiences, are as significant, if not more so, than the physiological and cognitive similarities that they might share. (James 2013:12)

This thesis covers many 'cultures of childhood' ranging in various ways such as time, generation, class, setting and country. Rather than understanding this to be a flaw in the research, it is considered that it will strengthen the profiling task. Additionally, it is hoped to generate a fusion between what is considered to be the progressive elements of both Developmental Psychology and Social Constructionism. To achieve some use of socially specific and universal approaches will allow for a more thorough understanding and resolution to be developed through the following theory chapter. Some initial consideration of the conundrum follows as in mixing black with white it is hoped that grey is not the result.

Universal man (or child) can only ever be a theoretical construct which is created with the purpose of understanding the category that is said to exist in a pan historic and pan cultural setting. What this means is that there can never actually be a universal individual child who exhibits common traits shared by all other children. What we can assert though is that there are useful parallels that can be drawn between all humans that we commonly refer to as 'children' and that these can be drawn upon to describe what we should understand as 'childhood' for the purposes of this investigation.

The relativism of the social constructionists finds it hard to consistently search for definitive answers or what I would call 'truth' in the required way because it ultimately doesn't consider something that can be understood and agreed in a unifying and shared way possible. James, Jenks and Prout reject "naturalist

orthodox psychology" and "socialisation typical to earlier sociology" when they set up the four elements to their matrix for theorising childhood (Morss 2002). They seem to reject any natural element to childhood when they characterise the time of childhood as a construct or the "periodization of the ageing process", in much the same way as Holloway and Valentine above.

The Social Studies of Childhood school lament, with some justification, the historical concentration of research on the institutions of socialisation rather than the subjects of it. But in developing a theory for justifying a change in focus from children as "human becomings" to children as "human beings", Holloway and Valentine (2000) move towards diminishing the teleological elements of childhood, contained within socialisation models, and provide an exemplar of the problem of relativism identified and discussed above.

What is needed for the purposes of this project is a formulation that allows for a socially constructed reality of childhood. A formulation which accepts that an underpinning universal commonality between children also exists and that this reality can be described and understood with a view to providing explanations. Additionally, it has to be utilisable as an analytical tool, utilisable to understand the childhood narrative data contained within the participant's stories.

How do children, small relatively dependent immature humans, become social actors, independent individuals capable of reasoning and reflecting on experiences and arriving at rational courses of action? There is a biological process of physical maturation occurring concurrently with a process of psychological development (Guldberg, 2009; Muuss, 1996). Throughout history (Smith, 1976; Rousseau, 1979; Aries, 1996; Friedenberg, 1964; Mitterauer, 1992; Postman, 1994) attempts have been made to understand the processes that lead to the mature individual. Pre-modern attempts were built upon very different understandings of what is was

to be a ‘mature individual’ and the shifting nature of these understandings have made the task of understanding the maturing process all the more complex.

What this project has arrived at so far is that alongside any biological processes run social dynamics that both shape the emerging human and contextualise our understandings of what is occurring. This chapter aims to build on the previous chapter by establishing what in relation to both time frames counts as truth for this project. It aims to explain what universal elements persist while chiefly grappling with the significance of particular developmental processes and the social / biological dialectic. What is the role and impact of society on the biologically developing human individual during their moment within the social space and time, previously identified as the modern construction ‘childhood’? And ultimately, how can this underpin an approach to analysing the participant's stories?

While it has readily been accepted that modern childhood is a social construction of the post-Enlightenment era (Aries, 1996; Postman, 1994; Simms, 2008; Guldberg, 2009), attempts have also been made to pose some form of universal underpinning to the social aspect of the childhood construction. This foundation should allow for cross cultural, cross time, cross class or pan-childhood comparisons to be drawn. It needs to enable us to be able to point at a child and understand that individual as experiencing something called ‘childhood’ which can be shared with other children regardless of background. This underpinning though should not lead us away from the socially constructed world, back to nature or God, as human agency, non-determined individual or collectively conscious activity, in these circumstances is diminished or compromised at individual and social levels and it is largely this ‘agency’ that comprises selfhood.

Fruitful supervision discussions have further developed an understanding of the difficult reconciliations required of this approach. That these discussions have also

thrown up issues is inevitable. Most people can look at a child and correctly identify the object of their gaze as being such and consequently that this 'object' is experiencing something variously understood to be 'childhood'. However, if those same lay people or academics were to be challenged, both the concepts of 'child' and 'childhood' would prove resistant to definition.

> In fact, if we take the word children to mean a special class of people somewhere between the ages of seven and, say, seventeen, requiring special forms of nurturing and protection, and believed to be qualitatively different from adults, then there is ample evidence that children have existed for less than four hundred years. (Postman 1994:xi)

The 'special class' and social time frame leading to a qualitative difference from adults categories are what is important to take from Postman's argument. He stands within a strong tradition in making these distinctions. Travelling back in time to 1762 we find an eloquent version of what can be considered the 'modern' approach,

> Nature wants children to be children before being men. If we want to pervert this order, we shall produce precocious fruits which will be immature and insipid and will not be long in rotting. We shall have young doctors and old children. Childhood has its ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling which are proper to it. Nothing is less sensible than to want to substitute ours for theirs, and I would like as little to insist that a ten-year-old be five feet tall as that he possess judgement. Actually, what would reason do for him at that age? It is the bridle of strength, and the child does not need this bridle. (Rousseau 1979:90)

Often placed in opposition to Locke on the 'nature / nurture' debate, Rousseau actually shares with Locke what is central and key to this particular discussion. He

too views and advocates the treatment of children as a 'special class' of people. To resolve the difficulty with arriving at a definition, or fragility to the coherence of the concept of 'childhood', the conundrum can be approached from the reverse angle. What it is now possible to advance is that children in the post-Enlightenment era do in fact share a universal attribute but this common trait is that children, and therefore childhood, is the time when humans are universally 'not adult'. Children can therefore only be usefully understood in relation to this project when in relationship to modern adulthood (discussed above) as the central context to their existence (Mitterauer 1992; Postman 1994; Scott 2000; Simms 2008).

The 'human centred' orientation to the future of Enlightenment thinking, or 'progress', is the predominant paradigm for the cultures from which the participant interviews have been collected. Despite some significant damage to the notion of 'progress' that accompanied the reality of the industrialised killing that took place during the two world wars, it can still be said that cultural ripples that accompanied the separation or construction of adulthood reach a long way. Adulthood in various separated out forms can still be said to exist in modern cultures and so therefore can the distinctive construction of 'childhood'. This universal can be deduced from the way that humans interact with their environments to solve problems that are presented to them. Humans go beyond nature when solving problems but can still exhibit universal tendencies that could be interpreted as emanating from natural sources. Kenan Malik in his fascinating book *Man, Beast and Zombie* (2000) explains that in every culture known to anthropologists, hunters throw their spears pointy end first but that this obviously doesn't establish the existence of pointy end first gene (nature). This demonstrates the potential of social, natural and social/natural sources to universal human behaviours.

> Accepting the irreducibly social character of social entities is neither giving in to barbarians, nor falling into the Cartesian pit. It is simply accepting that human reason can be applied not just to the physical or natural realm but to the social realm too. One doesn't have to be a sociophobe to believe in science and reason. (Malik 2000:266)

Rousseau claimed that the masterpiece of a good education is a 'reasonable man', "If children understood reason, they would not need to be raised." (Rousseau 1979:89). While 'an education' is a social construction and the category displays great variation across cultures, the fact that 'education', an intergenerational transfer of knowledge (Furedi 2009), exists across cultures, demonstrates that humans have an imperative to solve problems. That in the West, the Enlightenment was the particular from that it took and that this process resulted in the creation of modern adulthood and consequently modern 'childhood' is merely the culturally specific form of this universal of humanity.

Rousseau, above, also reiterates what might be understood to be the main distinction between the two categories, childhood and adulthood. Simms (2008) uses Van den Berg to explain the link between children and adults which ultimately results in their separation. This separation is based on the intimate connection between the two concepts and how they sit in a reflexive relationship. Neither is seen as natural but a creation of modern Western history. Going further though, Van den Berg places 'adulthood' as the logically prior construction which in turn demanded a distinct pre-adult existence, 'childhood',

> Childhood appeared on the horizon of Western consciousness as a separate phase of life with its own social practices (schooling, fashion, entertainment) because adulthood had changed. The more complex society became, the longer it took to make the transition from the infant state to that of adulthood. "The child is only childlike in comparison to

> what is not childlike" (van den Berg, 1961, p. 32), and when adults become un-childlike, the true nature of childhood appears. Children become children when adults become more 'adult.' (Simms, 2008:446)

It is with the social development of society, and as a precondition or pretext of democracy, that adulthood be created as a generalised condition. For an expanding group of individuals, economically independent or free and equal in the eyes of the state, rationality and reason were assumed. These individuals became members of adulthood, in place of the aristocracy as the formal wielders of power and separated from childhood as from their passive past,

> The Subject is perhaps most importantly the bearer of rights. Liberty is his watchword. Against the Church and the King he asserts his own right to determine his future. The individual's freedom of conscience, speech, association, from arbitrary arrest and of private property were all asserted by the Subject. With such freedoms the Subject built our own civilisation. (Heartfield, 2006:8)

Chapter 4 - Theoretical Elements (Childhood and Development)

This chapter aims to synthesise a novel theoretical approach, anchored to the understanding of childhood previously developed, which will be deployed when analysing the data set.

Generating the Individual Mind

To understand the processes that occur to generate this social transformation, the "appearance of maturation" (Simms 2008:446), where the physiological and social combine, we should turn to first Lev Vygotsky and then to Harry Stack Sullivan (as related by Youniss 1980, 1999). Both of these pioneers of their field grappled with how society interacts with the developing mind to create new biological structures yielding better sociability on the part of the developing individual.

For Vygotsky human development or maturation is not a natural process but one that involves the 'interiorization' of culture (Morss 1996:12). This can be understood as the social construction of a person's mind. This does lead to observable biological changes to brain structures (Sercombe 2009) but Vygotsky came to understand that such changes are situated within historical-social conditions rather than, or interaction with, nature.

For Sullivan the centrality of relationships to the process were similarly important,

> Sullivan did not deny that biology plays an important role in human, especially adolescent, development (puberty); nevertheless, he emphasized the socialization process and acculturation- the nature and

> quality of interpersonal relations- much more than almost any other theoretical system. (Muuss 1996:103)

It is little known that despite being separated by geography and pre-Cold War political divisions, Sullivan was aware of and influenced by Vygotsky and published an early, if not the first, English translation of Vygotsky's work.

> In the second volume of the journal Sullivan founded, *Psychology*, appeared an essay *"Thought and Speech"* by L.S. Vygotsky (1939), translated by the same Eugenia Hanfmann and Jacob Kasinin discussed earlier… This is in fact the final chapter of Vygotsky's (1962) Thought and Language, 23 years before the entire book was to be first published in English… (Bazerman 2001: 178)

Sullivan's life bracketed that of Vygotsky and despite their different contexts their theoretical contributions to our understanding of the roles played in child development by culture and learning are remarkably sympathetic.

Vygotsky was a Marxist and brought Marxist method to the study of the human brain. Marxist method in this context is about historical materialism, whereby there is no recourse to supernatural or divine explanations. Also, and significantly, there is no over reliance on a kind of physical reductionism where, to be considered a science, psychology was expected to only deal with the tangible. Materialism utilises the historical and social contexts of the entity under enquiry. This was particularly important to contemporary discussions for Vygotsky as they tended to be dualistic in nature, attributing explanations to either nature in the biological determinist vein or to nurture in terms of Behaviouralism (Wertsch 1985:20)

Vygotsky came into practicing psychology in a world where Freud had established psychology (psychoanalysis) as a science. This involved grappling with the relationship between the individual and society. Freud understood the ego, or the conscious, as able to synthesise powers to control the id, or the instinctive / unconscious (Freud 1993:296). This explanation offered a way to understand what is special and unique about humans in terms of reason and conscious intent but still left the explanation at the level of the individual.

Vygotsky established that there was more to the super-ego than social adaptation of the ego. He understood that through conscious intent humans can also change the world that they inhabit thus changing humanity in the process (Vygotsky 1994).

For Freud the horror of World War 1 caused him to reject control of our sub-conscious,

> After World War 1 Freud was basically a pessimist. He felt that Man was an impossible creature, very very sadistic and a bad species, and did not believe that Man could be improved. (Federn, quoted in Curtis 2002)

The experience of the Great War led Freud to re-embrace the power of the id and ultimately back to biological determinism. At this time the significance of subconscious influences on human thought and behaviour were again becoming influential more generally e.g. the Surrealist movement. Vygotsky and his colleagues though held onto an understanding rooted in historical materialist terms. Marx and Engels had first posited that historical changes in society and the material conditions of life continually bring about changes in thought and behaviour (Engels, 1974). Vygotsky applied this approach of mediated human behaviour that is, the use of physical and psychological tools, to establish the

major points in the development of humans.The point at which children master cultural behaviour was seen as a significant development point.

Vygotsky used his insights to intervene in the fissure between biological determinists and Behaviouralism. He established that the 'self' is a product of not one source of influence: Evolution, sociohistorical or ontologenic, but a product of all three in a simultaneous relational process. While the opposing sides of the nurture / nature debate emphasised the singularity of their own view point, Vygotsky (1978) argued that the social was special but that all three influences had to be taken into account.

Introducing 'culture' to the process brings to the table a new dynamic to development, one that emanates from and is reflexive to humanity and one which qualitatively changes elementary or natural thought processes into higher psychological operations. This aspect of development is unique to humans and on it rests our separation from the natural world. Animals may have an evolutionary past but only humans have a history (Malik 2000). It is these areas that form the interest and significance of Vygotsky to my project. In what ways did social processes influence and change the development of the childhoods under study? What were the concrete processes by which these socio-cultural processes came to influence at an individual and community level? How did the children come to understand themselves as active reasoning moral agents as they moved towards adulthood?

For Vygotsky (1978) there is a qualitative change to development once children begin to share pretend or sociodramatic play. New opportunities are created where meaning is separated from specific objects. Vygotsky is significant because he pioneered work that stressed the social origins of language and thinking and develop theories on the mechanisms by which culture becomes part of a person's nature (Morss 1996; Vygotsky 1978; Guldberg 2009; Haste, 1999). His

significance to this project is that his theories help explain how individuals develop sociability and how changes in society can impact on psychological make up.

A departure from the then established theory that Vygotsky makes, is one that takes us away from the natural and passive process of maturation, as perhaps developed by Piaget in his theory of 'stages' (Muuss 1996) (although Vygotsky acknowledges Piaget's huge contribution to understanding) towards one by which there is a unified and mutually reinforcing interaction between humans and their environment both natural and social. This leads us in the first instance to two novel constructions. For explanatory purposes it is worth relating one to the realm of 'development' and the other to the realm of 'learning'.

Firstly, signs and symbols acquire a specific organising role in human thought and result in completely new forms of behaviour,

> ….the most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development, converge. (Vygotsky 1978:24).

The employment of signs and symbols allows the child to free itself of the 'concrete' when problem solving. Such is the increase in ability that this approach allows children, that when they are used to functioning at a particular level, by using speech for example, and are deprived of this tool, their abilities drop off significantly. It is in the use of symbols and memory that allow humans to plan out what it is that they wish to achieve through any given activity, thus freeing humans from the immediate context of what is readily perceptible.

Morss uses Vygotsky to identify another 'universal' aspect to childhood as well, that of being "naturally social", (Morss 1996:10). Vygotsky's formulation of 'internalisation' is explained using the following quote,

> Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)….All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals. (Morss 1996:13)

This process of development (which when discussing 'higher' functions means cultural ones) must be assumed to exist across time and geography in terms of the process but be highly socially specific in terms of the content.

When we move over to the sphere of learning the use of symbols shows its true significance. Vygotsky developed a new approach to understanding the significance of learning. Previous models had separated maturing or development from learning and established a temporal relationship between the two that either placed development as a foundation on which learning was built or placed the two in a concurrent or simultaneous relationship.

Vygotsky theorised that they in fact exist in a unified relationship but that there also exists two developmental levels in a child. One that is the actual developmental level and a second category that he called the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky defines the ZPD in the following way,

> It is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky 1978:86).

Vygotsky uses the measurement of two ten year olds to explain his ZPD. If two ten year olds entering school were to be measured intellectually and were both found to be operating at the mental age of eight, they could be described in such a fashion- both chronologically ten but mentally eight. If the investigation was not stopped there but each boy was offered new ways of solving the questions presented to them a clearer understanding of their abilities could be obtained. One boy might perhaps be able to now solve the problems up to a nine year olds' level while the other could show greater potential and be able to solve problems at a twelve year olds' level.

Vygotsky states that in fact learning can be said to be ahead of development and legitimises this by saying,

> …human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them. (Vygotsky 1978:88).

Here he explains that the process of learning germinates a number of developmental potentials that move a child on to new higher levels of functioning that would not occur without learning. He also alludes to the significance of dominant cultural narratives which will be examined in more detail later in this chapter.

Vygotsky continues and applies his constructions to the play situation. When considering the process of play in children he separates 'play' from real life or 'action'.

> …at the pre-school age, a great many unrealizable tendencies and desires emerge. It is my belief that if needs that could not be realized immediately did not develop during the school years, there would be no play, because

> play seems to be invented at the point when the child begins to experience unrealizable tendencies...To resolve this tension, the preschool child enters an imaginary, illusory world in which the unrealizable desires can be realized, and this world is what we call play. (Vygotsky 1978:93).

Play here is seen as separate to but an idealised reflection of real life. If it were real life then it wouldn't be play, it would be governed by reality and not rules. If it didn't have some attachment to life then there would be no rooting for the imagination.

Vygotsky uses the example of two sisters playing at being sisters to explain. Although they are in actual fact 'sisters' what they play at is what they think sisters should be. They move into a fantasy world where they act out what society projects they should be, not how they actually are. It is in play that children first free themselves of the situational constraints of their real life but in so doing move their abilities forward by subjecting themselves to rules based on real life generally beyond their current abilities.

> …play creates a zone of proximal development of the child. In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in a magnifying glass, play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major source of development. (Vygotsky 1978:102).

Play then can be said to allow children to act in a freer way- independent from the concrete situation. At the same time though, while children are liberated from reality, they actually impose constraints or rules on themselves that are based on their idealised understanding of the real world. This allows play to be both enjoyable but simultaneously very demanding, as the controls they exert are

greater than those when adults are around. Youniss also makes sense of this process through his discussions of Sullivan and the constructs of symmetrical and asymmetrical relationships (Youniss, 1980).

Self from Selves

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development is generated between individuals. This is where the biological development of an individual requires that individual to participate in social relationships to achieve biological developmental progress within their brain.

Not only do these social relationships result in biological / organic development, they also produce social learning that feeds into the individual at a moral level, reflexing onto the initialising social relationships. This kind of learning is examined by Youniss (1980 and 1999) with his detailed analysis of Harry Stack Sullivan. Youniss focuses on the processes that occur between participants in the social relationships of children. According to Muuss (1996), Sullivan understood these as crucial.

Youniss attempts to take our understanding further than has thus been achieved. By taking Sullivan's centrality of interpersonal relationship theory, he dissects the difference between adult / child or unilateral (asymmetrical) relations and child / child or symmetrical relations.

From the age of about 5 yrs children begin to establish peer relations which are understood to be critical to the emergence of 'self'. Youniss (1980:29) states that these relations are the source from which the main characteristics of the mature personality come. Children enter this new world with all the certainty that comes with being sure that their understanding of the world is the way things actually are. Imagine the surprise when they meet other 'equals' who are just as certain of

their viewpoint. They quickly find out that their interactions follow a different course than those they have with adults. These are direct or symmetrical relations.

On their own unsupervised symmetrical relationship situations lead to nothing but ‘tit for tat’, for one child to give in would be just to replicate the unilateral aspect of the child / adult relationships. An alternative direction though is to replace unilateral concession with co-operation. Joint concession is a completely new experience for children and results in the realisation that temporary concession can lead to better fulfilment. Consider the experience of playing tennis as a child. With no umpire the game would quickly break down if the two competing children could not co-operate with line calls. Youniss (1999) identifies cooperation as the as the key indicator of mutually developing friendship. Without it he believes that friendship would not be possible as literal reciprocity would only lead to confrontation as each act would only determine that another would follow and hence eternal instability. Agreeing to cooperate is essential in friendship as,

> Without agreement to cooperate, there is no sure means for breaking the impasse….. The specific procedures that mediate cooperation have to be learned through mutual negotiation of the many challenging moments that come up in any normally varigated relationship. (Oswald,1992). With two active minds seeking to order reality, negotiation is mediated by procedures such as discussion, debate, compromise, argument, and majority rule. (Youniss 1999:17)

Youniss quotes Piaget and then Sullivan to illustrate the social implications of supervised and unsupervised relationships between children (1980:14),

> In all spheres, two types of relations must be distinguished: constraint and co-operation. The first implies an element of unilateral respect, of

> authority and prestige; the second is simply the intercourse between individuals on an equal footing. (Piaget)

> If you will look closely at one of your children when he finally finds a chum...you will discover something very different in the relationship, namely, that your child begins to develop a real sensitivity of what matters to another person....not...."what should I do to get what I want" but instead "what should I do to contribute to the happiness or to support the prestige and feelings of worthwhileness of my chum. (Sullivan)

Youniss' key construct is 'reciprocity' and its development must be studied through interpersonal relations. It is the tempering of the direct form of reciprocity that takes place between equal individuals in a mutual situation that leads to part of the mature personality as adulthood is attained.

As a child moves through his early years and into youth these relationships become increasingly turbulent and intense. This inevitably leads to upset and pain but 'intense' is exactly what these relationships need to be (Bukowski et al 1998). Youniss (1980:169) quotes Sullivan at length again,

> I would hope that preadolescent relationships were intense enough for each of the two chums to get to know practically everything about the other one that could possibly be exposed in an intimate relationship, because that remedies a good deal of the often illusory, usually morbid, feeling of being different, which is such a striking part of rationalizations of insecurity in later life. (Sullivan)

For these symmetrical relationships to be such and able to deliver the necessary intensity, they essentially require to be unsupervised (Youniss, 1980 and 1999). Youniss responds to concerns about modern day changes to the level of

supervision that children are under. He joins others in berating schools for significant reductions in the time and space children are afforded during school playtimes / breaks (Blatchford, 1999, Blatchford and Sumpner, 1998; International Play Association). By reducing playtime and placing playgrounds under omnipresent adult supervision during breaks (Blatchford, 1999; Blatchford and Sumpner, 1998), legitimate symmetrical relationships are precluded.

In the wider realm of children's play (in gardens, on the streets, in parks, etc) or other informal time e.g. while walking to school, there is a concurrent collapse in the amount of freedom being allowed (Cranwell, 2001; Cunningham and Jones, 1999; Davis and Jones, 1996; ESRC, 2000; Furedi, 2001b; Hillman et al, 1990; Hughes, 1994; Knight, 2000 and 2004 McNeish and Roberts, 1995; Scottish Executive, 2002/1; Waiton, 2001; Wilkinson and Lockhart, 1980). These disruptions amount to what may become a serious block on the social development of the individual as, once the child or young person's symmetrical relations environment becomes supervised then it ceases to be such and reverts to being an asymmetrical one (Youniss, 1980).

In more recent years there has been a widening recognition that children's play and experiences of community life are being severely curtailed because of concerns over child safety, and that this is at least potentially a problem. The dramatic reductions on the free movement of children and young people is one area of concern.

> Increased societal concerns about child safety have heightened parental concerns, especially with regard to traffic dangers and child abduction by strangers. For example, in a UK study of 1,011 parents, 43% believed that children under the age of 14 years should not be allowed out unsupervised, and half of those parents felt that they should not be allowed outside unsupervised until they were 16 years of age. (Brussoni et al 2012:3138)

While the focus of my study on unsupervised time is shared by the authors above, a chief concern of the discussion about child safety is linked to the, previously detailed, dramatic decline in challenge provided by purpose built playgrounds and in school play environments.

> …teachers' fear of the legal consequences of injury can elicit over-zealous risk reduction with the result that playgrounds lack challenge, and the potential benefits of play become limited. (Bundy et al 2009:33)

A wide ranging discussion about the benefits and even necessity of physical risk has emerged. This tends to focus on the physical challenge that play parks have offered in the past but are not now due to the various concerns raised by safety culture. These include, children becoming bored with what play parks offer due to more conservative, risk averse, equipment design, and an emerging paradox whereby children in search of excitement use play equipment in ways that it wasn't designed for and thus increase the likelihood of more serious injuries. Further more, the reduction in vigorous and adventurous play activity in children, because of increased controls by parents and teachers, is perceived to be resulting in other problems and increasing other, competing, risk factors such as obesity and a further paradox of impaired cognitive development in risk comprehension.

> …reviews on children's accidents on playgrounds have found that the most common risk factors are not the characteristics of the equipment, but rather the children's behaviour and normal rashness, such as walking or turning summersaults on top of a climbing frame, standing (or even standing on the shoulder of others) on the swing, or using others off a slide or a swing. (Hansen Sandseter and Ottesen Kennair 2011:259)

> …a risk deprived child…(is)… more prone to problems such as obesity, mental health concerns, lack of independence, and a decrease in learning, perception and judgement skills. (Brussoni et al, 2012)

While this discussion shares the starting point previously identified and bases itself on similar empirical data, there is a difference between it and the one being advanced in my work. There has been a certain fetishisation of risk whereby risk becomes understood to be a valuable end in itself. The focus of this concern is mainly on physical risk though and sits within the broader cultural narrative of safety, belaying a different understanding of the culture's social drivers. Safety, or risk avoidance, remains the social prism through which the associated problems are viewed and this discussion is framed. So, while there is a degree of challenge to the prevailing culture,

> Our aim is to contribute to the discussion on whether the goal of unintentional physical injury prevention should be to keep children as safe a possible or as safe as necessary. (Brussoni et al 2012:3135)

> …stimulating and challenging experiences involving physical risk are an important and necessary aspect of children's healthy growth and development… (Little and Wyver 2008:33)

there is still a contextual acceptance that children today are somehow, in essence, more vulnerable now than in the past. So one risk, in this case the threat of of injury or death during risky play activities, is just replaced by another risks, obesity, poor mental health, and poor judgement skills (Brussoni et al 2012). Even a new medical problem, stemming from the impact of missing out on physically risky play activity, has been discovered,

> …the term “Risk Deficit Disorder” to describe a set of problems that children can experience resulting from attempts to remove risk from their lives. (Brussoni et al 2012:3142)

In this scenario there is no challenge to the culture of risk but only attempts to establish which of many risks now facing our children is the most risky- the now embedded narrative continues to be accepted. The emerging array of paradoxes requires an increasingly contrived lexicon to be coined e.g. ‘safe risks’, ‘risk aversion’ and ‘surplus safety’ or “(the problem of)…seeing risk and hazard as synonymous.” (Bundy et al, 2009; Hansen Sandseter and Ottesen Kennair 2011), all trying to explain how ‘risk’ should be embraced while not being risky.

Overprotection, through governmental design controls on playgrounds or more strict guidelines for nursery staff and school teachers on what playground behaviour is to be allowed without becoming susceptible to litigation in the event of an accident, can lead to in increase in the overall level of anxiety in society (Hansen Sandseter and Ottesen Kennair 2011). It can easily be imagined how the fear of litigation itself might lead to a vicious circle of decreasing opportunity for children and young people to experiment and stretch themselves both physically and crucially, socially. But addressing this trend by artificially introducing physical risk to play environments might not be a solution. Opie and Opie (1984) point out there is also a paradox within this approach,

> In the long run, nothing extinguishes self-organized play more effectively than does action to promote it. (Opie and Opie 1984:16)

Overlaying the concepts above onto the participant's stories will help identify patterns of behaviour associated with symmetrical relationships and unsupervised time gained through freedoms and licences granted to the children, under study, by their parents. Reflecting real world behaviours through analysing these

interviews re-establishes the links between play and life that symbolic play originally severed. As children grow older and mature they will develop competencies they need to participate in the world around them. This participation promotes ‘worldliness’ or the abandonment of naivety. As discussed, these experiences can develop social competencies as well as physical ones. It is through experimentation that the world begins to make sense to a developing child. Simple experiences like walking to school have a wide and varied range of learning opportunities and choices to be made: crossing the road unsupervised, taking short cuts home, getting stuck up trees or lost, conceptualising the passage of time, being late, talking to strangers (bad) or asking adults the time (all right). It is through experience and practice that physical maturity gets accompanied by social competency.

The Role of Community

There is another aspect to being unsupervised within a community setting that is also essential. Initial considerations were focussed primarily on the centrality of experiences of symmetrical relationships acquired during unsupervised time. While the work of Vygotsky and Sullivan emphasises the play environment as a developmental site, informal asymmetrical relationships experienced within this free time and space can also be said to be essential, if not to the individual, to society at large.

Up to now it has been understood that children experience only two types of relationship- symmetrical, as detailed and explored above and asymmetrical. Asymmetrical, or supervised, relationships were assumed to be singular in nature. Children related to the supervising adult in a deferential manner and knowledge and culture were transmitted during these interactions. Wrongly, these relationships were understood to be wholly formal in nature, either with parents, other family, adult family friends or with, usually paid, supervisors such as teachers. The participant's stories demonstrate that relations between children and

other adults engaging in informal or community based contact with children also require to be incorporated into the theoretical framework.

Youniss explains the importance of relationships between children and adults by quoting Bronfenbrenner,

> If children have contact only with their own age-mates, there is no possibility for learning culturally established patterns of cooperation and mutual concern. (Youniss 1980):xvii)

Youniss is correct to say this but in that his preoccupation is with the nature of relationships between children he doesn't pursue this avenue. However, the nature of community for the interviewees has a content important to the profiling task. So, what is the immediate nature of community?

Society appears to be constructed from multiple intersubjectivities. Mohamed Ali's famous, if short, poem delivered to assembled graduating Harvard University students in the 1975 sums up the social constructionist understanding of society nicely, "Me. We." But is there a broader level on which we all relate to one another without direct contact? More than multiple 'we's'? If so, what is it that would bind such a society together and give it a sense of togetherness, purpose and adult solidarity allowing for what can be understood today as 'strangers' the permission to approach and have dealings with children?

Putnam and Feldstein (2003) lament the loss of togetherness in modern times and attempt to identify ways to restore that lost sense in *Better Together- restoring American Community* (2003). Milbrey McLaughlin's (et al) concept of community 'Wizards' in *Urban Sanctuaries: Neighborhood Organizations in the Lives and Futures of Inner City Youth* (2001) goes some way to addressing the issue. These active and engaged community leaders espouse the sense of mission

Putnam pines for. But for those children who's stories make up the data set there seems to have been a more generalised sense of community. Not that this was always all sweetness and light but one where one could can assume that,

> ...children co-exist with adults who hold to views of an already established society which has rules and values. (Youniss 1980:25)

And that these adults are not special superhuman 'wizards' as McLaughlin describes or on the pay roll of the state in some form or another but average, everyday people with no additional training or more authority over and above that of other adults.

There is a full and thorough discourse on the changes in community relations of trust that have occurred particularly during the late 20th century period (Putnam 2000; McLaughlin et al 2001; Furedi 1997, 2001a and 2001b; Beard, 2005; Beck, 2004; Coalter el al, 2000; Cranwell, 2001; Department of the Environment, 1973; Gill, 2007; Glasgow Media Group, 1999/2000; Hendrick, 1997; Hillman, 1998; Humphries, 1981 and 1988; Huntley, 1994; Jenkins, 1992; Landry, 2005; Maurice, 1914; O'Brien et al, 2000; Pearson, 1983; Rhodes, 1994; Scottish Executive, 2002/1 and 2002/2; Sissons, 1997; Stevenson, 1984; Streatfield, 1974; Uslander, 2002; Wainwright and Calnan, 2002). The diminished sense of trust, seemingly replaced by the officially sanctioned dis-trust of criminal checks under Disclosure Scotland (and their counterparts in England and Wales) for example, collapses in collective responsibility and individual duty and perhaps above all the end of spontaneity in ad hoc relationships, a thorough exposition of which is not the central focus of this project, all bear witness these changes. Waiton (2008b) relates a personalised account of this from a retired teacher's letter in the Herald,

> The letter, entitled 'My Shame Over Lack of Courage', it was written by an ex-teacher Catherine McGuiness. She explained how she had walked

> past a group of teenagers who were dropping litter in the park, and had said nothing.
>
> McGuiness said that approaching children was for many adults more difficult because children had been 'programmed to trust no one', rather than simply because of their anti-social behaviour. On her part she felt that she had 'chickened out' of challenging these young people. She asked herself whether she had 'joined the adults who have opted out of civic responsibility'. She wondered, '[h]ave adults become so frightened of the younger generation they're prepared to look the other way rather than tangle with them? (Waiton 2008b:163)

The participant interviews will be examined to glean if they reflect such a generalised collapse in the confidence or 'sense of mission' within adult culture. They may reveal that in the past the polar opposite of the above may have been the case. A universal past experience, on a day to day basis, forming and transmitting generalised expectations of children growing up during the first two thirds of the 20th Century.We may establish that there were in fact ample opportunities for the learning of Youniss' 'culturally established patterns of cooperation and mutual concern' in the past.

Vygotsky can develop this aspect of theory too,

> As has been ascertained by psychological research, the human personality is formed basically under the influence of social relations, i.e. the system which it is part of, from the earliest childhood onward. 'My relationship to my environment', says Marx, 'is my consciousness.' [8] A fundamental change of the whole system of these relationships which man is a part of, will also inevitably lead to a change in consciousness, a change in man's whole behaviour. (1994:181)

In this sense the role of community and how social interactions become embedded within the developing psyche of a young person is quite different to Sullivan's focus. Sullivan focussed on intersubjectivities (Muuss, 1996) and loses something of society as a result. As Heartfield explains,

> Here is the developed sociologists' version of society that is implicit within the concept of social action as action orientated towards others. Incorporated within it, without being reformulated, is the relation of 'I' to 'my' others. Society is a reciprocity, a 'getting along' with others. This reciprocity is an intersubjectivity…(but)…No transcendence is taking place. The myriad relations of subject and other, remain what they were from the outset, reflex categories: the one is other to the other, the other is other to the one. Intersubjectivity is only an advance on subjectivity in the most formal sense of an addition of other subjectivities. (Heartfield 1996:13)

Society as only multiple subjectivities fails to distinguish that human society achieves significantly more than an aggregation of its constituent elements. Animals gather together and in some cases share a division of labour but human society is not simply an aggregation of individual actions and interactions. In human societies we acquire the capacity to shift ourselves beyond what we could have achieved individually and in the process make and remake ourselves. Culture provides both the context and the mechanism for this process. In this way the social construction that is culture provides a cross time, cross cultural or universal that is beyond nature.

For children stepping out and exploring the world that they are growing up within, society requires to be more than meeting more and more people. There has to be a context in which these relationships occur, a narrative or 'reality' for the time. This reality will be mediated and obscured but none-the-less exists and so impacts

on human, particularly children's, developing notions of what to expect and how to act and react.

Smith (1976:241) above indicated values pertaining to the narratives of his time which are echoed by Kipling in his poem 'If'. Carol Ann Duffy (2007) 'answers' Kipling back from the perspective of the current sensibility in her poem titled 'Kipling' providing a pertinent example of current values and the change that has occurred between the 19th century and the present within which sits the time frame of the participant stories collected.

O'Malley (2005), while exploring the social basis of fear of crime, reflects the modern context which Duffy's more postmodern values indicate, current approaches to human worth.

> The ideological solidarities that marked most of the twentieth century meant that, in debates around crime, representations of crime in the past were marshalled to support the contending policies of the present…Today, morality tends not to be understood historically. The fraying of the moral fabric is seldom rendered more visible by contrast with an earlier, happier state of affairs. If critics of cultural mores and the bad behaviour of the young do harbour memories of a golden age, they have made little effort to describe or even locate it. The contemporary form of social amnesia is not so much the selective recall of an older generation, as a more profound unmooring of the historical consciousness. The collapse of competing visions of society has induced a withering of collective memory, so that the past has purchase only in the most individualised of ways, as evidenced in the popularity of biographic and historical literature, of family history, genealogy and the like. (O'Malley 2005:9)

Exploring if a ‘collective memory’ existed and if so how it is reflected within the interviews and what impact it had on the emerging personhoods of the individuals concerned with, form a significant element of the findings, accepting that the time frame of the interviews has its own particular narrative and contradictions.

> The various internal contradictions which are to be found in different social systems find their expression both in the type of personality and in the structure of human psychology of that period (Vygotsky 1994:176)

Along the long and winding road to adulthood both privacy for children and the actions of private individual adults play a central role in the socialisation process. Whether you support the values being imparted or you find them abhorrent and the cause of social problems such as sexism, racism or violence (Kipling v’s Duffy), the processes are just that, the ‘mechanisms’ by which transmission occurs. Changes in the ways that society regards itself and fellow inhabitants can result in changes not only to the content of these processes but also to the ways that they work themselves through. Within the time frame of the participant's interviews such changes may be recognised or an understanding that a generalised stability existed may emerge.

That children are ‘naturally social’, definitely not adults and engaged in an idealised developmental process, it is hoped, has been established. That as a central embodiment of this process, children are engaged in freeing themselves from only external sources of control and establishing inner ways to guide themselves needs to be drawn out further.

Kant understood the ‘unique individual conscience’ as the necessary individual form that universal reason takes. Moral judgement came from an inner voice and it was the development of this that allows children to take control and so responsibility for their own actions (Malik 2000). Ultimately, the aim of this

project has become a profiling exercise of the childhood experiences which shape the various processes identified and discussed above culminating in the human 'subject'.

Malik (2000: 366) draws a line from the spontaneous 'creature of natural impulse' that an infant child is through to the emerging self-controlling 'self'. He draws a useful analogy between this task and the role John Wayne plays in the film Stagecoach when trying to pull a team of in-flight horses under control- children need to develop a cerebral John Wayne! While it doubtful if there is an area of the brain that can be isolated as 'the self' and that it is more that the brain eventually controls itself (Malik 2000), it is that control we call 'self'. The free reasoning individual, which is the basis for much that is human, emerges from a natural / biological entity through experiencing natural, social and natural/social processes and influences to become the purely social 'active subject'.

Contextualising Elusive Individuals

The work of Frank Furedi provides a contemporary supporting framework to the theoretical constructions above and acts as my social contextualisation that both Vygotsky and Sullivan emphasise. Over the last 20 years Furedi has developed a critique of society's lowering expectations. Diminished expectations of society and individuals have been consistent themes in his works- 'Culture of Fear' (1997), 'Paranoid Parenting' (2001) and 'Therapy Culture' (2004) and form the basis of the dialectic between society and the emerging individual in my work. This dynamic relationship between the collective social and the individual develop a firm base for examining selfhood.

In these publications he develops the thesis that there is a spiralling collapse of authority in western elites and that this is resulting in a cultural script of diminished expectations both of society, or progress, and of individuals. His understanding of the term 'cultural script' is deeper than the broader 'emotional

climate' level which refers to the experiences of individuals in the context of group interactions. A 'cultural script' goes beyond the individual and transmits rules about feelings and what those feelings should mean.

In these ways Furedi is novel and has self-consciously diverged from the Left and Right wing political discourse. He takes each issue and analyses it on its own terms through the prism of Enlightenment rationality and reason, individual resilience and subjectivity. It is in this context the developing Subject is located. The cultural script or narrative of the diminished individual is interpreted and internalised both by adults and children and changes what is expected of a person. When considering natural or man made disasters Furedi states that,

> Vulnerability is not a state of being that emerges in response to a disaster – it precedes it. (2007: 242)

The expectations we have of each other but particularly children are set within this framework. Children are assumed to be especially vulnerable and so everything to do with them is affected. The bullying issue is a case in point, where a wider set of negative experiences is considered damaging and thus to be avoided, curtailed or counselled for. As a metaphor this social framework is a way of understanding the approaches to children's formative experiences in general and Furedi describes how parents have been placed in the frame for perpetuating damage across the generations (2001a).

Furedi (1997) identifies 'safety' as a fundamental value of the 1990's and situates the effort devoted to safety in the space once occupied by struggles to change the world- or keep it the same. The preoccupation with safety has become 'routine and banal' (Furedi 1997:3) and thus no area of life is immune. A consciousness of risk has developed into a constant state, where everyone is at risk at some point

and almost every situation can be considered as risky. The particulars of any given threat or problem are separate and incidental.

Conclusion

The tasks set for this chapter by the preceding one were firstly, to develop a formulation for childhood which, while incorporating social constructionism also reconciles the specificity of a particular culture with certain universal traits of childhood. Secondly, to produce insights that could be deployed in coming to an understanding of the data.

Through a process of tackling the questions that arose while attempting this reconciliation, an understanding of childhood as universally 'not adulthood' emerged. This placed adulthood as logically prior to childhood in socio-cultural terms and developmentally made the 'condition' of childhood aspirational, where certain attributes, such as 'agency', had to be internalised in order to attain adult status.

The question thus became one of how children master cultural behaviour and acquire agency. The 'agent' possesses autonomy, the freedom to make choices, which is developed while exposed to a variety of lifestyles and beliefs. This exposure occurs in a socially driven arena, understood as 'community', where the individual can exist within and absorb discourse. But the individual also has a need for privacy, both with close friends where intimate ideas can be shared or tested out and resolved, and of a solitary nature where reflection can occur. Youniss' work demonstrates the importance of private space and time to child development. However, there may be a wider and corrosive impact on society at large of perpetual surveillance as it dispenses with the requirement for people to maintain their moral co-pilot. Omnipresent adults or other surveillance such as CCTV could result in the stunting or diminution of moral character.

In the course of private deliberations with close friends, individuals not only resolve their own beliefs but can influence those of others, and this is where tensions existing between developmental drivers of biology and culture can be reconciled. Human development and learning incorporate both with the addition of the transcendent reflexive.

Kant ‘dared us to know’, urging humanity to stand on its own two feet without seeking guidance from others. This brought the Enlightenment to society and also the individual, beautifully shown in the ground breaking writings of Joyce where characters are were unmediated by a knowing external narrator. Joyce (1965) and Enlightenment thinking ultimately rejected the ‘spiritual’ and replaced God with Mankind, who is transcendent in the sense that humans can transform themselves, their nature and their world.

Vygotsky identifies that children ‘learn’ how to be adults before they ‘become’ adults through the three seemingly exclusive but simultaneous and reflexive areas of evolution, sociohistorical and ontogeny. Their learning is gradually internalised as children participate in their own struggles e.g. between inclination and obligation, and grow into the intellectual life around them. Culture eventually becomes part of their nature, though always susceptible to the continued influence of societal change.

The processes by which ‘children grow into the intellectual life of those around them’, while being understood in an academic way, have a concrete reality. It is this concrete reality, through the stories related, which needs to be explored in the data analysis chapters. How, through their experiences of play, freedom, independent travel, interactions between themselves and with non-authority bearing adults and such like do children come to understand themselves as, and actually become, ‘adult’? The following chapter on Method will produce a matrix

by which these understandings can be brought to bear on the interviews contained within the data set.

Chapter 5 - Methodology (Method)

This chapter on Methodology will describe and explain how the data for this project, while having been gathered in an unorthodox manner, complies with the strict ethical standards expected of study at PhD level. Compliance not only in terms of the conditions under which it was collected but also in terms of the way in which the data was analysed.

The process of collecting and analysing the data set for this project was complex due to the project's unorthodox genesis. The project passed through several transitions. Initially, as indicated in the Prelude section, the reminiscences being collected were personal stories with which I planned to illustrate a book about past childhood freedoms and licences. While still a long term goal, the book was superseded firstly, by study at M. Phil level where the stories became data to be used to describe a dramatic change to society. This then progressed to a Ph.D thesis, where these same stories, now firmly 'data', would be mined as an 'archive' and analysed using theoretical tools developed to generate a new understanding. These progressions actually had a limited impact on the data collection process. This data was not collected under Ph.D conditions or having had the more structured ground work required by Ph.D study providing it with a rigorous preparation. For the purposes of this Ph.D the data has been treated very much as a pre-existing archive. It would be naive to suggest that the project would not be different or have benefited from a 'tighter' approach but I can claim that the ethical standard adhered to would not have been any more honourable. This fact is reflected in the retrospective ethical approval from the University.

To describe, explain and justify the processes involved in the reorientation of the project to academic study, it is intended to structure this chapter in the following way: Setting up the data collection; Carrying out the interviews (Practical and

Ethical issues); Transcriptions and Analysis. In addition, a further section was also required to position the non-neutral researcher within the process and this appears at the end of the chapter.

Setting up the data collection

It might be generally true to say that people like to talk about themselves but for the target group this could not be assumed. For many in my target group, adults who grew up during the early and mid 20th century the 'democratisation' of opinion, the notion that they themselves would have anything to say about the world which would be of interest to anyone else, was disconcerting. Until recent times the notion that an interview with an ordinary person about their life being of any use in the generation of knowledge would have been strange to people (Gubrium and Holstein 2002). It might therefore be anticipated that today's elderly population may be at odds with modern expectations, being more deferential to the interviewer, quizzical about why they were of interest and suspicious of the intimacy required for life stories to be shared and recorded. In fact, the crumbling of authority that this change represents is paradoxically paralleled in a development of the immediate subject area being investigated.

With these factors in mind certain approaches were adopted to encourage volunteers to become involved. These approaches were also employed to prepare and reassure prospective interviewees, gain informed agreement for the interviews and adopted with a view to relaxing volunteers in order to gather and develop better data.

Initial pilot work, at the Dumfries Day Centre for the Elderly and in partnership with The Lighthouse (Scotland's Centre for architecture, design and the city), comprised of group discussions at both The Dumfries and Govanhill Day Centres for the Elderly. During these discussions the prompt sheet used to structure the subsequent interviews was refined. It also became apparent that two approaches

would be required to populate the potential interviewee list. Initially, I made approaches to other day centres for the elderly asking for volunteers to share stories from their childhood. This was relatively successful in achieving volunteers but sometimes the noisy and busy environment was not conducive to gathering 'good' data. In addition to this approach my mother, a retired speech therapist, and acting as a research assistant, had a generous circle of contacts from her work with stroke patients. This second approach was more dynamic in terms of creating a diverse set of interviewees. Through a process of 'snowballing', whereby an initially small group of people would agree to be interviewed and would then suggest other people, who would repeat the process and so on, a large group with wide ranging years of birth, social and geographic backgrounds was achieved. Importantly, these volunteers were interviewed in the quieter surroundings of their homes allowing for increased comfort, intimacy and consequently better sharing of stories. Not only was this data better due to the more conducive environment but by employing the two forms of collection I generated the volume of interviews that I considered necessary for the production of an interesting book.

At the point of first contact, with an as yet un-interviewed contact, the prompt sheet to be used by each interviewer (Appendix 1) would be sent out or delivered. This allowed prospective interviewees to become familiar with the type of information being sought and for some preparation and note taking. In addition, this approach helped to deal with any apprehension about what was expected. It provided an opportunity for subjects to consider what was going to be expected of them, what they were actually going to speak about and to then make an informed choice about whether to consent to be interviewed or not. All who volunteered were interviewed.

Audiotape (and Mini Disc) recorded interviews were selected as a method for recording this research. This method was selected for a number of reasons. The

primary reason for audio recording being used was that the ‘stories’ themselves were considered to be most important. It was the actual words and phrases that the interviewees used which was going to become the ‘meat’ of the planned publication. As such, interviewees’ words needed to be available in a verbatim form for using in quotes.

It is fair to say that if the process had been undertaken as academic study rather than for a book, the data set would have been smaller. Moving towards analysis posed significant volume problems with over 100 hours of audio to listen to, transcribe and analyse- the analysis depended on verbatim recording for purposes of accurate interpretation of nuance (Warren 2002). There was no way around this issue and I spent a considerable amount of time firstly listening to each recording and then transcribing them.

Carrying out the interviews

Practical issues

The set of interviewees was developed through a self selecting process. After initial individuals were identified and participated they often suggested friends and relatives who, after hearing about the research project, had stated that they would also like to be interviewed. Copies of the interview prompt sheet were then given out to be passed to the new potential interviewee and if the new person was still happy to participate an appointment was made with them.
In terms of the participants who were approached through day centres for the elderly, the interviews were carried out in a separate room to the one in general use. This was mainly to gain some level of quiet and privacy but it had the additional impact of further indicating consent, as volunteers came through to me rather than me going and sit next to potentially immobile subjects.

These conversations quickly became free-flowing as the presence of the recording devices was soon forgotten about and volunteers relaxed into discussing their

'favourite subject'. The conversations were intended to be as one-sided as possible with the hope being that subjects would soon get into their own flow and negate the need for intrusive prompting. Verbal and non-verbal encouragements were made and sometimes more directive interviewing took place, e.g. to return to something of interest or significant relevance which had been skipped over. In this sense, although the data collection was just a person talking, the guidance from the researchers 'grounded' the disclosure in the partial theoretical framework already developed at that point in the project which helped maintain relevance to the subject under scrutiny.

Each interview was ended sensitively as in some cases there had been a deep personal journey of disclosure initiated. Volunteers were always asked if they had anything else to say or a particular story they wanted to tell before the tape recorder was switched off. This approach indicated that the interview was coming to an end and allowed them to take control of the ending by contributing stories they wished to voice but had not yet found the opportunity to do so.

The use of new technology was alien to many of the interviewees and caused some awkwardness at first. However, as hoped for, most soon forgot that they were actually being recorded and slipped into an easy conversation about their past (Wenger 2002). It turned out that many older people, once started, like to talk about the past and often have well rehearsed stories about themselves. Some did insist on the recording being stopped for certain stories which, even after decades in many cases, still generated concern about being 'guilty' of misdemeanours. Hand written notes were made in some of these cases, while in one case the interview was discontinued due to the recollection causing upset even after all this time- this 'ending' was handled sensitively by the research assistant.

While the prompt sheets had open and closed questions, every opportunity was taken to allow the recollections to flow. Life stories were what were being sought.

In some ways, despite the highly personal nature of the conversations, the volunteers were almost passive in this process i.e. vessels of facts, memories and feelings. This is not to say that they were not engaged in their particular conversation, they very much were. Neither is it to draw the false conclusion that due to generational differences, discussed already, their reticence led me to coerce or trick them into disclosure. It is more that while there is a public discourse about changes happening to children and childhood, the basis of my investigation, it was my theoretical work which was going to make sense of their stories not their ownership of them. As such, the stories they told while being about them personally, were more of a window to the past for me to engage in analysing.

A conversational approach elicited a considerably more 'natural' style of disclosure and consequently much more information was volunteered. Open questioning often prompted reminiscences that were tangential to that intended by the question but often these questions provided a much more vigorous flow and richer vein of of information to be subsequently mined.

In other ways the volunteer interviewees were 'active' in the generation of my data and this proved to be a difficulty which had to be addressed in the analysis. Some claims to facts did come out of the interviews but these often contradicted 'facts' previously given. Problems with exact and detailed or 'fuzzy' memory, as Burns (2000) coins the issue, caused some problems. Often memories were interpreted and then reinterpreted by the interviewees. These reinterpretations were generally through a modern prism of changed values (Wainwright and Calnan 2002) and needed to be controlled for both during the analysis but also during the interviews themselves. Still though, despite the data set being a collection of recollections by older adults about their childhood experiences, the collective weight of what these stories share points strongly to there being an internal reliability to the emerging narrative.

As the data collection progressed the researchers developed nuances to their questioning which allowed for 'flow', encouraged the elaboration of throw-away remarks and sought clarification when contradictions or potential modern reinterpretations were made. Charmaz (2002) identifies that often collection of data and its analysis require to be concurrent due to emerging themes. The researchers remained in close contact so that memos, written during interviewing, could be exchanged and discussed. This allowed subsequent interviews to be more focussed as particular themes emerged as more or less relevant or fruitful. It also compensated for the fact that the majority of interviews were carried out by the research assistant as it meant that the relationship was closer to that of a proxy and might otherwise have been the case.

An example of an amendment of approach was the curtailing the collection of quantitative data, from closed questions included on the prompt sheet, when fairly rapidly, more so than if data had been collected individually, it became clear that the closed questions were yielding the same or very similar answers and therefore not particularly useful to continue squeezing in, e.g. "At what age did you first travel to school unaccompanied?", the answer generally being between one or two days after their first day at school. This data is not presented.

The closed questions included in the prompt sheet were with a view to quantitative analysis. They sought facts which were particularly susceptible to 'fuzzy' memories. It was decided as the project developed that inaccuracies in fact could be 'lived with' due to the historical 'sense' or 'feeling' of an era being sought and the internal consistency of the life story being told. Atkinson (2002) approaches the life story in an altogether similarly informal way and describes it as,

> ...a highly personal encounter; an analysis of a life story is highly subjective....Historical truth is not the main issue in narrative; telling a

> story implies a certain, maybe unique, point of view. It is more important that the life story be deemed 'trustworthy' than it be 'true'. (Atkinson 2002:34)

Ethical issues

The interviews for this project were carried out between February 2002 and July 2003 and for the reason already explained were carried out without prior ethical approval. The interviews were conducted at a time when the University guidelines were different from now and different expectations and clearance structures pertained. In its Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, the Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA) (2005: 4) expects that researchers will demonstrate respect for participants in research. At all times I feel that an ethical approach to interviewing older members of the community was adhered to. It is clear to me that at no time was there an intention to or an action which lead directly or indirectly to harm of the interviewees. As previously mentioned, there was one occasion when an interview was terminated and certain moments when other interviewees wished for the recording to be temporarily suspended. Interviewees' wishes were always respected and the Researchers' understanding of continuing consent was reflected back to them for confirmation when appropriate.

Despite the age profile of those being interviewed, neither the project nor any of the participants fell into categories requiring special consideration by the University Ethics Committee (University of Strathclyde Code of Practice on Investigations Involving Human Beings, Jan 2008) at the time. All interviewees were living independently in their own homes, often with family members, usually a spouse. Those accessed through day centres for the elderly attended those centres for social purposes, either travelling there independently or in a centre bus. They all returned home at the end of their time there and so could not be said to be falling into the category of 'vulnerable adult'. Nevertheless, the research assistant and I did understand the participants to be potentially vulnerable

and understand that, since further changes to University ethical expectations, these people would now certainly be considered vulnerable. As such retrospective ethical approval for this project was sought from, then considered and granted by the Departmental Ethics Committee during 2009.

While written consent from each volunteer was not sought or obtained, it is clear that they were in fact ‘volunteers’. The research assistant, having had a professional and potentially ‘privileged’ relationship with some of the initial participants, soon became detached from interviewees as the snowballing process progressed. In addition, the typed ‘prompt sheet’ (Appendix 1), while being sent out for preparation purposes, did in fact act in a permission granting way. Each volunteer was informed that the information was for the dual purposes of writing a book and potential academic study. The information sought was not of a complex nature and each volunteer was clear by the start of the interview what subjects were going to be covered and that the interview was going to be recorded. As previously noted above, some volunteers asked for the recording to be stopped at certain points in their story and others declined completely to be interviewed. The choice was always with them and their decisions were always respected.

I have personal contact and background information on all participants as well as the interviews containing personal disclosure themselves. The information and data recordings are kept securely at my house. A digital back up copy has been made, by a recording company, and I hold two copies of this- one also securely at my home and the other securely at my place of work.

Whilst needing to retain a traceability in terms of the interviewees names and indexing for authenticating and replication tests, each volunteer will be referred to only by their first or 'known as' name (and in some cases first initial). These will be linked to their year of birth to locate and anchor their childhood experience

within a time frame. There will require to be a referencing key but this will remain with the recorded interviews in a secure location.

The volunteers in this project were very happy and often keen to tell their stories. This can be gleaned from the enthusiastic way that many of the stories are told and the laughter accompanying such. These recorded interviews with real people, it is hoped, will be retained as a repository or archive for future generations of researchers to use and publicise. How this end is achieved will be researched post viva and publication.

Transcriptions and Analysis

The initial transcription process was, as expected, long and arduous- it was at this point that collecting such a large volume of data was temporarily regretted! Each interview was listened to a number of times and quantitative data was extracted and recorded on a separate grid e.g. age at which they first travelled to school unaccompanied or if they owned a bicycle. These 'facts' proved useful for a few reasons, for example, they gave useful comparison data to assess emerging short term trends, if any, and they gave 'anchor points' to judge the internal trustworthiness of an individual's recollections e.g. "Yes, I used to cycle to primary school." against "I got my first bike when I was 14 years old."

While quantitative data was interesting for making direct comparisons it was ultimately of limited use and the significant data was that which was of a qualitative nature. While there are significant concerns around the ways that people embed their personal stories, making sense of them by refining their telling (Charmaz 2002) each interview was viewed as a singular window onto the past and it was through the verbatim transcription of many interviews (including vernacular language and much laughter), recalling the same past, that an understanding of specific realities emerged. Active listening, informed by the approaches and theoretical framework adopted (Burns 2000), guided me to

recognise and select relevant passages for transcription. It was during transcription that reliability and honesty of the participant interviews was checked.

In view of this, an 'authentic' transcription approach was used (Humphries 1984) where no attempts were made to force the language to be grammatically correct. Some sentences were left incomplete and the vernacular was used with phonetic spelling. Edited passages were indicated but wherever possible the internal rhythm was left so that independent analysis could better judge consistency. Including unedited passages from the interviews allows the reader to assess authenticity, consistency of approach and get inside my thinking (Burns 2000).

Often seemingly irrelevant and, very often, rambling passages were transcribed as, although superficially falling outside the subject area, they were felt to be 'revealing' of the time, place and culture that the project was seeking to comprehend and incorporate into the emerging understanding (Lummis 1987). In these cases it was justified by my ability to 'hear' the story being told and locate it within identified trends. While this aspect of the analysis is difficult to replicate, I feel it was justified by my knowledge of the subject and analysis narrative.

Atkinson (2002) identifies meaning as coming from one of two frames of reference: theoretical and personal. While it was a personal journey for me up to this point, I do claim that theoretical approaches were adopted to analyse these stories. The theoretical chapters above identify objective and constructed orientations to reality and this approach was also taken with the participant interviews. While I took the interviews to be 'true' recollections of each volunteer's past, allowing for the difficulties of reinterpretation and 'fuzziness' above, the reality waiting to be discovered (Wenger 2002) is a construction which rests for methodological clarity on my thinking. Clearly there are 'sensitising concepts' (Wenger 2002), arrived at through a combination of theoretical understanding and emersion in the data stories. These 'filters' attracted my

attention to particular areas of interest and resulted in other areas being ignored. I understand this to be more a process of ‘distillation’ than pejoratively ‘selective interpretation’. Humphries (1984) makes it clear however that new interpretations of the past will not emerge purely from interviews but that researchers, “as members of the collective” (1984:53) must search for it through argument and analysis- to be found in the chapters subsequent to this one.

As ‘active listening’ was used during the interviews, so too it was employed during transcription and analysis. While during the data collection process ideas and experiences were reflected back to the interviewees to gain further disclosure, during analysis the joining up of threads and recurrent symbols that seemingly had no relationship produced a rich and textured picture of the past. This is approach is coined as “sympathetic introspection” by Meltzer, Petra and Reynolds (1975) and is deployed to understand meanings and interpretations from interviews. They suggest the use of sympathetic introspection to elucidate the role of close relationships in building an individualised approach to society. For me a society built of multiple individuals could not be further from reality but, as a way of approaching the development of a ‘sense of self’, the child’s experiences are viewed as an indispensable building block of the whole. It was at this time that having such a rich and diverse set of interview revealed itself as bonus rather than a time and energy sapping millstone.

At the point of analysis a further task to establish reliability and trustworthiness of these methods was identified as necessary. For me, internal validity generated by the number of interviews, being also a diverse set, was present, but external validation is necessary for a project such as this. Finding a device to allow for a form of ‘triangulation’ (Burns 2000) was important. Producing my own device in the form of a chronology of the period on which to ‘retrograph’ (Humphries 1984:62) or plot the individual time frames onto a historic lineage would have been useful but immensely time consuming. I therefore identified instances of

historical significance and researched them for corroborating detail (Bell and Jones 2002; Whittaker 2001) e.g. The blitz of Edinburgh or the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan.

The Reflexive Position of the Researcher

Although I am not neutral in within this project I would advance that this benefits rather than hinders or perverts the research outcomes.

As a director of Generation Youth Issues I have an agenda which broadly pits me against increased limits to the freedoms and licences granted to children and young people. These objections are not from a children's rights perspective but from one of concern over the impact of increased controls on children's development. Additionally, as a youth work manager, I bear witness, in an anecdotal way, to the impact of the changing paradigm of social policy on youth work practice and more generally changes in how adult society relates to subsequent generations of adults. For example, as Helene Guldberg indicated above,

> This is the basis on which much government policy is founded… Almost all state-sponsored youth work today is about getting children off the streets. Isn't it ironic? In the name of combating antisocial behaviour people, in jobs much like my own, are charged with acting like the Child Catcher in Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and tasked with clearing children off the streets – the very place where they learn to be social in the first place. (Guldberg 2009:163)

To conclude on my approach though, I do not understand myself as any kind of neo-traditionalist, longing for the return of some bygone age where hopscotch ruled over yet to be invented computer games. It is much more the changing

cultural script identified by Furedi (2007) that contextualises my disharmony with the present, I feel that this orientates me to the future rather than the past however.

Whilst I do have an agenda and this renders me 'non-neutral' in the process, the project is one of investigation and discovery. There is a particular outlook which lead me to being interested and motivated to specifically carry out this project. This essential approach guided the theoretical ground work to developing an analytical framework with which to approach the data, but the investigation is an honest one, genuinely searching for answers to the research question. A predetermined result would not serve my broader purposes.

Merely describing past childhood freedoms and licences, while interesting, would have left a void and further questions to resolve before being able to progress to further investigations. My keen interest is in how the expanding narrative of vulnerability may be or is impacting on children and consequently, perhaps more importantly, how it is impacting on emerging adulthood in the present day. This project is limited to laying the ground work for this but my knowledge, experiences and developed theoretical approach allow me to identify the issues of concern and develop an analytical approach to the data generated in a novel and original manner. This benefits the process while not undermining the results.

Conclusion

While the data set was generated with a view to writing a book, it easily sits as an archive to be mined for the purpose of this and perhaps subsequent doctoral investigations. The interviews were good, honest and real, and although initially brought together with a different, though not unconnected, purpose in mind, provided an ideal primary source.

It is untrue to say that the processes of collection, transcription, selection and analysis were completely distinct. Firstly, the collection process was inconsistent

in some ways. As it progressed small changes or adaptations were made which I feel had the effect of honing my sights rather than developing inconsistencies in the range. This can be claimed as each interview was treated as a separate window through which to view the past. Once some questions were established as yielding more or less fruit they could be skipped over or focussed in on and pursued. It was my sensitivity for the subject that allowed for this refocussing and I took the decisions- in particular to encourage more free-flowing disclosure rather than religiously following the 'script'.

Having such a large and diverse collection of interviews, sensitising concepts were required to allow for the selection of relevant quotes. These were developed from the theory chapters. Having established what these 'groupings' should be, the participant interviews were examined and any text that had some level of relevance was marked to be examined in further detail. My knowledge and familiarity with the theoretical approach allowed for the subsequent selection of the most pertinent passages to be analysed but I also wanted to use quotes that conveyed the tone of their time as well as being enthralling. Vernacular language and laughter were retained and indicated as much as possible.

The framework for analysis was drawn from the sensitising concepts. For example searching for Vygotsky's zones of proximal development lead on to the Expand, Experiment, Learn and Develop matrix. This made it relatively straight forward to lift text demonstrating such experiences and then dissect it for the developmental kernels. But in that *I* knew what *I* was looking for, another set of eyes would have different sensitivities and find completely different passages interesting. This does limit the replicable nature of my study and its findings but in no way undermines their legitimacy.

In preserving the humanity it is important to have and embrace the authenticity but not to be blinded by it. Before I move to the data it should be highlighted that

in analysing the unedited participant interviews strong forces of attraction became apparent. These forces acted to resist the separation, or distillation, of themes and trends identified in the previous chapters on approaches and theory. They work like sociological magnets, acting to bind together and overlap elements of the data, preserving the reality and complexity of the narratives and working to thwart deconstruction and understanding.

Endeavouring to overcome these forces provided further illumination of the theories and the data. At points where these magnetic forces are experienced, a brief discussion will be linked to a reference in any subsequent data chapter where such tensions are explored more fully.

Section 3: Data Analysis

Chapter 6 - Freedom and Licence

Framework

The approach to structuring this chapter is based on Vygotsky's insights to how learning and development come about. Vygotsky (1978) demonstrated that learning is a prelude for development. The data show us how children arrived at developmental outcomes by being able to- *Expand, Experiment, Learn and Develop*.

Some of what follows may be understood or judged by modern day standards of parenting practice as being outrageously negligent. This is the nub of what my Generation Youth Issues colleagues and I were concerned about occurring as time passed by and changed approaches became embedded as the norm. What may be being lost to the processes of child development through these changes was explained in the chapter on theory, reworked through the accompanying commentary and can now be experienced through the 'humanity' of these stories. The contribution of these experiences to the emerging 'self' might be summed up as follows- having adults present may prevent childish behaviour but freedom and licence allow children and young people to learn how to stop themselves being childish.

By way of addressing the research questions, we begin to see here that there is something significantly more than 'time' that separates current sensibilities around childcare from those of the not too distant past. Additionally, we start to witness how children, by means of social mechanisms, begin to internalise culture.

Liz 1949

When I was going through my Tomboy phase, which perhaps has never ended. And I wanted to play the sort of games my brother wanted to play, cowboys and Biggles and

this sort of nonsense and our little sister wanted to join in and we saw her as a girl who would just hold us back. And I clearly remember, I think, I hope I was no more than ten, I'm sure, perhaps even younger. And she was badgering us to join in our game and we said right, we're going to play Cowboys and Indians so you can be the Indian. And we quite deliberately worked it out that she would be captured, by these two Cowboys, within about ten seconds of the game starting. And we took her across the river, across the bridge over the river, onto the Forestry plantation, which was quite, it wasn't far but it was well out of view of the house and off our land and quite a scary place, all trees and nothing else. And as she was a captured Indian, she was tied to a tree. And we came home for lunch. And neither my Mum nor my little sister, quite rightly, has ever let us forget it! And we didn't, for a minute, understand that she would be hysterical when Mum went to release her. "Where is she!" And we just quite, stupidly and innocently thought that we'd have our lunch and then we'd go and continue playing. And decide what to do next with this Indian. Awful, but we were quite little. There was trouble, quite rightly.

Liz and her brother did not perceive themselves as having done anything wrong and were not really even being mischievous but they did do something wrong and clearly very upsetting for her younger sister. That there was 'trouble' and that they would have witnessed the anguish of their younger sister would have acted as a learning situation where at least if they repeated the action they would not again be able to claim ignorance of impact.

Expanding

Examples from the data of children just being 'free' to wander are so numerous it is in fact difficult to find the 'best' ones to record here. It was found that from a very young age, four to four and a half, children were given space and permission to broaden their physical horizons or geography.

Sandy 1937

I started school at four. I'd be four and four months. I would start in the August or September of 1941, which meant I was just four and a bit. I walked to school because it would be only about two or three hundred yards from home. (Accompanied?) Not that I remember. Presumably, Mother took me in the first few weeks but, erm, I really don't remember being supervised. We just wandered up and down the street.

Harry 1935

(Q about journeys to school) I don't remember ever being accompanied. I might have been, you know, in the very early days but I don't think so. I had a sister, who I think was supposed to look after me who did very little in fact, in the way of looking after me. She was just about a year older than me.

Elizabeth 1944

[W]hen I was older, about eight or nine, we used to go to the beach. If the weather was good we used to spend most of our time at the beach. There'd be about three or four of us go to the beach and spend all day there taking a pack lunch with us and have a whale of a time. (Q about parental concern) No, they never seemed to be. They obviously knew where I was. Yes, obviously they were concerned that I would be back by a certain time, but I don't remember having a watch even so somebody must have had a watch....

These children clearly were given a great deal of freedom and licence. Since their time, there have been huge changes to the freedoms afford to children of their age (Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg 1990). Independent movement has shrunk to a fraction of what these children experienced. In terms of being allowed to travel to school independently, during the 28 years from 1970 to 1998 children's unaccompanied journeys to school have halved. Children's play radius, centred on their home, has shown similar collapse. For example research published by Cunningham and Jones (1999) shows that girls were allowed no further than 150m from home whereas Elizabeth and her friends spend an entire day at the beach. The drivers of such changes have already been explored in earlier chapters but the sheer magnitude of change, as revealed in the stories above and below, is still quite staggering.

Children seem also to have been allowed to 'play' freely while carrying out helping tasks. Taking babies out for walks as an activity was reported more than once and while being desirable on the part of the 'responsible' child must also have been a great help, chiefly to mothers trying to complete the daily domestic chores, at a time when child care was almost completely unavailable to people who could not afford a nanny.

Catriona 1954

I'll tell you another activity that we used to do a lot of. Me and eh, one girl friend. When we were about nine, eight, nine, ten, was take babies for walks. Any babies in the village we'd got them out in their prams and take them. Sometimes very, very long walks. We went away up to the….[?]..and imagine that the mother would be quite anxious by time we got back…[Laughs]...[poor record volume].

But of course this trust, though in a way self-serving, could also be misplaced and Harry (1953), as we shall increasingly witness, was just the stereotypical male character to make excitement out of the mundane!

Harry 1953

Q about looking after younger siblings) Uh hu, well he's nine years younger than me so, I would be ten, eleven, twelve, and take him out in his pushchair to the park, go racing, you know, pushing him along the roads.... [laughs]. With a friend sitting him on his knee and I'd push them down the hill- like a bogie.

In the immature and unworldly child, freedoms and licence will inevitably lead to mistakes. The case of Harry above might have been considered more high jinks than anything sinister. The adults concerned are likely to have contextualised this behaviour, if they were aware of it at all, by looking at the lack of any serious consequences. Catriona here shows how some environments have a more proximal relationship to real danger and consequently a very different adult response to play there.

Catriona 1954

And there was a farm in the village, the whole farm. And they had hay sheds, you know, bales in it. It was a great place to play. Another terrible place we used to play was in amongst a kinda grain thing. A really dangerous place. The sort of place that people got killed in. They'd get sucked into all this grain. And Jean and I used to play in that until her Dad found us. And I was told I was NEVER to go in there again!

Farms and any accessible 'work' environment will develop situations dangerous to children as well as workers. From my own semi-rural upbringing during the 1970's I can recall serious and fatal accidents occurring to classmates and siblings

of classmates on farms. It seems though that limits to childhood freedoms were enforced when it was understood that they needed to be. It might be that the height of the bar has changed over time due to differing understandings. The data has a number of examples where freedoms were curtailed but these actually reinforce the understanding that the general condition for children during the period of the data set was one of great freedom.

Harry 1953

There was places you wouldn't go. Like don't go to such and such, the back loch, and you wouldn't, it was dangerous.

But yet again, there are many examples where despite clear instruction to the contrary children undertook flights of fancy in the space they were afforded. Though being disobedient in a literal sense, Janet is being more unconscious than deliberately naughty.

Janet 1921

It was when my brother and I were both going to this school, in Edinburgh. And we use to come home for our lunch on the tram. Now the tram, as I say, it's about two miles, probably about half way, down at Morningside Station, one day I said to Archie, "Let's get off and walk the rest of the way."…..Anyway, we toddled up there and of course we arrived home to find my Mother and the maid scouring the countryside wondering where we were. And I said, "Well just thought we'd walk." So Archie was put to bed, he got the afternoon off. And I was given my lunch and sent back to school (laughs). His legs were a bit shorter than mine. Well yes, probably about seven or eight because when he started school I would be seven, so I'd probably be eight. But he'd only be six.

The potential for flights like this is almost completely eliminated when children are supervised by an adult. While there remains some level of independent travel to and from school today, this is almost entirely associated with local schools and walking or cycling and not public transport. Part of the reason for the collapse in independent journeys is rights of 'parental choice' in school selection resulting in longer distances being involved (The 1981 Education (Scotland) Act gave parents the statutory right to request places in schools outside their designated catchment

areas). As with Janet's case above it is almost inconceivable that today children of 8 and 6 would be permitted to travel on public transport on their own (Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg 1990:28).

While the above quotes reflect the norm, there are some examples of extreme supervision. The reasons for these vary, in these cases they are firstly due to parental mental health difficulties and then more traditional class concerns.

Valerie 1951

The worries and fears were more my mother's. Not allowing me to go to school on my own till I was thirteen!.....I suppose the worries would be about my mother's health. She wasn't a well person, both physically and she suffered from periods of depression and I think the worries would be around her health.

Pauline 1932

...at a very early age they made me a member of the Royal Dublin Society……[T]hey also had a good library and from quite and early age, because I was a member, I could go and get out library books there and go over on my bike. For some reason, the public library, there was some kind of, I think probably mainly snobbish feeling, that one didn't go to the public library. But there were no bars on going to the RDS Library and em, it was totally uncensored. For all that, even after the time my mother left Dublin, book censorship was very active in southern Ireland but I certainly got out books which would have been on the banned list……They maybe got in before the Censorship Act was in force. I remember reading people like Daniel Defoe and people like that. And as I say, I got out books sometimes quite unsuitable….

Valerie's life may have been affected in other ways but the reminiscence doesn't cover that. There are many more support mechanisms for children and young people experiencing parental health issues now (http://www.youngcarers.net/) though, in the current climate of safety, the kinds of support offered are likely to be in the form of adult supervision during school journeys and leisure time. Interestingly, Pauline despite experiencing a high degree of control has freedoms not granted to the population in general in what was at the time a very traditional society.

Expansive freedom and 'licence to thrill' though was the generalised condition reported by the participants.

Catriona 1954

What we would do in the summer sometimes was take our bikes down to the, there's a breakwater down half way between Auchincairn and Balcary, and we'd go down there and we'd swim in there……(Parental permission?) I've no idea. Presumably 'cause you had to get a towel and your swimming costume. And you'd be saying, "Well we're going for a swim." I don't remember anybody saying, you couldn't go, even though I couldn't swim very well. Just went. And it quite stony and cold and there was a lot of jellyfish and stuff.

Experiment and Learn

As we can see above, children in the past had for a variety of reasons a great deal of freedom and licence where they were essentially occupying time and space in an unsupervised way. This led to moments, instances or situations they could find or generate excitement or where experiments could be undertaken from which learning could result.

Bill 1920

[W]e'd….run after the tramcars and jump on the running board at the conductors end and wait for the conductor to come down the stairs then jump off. Or running, catching on the back of wagons and jumping on. Another trick, we use to go up these tenement stairs and tie the door knockers across the way, one handle to another and take all the door mats downstairs and then rattle the doors and all the people were pulling at their particular door trying to get out. That was bad.

Another one was to climb up drain pipes and put suckers on windows with a string, with a thread and a weight and you'd tap tapped at the window and she'd come out and stare and you'd tap. And we just made a general nuisance of ourselves. Ah we did all sorts of things, none of it was really malicious though. It was just eh boys misbehaving.

Bill experiments with his physical abilities while he and his friends are making general nuisances of themselves. Cranwell (2001) details much of the use by children and young people of urban streetscape. Indeed much of the time streets

were understood to be not only legitimate places for children to be and play but in some senses ‘owned’ by children. Harry, while pursuing his desires, learns that some things are not black and white and that there are some gaps between what adults allow officially and will perhaps just allow.

Harry 1953

Don’t go to the loch in the park, on the islands. Of course you did that from as early as you could. You got a big boy to hire you a boat, then he jumped off and you took it away! Ay everybody did that, with the old guy shouting, "Bring that boat back." and you'd go to the islands because that's where the fun was. Parents didn't mind- it was regulations.

Fred (1917) by showing a real sensitivity to the needs of his younger sister begins to reveal how learning and development are linked. He had perhaps been lost himself in the past, an experience the literature on parental caution, reviewed in previous chapters, would lead one to believe is an increasingly rare occurrence, and therefore he had some understanding of the feelings his sister would be experiencing. The accidental situation that he found himself in was one where he was the ‘responsible’ person and therefore we can begin to witness the child acting ‘a head taller than himself’, being responsible and playing out the adult role. Once back under parental supervision one can assume that relationships would revert to those of ‘warring’ brother and sister.

Fred 1917

[M]y sister and I were up in the town, which is three mile from where we lived, and my mother must had lost track of us because the two of us walked home together. We must have been about five or six or something. So we walked home together hand in hand. And when we got about half way down my sister started crying. So I must have had thrupence or sixpence or something, we passed a shop and we went in and bought her some sweets to shut her up.

Similarly to Fred (1917) emotional experiences are quite often very powerful learning drivers. The memory of a close-shave or dice-with-death will act as a spur to avoiding similar situations in the future as a peep though a window on

mortality has been taken. In these situations experiences and learning are in close proximity to development.

Bill 1920

We played in the canal which was, there was always somebody drowning up there. There were huge logs in there for seasoning all chained together, behind Firhill football ground. And you went on these logs and sometimes you went into the water. If you went down you would get caught in the reeds and you wouldn't get up again very easily. (Age?) Probably about twelve.

Relationship of Expand, Experiment and Learn to Theory

The original impetus for this project was based on concern about increasing controls on children and young people being brought about by ever more supervision of their lives. This change is occurring as 'safety' becomes a fundamental value on which society is managed (Furedi 1997). Adult, more specifically parental, concern about children and their absolute vulnerability within an ever more threatening world leads to measures that drastically reduce the space they have to operate.

As discussed in opening chapters, particularly 'Theory' when Sullivan is being discussed by Muuss (1996) and Youniss (1980), peer relationships are understood to be critical to the emergence of 'self'. These relationships are where direct reciprocity between infants and young children, which can only lead to tit-for-tat, morphs through joint concession into reciprocal cooperation between equals. Inhabiting this new social environment allows for new ways of learning and development in children and young people- learning and development that cannot be acquired in any other arena.

While it is accepted that supervision is an important aspect of childhood, without which there would be no basis for the transmission of culture, the opposite of this, namely childhood freedom and licence, is essential for social development to occur and adulthood to emerge. Simply by being present adults inhibit the

germination of reciprocally cooperative relationships, as they become the arbiter of final redress thus negating the growth of interpersonal sensitivity between young friends. Incorporating the insights of Vygotsky (1978), we are beginning to see that being free from adult supervision creates space to for children to *Expand, Experiment, Learn and Develop*.

Sandy and Harry, above, are given, rather than take, freedom and licence. From an early age Sandy and Harry are allowed to begin to take responsibility for themselves on the way to school. Of course there are parameters to their freedom. It starts at the front door to their house, where they leave parental control, with the simple task of walking to school and ends a short time later when teachers take adult charge again as they arrive at school. Competence to perform the task is established by the child proving that they know the way to school and presumably that any subsequent tasks like making the correct turns and crossing a road are also within their abilities.

For Harry and his sister the dynamic is slightly different in that she is supposed to supervise him. However, in that he is just starting school (around 5 years old) and she is about a year older than him (6 yrs) the freedom for her is limited only by the delegated responsibility. Vygotsky (1978) explains that this in fact creates a zone of proximal development for Harry's sister whereby she plays the role of being in charge. She is free but simultaneously constrained by her understanding of the role she is expected to play thus she can act a head taller than herself. If there were an adult present Harry's sister would not be in charge, would not be playing the responsible role and consequently might well step out into the road without looking both ways!

Of course Harry's older sister might fail in her duty to live up to the responsible role. And there are other dangers that might be present and of concern to Sandy and Elizabeth's parents. Particularly during a day at the beach many things could

or might go wrong. Here then is an example of what I term ‘sociological magnets’ referred to in the section on Reflexivity in Methodology above. These issues of real danger and evidence of a changing cultural script while being significant to the experiences related in these snippets of data will be presented more fully in further data and analysis in separate chapters.

In terms of children being irresponsible during play while unsupervised, the play context affords space for imaginations to run rampant. So too though, that same space allows for play much more tightly linked to reality. In ‘responsible’ unsupervised play (Catriona (1954) and Harry (1953)) children can act out roles that they aspire to like that of being a parent. While this understanding is based on the theories of Vygotsky, the same ‘understanding’ can also be found in the ‘common sense’ of adults when trusting children to behave in a grown up fashion.

Here then are other examples where adults trusted children to ‘do the right thing’ and so allowed children to not only experience expansive freedom but also their expectations to behave correctly, as responsible people, with a high degree of trust. Of course this wasn’t always the case in reality. But none-the-less adults seem to have retained a measure of relaxed perspective despite high-jinks.

There is in the cases of Catriona (1954) and Harry (1953) an acceptance of the impact of two intertwining aspects of the analysis. Firstly, that of a cultural script underpinning a sense that the worst case scenario is actually a highly unlikely one despite the high chance that children will be silly. If this wasn’t the case parents wouldn’t allow their babies to supervised solely by 9 year old children. Secondly, that if required other adults would be trustworthy and of a disposition to step in and act as supporting adults. These themes will be explored within specific chapters but as an example, the ‘what if’ approach clearly wasn’t a concern to the parents of Catriona (1954) as, if it were, the farm yard would have been completely out of bounds from the start of their independent play.

Additionally, that it was now assumed the children, once told not to, would obey and not return to the grain silo is further indication that a 'what if' approach was not being taken. But significantly too the freedom and licence is clearly contingent on absolute deference to adult authority when it is actually imposed as further shown by Harry (1953) when he clearly states that if told not to, they would not go somewhere.

It has to be remembered that children are not responsible individuals in most ways during the early school years. Given space and when not under strict instruction, as in Janet's (1921) situation, children will still have spontaneous flights of fancy and make strange and arbitrary decisions. Though without serious consequence, the experimental nature of Janet's decision to get off the tram early created a kind of excitement for both of the children. Her mother though concerned and annoyed didn't show fear, "my Mother and the maid scouring the countryside wondering where we were.", and this will be linked back to in the chapter on cultural script later.

But freedom was the generalised condition for children growing up during the participant birth years period of 1903 to 1965. The opportunities generated allowed children colonised space and time thus encountering many situations they could not experience in their own homes and bedrooms. These moments in time were new to them and very few children had any prescribed responses to them so spontaneous decisions had to be made with regard to what to do. Making these decisions and living with the consequences of them is a kind of excitement that the unsupervised environment generates (Knight 2000) and leads on towards experiments and learning.

So, in the past during the period of the interviews, children were afforded space and time in which they had freedoms and licences that were not available to them in other settings such as home and school. This provided opportunities for them to

experiment in life through their playful activities. Either way, whatever the outcome, short of fatality, these experiments resulted in learning.

Liz (1949) (above) had freedom with her brother in which they could experiment. Their experiment was multifaceted as was their 'learning'. Primarily they learned that if they worked together to treat their little sister badly they would then get into trouble as their mother deemed this unacceptable behaviour. This would eventually, though presumably not immediately, lead to a change in the way they interacted with the little sister because they would receive punishments. Moreover though, as time went on and their unfettered experiences mounted up, they would develop a real sensitivity to the distress that their actions resulted in. Getting it wrong and getting it right lead to improved understanding of cause and effect. Experiences of fear and distress lead to more rounded understanding of what these emotions feel like and if they are desirable or not (This will be explored in a more in the relevant chapter 'The Self Understood' below.

Bill's (1920) play is dangerous, though much of the tram car 'running' is perhaps not as so as could be anticipated. To arrive at the ability to jump on to and off of moving vehicles or to climb up drain pipes would have incurred some errors on the way. Clearly, though there is a real potential, none of this error in learning resulted in serious injury. So Bill had freedom and licence, he experimented with physical ability and learned that some physical tasks were achievable but you didn't want to get them wrong.

What Bill was also experimenting in though was the impact of his actions on others. To understand that making a 'general nuisance' of yourself is just boys misbehaving requires a social context (Chapters 6 and 7 on Community and Cultural Script). That it is not good but is not really bad will
come from the individual and small group interactions with the adults whom he was annoying. He would learn what behaviour was 'going too far' and also when

a particular resident was being unduly sensitive, though links to community norms will also have played a role as the reminiscence extract demonstrated.

Development: internalised learning

The shift from experiential learning to a point where the observer of a child can witness 'development' signifies an internalisation of motivation or the impulses to act (Vygotsky 1978). Up to this point the interpretation of the data has provided evidence of how children and young people gain experiences and learn. Vygotsky places learning and development in a temporal relationship which is opposite to that generally understood. That is, he saw learning as a building block or foundation of development rather than development having to occur prior to an individual being able to acquire the skills to carry out a particular task. Being prompted to or supported to carry out an activity leads to that activity being learned. At that point it can be internalised in a biological maturing of the brain and the individual can be said to have developed to that level of ability. It is in this way that humans can be said to be "naturally social" (Wertsch 1985) in that what is witnessed in social settings could then be discovered within the individual at an organic level but easily witnessed emanating from them during their social interactions.

Sullivan (Muuss 1996 and Youniss 1980) shows how this process resolves itself in the field of social relationships. He explains how kind acts become unprompted and how constraint can be imposed by an individual on them self without the presence of a supervising adult. In effect, how empathy, worldliness and the abandonment of naivety develop internally to an individual.

Bill (1920) tells of his experiences as a poorer child at a fee paying school having won a bursary. His experiences were such that he had learned that the additional costs were difficult for his single mother to bear and so he took the far from easy path in appreciation of her situation (Followed up in Selfhood).

Bill 1920

[W]e got forty minutes for lunch, for a time there I use to go to the restaurant, you know, all school blazers and kitted out. And, um, it was table service in there and I felt after a time it was a struggle because my mother and father were separated and um, my mother worked and she was having to foot the bill. And I use to get forty minutes for lunch. Now I ran from the school just over a mile. We got out twenty minutes, quarter past twelve. And I ran along full pelt along Parliamentary Rd to Buchanan St in Glasgow. I got the number eight bus and was home in about quarter of an hour. I ran upstairs, my grandmother had my meal on the table. I had my meal, washed my face etc. I ran down, caught the bus on its return trip and I was back at the school in forty minutes. And it, believe me, if you missed the bus, um, or the bus was late, there were problems, 'cause you had to be in the next class. (Age?) Eleven.[1]

Much of the data leads one to romanticise the past in comparison to the present being experienced first hand. The space allowed certainly gave opportunity for adventure but also, as was noted during the discussion on accidents, space creates the risk of accident along a continuum from mishap to fatality. Past freedoms did result in accidents and it is interesting to consider in what ways and to what extent accidents impacted on children's thirst for adventure.

Harry 1935

And there was another place too, where there was a railway that went over the canal. And people use to dive off of the bridge from there. And there was one boy in particular, drowned because he dived off the bridge and ended up stuck in the mud at the bottom! And people went in to try and get him out but I mean, he was clawing at them 'cause he was desperate, you know. And I mean they couldn't, the time they got him out he was dead. So I mean it was a dangerous place we went to, to do these things. We were banned but we went anyway.

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[1] Bill (1920) "It was one of the high schools, you know, Glasgow Academy, Hillhead High, Allan Glen's. In fact one of my classmates was Dirk Bogart. I knew him as Van Bogart, you know he's dead now, in those days. He was of Dutch origin basically and he lived at Annisland, which was a fair distance from it. Yes I recall that."

Bill 1920

Another time I remember the police being there, they had blown up a gasometer and there were two killed that night. And this was under eleven! Well, they managed to climb, use the gasometer, they would climb up the ladders. They threw a match. Yes, two of them were killed. I remember the police enquiry.

For these young people first hand experiences of death were not that far away- in that large scale war was not yet a distant memory. Even so, having direct experiences of death would have a significant impact on developing children and teenagers and their relationship to risk taking behaviour as the abstract nature of mortality is a difficult concept to grasp in the early stages of life. It should be recognised though that in terms of a social narrative, children would not have understood their feelings of 'risk' in any generalised or shared way with the rest of 'adult society'- this will be explored in the chapter on Cultural Script.

Empathy with other community members though, rather than personalised feeling of exposure, is an internally generated social milestone. Being able to place the significance of death and loss within a context of how another person will be feeling about it demonstrates a heightened awareness of others and the social acceptability of public actions.

Margaret 1935

And I went into this butchers and I had to wait in a terrific queue and er I remember, in the queue, listening to two ladies behind me, must have been war time definitely, and they were talking about the lady in front and saying that her son, she'd just had word, that her son had been killed in the war somewhere. I have a funny feeling they said in the RAF but I'm not 100% sure on that. And er, just remember thinking, "That poor lady, yet she's got to stand in a queue with everybody else and get her butcher meat." You know life's just got to go on for her. It did seem so odd to me as a child, just waiting in this horrific queue. I must have been about nine or ten at that time.

While being evidence of developing selfhood, sympathy and empathy do however result from experiences during free time. How children and young people grasp the feelings of others will be explored more fully in subsequent chapters. Even at

the basic level of knowing that while being unpleasant to miss your dinner, your mother has made an effort on your behalf and you should present yourself for it, empathy is a product of development.

Mrs P 1937

I said to Marion. I said, "I don't often remember a parent coming down and telling us it was time for us to go home." And I don't think many of us would have a watch. So how we knew it was time to go home, or we could see people going home if it was teatime. We saw people going home from their work. There's Mr So an' So. Oh that must be, he comes off the bus from such an' such and the bus is at such an' such a time. So that was maybe the way we did it, noticing, we got to know the time when people were maybe coming home from work and we had an idea of what time it was. But we very rarely had an irate parent coming down and saying, the time, you know, you're late, I can't remember.

Conclusions: Expand, Experiment, Learn, Develop

We can clearly see that, with a few extremely rare exceptions, children and young people growing up during the time of the interviews experienced a great deal of freedom. This freedom developed space into which they could expand and so colonise time and space within their communities. Becoming active participants in community life allowed them to experience 'drivers of understanding' about how other people feel and what is expected of a member of a community and emerging individual reflective responsibility was the outcome. This is a significant contribution to the development of a reflective selfhood within the individual.

In terms of our understanding of this process, gleaned from Vygotsky and others, we know that these individual developments cannot be made without the collective experience afforded by large amounts of unsupervised time and the sensitising concepts developed reflect this.

The sensitising concepts for analysing the data in this chapter, *Expand, Experiment, Learn and Develop*, like the dynamic experience of childhood, can't

exist in isolation from each other. More so they form a telescoping idealised continuum- overlapping and leading, in a teleological way, to adulthood. As an example, through a range of ages the same activities and actions will be reflective of changing levels of understanding and motivations on the part of the individual child- as Keith provides a last example of, while recollecting his freedom to fully use of his powerful catapult.

Keith 1943

I must have been about ten to about sixteen. And we use to have catapult fights. We use to get in the orchard there and get behind trees and go and stock up with stones from wherever there was some building going on because they would generally have stones which came from the beach and therefore they were nice round ones. We would let rip at one another!! (laughs) You got struck but not anywhere that did you any sort of damage, other than bruising. It wasn't sort of malicious but erm, it was great fun.

When he explains that it wasn't "malicious" but "great fun" he is providing an example of the change that will have taken place during the six years between his tenth and sixteenth birthdays. Initially, as a ten year old, Keith would only have the external discipline of older children and adults to register if his actions were acceptable or not. Through experiencing close shaves, being hurt and hurting others during free play, he would learn what was reasonable and acceptable to the social group and fall under pressure from peers to act socially. Only then could he develop a 'reasonableness' internal to himself. This he exhibits by recollecting that what they got up to was not with malicious intent. That he understood this archetypical male activity to be "great fun" despite the obvious risk of injury leads us to begin to see a rift valley between the past and now.

Chapter 7 - Impact of Community (Informal Supervision)

Framework and Relevance

The significance and increasing importance of informal supervision was a relatively unexpected finding during my development of theory. As has already been discussed, the initial driver for the project was the identified dramatic reductions in childhood freedoms and unsupervised time essential to their development. To then identify and engage around changes to how children interacted in asymmetric relationships (in the presence of adult authority) was a surprise and had to be contextualised. This framing took the form of separating out two distinct forms of asymmetric relationship. Firstly, and disregarded for this project, was that of the formal- parental, other family member or teacher. These relationships contain prescribed and legitimate authority where the deferential nature of the transactions are readily understood and generally accepted. Secondly, are the significantly more informal and more socially contingent transactions which occur within public settings. These interactions take place during the time and space of initial interest to the project, namely while children and young people are free or under their own licence and 'unsupervised' in the community at large but these interactions are definitely asymmetric in nature and content.

This chapter is highly pertinent to the emerging finding that the present is separated from the past in some greater way than just by time. It has been discussed above that informal interactions between children and adults are now generally understood to be problematic or illegitimate. Below are accounts of the past that tell the story of a time very different from now when these interactions were in fact the norm. Additionally, the central research question is addressed here as interactions with adults in the community are a conduit for the transmission of culture, prior to it being internalised as part of the socialisation process.

The Existence of Community

Interactions between children, young people and other, general community adults came in many different guises, examples of which are below. That these contacts had various content elements to them will be gradually explored through this chapter. At times it is awkward to separate out 'informal supervision' from other aspects of the data analysis such as changing cultural script but this difficultly will be explored in the additional reflexive methodology chapter. These quotes exhibit the multiplicity of informal but authoritative interactions which took place within these children's communities.

Mrs P 1937

(How did you know when to go home for tea?) We saw people going home from their work. There's Mr So an' So. Oh that must be, he comes off the bus from such an' such and the bus is at such an' such a time. So that was maybe the way we did it, noticing, we got to know the time when people were maybe coming home from work and we had an idea of what time it was.

Margaret 1931

There was an Australian camp near us. They had, these Australians were brought over, they were cutting timber for the war effort. And of course they were in and out of everybody's homes.

Hazel 1946

I play on the, the men came to do the roads, I would get onto the trucks and go away to Dalbeatie to pick up the granite. (Parental knowledge?) No. But they did when I came back covered in tar! I did get into trouble.

Dorothy 1929

(Playtime in secondary school?) I remember it because there was a war on and our school provided, we had our meal at school. But it also was open to the public to come in and get a meal.

Harry 1953

(Q about when allowed to local park) Probably four or five years because it was just up the street... initially with my sister [two years older]. There wasn't a lot of traffic and

somebody could walk you across the road without seeming to be a pervert or anything like that if you were young kids.

Harry 1953

Sometimes go to other towns, go shopping, try and buy trendy gear, check out the talent in Dumfries [20 miles]. Walk the streets. (Go by bus without parents?) Oh yes and sometimes hitch hike. (What age?) I would think about twelve. Sometimes go as far as Carlisle (50 miles).

The examples above provide a glimpse of the plethora of contacts that took place. Mrs P (1937) provides a glimpse of an intimate community where nobody is a stranger. The children know the adults by name, many of whom would have been parents of friends, and know where they work and probably what the do for a living. For Margaret (1931) the proximity of an Australian camp put many young men in the area. It is significant that they were clearly welcomed and frequently in and out of people's homes, so the contact would have been 'supervised' in that, as related, it takes place in her home. The expansive cultural experience gained from frequent and intimate contact with a multiplicity of people from another continent must have been considerable. How these new adults related to children would have been different to indigenous ones. For Hazel (1946) her 'helping out' style of contact with non-formally authoritative adults is unsupervised and at the time her parents were unaware of it taking place. Though these men were presumably not complete strangers to the area and family, they would have no formal relationship to Hazel and her friends. Dorothy (1929) grew up in central London and so the people attending her school for lunch would have been 'strangers' to the children. The girls gradually got to know regulars though and, being teenagers, played up to the good looking men, testing the boundaries of what was acceptable. Harry (1953) was out and about hitch-hiking at the age of twelve during the mid 1960's. This was the precise time of the then infamous 'Moors Murders' and he is travelling long distances to a large town or small city in random cars. He has already contextualised this for us somewhat when during his childhood years he understood adults to be a helpful resource not a threat.

Free but Regulated

The particular forms of contact that are of interest here are those which took place at times when children and young people were not under the supervision of formally authoritative adults. These informal interactions are with other adults from the community who were not official but were authority bearing and thus these interactions are asymmetric in nature. For example,

Fred 1917

[A]nd we went and shouted things in at the shop windows, at the butcher's shop and ran away. Just poked your face through the door and shouted something and ran away.

George 1923

(Discipline by other adults?) [Poor sound.] It consisted mostly of somebody saying, "That's a bloody silly thing to do, stop it at once." And usually one stopped…. The boundaries for what was acceptable behaviour by children [poor sound] and er, if you gave offence to adults it was expected that the adult would at least would deal with you.

Fred and his friends knew that they were doing something naughty. They would have already learned that being cheeky causes annoyance to adults and so they ran away, expecting an adult to have something to say about what it was they had done. George's experiences give a richer flavour of the nature of community during his childhood. George expects that adults will deal with him and it is clear that they did. Adults would shout at him conveying an understanding that what he was doing was unacceptable and that it was their business to do something about it.

George presumably was dealt with on occasions when he got it wrong. For a developing sociability though things could be complex, sometimes it *was* acceptable to go against adult's wishes,

Harry 1953

You got a big boy to hire you a boat, then he jumped off and you took it away! Ay everybody did that, with the old guy shouting, "Bring that boat back." ….Parents didn't mind- it was regulations.

Harry here identifies that there was some contingency to adult authority. Perhaps the 'officialdom' of the authority of the man in charge of hiring out the boats was understood to be like the signs reading 'Keep Off the Grass' and to be ignored when it suited?

Hazel 1946

We were once given a load of bangers for doing something….And we had a wonderful time going round flinging bangers. And there was a wee spiritualist church hut thing, just close by. Just basically round the corner and I can remember we went and whizzed one of these bangers in there….D'know, probably about the twelve mark, eleven, twelve mark. Oh we'd been delivering some leaflets, that's right. It was for this little corner shop that in those days was becoming more self-service. That's right and we had to go round and deliver all these leaflets. Half of them we stuffed down the drains. And then we were rewarded with some fireworks.

Hazel and her friends had been, prior to being given the bangers, informally contracted to carry out a job for a shopkeeper. This would have entailed discussion and agreement between the parties and a level of authority of the shop keeper being accepted by the group. Entering a private relationship with non-family children is noteworthy in itself. This adult however seems to have made a number of misjudgements, namely expecting that the task would be completed and trusting the 'payment' to be used responsibly (!). From my own childhood though, it was certainly the case that bangers were pretty lame in the past and posed no serious physical threat. So the misjudgement appears more serious now when viewed from the contemporary context. The church congregation would have been annoyed though and this and the children's understanding of this are what is relevant here.

Community = Shared Responsibility

Shared responsibility for children in general seems to have been a shared understanding.

Harry 1953

(Outdoor Person?) We'd go walks in the countryside to find new trees, to find dams to make, things like that. Made dens up trees, wood swings, things like that, buy rope, get ropes, you know, legitimate from a builder, he'd come and check sometimes that it was safe.

Harry's group of friends clearly took themselves away to find their own amusement. They had considerable freedom to roam and make their own amusement. It was not the builder's 'job' to check the swing was safe and doing this will have taken him away from his contracted duties.

While strangers in the 'cars and puppies' sense might have been a concern to parents, strangers were still 'permitted' to step in and take charge when necessary. Teresa accepts her parent's instructions not to speak to strangers. The intent on her mother's part is definitely around concern of what a stranger (man) might do rather than not wanting her children to be a bother to other adults. Within the bus context and on the pretext of intervening in trouble, strangers are allowed to participate in the business of children not related to or formally responsible for them.

Teresa 1946

And we weren't allowed to speak to strangers. You know we didn't really do that 'specially men. Mother brought us up to be very wary of talking to men. Particularly because we were girls….

On the other hand, obviously adults looked out for children in those days in a way they don't do now. We knew if there was any problem on the bus that we could tell the conductor or other people would say, "Stop that boy throwing stuff on the bus." Or "Stop them shouting or swearing or something." So nothing like that hardly ever happened on buses because there would always be other adults around to say, "Stop that."

Discipline could take various forms and come with varying degrees of legitimacy but it seems to have been accepted by children, parents and other adults alike even if more than just verbal.

Mrs B 1916

[At the Saturday morning pictures] If the young lads were misbehaving they had two men on either side of the thing. And they had huge poles, they were wobbly things….But if they were behaving they'd just (laughs) clonk 'em on the head with them. It didn't do 'em any harm because it was only soft, you know. But it was sit down or they were out, they put them out…. "Pack it in!" (Motions a thump) you know (laughs).

The cinema staff clearly expected and were prepared for difficult behaviour. The children will have perhaps not planned or intended to 'carry on' but will not have been surprised that misbehaviour occurred in a cinema full of excited kids watching their heroes on screen. The physical nature of the measures taken are interesting though. There must have been occasions when and the wrong child got 'clonked' or perhaps the clonk was too harshly administered.

As an aside, children were not completely uncritically accepting of all adults. They would, between themselves, establish levels of acceptability.

Joe 1943

(Worries and fears?) We had um, what's it now you call them, paedophiles. There was a couple of guys we all watched out for. Joe the Lamp Lighter. In those days you had gas, in all the tenement buildings, you had gas on all the landings. And wee Joe would come down with his long stick with the flame on the end and he lit up and down the stairs. And er, two or three of us, there was always two or three of us, you never went on your own. But you could get to carry his stick and light the little, the mantles with this fire on the end of his stick. And he'd always pat your bum when you went up the stairs. And as long as you were with your pals you just laughed. You never went on your own. Things like that I remember but never anything serious. Although I suppose what he did was serious. He'd get in an awful lot of trouble today, but it never happened.

Tenements are the standard form of inner city housing in Glasgow. They consist of a communal entrance to a stair well from which individual flats are accessed. There communal areas or ‘closes’ were semi-public and people would shelter from the weather in accessible ones. As shared or communal areas they were maintained jointly between the residents (cleaning and decorating) and the city authorities, who would (and still do) pay for them to be lighted. The Lamp Lighter would have been a regular visitor to all closes in an area and well known to all.

In distinction to the ‘clonks’ and ‘pats’, Alan relates a situation below where tenderness was entirely appropriate. That it comes from an unusual source makes it all the more poignant.

Alan 1938

It was interesting to watch the men. To watch the cement mixer going round and to watch what they were doing. But we never got in their way. I think once I went and helped the man lifting bricks and I dropped one or he dropped one on my toe on my foot. And I was crying and crying away and he cuddled me in, you know. This old rough guy in his old old clothes. ‘Cause oh, it was very sore.

So much for the modern zeitgeist then. It is interesting to note that just watching adult activity was a enjoyable pastime for children- waiting for an offer or an opportunity to get involved.

Joining the Wider Social Unity

Shared care and responsibility by adults for children also demarks for them the existence of a culture to which children do not yet fully belong.

Harry 1953

And if you gan in the building yard, and Fergie, Scott's dad, said they were busy, you just understood that you didn’t have a right to play. They were the same as your own parents, they had the same rights.

Harry here understood his deferential place within his community. His wants were about play and the adults business is serious work. These adults too were understood by the children to be different from them.

Margaret though is starting to view herself as being in a responsible relationship (together with her parents) towards employees of the farm.

Margaret 1916

Well, we'd to cook for all these people and then we'd men in the in the cottage and they had work to do on the farm, harvest, hay time. We had them all to feed as well. We had to bake for all these, cook for all these. (Unsupervised?) Yes. Well I was taught to bake pancakes when I was eight and I made a hundred every Saturday.

Margaret was handed a task that required to be carried out. It was a minor task and understood to be within the capabilities of an eight year old but had to be achieved for the collective to function efficiently. Harvest time was a time of communal solidarity and whole agricultural communities would pitch in and help whatever their general role in that society was and Margaret, being the daughter of a tenant farmer, had a role to play.

The participants relate many examples of children having jobs, both domestically and in paid employment. The domestic chores while being useful, unlike Margaret's, usually don't bring the child into contact with wider society. Bill's milk run brought him into many new relationships.

Bill 1920

[I] changed and went with milk and the Co-operative, they paid five shillings. It was delivered in metal cans. They would have been at least two dozen boys in this Co-operative shop. Mary was the woman in charge and she was quite a, a very strong character…..You were there at five in the morning. There was a huge vat was filled with milk and there would be two or three assistant girls. And you went up and you shouted what we called 'Your Rake'. "Mrs Smith, two pints." "Mrs Jones, one pint."…..Now, if you

mis-shouted or misquoted, Mary had everyone in her head and my god you didn't half get ticked off if you tried to or misquoted your rake…..

Bill's reminiscence tells much of the story itself. Bill is developing responsibility by doing this job- he has to be there at five in the morning for quite a physically demanding job.

…..[H]ad to run for two miles with these cans in either hand, delivering. You went into these tenement buildings, you put the milk at the door, rattled the door and the person came to the door, emptied the can into their jug and left it there and you collected the cans on the way down stairs…..[Y]ou did one rake and then went back for a second rake, er, probably going further afield this time, and maybe the third rake was at least a fair distance away.

After carrying out maybe a half day's labour Bill had to get himself to school despite being tired. It
was child labour with all the associated low pay and summary conditions but he is growing by having to be responsible at his own instigation, despite Mary's matriarchal presence and whose wrath the children would go to some lengths to avoid.

…..Now these were metal cans with long handles…..sometimes they, now what shall I say, they got 'locked' and the cans tilted and you lost milk. But fortunately there was a gushet, a waterspout, and you filled up the cans with water! So the person always got the same amount of liquid. Otherwise you'd got to go back and face Mary and tell her.

Margaret and Bill have differing motivations. Margaret is carrying out a domestic task for the good of the family. Bill is acting for financial gain, though some money was 'taken home'. Both are however being dependable if not entirely conscientious. They are being driven by external forces different to those internal motivations they would normally react to when playing or otherwise unsupervised. In these situations their self-centred play activity is being reshaped into externally driven activity.

Analysis

The unequal nature of these relationships above, resting on the developmental framework previously discussed, implies that the key transactions taking place are ones where the flow of information is from the adults involved to the children or young people. This is the site within which Youniss (1980) understands that 'culturally established norms' are shared. This is different to the process of Education discussed by Furedi (2009) which is completely formal and knowledge (rather than social skills) orientated but still 'intergenerational' in nature whereby the older generation takes responsibility for the past and the socialisation of the next one. These interactions on the other hand take place informally within a public setting / community, and are contextualised by recognising the shared nature of the responsibility for children.

To specify what is understood by the term 'community' in this context we need to turn away from physical geography to an extent. Interactions clearly happen within a given place but what the inhabitants and users of these places share is more significant in determining 'community'. To perhaps counterpose this to current times when it could be said that adults can share place but not exhibit community, there are collective aspects to community such as **memory, responsibility** and **solidarity** exhibited by the people interviewed. Also the discussion towards the end of the theory chapter about society being something more than multiple intersubjectivities (as Sullivan, as related by Muuss, would have us believe) (Heartfield 1996:13) reflects a significant contextualisation of the social experiences of children and young people during their informal transactions with other adults.

Mohamed Ali's two word poem, "Me. We.", also discussed in the theory chapter, not only multiplies subjectivities but most significantly advocates a political outlook of shared identity. This sets up a seeming paradox whereby a developing

individuality is established by travelling through a process of joining as well as separating. Goffman's much used quote explains,

> Without something to belong to, we have no stable self, and yet total commitment and attachment to any social unit implies a kind of selflessness. Our sense of being a person can come from being drawn into a wider social unit; our sense of selfhood can arise through the little ways in which we resist the pull. Our status is backed by the solid buildings of the world, while our sense of personal identity often resides in the cracks. (1980:280)

To what extent the sense of selfhood developed by those individuals interviewed can be attributed to them being drawn into a wider social unity needs to be established. And then how, or if, this 'membership' then feeds through to selfhood incrementally, like pennies filling a jar, from being a source of external guidance to being internally driven. Generally though, children glean an understanding from this level of interaction of their place within a social framework and the nature of their social environment.

The initial set of quotes which attempts to establish the existence of community for children shows that there were many contexts for adult / child contact and that they were predominantly informal and spontaneous in nature. They were encountered within a time and space loosely understood to be community. Community wasn't understood at a general level to be a source of threat though. Strangers, whether workers returning home, Australian troops or car drivers were regarded simply as individuals from a diverse set called 'adults'. Adults made up the core of community, they were a source of support, need, a service or just as a matter of fact. In a sense community existed in a unitary way and had not yet fragmented into 'communities' and opposing interests as is perhaps part of the zeitgeist of the late 20th century.

The fact that a war is raging has a major impact too. The Australians are not considered as strangers or 'others' and a potential source of threat due to them being in the same predicament and on the same side- there to help. For Dorothy (1929) too the experience of war even in a city means that strangers are welcomed to the school. Again they are all in it together.

George's (1923) expectations of adults help define community for him in the interactional and moral site way discussed above. The interactions display confidence and responsibility by adults, as well as occurring within a subtext of adult solidarity by parents, and an act of deference by the youngster. The 'knowing' adult transmits expectations of behaviour and thus knowledge of culture to the child.

Adults though did not always speak with one voice (Harry 1953) so there is an ambiguity to the child's experience. At certain times messages could become mixed, particularly where official authority was perhaps seen as overbearing by parents. Or where certain adult norms were not shared by all adults and one adult's actions seem to provide legitimacy for children's actions where other adults would clearly disagree. This approach to authority would also become part of the child's developing understanding as accumulated experiences and listening to adults, both close and formally authoritative and other, would reveal the secrets. Hazel's (1946) example demonstrates the active role in decision making that children had to develop. The story doesn't detail serious consequences for the children, so presumably there was still a shared acceptance amongst the adults around that children will still occasionally be children. Hazel does note that, "I was probably a horrible child!" which implies that she did develop an understanding that this kind of behaviour was ultimately unacceptable. The adults would have been annoyed, the children would have known this and ran away, expecting some form of sanction from the general body understood as 'adults'.

Shared responsibility was the over-arching generally accepted sentiment though and there were frequent examples of this in the participant interviews conveying this in innumerable simple ways. That a builder would spontaneously nip up to check that a swing was safe is highly significant in that it frames the concept of responsibility as being the role of adults (Harry 1953). Responsibility here is not just meant formally, for those with family or officially sanctioned professional relationships with children and young people, but broadened to mean the moral rather than legal sense of the word, to again include all adults.

From the acceptance of adult intervention springs one of the keys stones of community- shared childcare. We can see above that Teresa (1946) relates situations where adults were not only permitted but expected to discipline children and young people. These "other people" share the authority of the bus conductor and understood their responsibility to wield this. Within past communities there was a clear linkage between 'authority' and 'responsibility'. They were built on and mutually reinforced each other and not only underpinned what the community was but provided the bedrock of what adulthood was and what these children were being socialised into.

Mrs B (1916) reminds us that adult authority wasn't always deferred to by children. There was clearly an understanding in the cinema whereby if the behaviour got too boisterous the children would expect to be ejected and the "clonks" were 'reminders' rather than painful physical chastisement that this was the case. It is interesting that the poles were ever needed. It seems that not all adult authority was immediately accepted and measures other than verbal reprimand were required. Thinking about how these measures would go down today perhaps throws into relief how fundamentally things have changed.

Joe (1943) provides another glimpse of how the social changes between past and present are manifested. His reminder that the modern preoccupation with

paedophiles does have antecedents stands in stark contrast to the matter-of-fact way the boys protect themselves. The way he tells the story maintain it as grounded reality and not yet a social panic with its own independent dynamic. The children themselves manage or 'police' the situation without today's ubiquitous 'support'.

The spontaneous show of affection and care by Alan's (1938) rough old builder is a truly beautiful image. The man understands himself to be responsible for looking after the child. It is conceivable that there was some feeling of guilt for the accident taking place but it is much more likely that the old builder sincerely wanted to comfort the upset little boy and does not question himself for having this impulse or how it will be interpreted by others.

These moments straddle various aspects of the data analysis and will be returned to in the cultural script and reflexive methodology chapters. Here though they show what values and mores were transmitted, through spontaneous action by adults, to children. We can ponder how they might impact on the emerging subjects and will do in a later chapter on Selfhood.

Harry's (1953) experiences of playing in his friend's dad's builder's yard set up the teleological nature of their development thus making it aspirational for them. They come to understand that they are on a journey from being the shared 'property' of the whole community, and thus allowed to play in a work place when there is space for them, to becoming adults or their own person with their own responsibilities for work and being different from a new cohort of children, is gradually internalised.

The discussion around Vygotsky in previous chapters lays the basis for our understanding of this process by which children internalise culture. Adults in general existed in the same way as children's own parents did specifically. In the

particular context of working environments, adults shared more with each other than they shared with children, even their own children, and Harry and his friends understood this. For these children the difference created their aspiration: to be part of something 'in control'.

Margaret (1916) gained some insight on this change of role and position. In addition to the tasks' successful completion, making the pancakes for the workers would have somewhat changed her relationship to these adults. She was serving them, carrying out a low skill job allocated to a child but at the same time acting in a more equal way than when playing because she had responsibility. This changed the tone and content of her transactions, only in a small way but for Margaret it was the start of joining adulthood.

As explored in the chapter on Approaches, "Developing responsibility is similar and parallel to forming a conscience or having the ability to hold in check spontaneous self-interested responses." Through these interactions with other adults in wider community situations Margaret (1916), Bill (1920) and other working children have experienced, begun to understand and in part attached themselves to a wider collective. They are at least becoming aware of the journey they have embarked upon and that it has an ultimate goal which entails them assimilating cultural norms shared by the community at large.

Conclusions: A Pin-Ball Community

One possible conclusion that can be drawn from the discussion above is that despite the multiplicity of interactions taking place within these communities, 'community' has a singular existence in this study for the main part. It can be understood to be a social context founded upon relationships, where children play a highly visible role but one which is subservient to that played by adults. Adulthood here is understood in a more conceptual way as a vocation where children are the shared 'property' (non-pejorative) of the community.

This community is not always all ‘sweetness and light’ but can be abrasive and contain threat, which in turn can lead to physical punishment. The task set of children then is to learn how to negotiate often contradictory signals while, as they grow, their relationship to community is developing.

If in today’s world the metaphor is one of ‘bubble-wrap’ (Shields 2011) where our individual integrity is constantly buffered from outside infringement, the past seems to be a world where ‘touch’ was not taboo. Touching frequently crops up in these reminiscences and can mean different things: control and affection. What it seems to signify though is legitimacy of adult interaction with children.

It would seem that in the past children grew up in a society where their social interaction with adults was legitimate and expected. This was a society in which adults were outwardly focussed and by just being in a community they participated in it. Their participation was governed in a way that made demands and expectations of them but also ceded them authority. This authority was given informally but collectively. Adult / child interactions came in many guises: regulatory, supportive, friendly and chastising to name a few. There doesn’t seem to have been a sense that this authority would be used in any other way than in the best interests of everyone. Keith’s parents were more likely to back up the adult involved and question his version of events.

Keith 1943

Oh yes, I would get clipped round the ear by uncles, aunts and neighbours, yes all sort of people. Particularly the local policeman.

Often authority and discipline are confused with chastisement and punishment. To have disciples you need to lead and many of the adults remembered played a significant role in these children’s lives- a kind of collective adulthood.

Dorothy 1929

These Guides Lieutenants and that Church Deaconess particularly, were very very good. You know they really treated us like their own children. In fact, the Deaconess was the one who use to take us in to Battersea Park which was beside the church. And we would go on the boats, we would play tennis, would play. And it was simply through her influence that all these things opened up to us because our parents, "I've got no idea how to hold a tennis racquet or what to do with it!" They just hadn't. They hadn't had the benefits of these things. And we certainly wouldn't have had it if it wasn't for the influence of these outside organisations.

It is perhaps fair to say that adulthood was more than a state of being or stage of life. It could be said that in the past, as evidenced by Dorothy's (1929) Guide and church leaders, adulthood was a vocation. And it was this approach which significantly contributed to the upbringing and induction of children to society. An understanding of adulthood as a vocation whereby trust and authority to deal with children in general is ceded to essentially strangers demarks the past in a highly significant way from now. As has been discussed in detail above, this past narrative is almost inconceivable today.

George's aunt seems to have been much more than a teacher and you can imagine her playing many roles in the lives of many children.

George 1923

On my father's side……of the family was his elder sister. Who was also a primary teacher. She ran what we called the Qualifying Class. The top primary class at Stairs School for probably thirty years- or more. I remember when she retired they asked her to stay on for while. It was a time when teacher recruitment was a bit difficult. And I remember her saying, when she was seventy, "I think it's time I gave up. For the first time in my life I was glad it was Friday today."…..She was quite a remarkable lady, she was also an excellent shot. One of the ways in which she maintained her reputation was by taking the children to fairs and shooting down the shooting stall things until the stall owners asked her to stop shooting (laughs).

There is a subtext here, one which is continuously conveying and reinforcing the notion that children are changing their relationship to community. Moving from

being separate to, children, paradoxically, are developing their individuality by joining ‘adult’ society.

Chapter 8 - Changing Cultural Script

Introduction

In the early stages of this project, and in subsequent discussions and debates, a problem became apparent to me. Whenever I tried to make a case against the panoply of 'safety' increasingly encasing childhood, I found that combating fear and concern with fact was ineffective. It seemed to make no difference to people that there was no actual increase in the numbers of children being abducted and murdered by strangers or that there was in fact a substantial decrease in the dangers presented for children by road traffic. There seemed to exist, at an emotional level, a social sense which defined children as perpetually under threat and demanded certain permitted behaviour by parents. This cultural motif could not be combated by mere facts but required to be laid siege to by other means.

Furedi takes this notion of 'social emotions' further and develops the 'cultural script' concept as being more than just an "emotional climate" where an individual's experiences are given meaning through group interactions.

> As a socially constructed phenomenon, a cultural script is to some extent independent of specific individuals and groups. It transmits rules about feelings and also ideas about what those feelings mean. Individuals interpret and internalize these rules according to their circumstances and temperament, but express them through culturally sanctioned idioms." (Furedi 2007:237)

I was keen to see if there were examples of how 'cultural scripts' influenced behaviour within the families of the participants and perhaps how these scripts had changed over period covered by the data set. Certainly it is becoming clear that the script or scripts in the past, during the period covered by the stories of my

interview participants, are at great odds to the current cultural script today. How and to what degree they differ it is hoped will become clearer during this chapter.

Liz indicates that there may well have been a considerable difference in the past from now.

Liz 1949

We used to have a lot of tramps and gypsies coming to the door, which you never see now. But I remember a lot. But I don't ever remember finding them frightening 'cause Mum always looked after them. She had a special large mug for giving erm tramps and people who asked for it a mug of tea and she'd always give them a sandwich or something….. So it was just part of life and we didn't see them as frightening strangers.

Liz's childhood occurred during the early years of the British welfare state. Evils viewed as universal and caused by poverty were identified in the Beveridge Report (1942). This Report formed the bedrock of the 1945 Atlee (Labour) Government's 'cradle to grave' welfare policies and the establishment of the British Welfare State. Up until then displaced, homeless individuals relied on informal kindness from the public- a mug of tea is the British way. Liz would have been growing up through these hopeful, optimistic times when vagrant strangers were perhaps understood to be
unfortunate rather than symptoms of an ailing society.

Script of 'Risk'

The data reveals no generalised sense of 'risk', either amongst adults or transmitted to children. The realities of risk and 'real danger' will be explored in a separate section but tragedies happened, as have been related in other chapters: Harry's (1935) witnessing of a drowning; Bill's (1920) gasometer explosion or in this case a serious bicycle accident. These cases seemed to have been understood as singular occurrences without being extrapolated to life in general.

Keith 1943

When I was eight, the road which went down past the house and went down to a junction where there was a shop, a T-junction, and they had recently flinted it….And myself and one of my friends were having cycle races up and down this road….And I came off this bike when I was going hell for leather on it, went over the handlebars and ploughed myself into the road. And sort of shredded myself, took large amounts of flesh off. Particularly off, unfortunately off my face. And my hands and arms and knees. So I pick myself up from this, having laid in the road for a bit…. so I picked myself up, you know, a bit of a mess…. and presented myself to my mother and by that time I was sort of like covered in blood! It was right down my front, down my trousers and I was sort of paddling in it. Rather curiously, I was sort of numb from it rather than being in serious pain. And my mother took one look at me (laughs) probably took years off her life, and erm, to her credit she didn't actually flinch or anything, 'cause she was pretty good like that, 'cause she use to work in a factory doing first aid for them. And so she grabbed hold of my father, told him to get the car out, and they took me up to the accident and emergency in the hospital in Lowestoft. Where they had to sort me out. And I had a sort of broken nose, and erm, had shredded all my mouth open. It was all split and my eye brows had suffered seriously and such like.

Keith seems to have had a number of accidents as a child (some like this one fairly serious) but he, and presumably his parents, contextualises this as the behaviour and the resulting consequences expected of a boy.

But I did have a tendency to take lumps out of myself and er, collide with things and such like. Classic sort of male child, sort of accident prone and not very sensible.

Around 80% of those interviewed had a bike at some point during their childhood and the overwhelming reason for not having a bike was not having the funds available to purchase what in the past was a considerable outlay. A lot of bikes were not intended for play but for practical purposes such as, as a mode of travel to school. Keith's parents seem to understand that their son is more than likely to come to grief in some way but nonetheless still allow him a bike to play on and to travel by road to school and friends houses on.

A sense of risk seems not have existed in the way it does today, previously discussed in earlier chapters. The classic sense of 'stranger danger' was enacted,

Teresa 1946

And we weren't allowed to speak to strangers. You know we didn't really do that 'specially men. Mother brought us up to be very wary of talking to men.

but this seems to have been more about how parents thought about particular types of 'strangers', acting in a specific ways, rather than suspicion about other adults in general.

Harry 1953

There wasn't a lot of traffic and somebody could walk you across the road without seeming to be a pervert or anything like that if you were young kids.

Peggy 1921

I was coming home on the tram with my Mother from somewhere or other. And some stranger, a man, offered me a sweet, with rather grimy hands. And I must have shrunk back or something and anyway I refused it. And to my surprise my Mother said to me either then or later, "You should have accepted that."

It is difficult to pull the story of these encounters out without straying into analysis. There are many such examples of informal cross-generational contact without concern on either side of the equation. The fact that these interactions were more frequent, and therefore were more common or garden, seems like a tautology but the nature of life, and the significantly lower car ownership resulting in more use of public transport for one thing, threw people together as an everyday occurrence. This experience possibly acted more as a spur to 'community' rather than as a prophylactic for fear. Fear seems not to have been a huge factor in parental decision making.

Madge 1911

My mother use to put us on the train in Lockerbie at six o'clock in the morning and we went up to Cullen….She put us in charge of the Guard and gave us money for our breakfast. And we had a lovely breakfast on the train, me and my sister. (Cullen journey?) In Banffshire. Oh quite a long time. And I just can't remember how we, we would have to change trains you see. The Guard must have taken us to where ever we had to go. I think Jean would be nine and I would be eleven.

Anne 1913

No no we never played in parks….in those days Colinton, although a suburb it was still countrified and at the bottom of the garden there was a lane going down to a pig farm and then a steep bank covered in wood. And we use to scramble down this and great excitement ‘cause the train came down at the bottom and we went down to watch it. And my brother who was very enterprising put pennies on the line. I don’t quite know what the attraction was.

I remember accidents but not worries or fears. When our own house had been built for a year or two, they started building the road further up. And it was a fairly steep hill and one day the builders had left a iron sort of truck and put a railway up to the top of the hill. I don’t know how the truck was going to be, where they let it run down with stuff in it or what, I don’t know. Anyway my brothers and I got into this truck and it went, rushed away down these rails and stopped very suddenly. And er, I hit, cut my ear in half. [Laughs] But it healed up.

Monica 1955

I was also put off the bus, from the bus once for swearing. I’d heard a new swear word by one of the farm workers and tried it out on the school bus. And the school bus driver put me off and drove off. (Age?) Something like 9, 8 or 9, no 9 or 10 when I think about it. And I’d a particularly interesting one, which I’ll not repeat, and tried it out on the school bus and he made some comment to me and I think I clipped him back. And he said, “Right you can get off the bus and you can walk.” And it’s quite interesting ‘cause he did, he abandoned me on a back road. When he eventually got to the pick up point where my Mother, sometimes I have to say did come to meet me depending on the weather, I didn’t get off the bus. So I got a double row because the bus driver was right and I was definitely wrong. So I was in trouble again when I got home.

Necessity is the mother of parental pragmatism in many cases but these tales are striking. Madge and her sister undertake a long train journey on their own. While under some kind of formal supervision, the nature of the guard’s other duties would mean that for best part of the journey the girls would be unattended in a public place with many strangers around.

Anne doesn’t consider playing in the park as there is much too much else to engage with. The steam trains were a magical draw of the time and she

experiences what is quite a serious industrial accident. To most this accident was entirely predictable- such a wagon may as well have 'Come and Play on Me' posted on the side! It is debatable if there was a full understanding of where the children were going and what they were getting up to but Anne's parents can't have been approaching the issue with a 21st century mindset- an approach which today might well have resulted in Monica's bus driver losing his job.

Relaxed Parents

It has been established that children during the period of the data set (1903 to 1965) were in general granted almost total freedom in many ways. There were controls in various areas of life and at times quite strict controls but, in terms of being allowed to roam and have 'private' unsupervised play, children were in the main free.

Much of this approach to parenting (it would seem that while terms like 'mothering' and 'fathering' with their different connotations are long established, during the time of the participant's stories 'parent' was still a noun and had not yet become widely understood as the verb it is used as today) was based on a considerably different cultural script than today's which meant that concerns of risk scenarios didn't arise in the same engulfing way. However, what about when things did go wrong, what was the impact of these events on future parental decision making?

Hovis 1913

He [Dad] always had a motor bike and side car, which my parents would use at weekends and just leave us alone. (How far would they go off?) They'd go off for a week's holiday. (And left you alone!) Yes, when I was twelve. (How did you cope?) Oh we managed. Mainly cold stuff, but you must remember in those days you didn't get a lot of variety of food. (Make cup of tea?) Oh yes and boil eggs and bread and jam and fry some bacon. (And you were safe?) Well they left us [laughter]. Although [More laughter] I must confess that on one occasion I was sitting reading, my brother had gone with them, I was on my own, I was eleven. (How long?) Oh that was just for a day's run, they'd gone out for the

day. I was sitting reading and lit the fire. And I went into the back yard, found what I thought was paraffin and threw it on the fire. It was petrol! [Hysterics!] The flames came out, the cat was sleeping on the hearthrug. So I kicked the cat and put the flames out and stamped on the hearthrug and all the time it's was burning on my own hand! So that was the last thing I put out. But, er, all was well, it could have been bad but wasn't.

Without passing judgement it is quite amazing what the reminiscence above contains. Children looking after themselves unsupervised for extended periods, a week even. There must have been an assumption that this was an all right thing to do because there must have been an accompanying assumption that if required, adult help in the shape of neighbours, was at hand and then others would know the situation. Hazards were more numerous in the past with open fires and petrol laying around but even so it's hard to imagine children of a similar age today possessing the self care skills, nous and moral strength to get by on their own for so long. Even the wherewithal to put out the burning rug while experiencing the pain of a burning hand! And then to contextualise the event, after the parental reaction, as "it could have been bad but wasn't." Unfortunately the interview doesn't pursue the question about how Hovis' parents actually reacted to the scorched hearth rug and cat. Even without the detail though, it is safe to infer from the tone of the recollection that this practice did continue. She was twelve when her parents went off for a week and only eleven when the incident occurred. Also she does imply that her parents were relaxed about it all- perhaps so only 'in the end'!

If we take reminiscences already related above in previous chapters by Liz (1949) about tying up her younger sister in a remote wood or of the various injuries sustained by Harry (1953) or Catriona's (1954) escapade in the grain silo or Harry's (1935) witnessing of a boy drowning, we can begin to draw the conclusion that parents made sense of situations and their own responses and decision making to such situations in a way bearing marked similarities. Like Janet's (1921) mother, there was concern and worry but this was tempered by the understanding of the time and potentially some realpolitik over the practicalities of everyday life.

Different Drivers?

What other aspects and in what other ways then can the participant's stories reveal to us a mind set or parental approach stemming from and reinforcing a shared cultural script existing in the past?

Sandy 1937

I remember winding them up once because a' got lost, in their eyes. But I was very friendly with the butcher, John Dryfe, an' he had a farm. And John took me to go and look at the animals and we hadnae told Mum and Dad where I was. The time I got back they were distraught and just about had the police out searching for us. But I was quite happy 'cause I knew where I was! And I was quite safe.

Despite his parent's reaction to the perception of having lost their son, Sandy, a child, considers himself to have been 'friends' with an adult, a relationship which is more likely to be viewed with deep suspicion in current times. John, the adult friend, seems also to be confident that the boy won't make up stories about him- it probably hadn't even crossed his mind in the early 1940's.

Rena too has a private relationship with a non-family adult but most significantly is the general acceptance of men who would certainly be considered suspicious by most adults today.

Rena 1940

You just dotted out and in other people's houses as and when. One old lady, she had a piano and I was dead keen on the piano so any excuse I could find I was in there. And I always managed to get a tinkle on the piano when I was in.

My brother had built me an actual house, a sand stone house. Because there was so much sandstone about. He'd built this little sand stone house. And, it had a fireplace in it and a roof on it and we had furniture in it. And we use to find anybody sitting in there, just sitting on the chair.....It wasn't huge but the walls would be this thick just because the sandstone was there. I was probably just about this size, had a wee fire and a window.....A couple of men that lived, not on their, well they did live on their own eventually, but they lived with their old mother. And quite often you would find one of these chaps sitting in there just reading his paper.

This construction was potentially lethal, though probably sturdy. It was located in an old quarry and not in the family garden and so was away from formal supervision, as discussed in a previous chapter. Quite amazingly though is the revelation that these brothers would just use it too. Finding men, still living with their mother, reading their paper in a known children's play house, and them not being seen as suspicious in any way, reinforces the notion of the existence of trusting communal relationships. It seems that there was no or little consideration given to suspicion. If the thought that these men may have been malevolent was considered, and the question "What if?" asked, the trusting feedback loop would have been disrupted and the innocence of the picture destroyed.

Children were also understood to be more resilient in the past. Resilience, as the counter point to being at risk or vulnerable, similarly to suspicion above, would not be understood as it is today. Keith and his friends were clearly highly 'resilient'. With the amount of freedom afforded them by their parents they had to be!

Keith 1943

(Discussion about park) I use to go with two or three friends and we would go down there. I mean it would be illegal these days, because we use to do all sorts of things on the swings, endeavouring to get them to practically loop the loop. A kid would fall off and they would take lumps out of themselves and they either lived with it there and then or you carted them off home and they were patched up and such like. It wasn't any of these soft surfaces or anything like that. It was a concrete surface underneath. It was either dirt or concrete or such like and it took lumps out of you.

These are activities in similar environments that I can remember doing as a child in the 1970's (Simon Knight (1965)). This begins to locate the changes to society discussed in previous chapters, and consequently changes to the cultural script, late in the 20th century and certainly post the data set time frame. There is no evidence that Keith's parents were not unconcerned or cavalier about his injuries, on the contrary he states that, "…my mother took one look at me (laughs) probably

took years off her life, and erm, to her credit she didn't actually flinch…" but at a time, prior to now, a change in society occurred when children became understood to be more vulnerable than they were in the more distant past.

And it wasn't just in the physical realm that vulnerability was not a factor in the script.

Keith 1943

I think, compared to today, people would probably say it was financially deprived. But erm, I had no benchmarks so it didn't actually matter to me. And er, one of my best friends, a guy called Ed S--, who I keep in touch with. His parents lived in a council house and my parents owned their own house and Ed's parents, father, must have been on a relatively low income, because he got free school dinners and uniform paid for and the things that went. But there was absolutely no stigma attached to it, it just didn't matter. Ed didn't pay for his school dinner and when we paid up, 'cause we use to start the week and collect the school dinner money, use to say, "Oh, Ed doesn't pay."

Whereas today all manner of methods are deployed to avoid the stigma associated with poverty, it just isn't a factor for Keith's class.

Despite the age stratification separating children and adults (already covered in previous chapters) and the commensurate understanding that children were inferior and not yet fully members of society, Bill (1920) relates a time when not only societal discourse was more engaged but when children and young people were also engaged in such discussions. (Methodist Central Halls, or Community Central Hall in Maryhill, Glasgow as it is known today)

Bill 1920

In particular just after the, you know, the depression was starting to lift, I can remember going to street corner meetings. All these unemployed folk with all time on their hands. And of course there was a means test on, you know, people were struggling financially. And there use to be these street corner meetings and er, speakers would get up with their little stances and er, socialism and whatnot. And they use to stand and listen to it. (About 8 yrs old then)

We had a church organisation at the Methodist 'Central Halls' and it was called Dr Tucker's Class. It was young men, he was a university lecturer in organic chemistry at Glasgow University, he was a Cornishman, no a Devon man, and he brought all sorts of interesting speakers. He brought, during the Italian Abyssinian campaign, he had one week, he had an Abyssinian putting their case. Next week he'd have Italians. We had, it was very uplifting and educational in many ways. And I took a very active part in Dr Tucker's lectures and benefited from it in gaining knowledge and became really tied up with the church right up until I went into the forces.

And children were capable being conscious of difficult social situations and of taking responsibility in difficult situations too. Bill (1920) has already shown that he was conscious of his family's financial state and the added pressure of him gaining a bursary to Allan Glen's. We have also read a number of situations where young children are responsible for even younger siblings. Below, Margaret shows how the Vygotskian 'head taller' can work in another situation demanding responsibility.

Margaret 1937

(Q about Trains?) The train I can remember would have been actually by the age of twelve or before because I went with my Grandmother down to my aunt who lived at Walmer near Deal, Dover area, Kent. And they didn't consider my Grandmother was able to travel alone anymore. So I accompanied her for that holiday. I was the responsible person! ……. But I was responsible for my Grandmother on that train journey and she died when I was twelve.

Of course being responsible and doing the right thing can be confusing for young children. Peggy, already having got into trouble for not accepting a sweet from a stranger, here gets it 'wrong' again. That she was allowed to visit the toilet at an age we will have to presume was relatively young is further indication of a relaxed and solidarity based cultural script.

Peggy 1921

I do remember, I don't remember which age it was, coming proudly home from having 'spent a penny'. When you literally spent a penny, a penny in the slot. And come back to

the family and proudly announced that there was a notice on the door saying, 'Please leave this lavatory as you would expect, like to find it'. So I left it with the door open!

Lost Worlds

Children seem to have had a much more public existence during the participant's childhood years. They were not only out and about much more and interacting with their communities more independently, they also participated in more formal, but non-school, activities to a high degree.

Avis 1916

I belonged to everything! We had erm, Rechabites, I can't remember, it was just some other girls went so I went too. 'R.I.C.H.A.B.I.T.E.S.' I presume. (Religious?) No, I don't really know what it was, we just went every Friday night I think it was. And just because friends went, I went. We belonged to everything. And at church we had the League of Young Worshipers and the Band of Hope, oh everything, we belonged to everything that was going.

Frances 1934

Brownies, Guides, Sunday School, Kinderspiel, that's a drama thing, a drama club within church. Taking part in that it would have been senior secondary probably thirteen upwards. Scottish country dancing of course. Youth club, Youth Fellowship. I was very involved in the um, Salvation Army because we got a, tambourine to bang and I use to embarrass my mother greatly, standing at the bottom of the road banging this tambourine and singing hymns. But there was a lot of us involved that really weren't interested in being a Salvation Army person but we enjoyed this on a Sunday, although it wasn't made out to be naughty to do it. We enjoyed doing it.

Here then are two girls who were totally immersed in the life of their community. They travelled independently to and from these activities. This again shows the tremendous freedom afforded children and its role in developing further relationships and skills. While participating, the level of social cross-pollination of ideas and values would have been immense (Putnam 2000). This will have provided a rich pool from which these children, as developing adults, could draw while exploring their own values but so too such exposure would have reinforced the generalised expectations of the time.

Adult run provisions have their own moral approach, value base and raison d'être. Rechabites for example was a mutually based temperance group. The moral worth of the club or association might have been questioned politically,

Fred 1917

I did not (belong to a uniformed organisation) my father wasn't keen on any kind of uniform. He wasn't any kind of military at all. Any kind of uniform was an anathema to him. But I didn't care.

George 1923

Oh Sunday School, no, no absolutely not. I had never been christened and neither had my parents….. (Q about scouts etc) No. Father actually disapproved of uniformed organisations in general. He'd had a long first war. He went through the European war and then he had a while in Afghanistan. I don't think he was de-mobbed until 1921. So he'd had seven years of the military life and he disapproved of anything that savoured of uniforms and discipline. Thought they were bad for people.

but the social setting was the draw for the children and they seem to have been relaxed if not cynical regarding their taking of the moral medicine – there was a lot of us involved that really weren't interested in being a Salvation Army person (Frances 1934).

The individual morality of the volunteers was not generally questioned or under suspicion though. This is perhaps a key area where divergence with current times is stark. Bristow (2011) explores some of what the notion of volunteering contains and how this is changing,

> Volunteering, by its nature, depends upon spontaneous and informal offers of help. But the trajectory behind the Vetting and Barring Scheme formalised this process, by regulating all 'frequent' or 'intensive' volunteers as though they were professionals or employees. This formalised the notion that the more prepared an individual is to volunteer

> time and energy to help with children's activities, the more he or she is regarded as an object of suspicion and in need of a licence…..
>
> Secondly, writes Parton, the Joint Chief Inspectors' Report addresses the problem of 'potentially dangerous persons' and agencies struggling to respond to 'unconvicted people who presented "a high risk of harm to the public, including children"'. This indicates the expansion of concern from children who may be at risk within their specific circumstances, to concern about adults in the general population who may pose a risk to children. (Bristow 2011)

It might be might be argued that for trust to emerge there requires to be risk. To put it another way, without the opportunity to get it wrong there is no need to trust people to get it right. As already observed in this chapter though, there is little evidence of these questions or considerations within the participant's stories.

This is all not to say that there was no concern or perception of change over time in the data set period.

Pauline 1932

There was a certain amount of traffic. There was quite a lot of traffic, but what there wasn't, was this fear of children being interfered with. Though even at that my mother told me that it wasn't quite as safe as it had been when she was a small child, because she had travelled from Dublin to the west of Ireland on her own when she was six and not come to harm.

Bernadette 1954

(Did you own a bicycle) I did. There was a big fight over me having a bicycle. 'Cause, I think in terms of the period we are talking about when I was young, I was quite protected….. So I was quite protected and my Mum didn't want me to have a bike at all. She didn't want me to have a bike and go on the roads, that worried her silly. But we had a family friend who was a policeman and he persuaded her that you know it was the thing children did, 'cause I'd been wanting one for ages. And, you know, he quoted some

statistics to her about the actual dangers rather than the ones she had dreamed up! And after that I was allowed a bike. I must have been about, I'm trying to think, it would have been very late primary or very early secondary, that sort of age. But I wasn't allowed a paper round. I wanted a paper round and I wasn't allowed a paper round, my brother did.

Through analysing the data collected for this project it is becoming to be understood that a social shift of seismic proportions, rather than gradual change, has occurred. And that it occurred at some point in the mid to late 20th century, after the last participant's story, when childhood freedoms, community relationships and narratives did dramatically change. It perhaps needs to be established in future work if this temporal/cultural 'rift valley' houses the period 1903 to 1965 or if it is our current time era that is out of kilter with other times.

Mr P 1937

This was it, it was safe. But I suppose there must have been 'bad men' in those days too but I don't remember, you know, I'd been told. We were never on our own, there was always a crowd of us.

Discussion: Defining the Script, "(what) If…"

Counter posing current times to the past is not the task of this project as such. The project is necessary because of changes in modern times and this has been discussed already, as have the reasons why there seems to be a suspicion, or dislike, of humanity in general. The aim however is to explore how past experiences influenced the development of 'selfhood'. Liz (1949) above sums up much of what this chapter has begun to show. She recounts a time when strangers were not understood to be 'other' in any insidious sense and this links to perceptions of community and shared identity. But how else might this tone be revealed and have been understood?

There was a danger that this chapter might have strayed over the terrain intended for a subsequent discussion on 'Selfhood'. Vygotsky's (1994) points about how society determines personality will be explored in that chapter too, though it is

worth setting down a marker here to draw out the distinction between the close but separate cultural and psychological phenomena.

> As an individual only exists as a social being, as a member of some social group within whose context he follows the road of his historical development, the composition of his personality and the structure of his behaviour turn out to be a quantity which is dependent on social evolution and whose main aspects are determined by the latter. (Vygotsky 1994:175)

Vygotsky could be said to be discussing how something becomes ones 'nature' while for Furedi these feelings and responses, what people can cope with, while deeply embedded within the individual are still very much governed by social relationships and thus understood to be more fluid.

For Furedi the key element of a cultural script is the transmission of rules about how people should interpret their feelings in any given context. Here however, I broaden this term somewhat to incorporate rules about how people should react as well. In a sense cultural 'scripts', plural, cover how in the past children and adults not only dealt with trauma but also how the narrative of the time governed their responses to each other both emotionally and socially, whereas today, mutual fear and suspicion are the motif generated by the now essential nature of 'vulnerability', where children are afraid of adults and adults are afraid of children, for example,

> In Michigan, the North Macomb Soccer Club has a policy that at least one female parent must always sit on the sidelines, to guard against any untoward behavior by male coaches. In Churchville, Pa., soccer coach Barry Pflueger says young girls often want a hug after scoring a goal, but he refrains. Even when girls are injured, 'you must comfort them without

> touching them, a very difficult thing to do,' he says. 'It saddens me that this is what we've come to.' (Zaslow 2007, August 23)
>
> Frank McEnulty, a builder in Long Beach, Calif., was once a Boy Scout scoutmaster. 'Today, I wouldn't do that job for anything,' he says. 'All it takes is for one kid to get ticked off at you for something and tell his parents you were acting weird on the campout.' (Zaslow 2007, September 6)

The participant stories are beginning to show that in the not too distant past there was a very different cultural script where society, in addition to not being governed by such misanthropic understandings, was generally more relaxed with itself. For Liz (1949) this was clearly the case when dealing with homeless individuals calling at her home for 'a cup o' kindness'.

The reaction of Keith's (1943) parents reveal there to be no generalised sense or narrative of 'risk' attaching itself to rough and tumble, and worse even. Boys (children) hurt themselves and get hurt and this seems to be understood as a fact of life and a site where perhaps all the associated aphorisms are coined- boys will be boys, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger, etc. Also, Harry (1953), Peggy (1921) and Madge (1911) demonstrate that there is also no similar sense of risk attaching itself to adults. Children were warned about talking to 'strangers' but few strangers were understood to be 'other' in the sense of something to define the community against.

Harry reflects what he recalls as a generalised sense of trust in his community. Peggy was with her mother but rather than praise Peggy for 'not taking sweeties from strangers' her mother seems to have been more concerned that Peggy could have been perceived to have been rude or discourteous to another adult. This social sense links back well to the chapter on community and informal

supervision. In the 1920's being polite seems to have been considered as more important than being 'safe'- today's over-arching moral value. This tells us something about manners but is a better indication of the modern sense of risk not being part of the cultural script at that time.

The way that the cultural script of risk currently invades the imagination is that it constantly poses the question, "What if?" In the realm of family life, a consciousness of the worst that could happen often paralyses parents and the outside world becomes a threat (Furedi 1997, 2001a). In contradistinction, the past seems to have operated under a vastly different approach. In fact, when attempting to sum up that way of thinking in a similar short question, the reality of a cultural script forces itself to the fore. The question didn't seem to arise at all. The opposite of, "What if?" would be something like, "Things will be fine." but the statement presupposes a consciousness that would consider what might go wrong. Once this concern has presented itself to parents, it must be extremely difficult to shake loose of the worry and so, in the past, the cultural script must be have been one that didn't venture onto that terrain in the first place.

This is why in retrospect 'parenting' in the past seems so lax to us. Today, with the social narrative, cultural script and media coverage already discussed as the context, we constantly, mostly unconsciously, approach child care situations with 'What if?' to the forefront of our thinking. Past parents don't seem to have thought this way. Why else would one seem to behave in such caviller ways and allow children to travel unaccompanied on trains, to play on railway lines, in builders' trucks or adults put them off a school bus to walk home along secluded country lanes? The 'What if?' question or approach seems not to have been part of the cultural script in during the period of the childhoods related within the participant stories.

Real Danger and Tragedy

"......risks must be taken because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing,
the person who risks nothing does nothing, has nothing, is nothing.
They may avoid suffering and sorrow,
but they cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love or live.
Chained by their certainties they are slaves,
they have forfeited their freedom.
Only a person who risks is free." (Anon, quoted in Barns 1997)

If we pose the question, "What if?" then it betrays a mind set that presupposed the worst that might happen and that this approach would lead to increased controls on children's movements due to quite understandable parental concern.

The quote from Charles Landry, used when discussing why this project is needed, perhaps sums up the differences in approach or mind-set,

> The life of a community self-consciously concerned with risk and safety is different from one focused on discovery and exploration. (Landry 2005:3)

It has been shown previously that this was in fact the case and that the general approach by people to their social context was different. It is worth drawing what the reality of this different approach was, not just in sociological or theoretical terms but in hard concrete day to day reality. The kind of reality that has been discussed previously and, if experienced today, in Britain at least, might lead to significant public debate and probable changes to the laws governing how we raise and deal with children.

The data set provides a range of stories that reveal what the reality of danger was to the child or young person growing up during the period- both in terms of

potential and actual occurrences. There is no intention to minimise tragedy here. Each event would have been significant to the individuals involved. What these stories suggest though is that from each incident there stems no generalised cultural reaction of any sort, not just of the 'fearful' variety.

It is intended here that the stories just flow and thus allow the text, childhood as a time of freedom, discovery and exploration, to speak for itself with minimal narration. To this extent there is some indulgence of the interviewees.

In the following reminiscences we find that children regularly played in *places and in situations* that were, potentially at least, very dangerous. There is some ambiguity as to the level of parental awareness. It ranges from full knowledge to none.

Rena 1940

Four quarries where I lived and one, just in front of the house, which was full of water. So we use to play around the edge of that. Around a couple of the others as well and we would go up the river. You know and just try and squeeze under the bridge where it wasn't really safe to be. Just walking and playing in the river. (Q about parental knowledge) Well they didn't always know where we were.

Catriona 1954

Another terrible place we used to play was in amongst a kinda grain thing. A really dangerous place….I was told I was NEVER to go in there again!

Freda 1950

(Mischief and places not allowed to go to?) I don't think I was that, I mean yes there were, but I wasn't really a full rebel….And we had to be careful because there was quick sands on the way to Hess. So ma' boundary was eels, quick sands and they would kill us. Up in, we would have adders and the woods up the road from us had adders as well. If we went down to the cliffs at Balcary and we did go to these places, sort of, near the boundary here we thought would be the dangerous part. We would fall off the cliffs and be swept out to sea, and end up I don't know where but there were boundaries of fear. We had a wide space to play in and we were allowed to play on tractors and I did get covered in tar. I was only frightened of the row I would get.

Harry 1935

(Q about mischief) ….there was a place near Reading which was called ‘Monkey Islands’. And all the children use to go on about ‘Monkey Islands’, how wonderful ‘Monkey Islands’ were. But we were banned. We were not to go anywhere near ‘Monkey Islands’! Well in secondary school, secondary, we went to ‘Monkey Islands’. And what it was, was a place on the Kennet and Avon Canal where there was a weir. And the water poured out from the weir and formed a big pool, in the middle of which there were islands. And then it flowed back and came into the river again lower down where there’d been a lock or two to lower the level. And it was, potentially a very dangerous place. But I remember going there when I was in secondary school. I remember diving off the weir and things like this….The lock in my time was in very bad disrepair. I mean the whole thing was in disrepair. The whole thing could have collapsed the state it was in.

Erica 1920

(Worries and fears?) Well I can remember very vividly, there was a passage that we went through from our street into another street. And erm, a man opening his trousers, you know. And it was difficult to get past. And it happened more than once and it happened in our street not very far from home. And when he got himself out under a lamppost, on his bike, you see, he’d sit on his bike. (How deal with?) I just can’t remember. Certainly I ran away. Where I told Mother or not, I don’t know. (Other children involved?) No. [Didn’t discuss it]

George 1922

(Other places to play?) We also use to remember, ‘cause there was buildings started after a time and we use to have great fun after hours, playing in the part completed buildings. And I remember we, we sometimes use to find some lead and make a little fire and melt it down and pour it into, you know brick’s got a little hollow in it called a frog with the name of the company in. So we’d pour the lead into this frog and wait till it set and then turn it out. Of course it was in relief and the wrong way round but that gave us some satisfaction.

Parents may not have known where their children were playing or indeed had full understanding of where their children were. Both poles are noteworthy however. In that to not know where your, often very young, child is playing would be now, and could well have been then, considered criminal if the worst did happen. Similarly the case if a parent is allowing their children to roam into unsafe situations. Perhaps to not know would be almost less ‘criminal’ in today’s world as today it is morally better to be ‘naïve’ than negligent.

Above though there are some quite extreme cases of children playing in the vicinity of real danger. What does this indicate about the generalised parental mindset of the time and how could these experiences of dangerous play environments impact on the emerging selfhood of children?

There is an advert on TV (for a root beer style drink) that asks, "What is the worst that could happen?" This question is asked in a way that is intended to reinforce the minimal risk that the customer is taking in trying a new drink. In terms of childcare today however the same question emphasises everything that can go wrong. The trick, when reading these examples of *potentially dangerous places*, is to perhaps see if your mind doesn't ask the question posed above. It is surprising at what point this approach becomes most difficult to sustain.

Harry 1953

(Q about any other story to tell) About the theft of the guns. That was Scott___. I always got the blame of it, cause I was seen as a naughty, you know, amusing child. And apparently, they stole the guns and shot the craw [ran away] not me. From the gun club, 303's. Scott's father was chairman of the gun club and he had them in his loft. They took them [the guns] away, they were aged 7 and 4 and a half, but I wasn't there, I was at school.

Harry 1953

We used to climb up the outside of Threave Castle and pretend we were invaders. Spend the whole day out there and build dens in the marshes. Make the odd bomb with sodium chloride and sugar. Set off bombs in the middle of fields and on housing estates so it would look like a flying saucer had landed, and start rumours. Flaming bombs! (Laughter and mock disapproval)

Keith 1943

One of the things which I had was a catapult. And I progressed from having a catapult cut from a Y of a tree to erm discover that a shop in Lowestoft sold metal versions of it which were much better because they were better shaped and stronger. And I had this catapult which was absolutely lethal because I had some very strong elastic on it and this would project stones [laughs] about 200 yards if not further. That was sort of, I must have been about ten to about sixteen. And we use to have catapult fights. We use to get in the

orchard there and get behind trees and go and stock up with stones from wherever there was some building going on because they would generally have stones which came from the beach and therefore they were nice round ones. We would let rip at one another!! (laughs) You got struck but not anywhere that did you any sort of damage, other than bruising. It wasn't sort of malicious but erm, it was great fun.

Colin 1963

(Mischief?) I was once tied to that very clothes pole. Ian S__, who's garden we were in went into his house and was rooting around in the draws in the kitchen. And his mother asked, "What are you doing Ian?" and he says, "I'm looking for matches." "What are you looking for matches for?" Cool as a cucumber he says, "We're burning Colin at the stake." So Matty S__ came out the door to see what was going on to find me tied to this clothes pole with kindling, paper and coal at me feet. So I shiver now to think what would have happened if he had actually got matches. I probably would have been burnt at the stake!

Ann 1916

My Aunt Kirsty was eight miles to ten miles away on the other side of the island. We regularly went to see her. So we went through, there's a road up so far and you're right over the hills. We walked right over the hills until we came to next road and we walked all the way and lots of young children did that. (As a group or with adults?) No not as a group of young children, you went a message with relations. And as far as I remember my older sister probably go with me because we had wild cats, big black wild cats. So you were a bit bigger before you risked that.

Ian 1940

(Q about free play range) Never an issue. The scouts were two and a half-mile away. Football at Penpont was two and a half-mile away. It was never a problem. Well we use to go further afield on a Sunday. I use to go and visit my uncle at Dunscore [Ten miles]. Use to strap my wee sister on the bar of my bike and take her with me. All the way to Dunscore.

Ken 1939

We use to go out and I, being the eldest one, they said, "Well if Kenneth's going you can all go." That was the way it worked, which was a bit of a burden. And so they use to come round and say, "Right, tell m'Mum we're all going." And then we use to go, or set off together and get to the top of the street and all we'd all go our individual ways. (Parent's aware?) Well I'm sure they did, but they were confident enough that they would let you go. There wasn't the distractions there are today. There wasn't the threats. I mean there

were bad things going on in those days but not in the way that there is today. It was occasional rather than the rule.

Joe 1943

(Worries and fears?) We had um, what's it now you call them, paedophiles….And as long as you were with your pals you just laughed. You never went on your own. Things like that I remember but never anything serious. Although I suppose what he did was serious. He'd get in an awful lot of trouble today, but it never happened.

Monica 1922

(Playing on local common and being out and about) And then one time I can remember I was scared stiff. I was coming, we use to have those terrible 'pea-souper' fogs do you remember them? Well there was 'pea-souper' fog and I was coming home from Greycoat [school] but I was pretty young I think. Probably perhaps 10. And it was very very foggy and a man came up to men and he said, "Can I help you across the road?" So he helped me across the road. And then he sort of got of very close. And he said, "Would you mind if you put your arms round me." I meant, "my arms round you?" And I said, "No" I didn't know any different but I was scared and it was horrible. And all the way down Burn Road he was sort of getting closer and closer and then he said, "Will you meet me on the common?" And I suspect I said, "Yes" because I was too scared to say, "No." But I remember when I got to my gate I said, "This is my home." At which he said, "I hope I see you." and went off quick. But I was far too scared to tell my parents about it. And I don't know why I was scared because I didn't know what he was getting at at all. I had a horrible feeling.

The examples above all have the potential to become dangerous, lethal even. The difference from the actually dangerous places is difficult to spot in some cases but I would argue that these situations are not necessarily dangerous and rely to some extent on the particular child's judgement as to how dangerous they become. Even the last two cases, where current sensibilities might lead us to be more concerned, do rely on some decision making by the children.

As has been discussed already, when things did go wrong there seems to have been no generalised 'risk averse' reaction to events. It is worth acknowledging that things did go wrong. There is no intention to minimise the sometimes tragic outcomes of *serious physical injuries*, *psychological trauma* (though the narrative

makes sense of this in a different way to modern times) *and death* that did occasionally happen.

Harry 1935

And there was one boy in particular, drowned because he dived off the bridge and ended up stuck in the mud at the bottom!….We were banned but we went anyway.

Bill 1920

We played in the canal which was, there was always somebody drowning up there….. (Age?) Probably about twelve.

Jean 1918

(In the harbour?) No down the castle dykes. You go right down the castle dykes, what we called The Point. But it was very dangerous. And you know we use to swim, saying I'm going for a swim. Well don't dare. There was this boy, he was in my class at school and he lived just up the street. And one of the neighbours says, "John, you're not going swimming tonight?" He says, "Mrs Jamieson, if they're going." "But you've just had your dinner." Poor boy, he was drowned. And he use to think nothing of swimming across the harbour.

George 1922

(Q about playing near water) In the park there was. There was a stream that ran right down through the park and there were certainly two and I've got a suspicion there was a third very large pool. And we played around the edges but I don't ever remember anybody falling in. I remember two of my friends being drowned in a river some distance away that we use to go to at a spot where we use to pick blackberries and go for nuts and things. And that was, oh, about three miles away. And once again as children we'd walk there and we'd do this during the school holidays. And I do remember um, a boy who was in my class and who I played with, his sister fell in the river and he went to rescue her and both children were drowned. I suppose about nine ten. Oh yes and we walked all the way. Like I say it was at least three miles and it was along a reasonably busy road but of course there wasn't anything like the same amount of traffic on the roads then as there is now.

Bill 1920

Another time I remember the police being there, they had blown up a gasometer and there were two killed that night. And this was under eleven! Well, they managed to climb,

use the gasometer, they would climb up the ladders. They threw a match. Yes, two of them were killed. I remember the police enquiry.

Jim 1931

I mean along the canal banks, the things we did! There was the walls, for instance were about this width (18") and at Francis' end the wall, the wall went down to the canal would be, what about eight feet. Eight feet plus and we use to know places to climb up. But at Francis' end the greens, our green was level with the wall but, in their end it was sunk down. And we use to run across, chase each other across the tops of these walls. Run all the way along the wall, no problem. (Q about accidents) No real ones. Skinned knees and things. The only accident I can remember was em, that was when we had the shelters in our area. They put the shelters out on the drying greens. And the two were fairly close, so a lot of us would go and run and jump from one shelter. And there was a row of spikes in between. And it didn't bother us because we could always make it. But this lad tried and I mean he got hooked up on the, on one of these. That's the only accident I can remember.

Keith 1943

When I was eight, the road which went down past the house and went down to a junction where there was a shop, a T-junction, and they had recently flinted it. So they had put a layer of tar down then put chippings down on to it. And myself and one of my friends were having cycle races up and down this road. And I unfortunately came to grief on the junction where we were turning. And I came off this bike when I was going hell for leather on it, went over the handlebars and ploughed myself into the road. And sort of shredded myself, took large amounts of flesh off. Particularly off, unfortunately off my face. And my hands and arms and knees. So I pick myself up from this, having laid in the road for a bit, This was on a bank holiday Sunday we were doing this and by pure chance there was nobody about so I was about a couple of hundred yards from home, so I sort of picked myself up, you know, a bit of a mess, and sort of trotted off home as being a sensible safe place to go. Walked in the back door and presented myself to my mother and by that time I was sort of like covered in blood! It was right down my front, down my trousers and I was sort of paddling in it. Rather curiously, I was sort of numb from it rather than being in serious pain. And my mother took one look at me (laughs) probably took years off her life, and erm, to her credit she didn't actually flinch or anything, 'cause she was pretty good like that, 'cause she use to work in a factory doing first aid for them. And so she grabbed hold of my father, told him to get the car out, and they took me up to the accident and emergency in the hospital in Lowestoft. Where they had to sort me out. And I had a sort of broken nose, and erm, had shredded all my mouth open. It was all split and my eye brows had suffered seriously and such like.

So they took me into the place and started cleaning me up. And they wanted to give me an anaesthetic and tried to get an anaesthetist to actually come out and he refused to come out so they strapped me down on this trolley, with sort of leather straps across me. And my mother sat on me. And they scrubbed me, and it hurt. And not unreasonably, I resisted. It was the right thing to do, it was painful but they weren't brutally inclined or anything like that. It was done in all the best things, but erm, as a result, not as a result of that, but because of the damage I'd done to myself, I then had a whole series of operations in Norwich, in a plastic surgery unit, to straighten my face out. They did a great job on me. But I can remember coming off the bike and I can remember going home and I came remember being strapped down on the, and being scrubbed. And quite amazing thing about that is, that once they'd actually finished doing it, I actually didn't feel too bad! (laughs)…But I did have a tendency to take lumps out of myself and er, collide with things and such like. Classic sort of male child, sort of accident prone and not very sensible.

It seems quite astounding how many drownings there were. The interviews do cover a wide range in years but a lot of the interviewees knew or knew of someone who drowned. What is remarkable though is not so much the regularity of the tragedies but the apparent lack of anxiety and prohibitive responses by adults. Apart from children continuing to swim and dive despite drownings, there are two adults responses related through the data, both of which can be considered positive rather than prohibitive.

Keith 1943

I was lethal on water because, I have discovered in later life I actually don't have much fear of water, and um my parents had to have me taught to swim at an early age or otherwise I was going to drown. Because I use to go and jump in the broads without a care in the world, before I learned to swim. So they decided it was much better to get me taught to swim!

Harry 1953

There was a swimming pool in Dumfries, which was twenty miles away so we used to get the bus to that as kids- not a club. We would have loved to have been in the club but it was too far to go at night. (Q about more local pool) When we were about thirteen, I think, after youngsters drowned at Sandyhills and they had a lot of money raised and converted the swimming pool. You know, with the idea in mind as a response to that, it was a kind of national thing at the time. That was inspired by that in a very decent small town way.

It could be implied that these ‘not unusual’ situations substantiate the claim to difference in community life that the Landry quote used at the start alludes to.

Much is also made of halcyon days of the bygone era which could perhaps be named 'pre-Risk Society' (Palmer 2007). There has always been some danger that this project may be understood in light of these discussions to be a neo-traditionalist one, where the modern sense of loss is projected back into the past in a search of answers to current day problems. This has never been the case and despite some clear learning that can be taken from these reminiscences there are no romantic goggles being worn, obscuring some of the grim past realities of childhood.

Allowing children to in effect supervise themselves resulted in parents not always knowing where their children were. It has already been shown that the helicopter parent is a modern phenomenon but these freedoms created a situation where rules on safety could be broken without any risk of chastisement. This reality creates a space for developing selfhood and this will be explored later but it also did place children at real risk and frequently in real danger. Has the balancing point changed? It can be argued ‘Yes’ in that there has been a rupture with tradition. Where parents and grandparents may have played in the same places in the same way and so understood the process whereby children go beyond the permitted limits, risk consciousness has ripped that approach from modern parents. This has left children under tighter control, with less space to exploit gaps and cross boundaries.

Potentially dangerous places and activities thus amount to the same thing under the new sensibility and the active decision making of the child is eliminated from the equation. Unlike children today, as understood through the literature, the children of the data set period were allowed to encounter situation where they had to develop judgement and decision-making abilities. This judgement had both

individual and collective facets to it and, due to the immediacy of the decisions made combined with and multiplied by the amount of free unsupervised time available to these children, real accidents inevitably happen. It can only be understood, in the parlance of the time of the participant interviews, as 'unfortunate' (rather than obvious and predictable) that these tragedies occurred. These seem to be 'common' in the sense that many of the interviewees knew of a tragedy but, viewed in terms of the total amount of outdoor / public unsupervised activity that took place, serious and fatal accidents were perhaps rare and relatively infrequent.

Though perhaps indulgent of the data, this section has demonstrated that the society and culture of the data set period, despite experiencing considerable 'real' and 'actual' danger to its children (as examined in chapter 2), was still focussed on 'discovery and exploration' when considering how to induct the next generation.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to establish if the cultural script (or scripts) operating at the times of the participant stories significantly influenced parental behaviour. Of additional interest was how this may have changed over time. Embedded within the second aim is the notion that a culture's 'script' is dynamic. As a socially constructed phenomenon, the susceptibility of cultural scripts to change can be easily accepted by academics. When dealing with the current day to day reality of risk aversion however, this susceptibility can be difficult for the general population to comprehend. Such is the extent of the gulf with the past, even those individuals and groups with a consciousness of the change that has occurred, and wishing to challenge the current cultural script of safety and risk aversion, can come to understand it to be impenetrable or hegemonic.

Cultural scripts must exist in a sense subliminally. If a culture's 'script' was manifest and generally understood as being how rules about feelings were

transmitted and internalised, it would cease to have such a purchase on emotions and consequently cease to exist. The controlling aspect of culture in this circumstance, not to ascribe a conspiratorial consciousness to it, would need to become much more direct.

So, while analysing the reminiscences of these people, we are trying to glean what the common rules influencing behaviour were. What needs to be established quickly though is that the cultural script of the times being analysed cannot be understood in relation to or through the prism of modern risk consciousness which underpins that of today and explored in chapter 2. Any of the situations above could have gone seriously wrong, and some did. It was not unheard of for children to be hit by trains, get lost or be abducted. However, while the potential for disaster might have been understood, this understanding does not seem to have been embedded deep down in the psyche- both individual and social. If these potential scenarios had been considered, parents would have been considerably more reluctant to grant such freedom and act in the manner they did. It therefore seems clear that the rules by which parents interpreted and internalised their feelings and decision making regarding their children were transmitted to them through a very different cultural script than exists today.

Was there then a script of 'resilience' during the time of the participant's stories? Again it would seem not or if so by default only. The modern term 'resilience' seems to have emerged as an attempted counter to 'risk' and thus rests on the assumption of vulnerability contained within the modern script of risk. Resilience is the flip side of risk if you like. Scripts in the past allowed contact between children and generalised community adults- or perhaps again more correctly, didn't forbid it. This perhaps set up a virtuous spiral whereby the greater public existence of children allowed them to experience more contact with the community, seeing more, which in turn impacted on their understanding and

development. Thus emerging adults possessed the same experiences, values and approaches to community life making their continued reproduction more likely. Examples cited within this chapter remain relatively uniform and stretch all the way from 1911 to 1963. This period crosses two world wars, the Great Depression and the birth of youth culture- though it was as late as 1956 before Elvis exploded onto the scene. Community life was welcoming and considered safe for children. When harm did occur it wasn't exaggerated and adults were a source of support and to be trusted- when not being mischievous towards them. The free association of children within their community resulted from them having a significantly more 'public' existence and is emblematic of the cultural script existing during the data set.

This cultural script is idiomatic of a culture where children were considered to be more physically and emotionally robust, when members of the wider community were understood to share more universal moral norms and were therefore more trustworthy and which perhaps led adults, and the next generation of adults, in a more optimistic direction than during early 21st century Britain. (What social upheaval occurred which might have disrupted this 'virtuous circle' seems to have taken place out with the time frame of the interviews and its nature and impact are worthy of their own project!)

Chapter 9 - The ‘Self’ understood

Glimpses of another role

In this chapter I will revisit some of the data and commentary from the previous data analysis chapters (pulling apart the previously mentioned 'sociological magnets') and, where relevant, draw in other concepts, expanding the commentary alongside the data. The question requiring a resolution is this- how do the accumulating life experiences of developing children and their relationships with other children, adults and wider society, contribute to or impact on the emerging agency of an autonomous self? It has become clear that in the past expectations of children that society had were very high. Indeed from the level of task carried out by some of these children they would seem to have very high expectations of themselves as well.

Here, Hazel is forced, through necessity, to become more mature; developing a less egocentric perspective, internalised controls and motivations.

Hazel 1946

(Q about benefits of upbringing?) Certainly in my situation with my father having died, we were learnt to stand on our own two feet at quite an early age because my mother had very little income and pensions were very small in those days….So we certainly learned to value things because my mother had not got the money to give ‘er us freely. So we always, always had to save up for something. I mean the boys use to go out and work at The Olympia but it was actually to buy things to give to my mother, they basically came home and gave it to my mother, it wasn’t for them to spend. And I can remember when I first started work, er, I hadn’t actually got a coat and I can remember, I think I had probably about ten pounds saved up, and I can remember going across to Manchester, and it was when leather coat became fashionable, and I remember buying this just perfectly plain navy coat. My mother came with me and we went to buy this coat and I think it was nineteen pounds, but I had to pay, so she loaned me the other money, and it was only because she knew that I hadn’t got a coat to wear. But I had to pay every penny back. Which and I think that sort of thing does give you good standards. And we all had our jobs in the house.

The death of her father removed the main source of income from the family. This left her mother in a financially dire situation. Whereas in other circumstances the proceeds from part time jobs and other casual work might go to the children themselves, this situation demanded that they contribute to the family wage before they would normally have had to. This ‘window’, through which circumstance has made these children look, opens to a vista of duty and adult responsibilities. Certainly it will have accelerated their understanding of the value of commodities, having had to work hard for them. The impact of this situation on life chances can only be guessed at but having to engage in wage labour and contribute to the family wage at an earlier stage potentially forces beneficial outcomes along the way. Perhaps a sense of pride in taking on adult responsibilities, a sense of achievement and esteem from completing meaningful tasks and a partial experience of being an active subject, even if just on a temporary basis.
Bill’s (1920) comparable experiences of poverty are drivers of similar learning and as was explored in the chapter on Freedom and Licence. In this situation Bill begins to develop an understanding of the needs of others and his growing place within the family framework. This is where inclination begins to be replaced by obligation. While it is accepted as 'good' that a person gives of their own free will and obligation implies a kind of external pressure, it is also a positive development for a child to understand that there are some things that are greater than one's self. For Bill, it seems that while this sequence of events was stressful, he didn’t understand it to be onerous or 'unhealthy'.

Bill 1920

Now, if I can explain, we got forty minutes for lunch, for a time there I use to go to the restaurant, you know, all school blazers and kitted out. And, um, it was table service in there and I felt after a time it was a struggle because my mother and father were separated and um, my mother worked and she was having to foot the bill. And I use to get forty minutes for lunch. Now I ran from the school just over a mile. We got out twenty minutes, quarter past twelve. And I ran along full pelt along Parliamentary Rd to Buchanan St in Glasgow. I got the number eight bus and was home in about quarter of an hour. I ran upstairs, my grandmother had my meal on the table. I had my meal, washed

my face etc. I ran down, caught the bus on its return trip and I was back at the school in forty minutes. And it, believe me, if you missed the bus, um, or the bus was late, there were problems, ‘cause you had to be in the next class. (Age?) Eleven.

Bill’s experiences here do mean that he misses out on much unsupervised play and peer interaction at lunch times. This would have contributed to his developing self in other ways, such as joint concession and mutual respect and a deepening of his comprehension of close interpersonal relations, as discussed in the chapter on childhood and development, but is he developing autonomy in another way during his lunchtime dash? The demand on Bill, for him to discipline himself, to not spend money the household couldn't afford and to race home and back to school, is to check himself to a deferred goal- an ‘education’. This pressure on poor families was reduced when free school meals were introduced after WW2, although gradually increasing flat rate charges were very quickly introduced. Bill will have been told of the importance of a 'good education' but the level of self management required would really have had to have true understanding and belief.

Alan (1938) and his friends were participating in the general, or adult, life of their community by helping out with the herding of sheep. This is closer to a ‘play’ activity for the children and a ‘bit of a laugh’ too. At any point in the process, on a whim, they can decide to not help. They might balance the various aspects of their role: enjoyment, duty, remuneration and decide that they have better things to do. However, presumably within the tasks they are aiding with, though not considered central or main participants, they are essential to the overall success. They require knowledge of how the sheep will behave as well as physical and mental strength to keep the sheep on track when events take unexpected turns. They were acting in a ‘responsible’ role, giving them the opportunity to act a ‘head taller than themselves’ (Vygotsky 1978), while not being accountable to any great degree and this broadened their experience and understanding of adulthood without the consequent burdens.

Alan 1938

And in those days they weren't driven in lorries to the station they were just driven, 'droved' along the road. And there was just one man on his bike and a sheep dog. But of course you'd go past other street ends and entries and our job was to 'kep', that means you'd stand blocking off that entrance. "Kep that road boy!" So we'd stand there to stop the sheep coming past you see. And they'd take sizeable flocks up to the station from Ednum St….We took a herd, a flock of about 300 sheep once. And we thought, "Well, we've don a fair job there." So we went into the auction office and said, "We just helped" er, Johnny, I forget what his name was, "To take 300 sheep up there. So we just thought we should get something for it." "Get out of that you boys!!!" So that was it. That was the last we heard of that.

Hovis (1913) is placed in an all together different position of trust. At the age of just eleven she was left in charge of the home and a younger sibling while her parents went on short holidays. This may have been 'borderline' against the law even in the 1920's. However, the assessment was made that she possessed the necessary practical skills to maintain the home and care for her younger brother. Trust in most contexts actually requires a degree of risk. If there were no chance of the situation going wrong, there would be no need for trust and thus the developmental gains, as a model of increasing competency, made by leaving her 'in charge' would be lost. Trust here is well placed in Hovis and she grows as a consequence both of having to supervise or 'be in charge' and having had to manage at least one serious situation!

Hovis 1913

He always had a motor bike and side car, which my parents would use at weekends and just leave us alone. (How far would they go off?) They'd go off for a week's holiday. (And left you alone!) Yes, when I was twelve. (How did you cope?) Oh we managed. Many cold stuff, but you must remember in those days you didn't get a lot of variety of food. (Make cup of tea?) Oh yes and boil eggs and bread and jam and fry some bacon. (And you were safe?) Well they left us [laughter]……

Of course, it's unpredictable occurrences which, no matter how unlikely, occasionally happen, that are most likely to show up the need for adult supervision.

…..Although [More laughter] I must confess that on one occasion I was sitting reading, my brother had gone with them, I was on my own, I was eleven. (How long?) Oh that was just for a day's run, they'd gone out for the day. I was sitting reading and lit the fire. And I went into the back yard, found what I thought was paraffin and threw it on the fire. It was petrol! [Hysterics!] The flames came out, the cat was sleeping on the hearthrug. So I kicked the cat and put the flames out and stamped on the hearthrug and all the time it's was burning on my own hand! So that was the last thing I put out. But, er, all was well, it could have been bad but wasn't.

It's hard to imagine children today, of a similar age to Hovis, possessing these self care skills and in particular the moral strength in the face of catastrophe and to get by for so long. It's difficult to explain outwith the 'concrete' what 'moral strength' is exactly. It is many things and usually exhibits itself as practical action in the face of adversity but at its core it would have been conveyed and understood through a particular narrative or expectation at the time.

The example above is quite extreme though revealing of what children were expected to be able to, and actually did, cope with. Generally, despite being free from direct supervision a lot of the time, children were considered part of their community and participated in social events together with adults. This created a site on which cultural continuity persisted, through a direct transmission between the generations. Ann, below, highlights the omnipresent nature of adults in the lives of children during the period of the interviews. Like pennies in the jar of Putnam's (2000) social capital, these informal interactions mount up to generate a significant site of transmission.

Ann 1916

(After school?)...Um it's difficult to explain. It's so utterly different. There were always what you call chores to do. Little chores, bring in the peats for example, they were in a sack outside and that type of thing. Maybe go and see what the hens we doing and all that. It was mostly that kind of thing. And we played of course. It was great fun during the harvest when the stacks went up. And the great game then was to run in and out of the stacks and not to be caught. That kind of thing. And obviously we helped a lot, even as small children. When potato planting came. This is what I appreciate most nowadays, is this business of children separated from, are not with parents. Because of the situation it

didn't happen. If the parents were out planting potatoes, we were all, not necessarily planting but making fun anyhow. And when the harvest time came and when the stacks had been put up, we were there throwing the sheaths. It was more that, than this is what you do. It was very enjoyable.

Gateways and Rites of Passage

Having worked with children and young people for over 25 years I can bear witness to the significance of the independent 'residential experience' for children's development, particularly the skills and emotions associated with developing independence. In a different residential situation from Hovis above, Margaret and her friends begin to accrue such experiences from a relatively early age.

Margaret 1935

From about 14 I think, onwards, maybe 15. There was four of us really and off we'd go. Sometimes we went with a club, you know. When we went on holiday, 'cause that's how we went on holiday when we were older, we were allowed to go youth hosteling but we weren't allowed to go to a hotel...Youth Hosteling gave us freedom and latterly about 16, 17 we use to go off at the weekends, when we weren't studying for our Highers... We'd probably go on the Friday and we'd stay Friday night, Saturday night, home on the Sunday. And also Auchencastle use be a Youth Hostel and we stayed there and that was lovely, very nice. And I even managed to fall in Moffat boating pond. It was a very cold day that I fell.

(Q about longest journey) A fortnight, because we were very very broke at the end of that fortnight. I always remember that. Actually we had to be bailed out. One of my friend's parents came up and met us at Perth and gave us some money and some food. I think it would be 14, 14, 15……It was quite young really. Parents didn't realise how relaxed, gradually, Youth Hostels became. They were very strict at first. The Warden was in command and what he said, you did. And there was none of this late night stuff around. And latterly it was changing, you know, I was beginning, there were certain Youth Hostels that were beginning to get bad names.

Apart from the huge freedom to practice being in control and responsible for themselves that two weeks away would provide, the changing role of youth hostel Wardens is very interesting. The Warden was in charge and responsible. He or she

had responsibility for the running of the hostel but this included a level of formal supervision of the younger residents. Teenagers gained some experience of freedom from parental oversight but the Warden would make sure that they were all right and 'behaving' themselves. Margaret notes how this relationship with hostellers gradually changed and youth hostels started to get 'bad names'. We have to assume that this meant what would have been considered 'immoral' behaviour! Sexual experimentation, although sleeping was still segregated then, is a key area where teenagers desire to flirt with adult behaviour. It is through such 'research' that sexuality is established, identity is forged, friendships are cemented and a great many other things besides. For the young people of the data set the Youth Hostel Association played a significant role in their transition to adulthood. For Margaret and her friends in particular we are witnessing the loosening of mores during the very early 1950's, well before Elvis (1956 onwards) but only just prior to the emergence of 'youth' culture. Obviously this 'loosening' did not occur universally at the same time but John's recollections show that while 'youth' had yet to explode there was already developing space between childhood and adulthood.

John 1936

We always used to go and play cards on a Sunday. Card games...It was only when I got older that the card games and that was, as I say, one of my closest friends. And that started in his, that was always a family tradition. It was his gran and grandfather. They always used to come and play, rummy. It was the main game on a Sunday night. And we used to sit and watch them. We never got playing as teenagers, no. It was very serious. They taught you, you sat and watched and learned how to play the game. Then if one of them couldn't play, then you got stepping in. It was known as the 'Card School' but it wasn't for money. It was just for fun.

There is a semi-formal gateway in this story. The children are encouraged or required to participate in the family ritual but only as observers. This emphasises the separation between children and adults and establishes for the children the teleology of their journey. The occasional opportunity to join the game and make the leap must have been quite special and nerve wracking, as well a source of

pride if you played well. Pride, while being one of the seven deadly sins, should not be underestimated as a positive emotion! The chance to ‘act-up’, to then do well at the task and then to exhibit ‘pride’ makes the act of performing well more than just good for the individual but turns it outwards towards society at large. Showing that you are proud at what you have achieved demonstrates your understanding of its significance to others.

Making the step up, away from childhood towards adulthood is a worrying time. All the concerns about doing whatever it is 'right' abound. We have seen how often children will present a caricature of adulthood as they constrain themselves by their own understanding of what is correct. Here we see young people, young adults even, being obsequious in their following of instruction well into the 1950's.

Jill 1935

Funnily again, the first time I went to London, er, with my sister. My Father took us in, to his little room, and said, “Now when you’re on the train, if there’s an old lady in the carriage and she asks you to lift down her luggage, don’t! And if you see an old lady and she asks you would you take her arm and help her across the road. Just don’t! Stay together the two of you. Don’t do any of these jobs.” So we said why, “Why Daddy?” And he said, “Well” he said, “There have been girls that have been injected with something.” [Laughing] Some tranquilliser. “And they’ve never been seen again.” We would be 18, 19 and we were told this! And I can remember it. And we were on the train and this little lady said, “Darlings, Dearies, would you get my case down?” And Joyce and I were looking at each other, “No, Daddy said we mustn’t.”

So innocence, in the sense that the world isn't all good as well as in terms of naivety, wasn't always abandoned early or abruptly during the period the participant interviews occupy but there are moments when all of the above processes and influences seem to come together. Often after some 'trigger', a realisation, that they need to take charge of them self or an understanding that they are travelling towards a destination, seems to take place for some young people. Educational failure plays a role in this manifestation of adulthood to the two

young people below. Care has to be taken as these are retrospective viewpoints. To understand something as 'the beginning of a new life for me' can only ever be understood after-the-fact but, as a counterpoint, realising that you have to 'pull my socks up' is a process concurrent with the experience.

Dorothy 1929

I didn't go to the Church of England School, I won a scholarship to go to a grammar school. Oh it was quite separate, quite distinct. Nobody in our school had ever won a scholarship before so all the children got a half-day holiday. The only time I was popular in the school. Up until then I was regarded as teacher's pet. If there were competitions or anything, I always won it. So, um, going to a grammar school was the beginning of a new life for me.

Fred 1917

At eleven I passed what they called 'the scholarship'. They were very keen in Wales on education at that time...Well so at the age of eleven I passed the scholarship and then I had to go to the secondary school...So I went to school and my memories of school are, are a good time. You know, I enjoyed it and I wasn't a particularly good pupil. I used to play about a bit and talk a lot and carry-on, you know. And er, in the course of time when I was about fourteen, I'd just been messin' about up till then and then I didn't pass a school certificate examination, I failed. So that must have triggered something off in me 'cause I thought, "I've got to pull my socks up here." So from then on I just knuckled down and studied and did quite reasonably.

The role played by 'challenge' in the lives of these two young people and that this ignites a desire to take an active role in developing of their own story is significant. That they both came from relatively poor backgrounds (similar to Bill, 1920, above who won a scholarship to Allan Glen's School) and that education was understood generally as crucial and a way out of poverty demonstrates that the working class also had a desire for more control over their lives.

Reflections of self in theory

Symbolic Interactionism provides a theory which at least seems to cohere much of what I witnessed though, as alluded to previously, this project attempts to retain a

grasp on a shared reality too (Lauer and Handel, 1983; Meltzer, Petras and Reynonlds, 1975). What were repeated time and time again were emergent social actors encountering a myriad of situations where their selfhood becomes honed by them having to interpret the actions of others and adapt their responses. This process requires affirmation in an ongoing manner and builds the foundation of self in social interactions. While discussing this project with a consultant paediatrician friend, who specialises in work on autism, she explained that to have 'self' you must be social. While at first glance this might appear to be a paradox (how can the individual be rooted in the multiple?) it grows naturally from Vygotsky's theoretical ground work.

Vygotsky understood language to be the tool by which we gain control of ourselves. We use it and hear it to develop our thoughts. Language is thus not an expression of our thoughts but the source of them, and conversations are laboratories from which our thoughts emerge rather than just expressions of them. Childhood freedom and licence to play and explore therefore create locations (ZDP's for Vygotsky) where children can test-out and resolve what they believe though real time social experimentation with peers. Eventually, speech becomes internalised and, working only with the sense of the word, children become what they believe.

Early in the Freedom and Licence chapter we met Liz (1949) who was 'experimenting' with her brother, on their younger sister. Their play, on one level, is not real life and created a location where emotions could be experienced and understood as they become separated from their immediate context. Annoyance at their sister's presence, curiosity and compassion at her terror, fear and sorrow at their mother's scolding of them and eventually, after many such moments these become internalised and owned and more complex emotions like sympathy and empathy emerge.

Keith's (1943) catapult 'warfare', related at the end of the first data analysis chapter, is a different kind of 'conversation' but also provided a window through which we could bear witness to children experimenting and internalising what they learn. Despite the level of superficial and real violence in this 'warfare', for the game to proceed there will have been levels of agreement and cooperation. His painful experiences may have caused him to have to 'dig deep' into his inner resolve too but he was discovering aspects of himself not on the inside but though his combative relationships. By holding onto his emotions when in pain or angry Keith is displaying that he is becoming conscious of how others see him (Goffman 1974) and keeping to the rules of the game- not allowing it to become real life and thus maintaining the site as an opportunity to explore how he should behave, not how he spontaneously wants to. Whether the 'real' person is the one held back or the one that the individual chooses to project is a matter of some debate.

Certainly Monica (1955) learned the hard way that some things you do hold back as she learned about rude words and their use. The implicit informal contact between children and farm workers is further evidence of how community was constituted even into the 1960's. Also, despite the 'age', children still have their 'place' and adults understand themselves to have a collective responsibility to back each other up.

Monica 1955

I was also put off the bus, from the bus once for swearing….

Monica's retrospective assessment that the driver was right and she was 'definitely' wrong is interesting. When did she come to this conclusion? How do children come to understand that some of their actions result in punishment not just because they have 'annoyed' somebody and been caught but that they shouldn't have done whatever it was, because it was 'wrong'? Do adults just want children to do the right thing or primarily, do they want children to do the right thing for the right reasons?

How are the 'right reasons' defined though? And what is the relationship between internal and external or socially derived morality? Fred (1918) below defers, with no need to enforce, to a moral framework lifted from 'the good book'. His parents, teachers, Sunday school teachers and scout leaders are his 'self' at this early point in his life. They project a collective consciousness onto Fred, though as previously noted, his father was against uniformed organisations- a viewpoint that may have had less resonance.

Fred 1918

The rules were pretty strict. There was no physical chastisement from my parents. I can't remember them even tapping me. But they were very strict with regard to the way I behaved. And the Sunday school in particular was a great help in giving me a moral framework in which to live. And this was also done at school. There was, an ethical environment at school and the teachers were not reluctant to make reference to the Good Book, with regard to the way that we ought to behave and live. And I think that that, the examples set by the teachers and the teaching at Sunday school and the teaching at the Boy Scouts plus the examples of my parents, have been a great foundation for me in my life. And I see the wisdom in all that they taught me.

Willie 1915

(Q about playground activities.) |Every boy had a knife and the idea was that during the summer months you sat on the dyke outside the school during playtimes and made whistles. The trees round about were about six-foot high before you'd get a branch off them.

In these recollections we not only see the mechanisms by which a moral compass is set and the almost complete absence of relativism from the various adults in Fred's life but also how socialisation worked. Willie and all his friends possess knives. The expectation of them from wider society is that will 'do the right thing'. Adult culture seems to have the confidence to assume that it will, in the various ways that Fred experiences, carry the day. This is perhaps a confidence lacking today when it seems that in banning knives, public drinking, or such like, society tries to prevent children and young people from doing the wrong thing rather than trust to intergenerational socialisation to get them to do right.

We have seen that there are a number of aspects to how children's motivation is influenced. These include formal and informal contact with adults and unsupervised time away from adult culture. When there is an increased chance of being caught e.g. in solid, well integrated and trusting communities, and children are more likely to be seen and recognised and these adults are likely to act, the distance between duty and self interest is less than if children were anonymous. This presumably improves behaviour but what is the driver of this improvement?

We are concerned with 'selfhood' here and surely it is not the consequence of being caught that Monica should be responding to but an inner direction telling her not to do wrong. For children the experience of doing wrong and not getting caught is possibly as significant to their moral development as the other factors above- osmotic pressure generates the learning. Hovis (1913) shows us an altogether less responsible side.

Hovis 1913

But there of course, in the cinema, they were all 'silents' of course, and at the front of this, the one nearest to us was a sloping floor and below the screen it was curtained off and the pianist was there. And they played music suitable to the film that was on. So we'd all go armed with peashooters and you couldn't hit the pianist 'cause he was behind the curtain. But if you hit the screen they bounced back onto him. And so, we knew approximately where he was, there was a man always on the prowl of course, When he was up the other end it was [spitting noise] rapid fire [quick spitting noises]. A mouthful of peas hitting the screen. The piano would stop, whistle would blow, film would stop. Lights would go up and he'd storm up and down the cinema looking. And we were sitting there so innocently, 'it wasn't us'. Oh yes.

And this oscillation, between moments of high responsibility and extremely annoying, though ultimately harmless silliness, shows that the space afforded to young people to experiment is important. Getting things wrong without consequence and showing the ability to get things right without having to take on full adult responsibility are the ground on which the building blocks of emerging adulthood are erected. A society of multiple 'we's' somehow osmotically

transmitting culture has something missing for these children. The collective in this context is greater than the sum of its parts and exists in a unified state together with a historical consciousness born of collective memory. This develops an aggregated consciousness which can withstand intermittent contradictory instances. How a particular levelling of what was just boisterous and what was beyond reasonable was arrived at then and is now would be an interesting and perhaps telling follow up investigation.

If getting away with things is a test so too is being caught. The significance of time away from formal adult supervision doesn't necessarily mean freedom.

Keith 1943

Oh yes, I would get clipped round the ear by uncles, aunts and neighbours, yes all sort of people. Particularly the local policeman. The local policeman was called George Waterman and he rode around on a bike. And he patrolled the area on a bike. And if you did anything wrong or he caught you doing things wrong like, we would light fires in places and such like and he would come along. And he would basically pick you up by the scruff of the neck and er, belted you round the ear or on your backside. And er, told you, "If I catch you here again, you're in real trouble." And that was it er, so he ruled, er, from a sort of basic authoritarian rule around the area. And generally knew most people and knew what was going on and did things from that basis.

Keith (1943) although extremely 'free' to wander and explore with his friends, seems to be under constant supervision! This is supervision of a different sort from today's 'helicopter parents' and their proxies and certainly of a less formal or democratic order. Perhaps the nature of community in the past which, particularly in rural areas, precluded a high degree of anonymity, formed a double edged sword that seemingly allowed for moral autonomy but which in fact possessed an overbearing deferential element which overruled certain aspects of self interest?

Margaret (1916) below is left to her own devices in the kitchen from a young age. Here she would be her own moral compass in terms of her diligence to the pancake making task and in terms of additional aspects like safety around hot

frying pans. This all happened within the context of preforming social tasks though. So we have simultaneous and seemingly contradictory learning contexts- autonomous and deferential. And constant flux and contradiction between the two would seem to be the norm.

Margaret 1916

Well, we'd have to cook for all these people and then we'd men in the in the cottage and they had work to do on the farm, harvest, hay time. We had them all to feed as well. We had to bake for all these, cook for all these. (Unsupervised?) Yes. Well I was taught to bake pancakes when I was eight and I made a hundred every Saturday. That was me in the kitchen.

But what if the adult cultural context which provides the authority to which a child defers is counter cultural itself? The authority bearing nature of adults can be confusing for children if the various adults to which the child should defer present opposite opinions. Christopher (1903) provides one such example where issues that he was gaining intimate knowledge of at home may well have been strongly contested in other areas of his life.

Christopher 1903

(Q about parental work / life balance?) She had her own interests and she was a suffragette. And she was very friendly with all the suffragettes of the day, Pankhurst and these people. Oh yes and I remember them. She er of course was not a militant suffragette. The reason was she had me to bring up and educate. If she'd been a militant she'd have been sacked of course, er so she had to be very careful. And I was just a kid I suppose, at that time, 'cause of course the 1914 war came on and all that stopped, the war effort put a stop to the suffragettes, but gave them the vote in 1918 of course.

I remember on one occasion. My mother's friends, I was aware that they had all been to prison. And they wore a little badge to indicate that. One afternoon, the Vicar's wife, the Vicar's wife no less, came to tea. And during tea, I piped up and said, "Mummy, when did that lady come out of prison?" Now, talk about children's clangers! I've been good at dropping clangers ever since but I think that was the best I ever did. However, no harm came of it, they were still friends.

While the issue was clearly emotive and which side you were on and if you decided to act on your convictions had highly significant consequences, our understanding of the historical importance of the Suffragettes is potentially secondary to the willingness of the female adults in Christopher's life to act and 'have their own interests'. Being party to these discussions and their activist outcomes, he learns about engaging, about the emerging role of women, about the need for struggle and acting against the law on conscience, as well as developing an understanding about the contingent and partial nature of democracy.

Consider of the possible confusion that may have been generated for him when he entered the wider world, which perhaps wasn't so accepting of women as activists and mothers who held such views and who held counsel with women who broke the law. The doubt arising for Christopher on going to school, where his heroic mother may have been branded a villain by other authority bearing adults, could have been overwhelming but doubt also generates the search for answers required by active subjects.

We know that confusion forms the unstable terrain of doubt on which inner conversations can lead to formation of our own views. It is from embracing not rejecting doubt that children can, within their private and social realms, generate conversations that determine their own approaches to life. Not just in terms of grand narratives either...

Jean 1938

My grandfather was a ‘Carter’. He used to have big whips sitting beside, and he was a terrible tease. He used to sit and flick the whip at Granny. And I used to think this was dreadful. I think when I became about twelve, one time he'd flicked it at me an' I says, 'You do that one more time grandpa and I'm going to break that whip.' 'Huh, would you!’ And he did it twice. Granny says, 'I never seen anything like it. You got up went [actions stamping] phut and stood on it.' Cause no one but no one ever defied my grandfather. He was definitely boss of the house. And I broke the whip! He had a sneaky respect for me after that.

This girl faces a mini crisis caused by an authority bearing adult acting in a way she considers to be wrong. What is significant is that, probably expecting to be punished, Jean acts. She becomes the author of her own narrative and seeks to influence the behaviour of others in a way that is beyond spontaneous inclination. In this way she has taken a significant step away from childhood, which will of course not be decisive, but which was recognised by her grandfather as an autonomous action.

In the data analysis chapter exploring childhood freedoms we met Bill(1920) who was also experimenting with the impact of his actions on others. To understand yourself as being a 'general nuisance' you first have to be able to comprehend other people's feelings and then requires that you place yourself within a social context and perceive yourself as others perceive you. This is a fairly sophisticated reflective thinking that requires both physical maturity and internalised learning. One wonders how many whips Jean had to snap but also how the mutuality of family and community supported children to navigate these treacherous straights.

Concluding Act

The progression route from understanding the feelings of others would seem to be to better understand yourself. To put it another way, as an individual develops as an active subject they are perhaps increasingly able to perceive themselves as an object too.

> O would some power the giftie gie us to see ourselves as others see us.
>
> Robert Burns (1759 – 1796)

The reminiscences above and throughout the data analysis chapters provide a richly textured insight to the variety of social relations which past children and young people experienced. Eventually they understood themselves to be engaged in a journey with an end point and for them this becomes aspirational.

Their peer relationships during free time, away from formal supervision, generate conflict which during its resolution leads to insights to emotions and the necessity for joint concession and the development of reciprocity. Their time under informal supervision while out and about in the community generates new learning from having to find ways to negotiate a plethora of social circumstances, as well as providing a forum, further to more formal education, where culturally established norms can be transmitted. This learning leads to development when new social capabilities are internalised by our time travellers.

The 'community', as a context for learning, is heavily influenced by culture itself and various cultural scripts sanction and govern responses which emerging adults acquire. In this arena there was a powerful influence on the next generation as there was an apparently relaxed confidence emanating from established culture, or adulthood.

Hovis 1913

(Mischief and nuisance?) And then of course you got ball games where you'd be playing and bouncing a ball against somebody's gable end. They'd be sitting inside. But they accepted it I think. (Other adults discipline?) Oh yes they'd come out and tell you but we had our own ways of getting back.....And another thing we did, get a length of rope and put it round on his front door, round the handles [Laughs] of the front door. And then knock the door and run. They get the door half-open and somebody next door would open their door and it would jerk that door to. And they couldn't get their door open. They could get them part way then it would slam to as somebody else pulled theirs open. I don't think we were doing any harm. They'd handle it. There were certain ones who didn't take a joke and others did.

The levels of relaxation at children's nuisance would have varied, clearly, though we have already seen that adults in general were confident in their righteousness, solidarity with other adults and assuredness to 'carry the day'. Hovis and her friends are subliminally messaged in the case above though. The message is slightly confused, "But they accepted it I think." and "Oh yes they'd come out and tell you but we had our ways of getting back." This isn't about a gang of feral kids

terrorising a neighbourhood. This is much more about an understanding that what they were doing was not too serious and that the adults affected were generally measured in their response to this 'joke'. Similarly to Harry's (1953) boat stealing episode above, in the second data analysis chapter, these children absorb the general adult response and disregard the occasional adult who "didn't take the joke." Even this quite sophisticated ability to filter responses would have been born of experience.

As our children and young people gain in social skill they become more able to distinguish between the various nuances in or forms of adult response. This develops and progresses to the extent that children begin to differentiate and understand a 'wind up' or a conciliatory gesture, playing along while the authority of the adult is not compromised.

Dorothy 1929

Saturday morning, Tu'penny Rush. To go to the pictures. And in the middle of the pictures there was a break. And we use to have some little show or something on the stage. And the most vivid memory I have. This particular Saturday, they asked somebody to come up onto the platform, who had a hole in their sock! "First person up with a hole in their sock!" And it was me. And I got sixpence. Sixpence, 'cause I had a hole in my sock.

Jean 1918

And on the road back from school we had to pass a turnip field and we always pinched the turnips [laughs]. And I used to eat one and skin it. And if the Farmer met us doon the road he'd think we were eating an apple! [giggles] So one day the Farmer is standing at the gate of the field when we came along. And of course, "Oohhhh!" we passed by and he say, "Are you not having one today?" [more laughter] And we says, "Eh?" And he says, "are you not having a turnip the day?" "Oh yes if we can!" So we all rushed back to get a wee turnip. He says, "I don't mind you having a turnip but don't pull big ones and waste them. As long as you take a wee one and don't waste it."

Last word on the paradoxical emergence of selfhood to Goffman, again. The stories above of selflessness, wider social units, resistance, solidity and spaces between, have hopefully brought his meaning further to life.

Without something to belong to, we have no stable self, and yet total commitment and attachment to any social unit implies a kind of selflessness. Our sense of being a person can come from being drawn into a wider social unit; our sense of selfhood can arise through the little ways in which we resist the pull. Our status is backed by the solid buildings of the world, while our sense of personal identity often resides in the cracks. (1980:280)

Section 4: Conclusion

Chapter 10 - Conclusions and Further Research

As I begin to draw this project to a conclusion, commemorations of the 50th anniversary of John F Kennedy's assassination are dominating the news. Fifty years on from those grim events in Dallas there is still an aura around the 'youthful' president's figure. "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country" was Kennedy's call for public activism (Inaugural Address, 20th January, 1961), and it connected. His project of cementing the position of the US as world leader orientated him to a hopeful future where, despite not yet having the technology, a manned flight to the moon was understood as entirely realisable within ten years. Despite significant health problems Kennedy embodied the national vigour. This collective energy originated not in one man but in the social dynamic of the continuing modern project. This in turn acted as a spur to the general public mood and generator of the then optimistic cultural script.

The period of my data set, being 1903 through to 1965 (my birth year and two years after Kennedy's death), is commensurate with Modernism. The task I set myself was to profile and explain the impact of childhood freedoms and licences on emerging selfhood. The significance of this task originated in the current (popularly understood as 'post-modern' era) when, as explored in depth during chapter 2 of this thesis, the 'values' of risk aversion and safety significantly eroded the free time and space available to children to expand, experiment, learn and develop. To be able to show what is potentially being lost to emerging adults today, it was necessary to profile what benefits accrued to previous generations from more hopeful, relaxed and trusting community relations.

From its slightly unorthodox genesis, through an exposition of the current climate of concern for childhood, a framing of the teleology of childhood and exploration of the learning and developmental processes involved during their progress towards adulthood, approaches to data collection and the data story itself, the process of this project has been an exciting and illuminating one. Work on the literature and development of a theoretical approach yielded more a focused understanding of the contradictions contained within a social constructionist approach. This went some way to resolving the tension within the nurture / nature dichotomy. Arriving at childhood as universally 'not adult' was a significant breakthrough for me as it turns the orthodox approach to the problem on its head by making adulthood the logically prior category. By adopting this resolution, (prompted by Simms (2008) exposition of Van den Berg) not only could I progress my analytical framework but, I also developed relevance for the project to future study of current concerns around diminished subjectivity and its impact on reproduction at a societal level (Furedi 2001a, 2004 and Heartfield 2006).

The data illustrates in a variety of ways the contributory nature of experience to the developing active and autonomous individual, as well as providing a rich and textured social context for the resolution these processes. Despite the huge social upheaval, at both community and international levels, which occurred during the period the participant interviews occupy, there is a continuity too. This continuity was the first of two surprises that emerged from the data. For my early supervisor there was an expectation that childhood licences and freedoms would gradually vary from considerable freedom at the start of the sample towards a situation closer to that of today, where safety and supervision are ubiquitous, as time elapsed. I was more circumspect about this. What seems to be the case is that there is a greater continuity between experiences in the early 1900's and well into the 1960's than between the 1960's and the late 1980's and beyond, as understood through the literature on childhood safety and evidenced in the first data chapter where common experiences range from birth years 1917 to 1954.

The Modernist optimism that Kennedy personified seems to have stretched beyond his own lifetime and only waned in light of other social changes, which must have happened later in the 20th century. These changes, which are not the focus of this project, must have heralded a fundamental rupture in the continuity of the modernist era. Today, at a time when we are all encouraged to obsess about our personal identity, cultivate our own and each other's self-esteem and pursue individual happiness in lieu of any big social projects, the Kennedy era seems like another world indeed.

My own work on anti-bullying strategies in the UK (Knight 2004) guided me to the early 1990's as a potential historical 'moment' when this rupture may have occurred. When researching the issue of bullying it became apparent to me that there was what could be termed an 'exponential' increase in concern about school bullying from the late 1980's. This was reflected in the significant, almost vertical, increase in books and articles focussing on the subject around then. Similarly, as touched on in the 'Role of Community' section of chapter 4 of this thesis, other key social relationships suffered similar dramatic changes around this time (see chapter 4 for the literature on this) and while each concern can be understood in its own terms, that there is such a raft of these issues indicates that something more fundamental must have been occurring.

> The world we live in today is not one subject to tight human mastery- the stuff of the ambitions of the left and, one could say, the nightmares of the right. Almost to the contrary, it is one of dislocation and uncertainty, a 'runaway world'. (Giddens 1994:3)

While for Giddens the end of the cold war resulted in an ecological end to modernity and the same historical processes lead Fukuyama (as discussed in Giddens 1994) and Beck (2004) to different but equally fundamental outlooks, that the trigger is the same is what is significant to this thesis. The end of the cold

war in the late 1980's was a watershed historical moment that lead to seismic changes at all levels of society and, as explored previously, a changing 'cultural script' which transmits rules about feelings and what those feelings should mean. This is where the roots of the 'bubble wrap' or 'cotton wool' approaches to childcare, that are so separate to the data set period, originate. Though there may have been other changes to how we bring up children during the period of the participant interviews, it provides only evidence of a continuity in approaches to freedom and licence that children were allowed. There is no evidence in the data of a gradual change in parental approaches to risk and safety moving us towards the current 'battery-rearing' approaches which, as we are seeing, attenuate the emerging individual in a myriad of ways. These changes, which generated Giddens' (1994) (and parents') sense of a being out of control, must have occurred at later date than the late 1960's and early 1970's when the last interviewee was growing up.

To be clear then, this research project has found the pre-1970s past to be separated from the post-1990s present in fundamental ways. The obvious temporal element to this separation pales compared to cultural narratives and how the reproduction of that society was achieved by way of its child rearing approaches.

While the initial focus of the project was on the time away from adult supervision, the data's second surprise for me was how resolutely generalised adult supervision, during children's time spent out and about in communities, planted itself within the analysis.

Adult 'responsibility' for children here is not meant just in the formal sense, for those who had family or officially sanctioned professional relationships with children, but broadened to the moral, rather than legal, sense of the word. This widened category existed like a universal set and included and permitted all adults to interact with children. Of particular interest though were those adults with no

formal role in the lives of children. In some of the smaller communities investigated a lot of them will have been 'known' but of high significance is the fact that many of these adults, who quite 'naturally' interacted with children and could expect deference to their authority, were pretty much strangers.

That it was legitimate, and expected even, for all adults to directly relate to children from the position of a singular adulthood is further evidence and clarification of the fissure between the past ad now. These relationships provided a direct but also aggregated understanding for children of what it was to be an adult. Something that they could reflect back and internalise.

From this generalised acceptance of adult intervention sprang one of the keystones of community- shared childcare. This became the site on which many experiences which contributed to emerging selfhood happened and established the intergenerational basis on which the teleology of childhood was resolved. The data provided a deep and richly textured canvas displaying these relationships and painting a highly 'human' picture, where children feel able to approach workmen to seek their help in erecting a tree swing and testing it for safety, or other children can be tolerated playing on a building site and be tenderly looked after by rough men when accidentally hurt. Here then we witness, in contradistinction to today, a genuine adult 'responsibility' for society, in the present and for its future as embodied by children.

This second realisation created a tension within the PhD question itself. The investigation's focus was on freedom and licence. We have witnessed that by being closely supervised children may well act in a more civilised manner but 'acting' may be precisely what they are doing. While it remains true to say that if we want children to learn and grow, and to be able to prevent themselves from being childish, they need to have opportunities to experiment, experience and practice responsibility independently, something else is also required. The 'tone'

of an engaged community, sure in its orientation to the future and of its responsibility for the past, sets a highly significant context for children's development towards independence.

Bygone childcare and community practices allowed for both of these distinct but not separate experiences and consequently for particular kinds of growth to occur. Vygotsky (1978) and Sullivan (as related by Youniss 1980) provide the theoretical models and the data gives us the examples. And we have now seen how kind acts become unprompted and how constraint can be imposed by an individual on them self, without the presence of a supervising adult. We have also witnessed how responsibility for self and others in your charge can emerge incrementally or burst out in response to crisis. In effect, how empathy, worldliness and the abandonment of naivety develop internally to an individual, through individual and friendship experiences, both while acting independently of all adults and in the context of an active, confident intervening community of adults. The role of more formal adults in the emergence of adulthood, while also accepted as essential, was beyond the scope of this project.

The time and space afforded by the freedoms and licences witnessed facilitate the development of internal controls on the self, or 'self' in fact. By the multitude and variety of experiences of others exerting controls on subordinates and less mature peers, and those individuals as objects developing sensitivity to others and eventually controlling themselves as active subjects.

As indicated above, being universally 'not adult' is how the theoretical construct of childhood developed for this project. This still leaves some question as to what kind of adulthood, or context, emerging adults will grow into- to mirror, to emulate. It has been shown that the process is a fusion, not just of developmental psychology and behaviouralism, but that a third element, 'culture', works in a reflexive way alongside nature and nurture. Children grow up in a society

consisting of more than just multiple intersubjectivities, their individual family relationship being one example. Their cultural context is one where humanity at large is both object and subject, creating its own nature. Within this arena children also act as both objects and subjects during their own journey towards adulthood.

And to what standard did society reproduce adulthood to during the period of the participant's stories? Kipling (1895) might be said to have, if not defined, summed up the Modern understanding of what it means to be 'a man'. His poem 'If…', bolstering the earlier understanding quoted from Adam Smith (1976), sets a tone for what is expected, not just of men, but of women too, as emerging actors. This demonstrates that the continuity discussed above, in relationship to the Kennedy 'era', can be argued to have stretched further back, rooting its origins in the Enlightenment (Rousseau 1979, Smith 1976, Zola 1954). That in the modern-day, post-cold war era, 'If…' has been replaced by 'what if?' has dramatically altered the context of child rearing. The past has become another country, an almost incomprehensible land where cultural practices are so alien that it is almost impossible to make any kind of connections between now and then.

The time and space, freedom and licence, previously afforded to children, which acted as learning environments, have been severely curtailed over the last 30 years (discussed in chapters 1 and 2). It is accepted that during this time, for a variety of reasons including reductions in independent mobility, death and serious injury to children has undergone a dramatic reduction too. This reality leaves a question which can be formulated as follows: Is it better that the life of even just one child is saved, or is the destruction of childhood too high a price to pay?

The impact of these changes on future generations of adults and consequently on the cultural context for social reproduction, and the human project more generally, while being of huge practical significance, can at present only be guessed at or inferred. The theoretical work of this project lays a firm base for future

investigation though. Some of the potential avenues for further investigation that this project lays the ground work for, might include: cross-generational familial comparisons of childhood freedom and licence; age related social competencies and expectations of emerging young people and adults; levels of independence or moral fortitude at key stages; and levels of adult preparedness to intervene in informal community relations or adult solidarity.

Suggestions for future research

The key question emitting from this work has to be an investigation into if the findings of this project are impacting on emerging adults today. How to explore this is not straight forward though and proxy indicators might need to be the focus. For example, adult solidarity, or its potential collapse, is of significant interest to me. I have already been involved in preliminary discussions with another academic regarding potential research projects into this. For example establishing a set of questions that would ascertain someone's readiness to intervene in a variety of community based, non-formal, childcare contingencies. This set of questions could then be applied to adults from a variety of backgrounds, class, generational and professional to establish which perspectives retain or develop more or less social solidarity in the modern context.

The implications for community educative practice of these perceived changes in community connections and solidarity are significant too. In that the implicit trajectory, taken from the period of the participant interviews which at root embraced risk, would be wholly at odds with the modern zeitgeist, fundamental professional and practical issues would have to be addressed for my findings to be adopted wholesale as an approach. Youth work, for example, is permeated by the narrative of vulnerability. Existing policy and procedure reflect this in their preoccupation with self-esteem and confidence (Knight 2004; Furedi 2004; Guldberg 2009). Taken together with the increasingly instrumental approach of outcome focused practice, modern youth workers would be placing their careers

in jeopardy if they unilaterally adopted these findings. The ‘what ifs…’ are too many to contemplate so to speak. Yet to achieve the ambition of, “Ensure Scotland is the best place to be young and grow up in.” headlining Scotland’s new draft Youth Work Strategy (The Scottish Government 2014), actions to impact on community life need to alter society at a ‘narrative’ level. As explored in chapter 2, these actions will have to impact on emotions and can only really be delivered through experience rather than promoting or ‘advertising’ the ‘Truth About Youth’ (Young Scot web site 2014) so to speak.

At a ‘values’ level though some of what has been identified might be adopted. If professionals and volunteers, or managers in leaderships positions, were to encourage and support ‘time machine’ youth and community work projects, where past practice was shown not to be damaging and freedoms proven to be beneficial, the current cultural script might be challenged incrementally. More so though, the debates and discussions, required as precursors to such radical approaches, would be powerful drivers and generate understanding rather than simple acceptance. The raison d’être for the discipline of community work would have to come under scrutiny at a fundamental level. We might have to reject some of the recent opportune new found popularity within Government (Scottish Government 2012) and re-examine past ethical approaches and how they sit with new formulations or understandings today. To facilitate this I would recommend the establishment of a network of professional face to face discussion forums, perhaps convened by the Community Learning and Development Standards Council for Scotland. Within a general remit of raising the ‘culture’ of the youth work sector, dispensing with the chilling effect of ‘representing’ employers, staff might be immersed in more honest or ‘essential’ discourse. Like Putnam’s pennies in a jar (2000), these debates might slowly reverse the encroaching panopticon our children are subject to.

There are some limitations to this project. Due to its unorthodox genesis and evolving nature, replication is not an option. My clarity of purpose was not a precursor to activity due to the initial project being one of generating material for a book. This resulted in the data set not developing with a view to the question, or under academic conditions though, as shown by the subsequent ethical clearance, an ethical approach was always adhered to. This reflects a 'processing' or 'distillation' of my question in response to the data rather than a driver for its collection. To attempt this project again would yield differences to the questioning matrix and better focus. This is not necessarily to say that this limitation is a flaw, as the stories contained within the interviews are still entirely legitimate and full of content. It's more that the precise pathway had to be resolved while actually travelling along a generalised trajectory.

The other key problem is the time that it has taken to progress from data collection to thesis completion. This is entirely due to personal factors, a busy professional life and starting a family, as well as the part time nature of the study. The extended time frame meant that, due to the dynamic nature of the risk / safety discourse, the discussion moved on while the project was unfolding. At the time of conception and into the data collection itself, 'risk' was understood to be wholly negative and 'safety' was becoming embedded as a dominant positive social value. By time the thesis was being written, some academics and practitioners in the childcare sector were beginning to confront the unfolding problems associated with risk avoidance in childhood. Risk, at a rhetorical level at least, is increasingly being embraced today (Play Scotland 2011). This paradox provides the basis for another study and is not resolved here, although some might argue that, with India launching a spaceship to Mars in November 2013, the 'hope' of Kennedy's era seems to be returning.

To conclude, this project has profiled and explored how experiences and context, as well as nature, contribute to emerging individuality. This story has developed in

a number of novel directions. Initially it unified the historically opposing viewpoints of nurture and nature in two ways. Firstly, by understanding their proponents as historically kindred spirits when they understood children as 'incomplete' versions of adulthood. Secondly, when the two forces are understood to work together, not as either or, when unified by 'culture', the specifically human form of society, which allows humans to move beyond their individual experiences.

This project also became one which was about what in fact adulthood is rather than just focusing on childhood. We have seen how a developing individuality is a seemingly contradictory process of 'joining' rather than 'separating from'. During this time, when children develop from being passive 'objects' to being active and contributing members of society, they have historically been considerably more resilient than they are currently deemed capable of being. It is this approach to children (and humanity at large) which is in a reciprocal way altering the reality of human nature. Our 'culture' is changing our 'nature' and thus establishing a vicious circle of diminished expectation of what it is to be human and what is possible in the future. Wainwright and Calnan's (2002) exploration of the work stress 'epidemic' thus links to my work on anti-bullying (2004), Furedi's on parenting (2001a) and therapy (2004), Blatchford's on school playgrounds (1999), Gill's on risk and fear (2007), Hillman et al's work on free-play radii (1990), Hughes' on play (1994), Oliver's preoccupation with pathways to 'manhood' (2008), Postman's (1994) and Simms' (2008) re-fusion of childhood and adulthood, Waiton's loss of adult solidarity (2008a) and Guldberg's need to reclaim childhood (2009),

> In a society with heightened awareness of physical and mental vulnerability, where mundane experiences like walking home from school without an adult chaperone or playing on an adventure playground are

> seen as potential causes of physical harm, and where having a working mother or sitting examinations at school are seen as a threat to mental health, children are likely to be over-socialised or over-protected. Children who are 'wrapped in cotton wool' and denied the social space in which to negotiate their own solutions to the hazards of everyday life and the difficulties of interpersonal relations are unlikely to grow up to be self-confident social agents. The external world is likely to be perceived as a threat to be avoided rather than challenge that can be met and overcome. (Wainwright and Calnan 2002:162)

The resilience of the past, like that of the US during the era of Pax Americana and Kennedy himself during its later stages, carried children through a range of experiences and relationships which, instead of crippling them, shaped them and allowed them to shape themselves, and consequently the future. That the nature of humanity is fluid and malleable, responsive to range of influences, rather than fixed and deterministic is a hopeful and optimistic finding of this project. It is tempered only by the reality of the current juncture, where the current truncated experience that childhood has become, under the existing cultural script of vulnerability, can be said, anecdotally at this stage, to be leading to generations of less active and less contributing adults. And that, as they say, is another story, but one I am already engaged in challenging by seeking out and challenging examples of such changes.

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Appendix A - Interview prompt sheet

Recording Sheet For Interview Date:

Name: Known as: Birth Year:

Contact Details: Family Structure:

Town of Upbringing:

Parental Occupation: Own occupation at Retirement:

I am interested in the licences that children were granted in the past and the amounts of supervision they were under. The indented questions need a direct answer. Otherwise conversational recording of anecdotes is fine.

School journeys- primary and secondary.

What age were you when you first went to school unsupervised?

Play time at school, supervision and activities.

Evenings, weekends, holiday and street activities.

How many friends were in your group of friends?

Were you and ‘outdoor’ or ‘indoor’ child?

When were you allowed out till? Primary:
Secondary:

At what age were you first allowed to the local park on your own?

What age were you when you first looked after your younger siblings (or were they, when they looked after you)?

Clubs and associations that you were a member of.

How did you get about? How far did you go and how were your movements controlled?

Did you own a bicycle?

Mischief you got into and illegitimate places you went to.

What role did non-family adults take in disciplining you?

Worries and fears; strangers etc.

Differences between your childhood licences, those you granted your children and those that your grand children are allowed.

What benefits did your upbringing give you?

Tell me a story about your childhood that you like to tell.

Appendix B - Grid of respondents

Name	Male / Female	Year of Birth
Christopher C	M	1903
Anna M	F	1911
Margaret L	F	1911
George W	M	1911
Anne C	F	1911
Joy W	F	1913
Kate M	F	1913
Thomas S	M	1913
Anne T	F	1913
Leslie B	M	1913
Jean M	F	1914
Lilias R	F	1915
William R	M	1915
Mrs A. B	F	1916
Avis H	F	1916
David S	M	1916
Margaret J	F	1916
Ann W	F	1916
Fred L	M	1917
Fred L	M	1917
Agnes T	F	1917
Eileen Mc	F	1918
William G	M	1918
Thomas C	M	1918
Jean H	F	1918
Wilfred W	M	1918
Jane W	F	1918
Annie H	F	1919
George S	M	1919

Name	Male / Female	Year of Birth
Mary S	F	1920
William P	M	1920
Erica P	F	1920
Janet M	F	1921
Margaret D	F	1921
Margaret W	F	1922
Isabella N	F	1922
Winifred A	F	1922
George R	M	1922
Margaret D	F	1922
Monica W	F	1922
George W	M	1923
Mary A	M	1923
Joy F	F	1923
James C	M	1923
Morag G	F	1923
John R	M	1925
Isabella B	F	1925
Mary S	F	1926
Dougal S	M	1927
Gwen B	F	1928
Dorothy D	F	1929
Iris L	F	1931
James G	M	1931
Rose K	F	1931
Margaret C	F	1931
Dr Pauline B	F	1932
Charlotte B	F	1932
Emily Mc	F	1933

Name	Male / Female	Year of Birth
Robert D	M	1933
Frances G	F	1934
Harry M	M	1935
Margaret R	F	1935
Shelia R	F	1935
Nina G	F	1935
Ailie G R	F	1935
John A	M	1936
Mrs C. P	F	1937
Sandy P	M	1937
Margaret H	F	1937
John S	M	1938
Jean A	F	1938
Jessie B	F	1938
Ken S	M	1939
Rena P	F	1940
Ian H	M	1940
Margarer C	F	1940
John C	M	1940
Nicolas B	M	1941
Keith W	M	1943
Joseph G	M	1943
Elizabeth M	F	1944
Maureen H	F	1945
Sylvia G	F	1945
David G	M	1945
Hazel W	F	1946
Teresa S	F	1946
Eliz'th Mc	F	1946

Name	Male / Female	Year of Birth
Margaret M	F	1947
Patricia H	F	1948
Liz S	F	1949
David W	M	1949
Freda L	F	1950
Valerie H	F	1951
Alison G	F	1951
Ailsa G	F	1952
Harry N	M	1953
Deborah B	F	1953
Catriona T	F	1954
Bernadette W	F	1954
Gordon B	M	1954
Jean B	F	1954
Monica Mc	F	1955
Alyson H	F	1959
Margaret B	F	1963
Colin B	M	1963
Joanne T	F	1965